

THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER... THE CHURCH IS GOD'S FAMILY SERIES

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TEXT: Matthew 18:15 “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” (NASB)**

Matthew 18:19 “Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” (ESV)

INTRO: Jesus talks about prayer in the context of the Church, the Ekklesia. He defines the Ekklesia as two or three who gather in His name: the basic unit of the family. Here we conclude the series, The Church Is God's Family, and we will shift into a series on prayer and fasting that will be through the month of March during our 40 days of global fasting and prayer. As a student of revival, I have learned that one of the key ingredients to a move of God is hunger and thirst for Him.

Today I want to teach three truths on prayer that are found in our text:

I. WE PRAY IN AGREEMENT WITH OTHERS

A. Matthew 18:15 “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”**

B. Matthew 18:19 “Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.”

1. Prayer was the success to Jesus' ministry. His disciples didn't ask how to preach or how to heal the sick; they asked Jesus how to pray.
2. That word *agree* is the Greek word *sumphoneo*; we get the word *symphony* from that word. A symphony has many different instruments and different parts, but they play as one.
3. Here God is emphasizing the prayer of agreement.

C. WHAT DOES AGREEMENT LOOK LIKE?

1. **It is praying with two or more.** Why? There is exponential power in agreement. **Leviticus 26:8 “Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand!”**
2. **Your heart is right with others.** You are not carrying offence. You are not bitter or angry towards others you are praying with. **Matthew 5:23 “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”**
3. **Others are actively participating with you.** You aren't allowing your mind to drift or texting others or daydreaming, but you are engaged. You are praying in the Spirit. And you say, “Amen!”
4. **You are in alignment with those who are leading the prayer meeting.** We see the principle of apostolic alignment illustrated in Acts 1.
5. **Acts 1:13 When they had entered the city, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.**
6. We see 120 in unity and agreement praying for the promise of power from the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).
7. We see unity with Jesus' family, with His brothers in alignment with the apostles.
8. Ten days later, the greatest revival breaks out. The Church is birthed in power (Acts 2). God sends revival when there is united prayer!

9. **You are praying with corporate faith.** Jesus could not do many miracles in His hometown because of their unbelief (Matthew 13:58). We must create an atmosphere of faith and expectancy.

II. PRAY TO THE FATHER IN JESUS' NAME

A. Matthew 18:19 “Again, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” (ESV)

B. GOD WANTS US TO ADDRESS HIM AS FATHER

1. When the disciples asked Jesus how to pray, Jesus began by saying, “Our Father, in heaven...” (Matthew 6:9).

2. There are many names for God in the Old Testament (e.g. Adonai, Jehovah), but of all the names, He wants us to address Him as Father. God is addressed around six times in the Old Testament as Father but never in the context of prayer.

3. Over 150 times Jesus addressed God as His Father in the Gospels to emphasize that is how God the Father wants to be addressed. The word *Father* comes from the Aramaic word *Abba*. “Dad,” or as my grandchildren call me, “Papa.”

4. God is not like your earthly father. He is love (1 John 4:8,16). **He loves you with an everlasting love. (Jeremiah 31:3)**

5. Prayer is about intimacy with God. God wants you to be close to Him. He wants you to call Him “Dad.” **James 4:8 Come close to God, and God will come close to you.**

6. Your perception of God will determine your faith in God, and faith is indispensable when it comes to prayer. If you see Him as a distant God, you are not going to approach the Father in faith and in confidence.

7. My grandchildren have taught me that they are bold and confident to ask us for almost anything. E.g. “Can we have a treat?!” Most of the time, we say yes because we love them. But if it is right before dinner, we have to say, “Not now, but after dinner you can have something special.”

8. God the Father will give you one of three answers: “Yes,” “No,” or “Not now.”

9. If He says no, it is because of three reasons: (1) for our protection, (2) for our direction, (3) for our perfection.

10. But because He loves you: **It is the Father's good pleasure to give us His Kingdom. (Luke 12:32)**

11. E.g. My testimony of TMJ being healed.

III. PRAY ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

A. Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

1. To gather in His name means to gather on behalf of Jesus. You are asking as if Jesus would ask. What would Jesus do? What would Jesus pray? He says He will be there as we gather in His name.

2. 1 John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

B. WE PRAY ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD

1. God has revealed His will to us in the Bible.

2. E.g. Wesley and Stacey Campbell's book *Praying The Bible*.

3. We need to be people of the Word, so we can pray what is on God's heart.

C. WE PRAY ACCORDING TO HIS PROPHETIC WORD

1. Matthew 18:18 "Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

2. Heaven initiates what we are to pray.

3. This is how apostolic decrees work. E.g. Decreeing that God would remove Gov. Gray Davis in April 2002.

CONCLUSION: Like the apostles in the upper room, let's come together in unity. I want to make sure you have committed your life to Jesus. Today is the day of salvation! I pray a father's blessing over you.