# Editorial Every Church In Every Nation A House Of Prayer Dr Jason Hubbard

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When Jesus came into the temple, he drove out the money changers and declared, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations”? But you have made it a den of robbers.’” It is clear that Jesus’ declared intention that “His house” (today the assembled church and our physical bodies as His living temples) should be a house of prayer for all nations (Isaiah 56:7, Mark 11:17; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19).

The Old Testament Temple was to be a dwelling place of God’s presence. It was to be a focal point of worship, prayer, sacrifice, and joy. It was to be a place where His people would humble themselves, pray, and seek His face – turning from their wicked ways for healing, blessing and restoration (2 Chronicles 7:14).

But what does this reality look like for our lives and churches today? What does Jesus desire of us if we are to be agenuine house of prayer indeed, not just in word?

5 Biblical Indicators of a True House of Prayer.

First, prayer was to take priority over all self-centered activities of commercialized religion. Jesus’ anger over the money changers in the temple was rooted in the self-serving system created to use funds from the sales of sacrificial animals for their own gain. He called it a “den of robbers.” The house of prayer is to be a place of humility, and sacrifice. It was not to be a place for the financial, or selfish advancement of its leaders.

Second , prayer is both the churches identity as well as it’s ministry work! Prayer isn’t just one of the ministries of the church. The whole church is to be engaged in prayer. The church is called to be ‘devoted’ to prayer (Acts 2:42, Rom 12:12, Col. 4:2, Eph 6:18).

“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be devoted in prayer.”

The word devoted literally means to be ‘diligently occupied with, to constantly persist in, or to be dedicated/appointed for a task.’Paul calls the church at Ephesus to make prayer first in the church, “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people” (1 Tim. 2:1).When we make prayer a priority, we come to God dependent on him, knowing that we can do nothing apart from him (John 15:5). God releases his power in response to the prayers of his people. When we pray according to his will and for his renown, God always responds and increases his activity! As Hudson Taylor wrote, “When we work, we work, but when we pray, God works.”

Third , prayer is to be modeled first in the leadership culture of the church. The story in Acts 6:1-7 is a powerful model for a biblical leadership culture. The leaders gave themselves to continual “prayer and the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4). Supernatural blessing and expansion followed (see v. 7). A genuine house of prayer is guided by leaders who spend extraordinary amounts of time together in prayer because they have a conviction that God is the true source of all power, unity, direction, and blessing.

Fourth , Jesus described the house of prayer in John 2:16 as his Father’s House of prayer. The Father has always been longing for a family (sons and daughters) and a home (to dwell with them). In teaching his disciples how and what to pray, Jesus called them to pray, “Our Father.” Jesus re-orientated prayer as ‘sons and daughters’ before a good Father! The Spirit would place an “Abba” cry in the hearts of his people, leading them to pray with the same intimate language that Jesus prayed to his Father. As Paul described in Romans 8:14-17,

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”

The word ‘house’that Jesus used is o ikos , meaning household, family, or dwelling. This makes sense since the primary identity of the church in the New Testament is as ‘family.’ Family terminology is Paul’s primary and most used metaphor describing the identity of the church (sibling terminology 118x’s, Father terminology 40x’s, and inheritance terminology 14x’s).

And the distinguishing value of the family of God is ‘love’ for one another. As Paul writes,

“In brotherly love, showing family affection to one another. Outdo one another in showing honor” (Romans 12:10).

One of the best ways that we can love one another is to pray for them. Our prayers must be love-motivated. As Dr. Alvin VanderGriend writes,

“Love-motivated prayer is a love-motivated plea to a love-giving God, on behalf of love-needy persons who live in a love-starved world.”

Fifth , Jesus describes the house of prayer to be “for all nations.” Prayer was the fuel for Spirit-inspired mission fulfillment. In a true house of prayer, prayer is not the end – but the means to the end. Prayer exists to empower us to accomplish the Great Commission of Christ in the power of Christ and for the glory of Christ.

George Otis shares a story about a church in Cali, Columbia that at one point was adding 1000 people to their church every month for forty months! He asked the leaders what their strategy was in reaching so many for Christ. His answer was simple, “our church prays 24/7!”

Prayer precedes conversion. Prayer precedes mission.There is no other way to do His work and reach this lost world with the truth of the good news than connecting with God’s heart in fervent, continual prayer!

May God call us to become increasingly, “Prayer-Devoted” in our personal lives, families, churches, and ministries! As my good friend Brian Alarid, founder of America Prays/World Prays says, “Every church in every nation - a House of Prayer!”

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