

Matthew 21:13 – “It is written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer.’” How many of you think about prayer first when you think of church? Truthfully, most pastors don’t do that. If we, the leaders, don’t, neither will those who follow us. My biggest regret as a pastor is how long it took for me to see this. The wisdom of the day was not to pray too much or people won’t come back. I never attended a church that took prayer seriously until I was in my 60s. What would happen if each local church was a house of prayer? The church began when 120 Christians were praying. After Pentecost, “They continued steadfastly in...prayers” (Acts 2:41). After the church prayed in Acts 4, the place where they were assembled was shaken. Is it any wonder the Lord added to the church daily? The church started as a house of prayer. It was during prayer that Saul (later Paul) was separated by the Holy Spirit to be a missionary. When the church prays things happen. The 1857 prayer revival in the United States began with a handful of people in New York City and ended up with thousands of prayer meetings all over the nation. It made its way to Ireland. By the end of 1858, one hundred prayer meetings were going. One night, prayer turned into a revival as people poured out of a church onto the street and three thousand people of all denominations were gripped by the Holy Spirit. A chilling rain fell on them, but they knelt in the mud on the streets and prayed. A number of people were smitten by the Holy Spirit and prostrated themselves on the soaked ground. Things like this happened throughout the revival. The church will never be what it should be until its pastors and its people recognize it as a house of prayer. If I could do it over again, I would designate a part of every service for prayer, and I would have one evening a week for prayer alone. Our neglect of prayer is the biggest reason we have “left our first love.” Let’s have a prayer revival in our churches. Talk to your pastors about it. If they aren’t interested then meet in homes. The famous Nike slogan began by showing an 80-year-old man running 17 miles, which was his daily habit. The commercial ended with the words “Just do it.” It couldn’t get simpler than that. HA