

Acts 4:13-31 Vital Church – A Praying People

Looking back

We want to grow together, so let's just review what God has done in us from the last study:

- How did you get on? How has God changed things in your life as a result of your response to the last study?
- What have you found difficult?
- If you feel that you haven't really applied God's word from last time, what might you (individually or as a group) do this time to help apply God's word?

Getting into the passage

Read Acts 4:13-31 together. You should also look at the context (Acts 3-4)

For each study we need to ask some basic questions. Be honest, and help one another learn:

- Was there anything in the sermon that you didn't really understand or had you confused?
- What particular things did God challenge you about to apply in your life / heart?
- Was there anything said that you struggled with or disagreed with?

Learning from the passage

Summarise the 'back story' that leads into **v23-31** What would you be praying about in this situation?

Notice what they were concerned about ... not so much their safety or their speaking, but that the work that God was doing shouldn't stop!

How do we see God at work today ... in your life or in the church? What does Jesus' commission (Matt 28:18-20, Acts 2:8-9) suggest we should see?

How should this be reflected in our prayer life? Why do you think it was more passionately reflected in their prayers here & throughout the New Testament? Look in **John 15:5**. The statement is *very* absolute! Does it shock you? Do you think we live in the light of this truth?

In the context of **John 15:5** what is the significance of **v24b-28**?

Notice what they recall: His Power, His Reign and His Sovereignty

Is their situation unique? What, in this, should be a model for our prayers?

For private consideration:

It is well said that our prayer life is a measure of our dependency upon God. If we really believed that He is God and over everything, we'd pray! The big question, therefore, is – do we believe in Him as He is revealed in the Bible or is He smaller (an idol) in our hearts? What does your prayer life tell you?

Look in **v24a** ... who is it who prays?

Look in **v29-30** ... what do they pray for?

Notice the double emphasis – on equipping for them, and on power from God!

It's not about praying for God to work and them sitting back; Nor about God to work through others and I sit back; It's for God to work through me as I go. Does this differ from our prayers?

See **Eph 6:19, 2 Tim 1:7, Ps 138:3** and **Acts 4:13, 9:28,14:3, 18:26, 19:8, 28:31**, Why is it vital to pray for boldness?

What does this mean for our prayer times in the Home Group / in our personal prayers? How should we change?

What is God's response (**v31**) ... see also **4:8, 6:3&5, 7:55** (and **Rom 8:5-17, and Gal 5:16-25**) to see what this phrase means. Notice that it isn't about spiritual gifts → what is the response it produces in them (**v31b**)?

Hopefully you will have seen how desperately we need to be people of prayer!

- What can you do practically to reform your personal prayer life? Make some suggestions within the group that might help one another
- What can you do as a group to encourage and watch over one another?
- Their togetherness is emphasised, so how might we respond as a church?

Regular Questions to End

Each time you meet we'd love you to end by asking some searching questions around the group. Be honest, so you can support one another!

- If there was one thing you could highlight that God is challenging you about to pray over / change / seek His help in, what is it?
- What can others pray for you to help you respond to His challenge?