



Week 9

## Acts 12: Prayer

Text: Acts 12

### OPEN

This is our ninth and final week of our series in Acts called **"Unstoppable"** based on Acts 5:42 which says, "Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, **they never stopped** teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah." Like a powerful waterfall, the book of Acts is the story of the unstoppable movement of Jesus. It is the story of the birth, life, and ministry of his Church that we are part of today as a **people of God, filled with the Spirit of God, to fulfill the mission of God, by sharing Jesus with others.** Through this series we will be following the story of birth the Church and how it followed in the footsteps of Jesus' Spirit-led life and ministry. Like Jesus, his body the Church is Spirit-born, Spirit-filled, to be a Spirit-empowered people, sent to continue in the mission and ministry of Jesus. As this story continues in Acts 12 we see the church return to one of its foundational practices of prayer. With arms outstretched the church prays earnestly for God to step in and provide deliverance.

### READ

**Read the accounts of Hannah (1 Samuel 1), David (2 Samuel 12:13-20) and Moses (Exodus 32:1-14).** (1) What were the circumstances for earnest prayers? (2) How did God answer?

Have each group member read out one of these passages on prayer: *Psalm 141:1-2, Psalm 88:9, Psalm 141:1-2, Psalm 143:6. 2 Chronicles 6:12-13. Ezra 9:5, Nehemiah 8:6, Lamentations 3:41, 1 Timothy 2:8*

- How does posture help us connect with God in prayer and worship?
- Read Acts 12:11-16. After an angel rescues Peter from prison those praying for him struggle to believe their prayers have been answered. Have you ever struggled to believe God could answer your prayer. How did he grow your faith through that?

### REFLECT

- **Read Acts 12:1-4.**
  - What insights do you have around the apostle James being killed while the apostle Peter is spared?
  - How does 1 Peter 1:3-9 provide insight to how God uses trials to grow our faith.
- An angel delivers Peter from prison (similar to Acts 5). Do you personally know of any modern day examples of angels who came to someone's aid? What happened?
- Describe a time an earnest prayer was answered in your life. How was God's Kingdom advanced?

Jesus taught his disciples to pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt 6:10). Effective prayer that prays for God's will to be done takes on a different shape in our lives. Richard Foster writes:

**“To ask “rightly” involves transformed passions. In prayer, real prayer, we begin to think God's thoughts after him: to desire the things he desires, to love the things he loves, to will the things he wills.”**

- What would it look like for you to seek after God's will in prayer and ask him to lead you into the things he desires? How would that change the way you pray?

### APPLY/PRAY

- What is a need that your group can pray for together 'earnestly'? How will the answer grow God's Kingdom? Share and then pray for it together.
- Read the Lord's Prayer Matt 6:9-13. Notice the three part order and how it begins with God. Adoration (6:9), God's will (6:10) and our needs (6:11-13). Spend some time praying into each part beginning with praising God for who he is, seeking after his will, and then asking him to meet your needs as a group.
- Continue to pray for our staff, elders, volunteers, and leaders during this time of transition that we would follow God's will as he leads.

