

The Prayer Meeting

Andrew Murray:

"Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree an earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" Matthew 18:19,20.

The Lord Jesus has told us to go into the inner chamber and hold our personal conversation with God by praying privately--not to be seen by men. The very same voice tells us that we are also to pray in fellowship with one another.¹ And when He went to heaven, the birth of the Christian Church took place in a prayer meeting which one hundred and twenty men and women held for ten days.² The Day of Pentecost was the fruit of unanimous, persevering prayer.

Everyone desiring to please the Lord Jesus, longing for the gift of the Spirit--with power for their congregation or church--and wanting the blessing of fellowship with other children of God, should attach themselves to a prayer meeting and prove that the Lord will make good His Word, bestowing a special blessing upon it.³ And let them take part in it, so that the prayer meeting may be such as the Lord presented it to us.

For a blessed prayer meeting, there must be, first of all, agreement concerning that which we desire. There must be something that we really desire to have from God. We are to be in harmony concerning this. There must be inner love and unity among the petitioners--all that is strife, envy, wrath, lovelessness, makes prayer powerless⁴ --and then agreement on the definite object that is desired.⁵ To achieve this, it is entirely proper that what people are to pray for should be stated in the prayer meeting. Whether one of the members wants to have his particular needs brought forward, or whether others would bring more general needs to the Lord--such as the conversion of the unconverted, the revival of God's children, the anointing of the teacher, the extension of the Kingdom--let the objects be announced beforehand. And let no one think that there is complete agreement whenever one is content to pray for these objects. No, we are all to take them into our heart and life, and to bring them continually before the Lord. We are to be inwardly eager that the Lord should give them. Then, we are on the way to the prayer which has power.

The second feature that characterises a proper prayer meeting is the coming together in the name of Jesus with awareness of His presence. The Scripture says, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Proverbs 18:10). The name is the expression of the person. When they come together, believers are to enter into the name of Jesus, and to find within this name their fortress and abode. In this name, they mingle with one another before the Father, and out of this name they pray. This name also makes them truly one with each other. And when they are thus in this name, the living Lord Himself is in their midst. He says that this is the reason why the Father certainly hears them.⁶ They are in Him, and He is in them. Out of Him they pray, and their prayer comes before the Father in His power. Let the name of Jesus truly be the point of union--the meeting-place--in our prayer meetings. Then we will be conscious that He is in our midst.

Then there is the third feature of united prayer of which the Lord has told us--our request will certainly be done by the Heavenly Father. The prayer will certainly be answered. We may well cry out in these days, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" (2 Kings 2:14), for He was a God that answered. "The God that answereth by fire, let Him be God," said Elijah to the people (1 Kings 18:24). And he said to God, "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God" (1 Kings 18:37). When we are content with much praying, with continuous praying, without answer, then little answer will be given. But when we understand that the answer is the principal thing--the token of God's pleasure in our prayer--and are not willing to be content without it, we will discover what our prayer lacks and begin to pray that an answer may come. And we may firmly believe this--the Lord takes delight in answering. It is a joy to Him when His people so enter into the name of Jesus, and pray out of it, that He can give them what they desire.⁸

Children of God, however young and weak you may still be, here is one of the institutions prepared for you by the Lord Jesus Himself to supply you with help in prayer. Let everyone make use of the prayer meeting. Let everyone go in a praying and believing frame of mind, seeking the name and the presence of the Lord. Let everyone seek to live and pray with his brothers and sisters. And let everyone expect to surely see glorious answers to prayer.

Blessed Lord Jesus, who has given us a commandment to pray--in the solitary inner chamber as well as in public fellowship with one another--let the one habit always make the other more precious as a complement and confirmation. Let the inner chamber prepare us and awaken the need for union with Your people in prayer. Let Your presence there be our blessedness. And let fellowship with Your people strengthen us to expect and

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receive answers. Amen.