

THE EARLY CHURCH AT PRAYER
ACTS 12:5.

In the last paragraph of the eleventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we read of a world famine which took place under Claudius. In this calamity the church put forth efforts to raise some funds. Each disciple was determined to send help to the brethren in Judaea. Barnabas and Paul were selected to carry the offering to them. *ch has always taken off his shoes before the people*

Herod But the devil was at work at the same time...he is always at work at the same time any good is being done. His agent was set out to kill leaders in the church. He killed James the brother of John. He found that this pleased the Jews..In pleasing the Jews he was helping his political interests. After seeing that he was pleasing the Jews he then seized Peter and placed him in jail...He placed 16 soldiers around Peter to guard him. These men were to guard him through the days of unleavened bread.....just like cowards saying..."wait till he comes out of church."

These were trying times for the church...and in trying times for the Early Church we find them praying...praying for

Let's look at that Early Church. After we have looked let's not forget it.....

I. It was poor. I have never found a church yet that was not poor. I have heard that such and such a church was wealthy. Then it would fall my lot to go to such a church. But when the first stewards meeting was held they would say "All the wealthy people of this church have died or moved away." I have never served a church yet that did not say that. So I can truthfully say that according to all reports, all our churches have one thing in common with the early church.... Poverty..but are we as poor as we seem? Let 's illustrate by an E.League of 40 members....it is hard to find a league with \$16 with which to send two delegates to Assembly. An average of 5cts per week for the year would place in the treasury \$104. I dare say that forty members of any E.L. will average for any year one picture show per week for the year per person to say nothing of gas, gum, candy, smokes etc. If they gave to the league per week the price of a picture show there would be \$582.40 in the Treas. But the poor dollars of the

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poor church have had power. Those people were rich in determination. The time of trial gave them a chance to demonstrate their faith. * and rich in spirituality.

It faced a political enemy. No institution has suffered more at the hands of kings than the church. No institution received less help from the governments than the church. Just come down to brass tacks... Suppose that in the last 20 years the governments of the U.S. Great Britain, and France had appropriated the amount of money to the church that has been appropriated to war equipment... building hospitals in every land, schooling boys and girls to man them. What would be the world situation to day?... Church and state schools I have to support both IF I stay by my church college and do not forsake it.

3. The church was praying for a captured man. He was in jail, two guards chained to him... four guarded the jail proper, eight others must have been placed at the gates to the other two walls... but in face of all this the church prayed. Do we have that faith today?

The church was a praying church... that is the only way the church has ever made things happen. Peter was carried by physical force to the prison.. not that he resisted but flesh carried him there. But a power stronger than bars, locks, keys or any material or fleshly thing was working in in his behalf BECAUSE THE CHURCH WAS PRAYING. If that church could pray for a man bound by chains should not the church pray for men bound in sin. Peter was not the only person bound with chains they are all around us bound with chains of gold, silver, etc.

THEY PRAYED WHEN ALL THINGS PHYSICAL SEEMED AGAINST THEM.

What these prayers did.

- a. Caused angels to stir
- Brought Peter to early church
- Increased their faith in God.

When we are released from our chains there are five things for us to do if we follow what Peter did when released from the material chains that bound him:

- I. Rise up quickly. We are not to delay.

2. Gird thyself...get ready.The battle is on

3. Put on your sandals there is marching to be done.

4. Put on your garment ...be in proper garb.

5. Follow me....here we come to right attitudes.

PETER TESTIFIED. THE EARLY CHURCH PRAYED, PREACHED, AND
PRACTICED AND THE WORD OF GOD MULTIPLIED.

