

Are You a House of Prayer?

You know the verse: *"My house shall be called a house of prayer."* Jesus declared these words while driving out those who were defiling God's temple with their merchandising (see Matt. 21:13). Isaiah had first prophesied this more than 700 years earlier, adding that this house would be "for all nations" (see Isa. 56:7).

Thanks to Jesus' death and resurrection that opened the gates of His kingdom to Jews and Gentiles alike, today that prophecy rings true from Australia to Zambia. The global church, comprised of believers from almost every country in the world, is a house of prayer.

Sort of.

In the United States, you'd be hard-pressed to describe the average church as a "house of prayer," and I'm certain our struggle is not unique. Think about it: How much time does your church really devote to prayer? Not talking about prayer, not holding conferences on how prayer unlocks the keys to the kingdom, not scheduling prayer—I mean *actually* praying.

In the Southern Baptist circles in which I was raised, Wednesday night "prayer meetings" were more mini-services than times of actual prayer. What praying we did was usually for God to bless either the latest budget decision or whoever had the nerve not to show up that day (bless their souls).

It's not much better in most Spirit-filled churches today, where we often relegate our corporate prayer life to pre-service intercession or 6 a.m. gatherings. Even congregations that prioritize prayer struggle with the bitter truth that devoting significant corporate time to prayer means a hefty segment of people will be looking for another church within a few months.

Apparently prayer just isn't sexy enough. As multiple leaders in the prayer movement have told me, "Prayer is so simple that no one does it."

Yet Jesus devoted His life to prayer. He clearly portrayed it as something as fundamental to a believer as breathing. He knew prayer built a solid foundation so that when the storms of life came, we wouldn't fall like a house of cards but would stand strong. It was never an issue of *if* we pray, it was *when* we pray.

Sadly, I make prayer an option far too often. I'm put to shame by believers from Third World countries or the persecuted church who pray for eight hours a day (often with little mention of their affliction). I have a long way to go before I join the "pray without ceasing" club, yet I'm grateful I now understand that prayer isn't some boring discipline I must develop to please God. Instead, it's His ongoing, ever-open invitation to the most riveting dialogue I'll ever experience on this planet.

Let's not forget how simple *and* fundamental prayer is, both on an individual and corporate level. If we're called a house of prayer, isn't it time we start being it?

Marcus Yoars *is the editor of Charisma. Check out his blog at or connect with him via Twitter @marcusyoars or .*