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# EQUIP

**A Prayerful Church – Small Group Session Five  
Week beginning 12th March**



# Oh no, not the other 'p'

This is the final week in which we are focusing on the church. Over the last few weeks, we have seen what the church is, how the church is built and the role we all need to play in that building project. We have seen the need for people to proclaim the truth prayerfully in the power of the Spirit, often with great persistence in the face of opposition. We have seen how we need to do this together, both within the church for our own building-up but also as we speak of Jesus to those around us.

Over the last two sessions, our focus has been on proclamation - how we speak truth to others - but it would be a mistake for us to overlook the other 'p'. Just as crucial in the building of the church is the need for God's people to pray.

Now the moment we suggest a session on 'prayer' the group breathers a collective 'deep sigh'. We all know that we 'should' pray, Jesus tells us we should. We all could pray more (however much you pray at the moment). Many of us feel an instinctive guilt about our prayer lives or the lack of our prayer life. So ... maybe you anticipate this session will tell you to pray more (which you already knew) and make you feel guilty about the fact that you don't! Maybe at the end of the session you might resolve to try to pray more, but you suspect that in reality little will change.

We need a different approach. Maybe we might be more excited to pray if we saw how essential prayer is in the church's building work. Maybe we need to rediscover the confidence in prayer that the early church had. Well that is what we are going to try and do.

So, at the very start of the session, why not spend some time praying! Pray that God would be powerfully at work by His Spirit through His word and pray that we would discover (or re-discover) an excitement about prayer for the building of the church.

"After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly."

Acts 4:31

# Spirit given prayerfulness

## 1 How would you respond?

In Acts 4 we are told that Peter and John were arrested for speaking about the resurrection of Jesus. They were people proclaiming the word, in the power of the Spirit, with persistence in the face of opposition. They were threatened, told to stop proclaiming and then released...

What different things might they have done next after being released? What do you think you would have done in their situation?

Now read Acts 4:23-31.

What do we learn from their actions and their prayers? Spend some time reflecting together - this step should take 15 mins.

Now try to summaries your thinking: What do we learn about their priorities? What do we learn about their understanding of God?

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## 2 Our life of prayer

In this passage (to me at least) prayer feels exciting, dynamic and action packed, crucial for the vital work of building the church. Explore why our times of prayer often don't feel like that. Reflect on our priorities and our understanding - why might they make our prayers feel less 'vital'? This step should take 10 mins.

In verses 31, God answers their prayer and the Spirit empowers them to keep speaking. Why might we find it hard to believe that God will answer our prayers when we pray for things he has promised us?

When we pray, we are praying to our sovereign God who is the Lord of creation and the Lord of all history. That God has all the power to answer our prayers and He loves to give good gifts to His children.

How should our small groups and church respond to all you have thought about in this session?

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## 3 Praying Together

It would be ironic if we didn't end this session in prayer. This series on the church has been challenging. Share the one thing (above all others) that you want to pray, given everything you have seen over the last few weeks. Then turn to pray for each other.

