

“SHUCKING US DOWN TO THE COB IV”

(Prayer)

MCC Distinctives

I. Today we continue our Cob Series with a focus on prayer.

A. Last week we talked about buildings, and the lack thereof, and we found:

- 1) It is more Biblical to meet in anything but a church building... :-)
- 2) You can fall asleep during an all night sermon, fall 3 stories to your death, get raised from the dead, and never have even been in a church building...
- 3) Church buildings can be helpful but aren't essential. Buildings do not make a family of believers more legitimate than what they already are...

B. Let me repeat some beef jerky statements to chew on:

- 1) In the New Covenant there are no “holy places.”
- 2) The church is meant to be a movement not a monument...
- 3) The church is meant to be a living organism not a dead institution...
- 4) The temple of God exists today--it is you! (1 Corinthians 3:10-17)
- 5) “*There’s no magic in the faucets.*” - Lawrence of Arabia...

C. We can't talk about MCC distinctives, our DNA, and leave out prayer...

- 1) July 5, 1987 and the next year and 9 months, prayer was IT for us...
- 2) To go thru the NT on prayer like I did last week on meeting places, would take us all afternoon and then some... Scriptures on prayer are exhaustive...

D. Let's explore a few scriptures on prayer and see why it's so pivotal to us.

- 1) Acts 1:12-14: The Upper Room Fellowship was constantly in prayer...
- 2) Acts 2:42: The early church was devoted to prayer...
- 3) Romans 12:9-13: Paul's tells the church in Rome, be faithful in prayer.
- 4) Ephesians 6:18-20: Praying on all occasions all kinds of prayers...
- 5) Philippians 4:6-7: Don't worry about anything--pray about everything.
- 6) Colossians 4:2-4: Paul says we should pray expectantly & thankfully...
- 7) James 5:13-16: James, the brother of Jesus on prayer...
- 8) Luke 18:1-8: Jesus shares a parable on persisting in prayer...

E. On your own you may want to read more on prayer...

- 1) Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-11: Jesus teaches His disciples to pray...
- 2) John 17: Jesus prays passionately for His disciples and for us...
- 3) Acts 6:1-4: Deacons were chosen so the Apostles could focus on prayer and the ministry of the word.
- 4) Acts 10: Peter's encounter with Cornelius is birthed out of prayer...
- 5) Acts 12: Peter is jailed and the church prayed earnestly for him. (“*The angel fetched Peter out of prison, but it was prayer that fetched the angel.*” - Thomas Watson)
- 6) Acts 16: Paul & Silas in Philippi (including jail) prayer was in action...
- 7) Romans 8:26-28: Praying with the Holy Spirit...
- 8) 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: Praying continually...
- 9) 1 Timothy 2:8: Lifting up holy hands in prayer...
- 10) Revelation 5:6-8: Golden bowls of incense = prayers of the saints.

F. If you were to keep track of answered prayer I think it would amaze you...

- 1) My Mom kept running notebooks of prayer requests and answers...
- 2) Story of Josh McDowell praying with respect to his Mom...

G. Story of 5 students visiting Metropolitan Tabernacle, C. H. Spurgeon...

- 1) Prayer must also be the heating plant of MCC
- 2) Quote from E. M. Bounds...

Sermon Scriptures & Illustrations

Acts 1:12-14 (NIV)

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. 13 When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. 14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Acts 2:42 (NIV)

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Romans 12:9-13 (NIV)

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. **10** Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. **11** Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. **12** Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. **13** Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Ephesians 6:18-20 (NIV)

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. **19** Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, **20** for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Philippians 4:6-7 (CEV)

6 Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God. **7** Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel.

Colossians 4:2-4 (NIV)

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. **3** And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. **4** Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

James 5:13-16 (NLT)

13 Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. **14** Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. **15** Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. **16** Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

Luke 18:1-8 (NIV)

1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. **2** He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. **3** And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' **4** "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, **5** yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!' " **6** And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. **7** And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? **8** I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Josh McDowell's Answer To Prayer

Our Daily Bread

While Josh McDowell was attending seminary in California, his father went Home to be with the Lord. His mother had died years earlier, but Josh was not sure of her salvation. He became depressed, thinking that she might be lost. Was she a Christian or not? The thought obsessed him. "Lord," he prayed, "somehow give me the answer so I can get back to normal. I've just got to know." It seemed like an impossible request.

Two days later, Josh drove out to the ocean. He walked to the end of a pier to be alone. There sat an old woman in a lawnchair, fishing. "Where's your home originally?" she asked.

"Michigan--Union City," Josh replied. "Nobody's heard of it. I tell people it's a suburb of --" "Battle Creek," interrupted the woman. "I had a cousin from there. Did you know the McDowell family?"

Stunned, Josh responded, "Yes, I'm Josh McDowell!"

"I can't believe it," said the woman. "I'm a cousin to your mother."

"Do you remember anything at all about my mother's spiritual life?" asked Josh.

"Why sure--your mom and I were just girls--teenagers--when a tent revival came to town. It was the fourth night--we both went forward to accept Christ."

"Praise God!" shouted Josh, startling the surrounding fishermen.

Quote by E.M. Bounds

"What the Church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use--men of prayer, men mighty in prayer."

Quote by Thomas Watson

"The angel fetched Peter out of prison, but it was prayer fetched the angel."

Want To See The Heating Plant?

Five young college students were spending a Sunday in London, so they went to hear the famed C.H. Spurgeon preach. While waiting for the doors to open, the students were greeted by a man who asked, "Gentlemen, let me show you around. Would you like to see the heating plant of this church?" They were not particularly interested, for it was a hot day in July. But they didn't want to offend the stranger, so they consented. The young men were taken down a stairway, a door was quietly opened, and their guide whispered, "This is our heating plant." Surprised, the students saw 700 people bowed in prayer, seeking a blessing on the service that was soon to begin in the auditorium above. Softly closing the door, the gentleman then introduced himself. It was none other than Charles Spurgeon. - Our Daily Bread

Humorous Prayers

- Unknown Source

* A daddy was listening to his child say his prayer "Dear Harold". At this, dad interrupted and said, "Wait a minute, "How come you called God, "Harold"? The little boy looked up and said, "That's what they call Him in church. You know the prayer we say, "Our Father, who art in Heaven, Harold be Thy name."

* And this particular four-year-old prayed: "And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets."

* One night Mike's parents overheard this prayer. "Now I lay me down to rest, and hope to pass tomorrow's test, if I should die before I wake, that's one less test I have to take."

* A woman invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to her six- year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?" I wouldn't know what to say," the little girl replied. "Just say what you hear Mommy say," the mother said. The little girl bowed her head and said, "Dear Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

* Johnny had been misbehaving and was sent to his room. After a while he emerged and informed his mother that he had thought it over and then said a prayer. "Fine," said the pleased mother. "If you ask God to help you not misbehave, He will help you." "Oh, I didn't ask Him to help me not misbehave," said Johnny. "I asked Him to help you put up with me."

* A little boy was overheard praying: "Lord, if You can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a real good time like I am!"

* Another little boy's prayer: "Dear God, please take care of my daddy and my mommy and my sister and my brother and my doggy and me. Oh, please take care of yourself, God. If anything happens to you, we're gonna be in a big mess."

The Senility Prayer

God grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to run into the ones that I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference. - Unknown

Two Senators Debate The Lord's Prayer

Two US Senators who were having a spirited debate about pending legislation . One Senator said to the other, "You think that you are so smart, but you don't understand the religious implications of this legislation. I'll bet you \$20 that you don't even know the Lord's Prayer." The second Senator said "I do so!" "OK let's hear it then" replied the first Senator. The second Senator started, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray thee Lord my soul to take." The first Senator, taken by surprise, humbly handed his fellow senator a \$20 bill and said, "Well I guess you knew it after all. - Unknown