

When 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. ¹³ Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. ¹⁴ When 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." But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. ¹⁷ Peter 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. Acts 12:12-17 NIV

I was numb. Someone I had worked closely with in a former congregation quit their position, and quite frankly was a bit nasty to me about it. This was a situation I felt limited on how I could deal with it. So I could understand why that person was upset.

I took the initiative and talked to this person as soon as it was practical. It was a bit of an awkward conversation for both of us. I started out apologizing for anything I might have done wrong and urged the person to come back for the sake of congregation whatever this person thought of me. That was all that could be done on an interpersonal and human basis.

From that point on I made sure I included that person in my prayers that they would return to that congregation. Prayer was the only outlet I had left.

Just recently I received a newsletter from that congregation, and found out that not only has this person returned to their former position, but they are taking a real leadership role in another area.

I was a bit surprised, but very happy to read the news. Now you'd think that I as a pastor would not be surprised, especially when I have spoken of the power of prayer. But it did take me a little while to realize my prayers (as well as the prayers of others known to that individual) were answered!

That's why I took a passage from Acts about Peter's miraculous escape from prison in the book of Acts. The passage tells us the brothers and sisters were together praying. I suspect that Peter's safety or release was at the top of their prayers. So when Peter is at the door, it bit humorous that they don't believe Rhoda the maid, and when they see Peter they were "astonished". While I'm sure if you'd asked them, they would tell you they believe God answers prayer, but based on Peter's release, deep down inside they did not.

What are your good and proper prayers for others and yourself right now? Let us grow in the conviction that God will answer. We should never doubt that when we pray, God hears, then in God's timing, God acts. Even I had to learn that lesson again!

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