

The Local Church 4 - Part 5

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald emphasizes the vital role of fervent prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the life of the local church.

Duration: 7:40

Scripture: Matthew 7:7, Acts 13:2, Romans 8:26, Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 4:6, Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, 1 Timothy 2:1, Hebrews 4:16, James 5:16

Topics: "Prayer Life", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer, highlighting its power to accomplish miraculous feats, the need for fervent and big prayers that honor God, and the significance of prioritizing prayer over service. It also discusses the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding the assembly in various aspects, such as governance, worship, goals, fund dispersal, and public worship, urging believers not to quench the Spirit's leading.

Transcript

Churches and assemblies that don't have a prayer meeting, that's all I can say. Whatever happened to the prayer meeting? It's missing today, I would guess, in most churches in the United States. There are mysteries in connection with prayer.

You can come to me after, you can ask me questions about prayer. Listen, I'd rather pray than solve all the mysteries of prayer. Just get down on my knees and cry to God in simple faith, I'd rather do that.

I like this paragraph, somebody said, Prayer has divided seas, rolled up flowing rivers, made flinty rocks gush into fountains, quenched flames of fire, muzzled lions, disarmed vipers and poisons, marshaled the stars against the wicked, stopped the course of the moon, arrested the rapid sun in its great race, burst open iron gates, recalled souls from eternity, conquered the strongest devils, commanded legions of angels down from heaven. Prayer has bridled and changed the raging passions of men and routed and destroyed vast armies of proud, daring, blustering atheists. Prayer has brought one man from the bottom of the sea and carried another in a chariot to heaven.

What has not prayer done? It's all in the Word, all of those things that I read to you, they're all found in the Word of God. Prayer leads you to heights that makes reason dizzy. It's fervent prayer, I mentioned before, it's really fervent prayer that reaches the gates of heaven.

This is good, cold prayers always freeze before they get to heaven. Fervency of spirit is that which avails much. Somebody said this, I measure my effectiveness by the number of people I pray for and the number of people who pray for me.

I measure my effectiveness by the number of people I pray for and the number of people who pray for me. We honor God by the greatness of our prayers. I like the story of Alexander the Great who used to have open court one day in a month when the people could come and present any request they wanted to him.

And one day a man came and he asked for an education for his son, all expenses paid, and a dowry for his daughter, and he just went on and on and on. And Alexander the Great said, your requests are granted. And some of his courtiers came up to him and said, why did you give all of those things to that beggar that came to you? And he said, he treated me like a king.

He asked big. I'm tired of these people who come and ask for a golden coin. God is honored by big prayers.

If you had been living when Christ was on earth and had met the Savior kind, what would you have asked him to do for you? Suppose you were stone blind. The child considered and then replied, I suppose that without doubt I'd have asked the Lord for a dog with a chain to lead me daily about. How often thus in our faithless prayers we acknowledge with shame surprise we've only asked for a dog and a chain when we might have had opened eyes.

Ask big. He's a big God and he loves to be honored by the bigness of our prayers. Prayer is more important than service.

That isn't the emphasis you get today so often, but it's true. Prayer is more important than service. The heavenly bridegroom is wooing a bride not seeking a servant.

The heavenly bridegroom is wooing a bride not hiring a servant. Thou art coming to a king, large petitions with thee bring, for his love and power are such we can never ask too much. When we get to heaven, dear friends, we're going to wish we had prayed more.

And I hope this assembly will always be assembly that's given to prayer. All honor God by the bigness of your prayers and the fervency of your prayers and the love in your hearts to him. Just a few thoughts at the close here.

The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative in the assembly and he should guide in the government of the assembly. I know the Lord's will should be done, but he uses the Holy Spirit to convey that will by the word of God to the elders and to the assembly. The Holy Spirit should guide in the worship of the assembly.

That's a wonderful thing to be in a meeting and to sense the moving of the Holy Spirit in a certain direction where the hymns and the ministry all center maybe on the blood of Christ or in his coming again, some aspect of his person or work. The Holy Spirit is the one who guides in the goals of the assembly. It would be easy to sit down and say, well, our goal for the next year is to see 25 people, one to the Lord.

Well, that's very nice, but how do you know? How do you know? How do you know that that's what the Lord wants for it? We can manufacture these things, but we want to get our guidance from the Lord. The Holy Spirit should guide us in the dispersing of our funds. It's a wonderful thing to get a letter from somebody and say, the money which your assembly sent was an exact fulfillment of a need which we had

at that time.

Do you mean to say that God can convey to an assembly to send a certain amount of money to meet a specific need? Yes, that's exactly what I mean to say, and it's happening all the time, and blessed are those who have a part in that. That's one of the great thrills of life. The Holy Spirit guides in public worship, in arranging meetings, in speakers, and he must not be quenched.

Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesying. We must be ready to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit.

He doesn't always do things the same way. In fact, he seldom repeats himself, and he's so original, so we want to be sure that we don't quench him, that he can have his way unhindered in the meetings of our assembly. Shall we look to the Lord in prayer? Father, we thank you for all those here tonight who have followed the Savior in the waters of baptism.

We pray that each one might go forth to live a life that is consonant with that, to walk worthy of this profession of faith, and we thank you for the wonderful privilege we have of gathering to remember the Savior in his death for us. Teach us to be better worshipers than we've ever been before. Bring before our hearts the reality of Calvary.

Teach me what it meaneth. O blessed Lord Jesus Christ, open our eyes to see the immensity of it all. May we be men and women of prayer.

May we really learn a closer walk with you in a life of prayer as we seek to do your will day by day. We ask it in the Savior's name. Amen.

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