

## Conclusion: Back to the Mirror

What keeps you from praying?

Do you feel unworthy or unable to talk to God?

Does prayer seem powerless and passive to you?

Does it seem as if others are really in charge and not God?

## LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community.  
The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups  
as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

### Love the Gospel

- How would you define prayer? What passages from Scripture would you draw upon for that definition?
- What stands out to you about prayer in Acts 12?

### Live the Gospel

- What is your main hindrance to being devoted to prayer? How does God's word address that hindrance?
- How does Acts 12 (especially consider the concepts of prayer and activity and prayer and authority) challenge your conception of prayer?
- How does Acts 12 motivate you to pray more often?

### Advance the Gospel

- What prayer practices have allowed you to be the most consistent in prayer?
- What brother or sister can you come alongside to encourage in prayer?
- How might your prayer life be a testimony to an unbeliever in your life?

## The Church: A Faithful Gospel Witness (Part 8) They Devoted Themselves to the Prayers Peter Stonecipher — February 7, 2021

Text: Acts 2:41-47; 12:1-24

## Introduction: The Devoted Themselves to the Prayers

Are we, as Gulf Coast Community Church – both corporately and individually – devoted to prayer?

*The Secret Key to Heaven*, Thomas Brooks

*Prayer is the regular, dependent communication between God's children and our gracious Heavenly Father, which recalibrates our understanding of activity and recenters our understanding of authority*

## I. Prayer and Activity (12:1-17)

A. Prayer as regular, dependent communication

*Matthew 6-7*

This background of what prayer *is* forms an essential foundation for what we see the early believers doing in Acts 2 and in Acts 12

B. What does regular, dependent communication look like?

C. Prayer and activity

In prayer, we call upon our gracious Heavenly Father to *do things* both spiritually and physically which are beyond our capabilities. In this way, we *are* doing something about the chaos of our fallen world.

D. What about James?

*James 2:15-16; 5:16-17*

Prayer recalibrates our understanding of activity by conforming the activities we undertake as God's people to God's will

E. Is prayer powerless and passive?

## II. Prayer and Authority (12:18-24)

A. What about Herod?

For God's people under King Herod's rule in the middle of the first century, there must have been times in which his rule seemed immovable and his authority seemed incomparable

B. A Greater Authority in Acts 12

If King Herod has perpetrated persecution and imprisonment and death against God's people, it is only because God – the real authority figure in Acts 12 – has allowed it in his mysterious providence

C. Who is your Herod?

Often we have looked more like the residents of Tyre and Sidon groveling at the throne of the King Herods of our culture than we have looked like the believers huddled in Mary's house pleading before the throne of grace for strength and patience and joy in the face of hardship

Who's *your* Herod?