

Church 101 – Prayer: Making it a Conversation

Acts 12:1-17

¹It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. ²He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. ³When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. ⁴After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

⁵So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

⁶The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. ⁷Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!” he said, and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists.

⁸Then the angel said to him, “Put on your clothes and sandals.” And Peter did so. “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,” the angel told him. ⁹Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

¹¹Then Peter came to himself and said, “Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod’s clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen.”

¹²When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. ¹³Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a

servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. ¹⁴When she recognized Peter’s voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, “Peter is at the door!”

¹⁵“You’re out of your mind,” they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, “It must be his angel.”

¹⁶But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. ¹⁷Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. “Tell James and the other brothers and sisters about this,” he said, and then he left for another place.

Follow up:

Read this story slowly, noticing the role of each person in the events.

- 1-5 – *What was the situation? What were people of the church doing, and what was being done to them?*
- 5-10 – *How did the church respond to the situation, and what did God do?*
- 9-15 – *How did each person (Peter, Rhoda, and the church) initially respond to the answered prayer?*

Re-read the story, considering which character you relate to most.

- *Are you in trouble, feeling hopeless, and in need of prayer?*
- *Do you see God working, but nobody is listening to you?*
- *Are you praying, but feeling doubtful that God will answer?*

What is God saying to you through this, and how will you respond?

More Scriptures for Prayer Conversation:

- *Teaching: Matthew 6:5-15, Luke 11:1-13*
- *Prophecy: Isaiah 43, 49, 55, 60, 61*
- *Prayers for guidance: Psalm 86, 119, 139, 143*
- *Intercessory Prayers: Ephesians 1:15-20, 3:14-21, John 17*
- *Narrative: Mark 10:46-52, 9:14-29, John 5:1-15*