

Principle 39

Fervent Prayer Meetings

With many in the Church prayer is treated as the last thing we do before God. We use prayer to ask Him to fulfill—in many cases—our own fleshly plans. With thousands of books written on prayer, many of us still have not placed prayer its proper place as the most important Christian activity we do, corporately⁸⁹⁶ or privately.⁸⁹⁷ We have special times for prayer once in a while, expecting that God should hear us and then we tend to go back to our normal lives without any intense reliance on God through prayer.

All the growth of the house Church movement in China stems from a root of intensely fervent prayer.⁸⁹⁸ Whole congregations cry out to God with weeping and tears in intercession for the lost in their country and for their persecutors.⁸⁹⁹ Such passionate praying will shock and disturb many of us, yet the Church there truly believes that God answers genuine prayer.⁹⁰⁰ As with the widow who cried out to the judge,⁹⁰¹ so this house Church movement cries out to God day and night and God hears them. If we realized that God would hear such praying, we would spend much more time as a Church in the blessed place of prayer and intercession. Persistent

intercessory prayer may often go on in many underground meetings for up to three or four hours at a time in duration.

It is argued that over 80% of the believers in the underground house churches in China believed in the Lord Jesus Christ because they have either seen or experienced some miracles, signs and wonders. How else can you convince atheists there is a One True God? "God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will."⁹⁰²

One underground Church pastor upon returning to China from America, stated to his Church: "Our brothers in the West know how to plan, but we know how to pray." Everyone prays out loud in most prayer meetings all together and with many Amens and Hallelujah's.

There is such a great commitment to pray that many in the underground Church wake up at 5 A.M. every morning to worship and enter into prayer before they start their day of manual labor. Prayer meetings often occur at this early hour of the morning and there is even a hymn entitled: *5 A.M. in China*. Some of the words are: "When dawn arrives in China you can hear people praying. They are rejoicing in the great love that unites all the peoples of the world. These prayers soar over the highest mountains and melt the ice off the coldest hearts."⁹⁰³

Should this not move us to spend much time with our Heavenly Father who is eager to hear the prayers of His children? "I love the Lord, for He heard my voice; He heard my cry for mercy. Because He turned His ear to me, I will call on Him as long as I live."⁹⁰⁴ All night prayer meetings (from Friday at 6pm to the next day at 6am) are common with as many as half a million underground believers praying in this way from the house Church networks every week.

The Lord will hear our cries as we seek His face daily and believe that we have what we ask in the Name of His Son.⁹⁰⁵ Prayer must be the primary function of the local Church and not an afterthought. Prayer demonstrates our dependency on the Lord for everything.