

# DEVOTED

*Disciplines That Deepen Our Delight In God*

## Devoted — Prayer

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### Key Idea:

Because the Father delights to commune with His children, the Spirit draws believers into prayer — first in the gathered worship of the Church, and then overflowing into a daily personal life of prayer — so that their hearts flourish in ever-deepening delight in Christ.

### Key Text:

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42

### Key Points:

1. **Prayer Is the Most Frequently Commanded Devotion in the New Testament** — Of the ten times the word “devoted” appears in the New Testament, five refer specifically to prayer (Acts 1:14; 2:42; 6:4; Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2). Paul’s call to be “constant” in prayer (Romans 12:12) and to “continue steadfastly” in prayer (Colossians 4:2) both use the same Greek word as Acts 2:42 — pointing to a consistent, sustained life of prayer rather than occasional emergency appeals to God.
  2. **“The Prayers” Begins in Corporate Worship** — The Greek of Acts 2:42 is specific: not simply “prayer” but “the prayers” — the definite article pointing to the structured, corporate prayers of gathered worship, including the Psalms, the Lord’s Prayer, and sung prayers known by heart. Every major movement in Acts — Pentecost, persecution, the Gentile mission — was bathed in corporate prayer. Once again, our devotion begins in corporate worship and then spills over into our private practice.
  3. **The Spirit Is the Engine of Our Prayer Life** — We do not sustain a life of prayer through willpower. As the Spirit of adoption the Spirit draws us to the Father (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6), prays within us when we cannot find words (Romans 8:26-27), freshly fills us as we pray (Acts 4:31), strengthens us in faith (Jude 1:20-21), and guides us in spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:18-19).
  4. **Prayer Is Communion with a Father Who Delights in Us** — The heart of prayer is not technique or vocabulary but conversation with a Father who loves His children and delights to give them good gifts — most of all, Himself. Just as a grandparent treasures the stumbling words of a grandchild, our heavenly Father welcomes us as we are, not as we think we ought to be.
  5. **Corporate Prayer Overflows into Personal Prayer** — As with the Word, fellowship, and the Lord’s Table, devotion to prayer begins in gathered worship and spills over into daily personal practice. Learning to pray in corporate worship — through the Psalms, the Lord’s Prayer, and sung prayers — forms the vocabulary and rhythm of a growing personal prayer life.
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## Discussion Questions:

1. Bret opened by acknowledging that prayer is the discipline most likely to produce guilt and feelings of inadequacy in believers. Why do you think that is? What emotions or thoughts most commonly get in the way of your prayer life?
  2. The word “devoted” in Acts 2:42 appears five out of ten times in the New Testament specifically in connection with prayer. What does this frequency tell us about the place prayer is meant to hold in the life of a believer and a church?
  3. The Greek text of Acts 2:42 reads “the prayers” — a definite article that points primarily to the structured corporate prayers of gathered worship, not private spontaneous prayer. How does this reframe the way you think about participating in the prayers, songs, and liturgy of corporate worship each Sunday?
  4. In Acts, corporate prayer precedes or accompanies every major advance of the gospel — Pentecost, the response to persecution, the sending of Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles. What does this pattern suggest about the relationship between the prayer life of a church and its mission and vitality?
  5. Romans 8:26-27 tells us that the Spirit intercedes for us “with groanings too deep for words” when we do not know how to pray as we ought. Have you ever experienced this in your own prayer life — a sense of the Spirit carrying you in prayer beyond what you could articulate? What was that like?
  6. Bret described the Spirit’s role in prayer through five specific functions: drawing us to the Father, praying within us, freshly filling us, strengthening our faith, and guiding us in spiritual warfare. Which of these five most encourages or challenges you in your current season of life, and why?
  7. Bret used the image of a grandparent delighting in a grandchild’s stumbling words of love. How does this picture of God’s delight in our prayer — regardless of eloquence or theological precision — change the way you feel about approaching Him in prayer?
  8. In Luke 11:11-13, Jesus argues from the lesser to the greater: if earthly parents delight to give good gifts, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask? How does grounding prayer in the Father’s generous character guard against treating prayer primarily as a technique for getting what we want? What does it tell us when Jesus says what the Father gives us is the Holy Spirit?
  9. Bret offered six practical tips for growing in prayer: remembering God’s delight in communion with us; learning through corporate worship; beginning with worship music; praying Scripture; using the ACTS model; and including both structure and spontaneity. Which of these do you already practice, and which one might most help you in the next season?
  10. This series has consistently shown how each discipline — the Word, fellowship, the Lord’s Table, and now prayer — begins in the gathered worship of the Church and overflows into daily life. How have you experienced this pattern personally? In what ways has your participation in corporate worship shaped or deepened your private devotional life?
  11. Bret closed by saying: “The greatest gift God gives us as we pray is Himself.” How does this reframe what you are actually seeking when you come to God in prayer? What would it look like for delight in God Himself — rather than answers to requests — to become the deepest goal of your prayer life?
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## For Further Study:

For other teachings and resources to grow in your devotion to prayer, take a look at the following:

- Use the “The Spirit and Prayer” handout distributed with this teaching to study and meditate on the Spirit’s five roles in the prayer life of the believer this week.
- Use the “Tips for Growing in Devotion to God Through Prayer” to practice a new way of praying this week.
- Spend time this week praying through either a Psalm or the Lord’s Prayer each day and using that as a guide throughout your time of prayer for yourself and others.
- Try the ACTS model (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) as a daily prayer guide this week, beginning each session with a few minutes of worship music.
- Visit the church website to explore teachings organized by [series](#), by [Scripture](#), or by [topic](#) for a deeper study of [prayer](#), [the means of grace](#), [sacraments](#) and [worship](#).