

The special prayer-meeting

‘When he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.’ Acts 12:12

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Acts 1:12–14

Peter ‘considered the thing’: I fancy that he thought ‘Where shall I go?’ and recollected that it was prayer meeting night at John Mark’s mother’s house; there he would go, because he felt that he should meet with true brethren. In those days they did things by plan and order according to the text, ‘Let all things be done decently and in order.’ I have no doubt that it had been duly arranged that the meeting should be held that evening at the house of John Mark’s mother; therefore Peter went there and found, as he probably expected, that there was a prayer meeting going on. They were not met to hear a sermon. It is most proper that we should very frequently assemble for that purpose, but this was distinctly a prayer meeting ‘where many were gathered together praying’. Prayer was the business on hand. I do not know that they even had an address, though some will come to the prayer meeting if the pastor is present to speak; James, who is generally thought to have been pastor of the church at Jerusalem, was not there, for Peter said, ‘Go shew these things unto James’, and most probably none of the apostles were there, because he added, ‘and to the brethren’; I suppose he meant the brethren of the apostolic college. The eminent speaking brethren all seem to have been away, and perhaps no one expounded or exhorted that night, nor was there any need, for they were all too much engrossed in the common intercession. The meeting was convened for praying; this was a regular institution of the Christian church and ought always to be kept up. There should be meetings wholly devoted to prayer, and there is a serious flaw in the arrangements of a church when such gatherings are omitted or placed in a secondary position.

FOR MEDITATION: Meeting for corporate prayer was a priority in the early church (Acts 1:14; 2:42; 12:5,12; 1 Timothy 2:1,8). How high is it on the agenda of your church or on your own personal agenda?

N.B. Spurgeon selected this topic to call for follow-up prayer after the departure from London of the evangelists Moody and Sankey.

The immovability of the believer

'They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.' Psalm 125:1

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: John 6:35-40

A great nobleman with a big house in a wide country is not content to be all alone, but needs servants and tenants; if he is of a generous spirit he seeks the poor. He wants poor neighbours to help and says, 'This Christmas-time I must give something away; is there nobody wanting a round of beef? Is there nobody wanting their chimney set alight with a joint? Is there nobody needing a blanket in this cold season?' Thus God must have dependants; he must have those about him who need him. He loves dependants, and I do not see why he should cast them away. Why should he? If this is what he desires, if he 'seeketh such to worship him', and if 'he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him', why should he reject their petition? It is not the nature of God to cast away any who rely upon him; on the contrary, he is very careful that faith should never have less than she has expected. He respects the courage of faith: he never confounds it. If you open your back door and a robin comes bravely in out of the cold, do you drive him out? No, you are pleased with his assurance and give him a hearty welcome. Even so does God deal with poor trembling souls when they come to him. We read of Charles V, the German Emperor, that when a pair of birds had built their nest among the poles and lines of his pavilion, he would not allow it to be removed though the time was come for the camp to be on the march. The birds had trusted to him, and they should not be disappointed. The like zealous care does the Lord exhibit towards the trembling hopes and feeble confidences of poor souls that trust in him. There is, therefore, no reason why they should be removed, since it is not like the Lord to cast them away.

FOR MEDITATION: (*Our Own Hymn Book* no.742 v.1—Isaac Watts, 1709)

'Firm as the earth Thy gospel stands,
My Lord, my hope, my trust;
If I am found in Jesus' hands,
My soul can ne'er be lost.'