

Acts 12:5

Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.

When you are in church and you have a prayer request, what do you do? I think a lot of people would say that they will go to the pastor, or one of the elders to pray for them. Which is fine, but did you know that you can actually go to anyone in the church and have them pray for you or with you? There is no rule in the bible that says that you must go to the pastor or elders only to get prayed for. Sure it does say that: ***“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”***

James 5:14

But this is referring to the sick, but the bible also says that there are those in the church with the gift of healing.

† **1 Corinthians 12:9** *to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,*

But if you read here in I Corinthians about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it does not say that only the pastor or elders in the church are given gifts, but the gifts are given to everyone (***each one***) in the church, including the gift of healing.

† **1 Corinthians 12:4-7** *There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:*

So simply you can go to anyone that is a believer to get prayed for, and not just for healing, but for anything.

With that in mind, you must remember that you are also a part of the church, and that you should be praying for others too. Look at today’s verse which says: ***“but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.”***

Did you see it at the end of the verse ***“the church”*** Not just the elders or deacons or the pastor were praying, but ***“the church”*** which included everyone. Also notice it doesn’t say that some of the people in the church were praying, but simply ***“the church”*** was praying, which I would think would be everyone in the church.

And why were they praying? Well, in this case it was because ***“Peter was, in prison”*** and our buddy Peter was in prison for sharing the gospel, so the church was praying for him to be released. And even though this is a funny story, if you think about it... Wait, what do I mean it

was a funny story, how can Peter being in prison be funny? Well, Peter was actually released from prison when God sent an angel to set him free.

† **Acts 12:7** *Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands.*

But the funny part is what happens when he is released, and he goes to the church (a group of believers, not a building) to let them know that he was set free from prison... remember they are praying for his release.

† **Acts 12:13-16** *And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel." Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.*

The church was praying, but they didn't believe what they were praying for, which was Peter's release from prison. Why? I have no idea, maybe they expected God to do it a certain way, and since the way they wanted it to happen, didn't happen, they couldn't believe? But the bible does not tell us why. But it does show us that they were praying, and God answered their prayer, whether they believed it or not, and it didn't stop God from doing what He wanted to do, which was to answer their prayer and release Peter from prison.

So let's be like the early church and pray together as a church like they did here. But let's also believe that God will answer our prayers, even if He doesn't do it the way we think He should.

Also note one more thing, that with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, prayer is not one of them, because God wants to hear your heart speak out to Him. So join in with your church and pray, because not only will your church be strengthened and encouraged, but you will too. And if you don't know when they get together to pray, ask them. And if they don't, why not start up a prayer group in your church yourself.

† **Psalm 86:7** *In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, For You will answer me.*

† **Psalm 17:6 (NLT2)** *I am praying to you because I know you will answer, O God. Bend down and listen as I pray.*

† **Psalm 138:3 (NLT2)** *As soon as I pray, you answer me; you encourage me by giving me strength.*