

1. A Great Church Series Overview

Series Purpose

The *A Great Church* sermon series is designed to inspire, challenge, and equip congregations to embrace the biblical characteristics that define a thriving, Spirit-led community. Rooted in the book of Acts, this five-part series highlights the behaviors and priorities that shaped the early church and empowered its explosive growth and divine impact.

Each message in this series provides a foundational key to spiritual health and congregational vitality. The desired outcome is to help churches move beyond religious routine and step into a greater sense of purpose, service, and spiritual influence. This series also equips pastors with a model for vision casting, church culture shaping, and kingdom-building.

Desired Outcomes

By the end of this series, the church will be challenged to:

- Deepen their prayer life
 - Commit to cheerful and sacrificial giving
 - Embrace a servant's heart
 - Become more spiritually accessible and missionally open
 - Be ready and willing to receive new people into the family of faith
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Sermon Summaries

Part 1: A Great Church Is A Praying Church

Scripture: Acts 12:1–17 NKJV

In the midst of persecution, the early church turned to God in prayer, and their prayers triggered divine intervention. This sermon teaches that a great church does not rely on programs alone. It relies on the power of prayer. When the church prays consistently and in unity, miracles still happen.

Part 2: A Great Church Is A Giving Church

Scripture: Acts 3:1-10 NKJV

The believers in Acts practiced radical generosity. This message emphasizes that a great church sees giving not as a burden, but as a joyful opportunity to be part of God's work. When we give from the heart, the needs of the church and community are met, and God's name is glorified.

Part 3: A Great Church Is A Serving Church

Scripture: Acts 6:1-7 NKJV

When a problem arose in the early church, they responded by raising up leaders and expanding their service. This sermon explores how servant leadership, spiritual maturity, and a commitment to meeting real needs are signs of a great church. The tension of growth is a good thing. It reveals areas where God wants us to grow and serve more.

Part 4: A Great Church Is An Open Church

Scripture: Acts 10:1-23 NKJV

This message focuses on Peter's transformative vision and God's plan to reach beyond the Jewish community. A great church is open to hearing God, open to change, open to different people, and open to new assignments. Just like Peter had to open his heart to God's bigger vision, so must we, if we want to be truly great.

Part 5: A Great Church Is Ready To Receive

Scripture: Acts 10:24-48 NKJV

As Peter preached, the Holy Spirit moved. Cornelius, his family, and his friends were ready to receive the Gospel. This final message teaches that a great church is always expecting guests, souls, and new believers. A great church prepares space, leadership, and love for those God is sending.

Conclusion: What Makes a Church Great?

A great church isn't just built on numbers, budgets, or buildings. A great church is marked by **prayer**, **generosity**, **service**, **openness**, and **hospitality**. These spiritual qualities attract the presence of God and the interest of the world. Through this series, pastors and congregations will be empowered to evaluate their current culture and take bold steps toward becoming a truly great church, a church that glorifies God and transforms lives.

Part 1: A Great Church Is A Praying Church

Text: Acts 12:1–17

Series Introduction

Today we begin our sermon series entitled “**A Great Church.**”

Throughout this series, we'll explore what makes a church truly great, not by the world's standards, but by God's standards.

This first message lays the foundation: **A great church is a praying church.**

A church may have dynamic preaching, talented singers, or a beautiful building, but if it lacks a **praying people**, it lacks power.

Sermon Introduction

In Acts 12, the early church faces a crisis. King Herod stretches out his hand to violently oppress the church. He kills James, the brother of John, and arrests Peter. But rather than panic, the church **prays**.

This passage shows us what happens when a church responds to trouble not with fear, but with **fervent prayer**.

Sermon Outline

1. A Great Church Prays in Trouble

Scripture: Acts 12:1–5 NKJV

“Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.” (v.5)

- Herod’s persecution created real fear. James was already dead, and Peter was next.
- Yet, the church turned to its greatest weapon: **prayer**.
- Great churches understand that when we can’t fix it ourselves, we can **take it to God**.

Reflection Question:

When trouble arises in your life or the life of your church, is prayer your first response or your last resort?

2. A Great Church Prays with Expectation

Scripture: Acts 12:6–11 NKJV

“Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him...Then Peter came to himself and said, ‘Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me...’” (vv.7, 11)

- God answered the church’s prayer by sending an **angelic intervention**.
- Their prayer didn’t just go up; **power came down**.
- When we pray expecting God to move, we position ourselves for the **miraculous**.

Reflection Question:

Do you pray with the expectation that God will answer, or just out of religious habit?

3. A Great Church Prays with Persistence

Scripture: Acts 12:12–17 NKJV

“Peter knocked at the door of the gate, where a girl named Rhoda came to answer...But they said to her, ‘You are beside yourself!’...Yet Peter continued knocking...” (vv.13–14, 16)

- Even after the miracle, the praying church **struggled to believe it had happened**.
- God sometimes answers before we even recognize it!
- But the church had not stopped praying. They stayed in **persistent prayer** until the answer came.

Reflection Question:

Am I willing to keep praying even when I don’t immediately see results?

Congregational Challenge:

“Is Our Church a Praying Church?”

- Do we pray **together**, not just alone?
- Do we pray with **urgency** and **faith**?
- Do we treat prayer like the **engine** of our ministry or just an emergency tool?

Challenge Scripture:

James 5:16b NKJV

“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

Philippians 4:6 NKJV

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”

Conclusion

A great church isn't one that avoids trouble. It's one that knows **how to pray through it**.

The early church didn't call for protests or politics when Peter was imprisoned. They called on **heaven**. And heaven answered.

If we want to see lives changed, families healed, and communities impacted, we must be a **praying church**.

Let's build a church where prayer is the **culture**, not just the custom, where people know, “If I can just get to that church, they'll pray me through.”

That's the kind of church that shakes gates, opens prison doors, and sets people free.

Let's be that kind of church, a **great** church.

Let's be a **praying** church.