

A CALL TO CORPORATE PRAYER

Acts 1:14

June 29, 2008 Sunday p.m.

INTRODUCTION

- A. Webster defines a “corporation” as... “a group regarded as an individual by law”.
The defining feature of a corporation is its legal independence from the people who create it. If a corporation fails, shareholders will lose their money, and employees will lose their jobs, but neither will be liable for debts that remain owing to the corporation's creditors. This rule is called limited liability.
- B. Most churches are incorporated for this very reason. Our church is incorporated or is a corporation.
- C. Churches are incorporated in another way, however, we are to be incorporated in prayer. That is, we are to be involved in “corporate prayer.”
 - 1. Another meaning of “corporate” is to “combine into one”.
 - 2. Acts 1:14 is an example of the early church participating in corporate prayer.

I. WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS OF CORPORATE PRAYER?

- A. Dependency on God.
 - 1. Since Jesus was taken from their presence they were dependent on God—v.9.
 - 2. This led them to immediately begin praying—v.14.
 - 3. What substitutes do we have for dependency on God?
 - a. Preaching—but the Bible never says “My house shall be called a house of preaching.”
 - b. Programs—the latest fad of the church down the road.
 - c. Possessions—buildings, budgets, buses, etc.
 - 4. Only dependency on God leads to effective corporate prayer.
- B. Brokenness—they thought Jesus had left them alone and on their own and they knew they were in trouble. This is exactly where God wants us and the church.
- C. Unity—14a “They all joined....”
1 Timothy 2:8⁸ I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.
- D. Consistency—14b “constantly in prayer”.
1 Thessalonians 5:17¹⁷ pray continually; (regularly, not just on special occasions).

II. WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF CORPORATE PRAYER?

- A. Receiving God’s plans—vv 15-26. (Selection of Judas’ replacement).
- B. Receiving God’s power—2:1-4.

CONCLUSION

John Franklin recounts a time back in June of 1990 when he joined about 250 people to participate in a two-week evangelistic crusade in Mombasa, Kenya, which at the time had around a million people. They were divided into teams of three, each team going hut-to-hut and house-to-house, presenting the Gospel. And John Franklin said he was in awe. “A few times in my life I have been in a service or prayer meeting where the manifest presence of God could be felt but never before in a whole city. Wherever we walked, the presence of the Lord tangibly permeated the land, so much so that often people were saved by the dozens.”

Franklin goes on to tell one example when his team of three was walking down a dirt road that led to the next village. Up ahead were three Kenyan men seated on stools by the roadside. “As we approached,” he said, “one of them arose, walked briskly toward us, and greeted us in English.

“Excuse me, are you from America?’ he asked. “Yes.” “Are you one of the ones who has come here to tell us the word of God?’ ‘Yes,’ I answered. ‘We’ve heard that you’ve come, and we’ve heard of Jesus and His great power. Tell me, how does one become His follower? My friends and I want to know.’” John explained the plan of salvation, and without a trace of hesitation, the man immediately replied, “Let’s pray.”

John Franklin thought what I would have thought: “That was too easy. He must not have understood.” So he repeated it again. But the man interrupted. “I understood the first time. Let’s pray!” That story of people coming to them to be saved happened over and over. In all, 30,000 people responded to the Gospel in 14 days time.

It was an extraordinary 14 days for Franklin and the team. But there’s a back-story he adds that speaks to our purpose this morning. Three months earlier, several churches in Mombasa began fervently praying for these concentrated days of evangelism. During the two weeks of the crusade, a different church prayed all night each night. John Franklin joined one of the all night prayer meetings, praying until 7am when he went to bed. He woke up four hours later and felt the presence of God in his hotel room so strongly that he did not rise; he simply slid out of the sheets to his knees in prayer. That day following that prayer meeting, John said every single adult they witnessed to trusted Christ. No one rejected the Gospel. Franklin and the others in the crusade made a big discovery in that crusade: The revival that came to this city happened because of the prayer meetings of God’s people.

(Excerpted from John Franklin’s *And the Place Was Shaken*, p. 1-4.)

J. Edwin Orr in his book *Prayer, Its Deeper Dimensions*, p 21 said...

“No great spiritual awakening has begun anywhere in the world apart from united prayer.”