

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Decline of public prayer and prophesy in church meetings

Decline of public prayer and prophesy in church meetings - posted by narrowpath, on: 2015/7/23 17:10

As we talked about head covering in conjunction with women praying or prophesying I noticed that actually very few people really pray in fellowships apart from prayer meetings and prophesy is nearly completely absent.

Just on a side note, one may say, if no one prays or prophesies in the church anyway, head covering is no longer a big deal.

I am not sure if I am the only one, but I noticed that public prayer and prophesy has been much in the decline. We have grown so accustomed to tight scheduled programs that leaves very little room for unction in prayer or prophesy. You would feel out of place if you acted upon this bible verse and lift your voice in prayer in the Sunday morning meeting.

I once joined a church and I noticed nobody prayed during the worship time. Then I just started to pray out loud between the song in the worship time. It felt awkward to start with but over time I noticed more and more people started to pray out loud.

1Tim 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

This verse calls us to engage with God in prayer in public or private meetings. Prayer was much part of the early church gatherings.

Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers .

1 Timothy 2:1-3

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

We have endless time for church announcements, birthdays, reports of sicknesses, jokes, stories and sketches but little time for prayer. Why that? Have we lost faith that prayer works out God will and plan? For Paul prayer was to be done "first of all", so it should take prominence over other activities we engage in church.

Prophesy in public meetings is a much rarer phenomenon.

I think the past counterfeit moves of the spirit in the last decades made many churches much more cautious towards the gift of prophesy.

Prophesy is just as much for today as it was in the first century. We must rediscover and revive this gift. God speaks to us through not only through his word but also through prophesy.

Prophesy in the church of today is a big topic that needs much more exploration, so I only mention a few snippets.

Prophesy reveals the unknown things to us. It gives us direction, warning, conviction, encouragement, and correction.

Prophesy must always affirm scripture, never go beyond it or bring new doctrine.

Without prophesy Paul would have gotten stuck in Asia and never got to Macedonia.

Without prophesy Jesus' birth would have happened much differently.

Prophesy in Acts was a vital means by which God ministered to his church.

1 Corinthians 14

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

I pray to God the he will restore this gift to us. May he raise up godly men and women who prophesy accurately to the edifying of the church.

In order to have public prayer and the gifts of the Spirit operation we need to fellowship in a different way. Clever programs are a hindrance. We need a praying eldership, not just one top man who delivers it to us. We need proper church discipline and caring shepherds. We need apostles that go round and look after the churches. We need a new reformation - again.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-20 Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesying.

Re: Decline of public prayer and prophesy in church meetings - posted by RogerB (), on: 2015/7/23 17:19

I see this too. It's easy to lose heart. I get tired of petty denominational doctrines. No messages on the Kingdom of God or salvation. The worship team concept is not good either. Everything is cut and dried. Come sing, sit, and pay. Why you can't even pick out songs in most groups. Cliques.

Re: Decline of public prayer and prophesy in church meetings - posted by twayneb (), on: 2015/7/23 17:25

I do not want to sound disparaging to the church, but I also have to be honest about what I see in the American church. We have, to a large degree, commercialized the church. Really, it runs a bit like a business. We provide particular services that we call ministries (children's ministry, youth ministry, men's ministry, etc.) and strive to make them plentiful and attractive so that we can attract people and get them to come to our business (church) instead of the one down the street. We provide the best worship services. We use the most trendy music, lights, etc. and make sure that the performance (music and sermon) are as attractive as possible so they will come back to the next show (service). We want lots of people because their money is what allows us to improve our own business to attract more people.

I am not against modern music. Some of it is fantastic. I am not against musicians doing their very best. God deserves it. I am not against modern technology. If it is useful in genuine ministry, use it. I am against what we have done to what we call church. We have produced a generation of consumers who shop churches like the shop for a better car or a better haircut.

We have lost touch with the true identity and purpose of the church. The church is a fellowship of the reborn. It is the body of Christ. It is supposed to mature and grow under Godly leadership gifts so that each member assumes the stature of a full grown man of God and is perfectly capable of allowing the Holy Spirit to use him or her to supply to the rest of the body as He anoints them to so do.

I honestly think that this perversion of what the church really is and is supposed to be is largely responsible for what you describe. We do not meet for mutual growth and mutual edification and strength. We attend for what we can get out of it. There is a huge difference between meeting and attending. One is active, the other passive. Too many of us are just there.

I praise God for prayer meetings where people still meet just to pray and seek God together. I praise God for prophecy in the church. I praise God for spontaneous prayer. I remember this happening as part of my heritage, and I am blessed to be part of a fellowship where this is still the norm and is actively encouraged.

Re: Decline of public prayer and prophesy in church meetings - posted by dolfan (), on: 2015/7/23 17:25

I have responded too much today. ðŸ™„ But, Lord hear our hearts and visit your people again.

Re: - posted by Theophila (), on: 2015/7/24 15:49

Could it be that public prayer meetings have declined because private, personal prayer has declined?

Its rather hard to pray earnest, heartfelt prayers in public when a person doesn't pray in private.

May the Lord draw our hearts to Him again...

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2015/7/24 17:54

So true

Psalm 22:22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2015/7/25 22:33

Theopla. I tend to believe it is the other way that a viberent personal pray life out flows from the corporate prayer meetings and the reviving we get through that means of grace ,the same way the church gifts and ministerys flowed out of the prayer meeting of the day of Pentecost,

”
I think many people redefine prophecy to mean just exortingpreaching and teaching and don't Ste up there church struct
ure to acomadate genuine prophecy as we see in scripture „even the role and office of the prophets is neglected and dis
missed„so in people's minds when they seek the gifts of prophecy it is really them seeking for the power to preach and e
xpound scripture . We need to get back to understand the basic differences between the prophets evangelists and paste
rs and teachers ,and the gifts each one moves in ,and also not to let the false prophets and prophecy to cause a nee jer
k reaction away from the truth

Re: , on: 2015/7/26 5:11

"Come sing, sit, and pay..."

"We have, to a large degree, commercialized the church. Really, it runs a bit like a business. ..."

...and you are getting a bit a helping hand, not from above, but from us "down under". Have a look at this:

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/69220027/pushpay-moves-up-to-main-board>

I don't think Jesus is very impressed, He wants His house to be a "House of Prayer".

When I was in Russia many years ago I discovered that the old Church buildings were called "House of Prayer". In com
munist times they probably didn't come together for entertainment and business, they were desperate to pray and seek t
he Lord.

Re: , on: 2015/7/27 0:08

Do you think the decline of public prayer and prophecy has to do with people conditioned to see the written word as final
authority rather than the Living Word as final authority? For sure the Spirit and the Word agree, but the Living Word is th
e true final authority in a Believer's life. Have we not been conditioned by religion in a very subtle way to listen to them (c
lergy and theologians) instead of the Spirit? Not everything a person needs can be found in the Bible, sometimes they n
eed the voice of the Shepherd in their spirit. "Those who are led by the Spirit are the sons of God".

Re: Decline of public prayer and prophesy in church meetings - posted by Sree (), on: 2015/7/27 3:59

Here in India, most denominational Churches do not have God's word at all. I recently addressed a Christian marriage held by CSI (Church of South India), during the message time, the Pastor just spoke about a secular book that he read on marriage. Some 3 points said in that book. Those points were nothing related to Bible. No mention of anything from Bible was made during the message. Latter I inquired to my relatives about this useless message, I was told that they no longer preach from Bible as they do not get any word.

But in our Church, recently we identified a young man (I am young as well only 32), stood up to share word when we gave time for others to share and testify after the main message (normally only 5 mins per person). This man had the word of God continuously for subsequent weeks that were clear revelation. We recognized that God is backing this young man and given him the gift to prophesy for the Church. Now we regularly ask his man to speak.

So I see both, I see the decline of God's word in mega Churches, I also see the increase in prophets in the Church that Jesus himself builds.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2015/7/27 6:27

Sree how does the function of the phopher and and pasters and teachers differ in your church

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2015/7/27 7:32

We do not have Pastors only Prophets and Teachers. We do not assign any title to anyone. But we just identify the gift that they have. New Covenant Prophesy is for the encouragement of the Church. It warns the Church against the schemes of devil. It is specific to a Church. They have a burden for the Church and word comes in accordance to the current need of the Church.

Teachers differ from Prophets in the way that their messages are for broader audience than to the Church alone. They speak with more authority.

Elders lead the Church. They are always more than one in number. Either 2 or 3, depending on the size of Church. They are good in administration which is also a gift of the Spirit. At least one of them will be a gifted speaker who can share the Word.

It is not always one person who shares the word, normally all known prophets in the Church will get their turns to share. There will also be an open call for others to share as well. This is the time we find whether God is backing someone with gifts.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2015/7/27 9:27

Travis,

I appreciate and agree with your comments. Even in most Churches where the gifts of the Spirit are acknowledged, there is not liberty for believers to flow in these gifts. Many pastors are in such tight control of their churches that a prophesy would need to be filtered through him before it is given to the church.

There are very few organized churches where you could say that the Holy Spirit is in control.

Every believer has been given at least one gift for the building up of the Body of Christ. House churches are being used by the Lord for Body ministry. Jesus is the Head of

the Church, and every member of His Body should be functional.

Re: , on: 2015/7/27 9:39

If a member of the Body is not allowed to function within the Body it will atrophy and that part of the Body will be crippled (not healthy). But, this only signifies that there is a deeper problem which is the quenching of the Holy Spirit, by those who "control" the gathering. The danger here, is that the Holy Spirit quietly moves on from the corporate gathering, but still responds to individual hearts that are receptive.

Re: - posted by onemite, on: 2015/7/27 13:15

This is a good topic, I've thought about this as well.

The churches that I've visited that seem the most orderly and grounded in the Word, seemed to be the biggest culprits of stifling anyone with a gift in the church, while the churches that allow for time to operate in the gifts seem to exercise no discernment whatsoever, accepting all words as from the Lord.

It's encouraging to me to read here that others have made similar observations. Sree, you said, "So I see both, I see the decline of God's word in mega Churches, I also see the increase in prophets in the Church that Jesus himself builds." I find this very encouraging! I pray that God bring to nothing all that is not of Him.

Sincerely,
Penny

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2015/7/27 13:58

I agree that we have seen the extremes on the use of the gifts. Some believe that the gifts were only for the early church. Others would love to see certain gifts in operation but are opposed to speaking in tongues. Then you have the extreme Charismatic groups where anything goes, and the wilder and stranger we can get, the better.

This is why we need mature leaders in the Church that don't feel the need to control everything, and do not want to quench the Spirit. They would encourage the Body to exercise the gifts, and to discern if the utterance is of the Lord or not. They would also give loving correction. There have been many times that the Holy Spirit has given me a word to share with the Body, and I have struggled with it, not wanting it to be out of self, only to have it confirmed by another that the word was from God.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2015/7/27 15:19

Sree: I guess I overlooked the fact that you are in India. I realize that India is a very large place, but do you ever contact any of the Abraham's and IGO? The church I grew up in has had contact with Bro. Abraham's work for many years.

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2015/7/27 17:42

Very true, AbideinHim

Satan has been successful with a twofold strategy. Firstly, to mock the gifts of the Spirits by counterfeit excesses of some Charismatics.

This lead to other side of the extreme. There are those churches that are motivated rather by fear than discernment that attribute all expression of the gifts as being counterfeit and a curiosity of the first century that has to be contained in history books instead in the Body of Christ.

They idolize bible knowledge at the expense of the living word. This inevitably leads to overt control of men, even if they are godly.

When the Spirit moves in a church, man has to step back and allow God to do his work. Once that happens, elders, teachers and leaders are needed to ensure order, propriety and decency. This calls for a deep reformation of church structures after the pattern of the New Testament.

I believe that remnant believers will in the end come to terms with that and persecution may be the agent to bring us into the realization of the gift out of sheer necessity. We will need to pray for miracles to provide food.

Words of knowledge will give us protection from detection and traitors.

Corporate prayer in the night will again fling prison doors open.

We will pray for healing when the health system breaks down or we will be excluded from it.

We will need to share our possessions because Christians are forbidden to buy.

We will need to provide shelter for Christians from denominations that we always avoided.

We will sing spontaneous new songs during nightly prayer meetings.

We will learn to fast because food is scarce anyway.

Are we ready for that? Will we see that day?

Re: Decline of public prayer and prophesy in church meetings - posted by Theophila (), on: 2015/7/29 9:50

Way back when, there used to be prayer in the sanctuary before the service. Now even in churches where there is prayer before the service, its in some other room in the building. When I asked a church leader why, she said, 'so we don't scare away first-timers'.

Dumbfounding.

Also, when I was growing up, the preacher would lead us in prayer immediately after his sermon. As in, he would mention topics related to the sermon and the entire congregation would pray out loud. And there would be at least 2 or 3 things to pray about.

Now even when there is prayer after the sermon, its the preacher praying and then everyone is supposed to 'amen' afterwards.

I was fortunate to visit a Brooklyn Tabernacle prayer meeting. It was an actual prayer meeting! After the music, prayer requests and testimonies were raised till the end of the meeting. Probably an hour or so. It was wonderful.

I still believe folks don't pray corporately mainly because they don't pray privately. How many 'Christian' homes have regular family prayer, however short it may be? How many husbands/fathers are actively praying with their wives?? How many mothers are actively teaching their wee little ones how to pray?? Praying on rising and retiring are good places to start with children. Mysteriously, we have more than enough time to watch TV and movies, to discuss politics and politicians, to even argue doctrine, but not enough time to sit down and pray for ourselves, let alone our churches and the Body of Christ worldwide. Even personal bible study avails us naught if we will not pray! Bible study without the purifying illumination that comes through communing with the Author of the Book is how false cults/heresies arise.

We have time to pursue every other thing but the one thing that practically ensures we become whole-hearted disciples of Jesus Christ.

Those who pray know their bibles and those who truly know their bibles, pray. Biblical illiteracy is at an all time high, in spite of numerous free bible websites/apps.

Prayer is the oil that kept the menorah alight in the old tabernacle. Prayer is still the oil that keeps our congregations alight in the new tabernacle. Isn't it a wonder how we happily carry on in church without the light of heaven?

Have mercy on us, Lord.
Have mercy on me, Lord.

Re: - posted by dolfan (), on: 2015/7/29 9:56

Many good and worthy matters on this thread to do.

Listening to Paul Washer's sermon this AM on the way to work about useless prayer meetings. I shut the sermon off and started praying. His sermon worked! It became useless to hear it anymore!!! :)

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2015/7/29 11:34

There is definitely a decline in prayer in most churches today.

There have been preachers of large churches and ministries that have said that they were too busy to pray.

Jesus said: "My House shall be called a house of prayer." (Matthew 21:13).

Prayer should not be relegated to a few elderly folks, but pastors and leaders should be setting an example for their flock and leading the prayer meetings in their churches or at least attending them.

God can do much more through the corporate prayer of believers than any program that man has come up with.

Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2015/7/29 19:07

I always admired Times Square Church. Every meeting on Sunday, you see ALL the ministers seated there and at all the prayer meetings and they have 3 meetings a day(?) on Sunday. I heard David Wilkerson say in a sermon once that if a deacon/elder didn't show up for a prayer meeting, he wouldn't be a deacon/elder for long!!

Re: - posted by Theophila (), on: 2015/8/8 19:36

On a side note, we visited a church some weeks ago. A few hours later, two well-dressed men showed up at our door from the church.

We ended up having a nice visit with them. When they were wrapping up the visit, we asked if they would pray with us. They were surprised at the request!

Thankfully, they did pray.

I was taught that when believers gather together, they pray. I think we need to recover such teaching again. Folks just need to be taught to be ready and willing to pray any and everywhere again. Even amongst folks who love Jesus, it really takes some doing to get them a-prayin'.

Also, when did congregational praying out-loud give way to one-by-one praying?

Re: , on: 2015/8/9 3:55

"God can do much more through the corporate prayer of believers than any program that man has come up with."

Martin Luther said: " i have a lot of work to do today - therefore i need to pray a lot today "

Peter Deyneka encouraged the Lord's people to pray for the opening of the Soviet Union for the preaching of the Gospel. His motto became, "Much prayer, much power. Little prayer, little power. No prayer, no power!" His powerful preaching resulted in the nickname, "Peter Dynamite." (Source: SGA website)

Because prayer is so powerful it always seems a bit of a struggle. I clearly remember one of my first Bible studies as a new believer more than 30 years ago. The study went from 7:30 to 9pm. Shortly before 9pm the leader asked if two people could quickly pray so that we could finish on time. As soon as the study finished some members turned on the TV and watched some "important" Hollywood program.

Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me (Romans 15:30)

Re: , on: 2015/8/10 8:39

Along with prayer, there is a decline in fasting.

Mark 9:29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and FASTING.

You don't hear much anymore about fasting.

Re: Decline in prayer - posted by RogerB (), on: 2015/8/16 11:58

Carter Conlon answered this question today Aug 16.

Noon Sermon "When someone decides to pray".

Moses moved his tabernacle away from the common message and sought God's presence away from the others. We can't rest on our plans, programs and accomplishments.

Re: , on: 2015/8/16 12:21

Carter Conlon: One of the few genuine men of God that lead a mega church and a Canadian eh? And his associate pastors are cut from the same cloth.

Re: Decline of public prayer and prophesy in church meetings - posted by Theophila (), on: 2015/8/16 16:28

What if, each of us, depending on relationship with head pastor/elder, gently suggests avenues for public prayer in our churches/fellowships?

1] I have noticed many churches dismiss children after worship music. How about suggesting the congregation pray for the children before they are sent away?

2] Once a month, pray for wedding anniversaries and birthdays in that month.

3] If the pastors/elders are game, once a month, pray for them and their families.

4] Once a month above, pray for churches in your state. Almost everyone complains about spiritual decay in America, but how many people actually pray for her churches, the pillar and ground of Truth?

Each of these ideas shouldn't take more than 10 minutes and will help make congregational prayer more feasible...

What say ye?

Re: decline of prayer - posted by RogerB (), on: 2015/8/17 21:44

This article is from 2010. This is good:

<http://acalltotheremnant.com/is-there-a-desperate-cry-in-the-land/>

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2015/8/21 7:12

Theoplia I think thats putting the cart before the horse what about once a month we tell the paster to call a solom assem bly and fast for tow of three days and pray for revival ,,out of this when a revival comes others areas are stagnate will begin to operate with unction

Re: - posted by Theophila (), on: 2015/8/21 19:02

Brother,

That would be awesome except that most churches don't even have any form of congregational prayer at all. I fear many contemporary church goers have never heard anyone pray earnestly in church on Sunday morning. My prior suggestion s were to help willing groups take baby steps in congregational prayer.

When there's sufficient momentum, a solemn assembly would be feasible...

Oh, how we need the Lord to warm our cold hearts so we can join the Great Intercessor in His present day ministry for H is Body.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2015/8/21 20:06

It only takes three or four people willing to go with out food and regular activitys , to kick of a mini typy of revivle ,,but on the others hand you can have a relatively good church that sends up thousands of pertitions a for pastors children,rulers lost people,,have good Sunday worship great biblical sermons a regular moving of the spirit every week, yet remain in a n unseen rut due to the lack of fasting and seeking the lord through seperationofthe good things to seek and ministers t o the lord for a great moving of the spirit ,many church stagnate in a position that literally is not a bad position compare d to 90 percent of the rest of fellowships , but fall short of deep moving a of this, people are not willing to set a side the rooteen of a relatively bibilical tradition , for really seasonal seeking the lord . And until we do that all the pertitions we s end up to God will not be fulfilled in the powerful manner preferred by God

Pertitions can't replace ministering to God through the old fashionand the book of acts prayer meetings , with fastings...

Gods blessings on you sister !!

Re: , on: 2015/8/21 22:06

North Korea has announced they are ready for war and the rest of the world is mainly in chaos. So may be we could star t praying wherever we are in which ever format we can do it. I think time is a bit short to try and figure out the "right " way to do it first.

Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus - Your Kingdom come !

Edited: to correct minor errors

Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2015/8/22 4:59

Quote:

-----by Theophila

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1

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Each of these ideas shouldn't take more than 10 minutes and will help make congregational prayer more feasible...

What say ye?

I'm all for it! I think this is an excellent idea but you have to have a praying pastor to institute one or more of these! Majority of pastors are on a schedule and anything that hinders that schedule is not welcome or anything that he could lose control of is not welcomed either!! :)

I have found (could be wrong but in my experience), that a praying spirit flows down from the pulpit out to the people, not the other way around (edit: up to the pulpit).

I believe a praying church comes from a praying pastor but that's just me. You have excellent ideas and I hope they are instituted in all churches.

Lisa

Re: - posted by Theophila (), on: 2015/8/22 11:58

Sister,
I read your comments at least thrice before the gravity of them hit me!
If a life of prayer supplies the power for ministry, And If many pastors aren't men of prayer, How, in the world, are they doing ministry???

I know the coldness of my own heart, so I know my need of increased closet prayer but it is rather frightening if many pastors are in my position.

When we lived up north, in one of the churches we attended, the pastors accepted the suggestion to pray for the wee ones before they were dismissed. It was lovely to hear the parents of said children actually praying for their children out loud. It was a church established by immigrants though....so things weren't quite set in stone and it was relatively easy to accomplish.

I'll try to pray for the pastor for tomorrow's service. That's a good place to start.

Help us, Lord!

Re: Decline of public prayer and prophesy in church meetings - posted by Theophila (), on: 2015/9/8 11:21

I left out a very important avenue for public praying: teleconference!

It's huge in African Christian communities in the US! Convenient and comfortable...mainly because many believers of African descent are used to public prayer in church. Sadly, that is changing with the advent of the prosperity gospel and mega churches.

Best of all, most teleconferencing is free!

You could start with just one other like-minded person or family.

In addition to all the suggestions, there really isn't any excuse for lack of group prayer, pending the time the Lord MAY sovereignly send a revival of corporate prayer.

Since as Sister Lysa rightly said, a praying church usually is begotten from a praying pastor, each believer on this site should consider making their pastor/elder/leadership, the object of specific intercession before the Lord.

Enough complaining about the state of the American church. Let us begin to pray that old song,

'Lord, send a revival
Lord, send a revival
Lord, send a revival and let it start with me'

With much love,