

Acts 1:14 Does it Support Prayer Meetings

Written by K B Napier

Wednesday, 11 March 2015 12:36

A variety of texts are used to 'prove' the need for prayer meetings. This is one of them. Does it support regular prayer meetings? No, it does *not* support the prayer meetings most are used to in our modern day. Yet, even recently, I heard a sermon delivered by a respected and genuine Christian pastor, that claimed this text for the support of regular prayer meetings! Just as few Christians know how to interpret properly, so most seem incapable of reading scripture as they ought. This verse does NOT say what most think it says! The verse says:

"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."

All of scripture is 'doctrine', but not all texts are doctrinal laws. This text is an historical narrative, NOT a statement of doctrinal law. The verse gives an account of what happened on the day Jesus was taken up into Heaven. The apostles and other disciples saw Him ascend. They had every reason to think with "one accord"! They were at the very start of the era of the Christian Church, and had much to pray about. They also needed to replace Judas Iscariot with another man, and had to consider the coming Pentecost, when thousands, if not a million or two, Jews came to Jerusalem. It was the Spirit Who drew them to prayer – not a timetable.

The important factor was that they were all of one mind and one accord. As I have already shown in my article on Prayer Meetings, this had a very special meaning, and we do not see this 'one accord' in any modern prayer meeting, except rarely. And I really mean *very* 'rarely'.

This kind of total union in prayer is not found in regular meetings, where 'prayer' is a word used to cover all kinds of non-genuine activities... praying-around-the-world, vagueness, excitability, and so on. People tend to 'pray' because they must, and because they are expected to do so by the pastor. But, the 'prayers' are not real prayers – they are superficialities compared to the prayers we read about in Acts 1:14. In the sermon I referred to above, the pastor actually prayed for "all the needs of the world"! What on earth does that mean? It was, in terms of spiritual truth, drivel.

When the disciples prayed with one accord and one mind, they each had exactly the same prayers in their hearts, prompted by the Holy Spirit; they prayed ONLY for what the Spirit told them to pray about. And they had the Ascension to speak of plus the need to appoint two more apostles, AND sought God concerning the coming Pentecost! Is this like modern prayer

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meetings? Of course not! Men and women today come reluctantly to prayer meetings; they rush to get there because their daily lives seem more important; they wonder what they can possibly pray about; they go on and on in general and useless terms; they fear being asked to pray out loud.

All these things go around people's heads. Many attend not because they ought to, but because they do not want to appear backslidden; they want to remain in the pastor's 'good books'. Some attend because they are fluent in speech, and love to pray long prayers (and you know what Jesus said about that); some love to be thought of as 'more spiritual' by their flowery utterances that say a lot but mean nothing. Few attend willingly, and those who do attend willingly have wrong beliefs about what prayer is; they also have no idea that God does NOT wish us to hold regular prayer meetings, which, by definition, are NEVER like the meeting in Acts 1:14. That is, those who attend have pencilled-in the meeting beforehand, indicating that they have no idea what real prayer is.

They are, in effect, telling God that He will 'perform' every Tuesday (or whatever the day is); He will listen to their dreary offerings every mundane week; He will come to them in the same way as He came to the apostles. Look at the prayer 'meetings' held in the New Testament and you will find they were vastly different – they were not regular, nor did the Christians hold 'prayer meetings' every week as a matter of course. This is because a prayer meeting held by several must be for an urgent and important reason. And, those who attend must do so because they are urged by God; each one attending will have exactly the same thing to pray about... no flowery words, no generalisations, no weak and useless personalised nonsense.

In Acts we see, simply, an historical narrative – a record of what actually happened. It does not, then, necessarily mean we must follow it, or that what is read about should become a part of local church life as a 'regular' prayer meeting. It is not, then, a statement of doctrinal law by God... it is just a report on an event, by Luke.

Those who advocate regular prayer meetings, which – as I say, by definition are not genuine – willingly ignore what Jesus Himself said about prayer: ***we must pray individually in secret, not in public***. No believer who attends regular prayer meetings can ever answer that command by God. Instead, they continue to ignore what Jesus said, by holding regular (and useless) prayer meetings!

I recognise that almost all believers attend these regular prayer meetings out of habit; it is

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nothing but learned behaviour, something done because it is expected. I urge them all to read what Jesus said about prayer, because it gives them no reason to attend regular prayer meetings. But, they must pray with one accord if commanded to do so by the Holy Spirit... and how often does that happen?

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