

## **Title: *Pray Continuously***

**Key texts: 1 Thess. 5:17 & Acts 12:1-12**

Here are some scriptures to support our topic...

**1 Thess. 5:17** – *Pray without ceasing or pray continuously.*

**Luke 18:1** – *Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up.*

**Luke 21:36** – *Watch and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.*

**Eph. 6:18** – *Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.*

**Mark 11:17** – *Jesus said: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'.*

**Read Acts 12:1-12.**

From Acts 2 till Acts 11 (apart from the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts 7:58-60), the church had been on a streak of success, experiencing exciting conversions of people from Judaism to Christianity. Thousands of them coming and acknowledging Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

There was Saul of Tarsus, then the Gentile centurion Cornelius, then the highly successful work among Gentiles (and Jews) in Antioch.

But in Acts 12, we see a great persecution which started to arise. The death of James shattered the dreams and aspirations of the disciples.

And to top it all up, Peter, one of the prominent leaders of the Christian community was now imprisoned with soldiers keeping an eye on him – 2 chained with him on both sides and 2 standing by the prison gate.

***<sup>5</sup> But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him.***

The unthinkable thing took place.

***<sup>7</sup>Suddenly, there was a bright light and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter... awaken him and **the chains fell off his wrists.** <sup>8</sup>Then the Angel told Peter what to do. <sup>9</sup>Peter left the cell, following the angel not realising that it was actually happening. <sup>10</sup>They **passed the first and second guard posts, passed the iron gate leading to the city, and this opened for them all by itself.** So, they passed through and started walking down the street, and then the angel suddenly left him. <sup>11</sup>Peter finally realised that the Lord has sent his angel and saved him from Herod and the Jewish leaders. <sup>12</sup> When he realised this, he went to the **home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were gathered for prayer.*****

In the midst of their highs and lows, their victories and persecutions, regardless of where they were, either in **a church gathering** or **at home**, there is one thing that the disciples never ceased and never stopped doing -*THEY PRAYED FERVENT PRAYERS!*

## **MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PRAYER**

**Misconception #1 - *We only pray when we need help from God.***

We tend to treat God as a **spare tire**. We only use Him when we have a flat tire.

Others treat God as an **ambulance**. We only call on Him when there is emergency.

God should be in the **driver seat**. Let Him take us to our destination as we go through life's journey.

**Misconception #2 - *Prayer changes things.***

It is not prayer that changes things, it is God that changes things.

In fact, God changes us through prayer.

At times, we pray to God to change the situation not realising that God uses situations to change us.

Through prayer, God starts to deal with our wrong

motives and intentions, correcting us and making us a better person.

### **Misconception #3 - *There is power in prayer.***

It is a statement that contradicts itself.

It is an oxymoron in every sense of the word.

The reason we pray is to acknowledge that we are powerless and by ourselves, we cannot cope and that we need Him, we need His power to move in our lives and in our situations.

God's power is released through prayer!

It is not having the power but being under someone's power - being under and submitting to God's power. That's how things work in the economy of God.

Prayer is an acknowledgement of God's power and authority in our lives.

### **Why do we need to pray?**

**a. *We pray because it is the link that connects us with God.***

**Matt. 6:9-13...** *Our Father who art in heaven...*

Our prayer is our way of connecting with God.

Prayer links us to the source of power.

**Ex.** It is like having a phone connected to the internet 24/7.

**b. *We pray to draw our attention and focus on the true source of our total supply and to rely on His power.***

**James 1:17** - *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*

Through prayer, we are acknowledging that we are powerless and that we are relying on His great power to bring the change that we need in our lives and in our situations.

**c. *We pray to build a strong relationship with God, our Father.***

**Jude 1:20** - *“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.”*

We don't only pray because we want something from God. We pray because we want to have a strong relationship with God.

*“The greatest tragedy of life is not unanswered prayer, but unoffered prayer.”* F.B. Meyer