

Marks of a Biblical Christian Part 3

Acts 2:42

I came across an article by Stephanie Karina in the Thought Catalog.

12 small ways to identify a good person. Here are 5 that I find interesting!

1) *They are kind and patient with the salesperson and cashiers at stores.*

2) *They always tip well.*

3) *They call their parents*

4) *They remember their manners*

5) *They text back in a semi-prompt manner.*

How does the Bible identify Christians? There are marks or behavioral traits that identified the followers of Jesus.

We have been looking at these marks: Brotherly love (John 12:35) By this people will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.

-A devotion for the word of God (the teachings in the Bible) Acts 2:42 (reading it, hearing it, studying it)

-A commitment for being in fellowship with other Christians (sharing with one another, doing life together)

Our text in Acts 2:42 tells us of another trait that distinguished Christians in the first century.

-They were committed to prayers (Acts 2:42) the first Christians were devoted to prayers.

Their lives were marked by their being committed to continuous prayers.

This is another thing they learned from Jesus himself. **Jesus modeled prayer for his disciples;** he always found time to spend time with the Father; often we see Jesus withdrawing to a solitary place to pray. The disciples learned this from Jesus and they taught others the importance of praying. We see this in **Acts 1:14** *They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers.*

As they waited for the promise of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit; they gathered to pray. These were about 120 people, by chapter 2:42 where we read that they devoted themselves to the prayers, the group was larger more than 3 thousand disciples.

Devotion to prayer: It is not just praying when you are in trouble or in need of something, Devotion to prayer is a constant communication with God.

Acts 3:1 *Peter and John were going to the temple at the time of prayer. Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. ESV.* Praying was so much part of their daily routine. **Praying helps you build your relationship with God.** If there is not communication in a relationship, such relationship is prompt to die. Dan Hayes says that prayer is a prerequisite for spiritual revival. **How often do you talk to God in a given day?**

Why prayer?

Praying helps you determine God's will on a given situation.

The apostles prayed for God to show them who would be replacing Judas **Acts.1:24** **Lord Show us which of these men you have chosen.**

Acts 13:1-5 the church in Antioch prayed and fasted seeking God's will.

Paul understood God's will for his problem "the thorn in the flesh." Paul had prayed three times for this and finally realized God's answer was my grace is sufficient for you. **2 Cor.12:8-9**

Praying helps you overcome difficulties.

Acts 4:22-31 The believers prayed for boldness in the midst of persecution.

Acts 12:5 The church prayed while Peter was kept in prison.

Praying kept these followers on target in the midst of opposition and intense persecution. They knew that it was spending time with God that would help their decision making and would provide the strength to endure trials.

Prayer helps us overcome temptation. Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matt.26:41

As followers of Jesus we are at war with a strong enemy; we are encouraged in Scripture to always be ready for battle dressed up with the full armor of God. *Eph.6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

The first century Christians were truly committed to prayer; it wasn't just in the gathering that you found prayer taking place; as individuals, they made it their priority to develop their relationship with the Lord as they constantly sought God's guidance through prayer.

Is your life marked by a devotion to God's word, the Bible? Can others see how committed you are to loving your brothers and sisters? Is your life marked by a serious commitment to your church family, the fellowship?

Are you truly devoted to prayer? I don't mean praying after each meal or while you are at church. I am talking about your spending quality time with God on a daily basis; seeking his face. Quality time is giving the other person your undivided attention. Does God have your undivided attention on a given week? Day? Hours?

As a follower of Jesus, you are in a relationship with him. However, what are you doing to continue developing and strengthening your relationship with him?