

RETURN TO THE UPPER ROOM



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by [Kim Butts](#)

“Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers” (Acts 1:12-14).

Following Jesus’ ascension into heaven, the apostles obediently returned to their place of prayer in the upper

room. They were joined by other men and women who had agreed they were “in this for good, completely together in prayer” (Acts 1:14 MSG). They joined together constantly in prayer as they awaited the promised Holy Spirit. As they waited, they listened. God prompted Peter to speak about the Scripture that spoke of the need to replace the position that Judas Iscariot had thrown away in favor of his own will, so Mathias was added as the twelfth apostle.

I wonder how these early believers felt as they awaited the promised Holy Spirit. Did they wonder what it would feel like or be like to have this “power” Jesus spoke to them about? Were they excited to receive such a gift, or apprehensive about what it would mean for them individually and collectively? Would they have spent time talking about it together over meals, speculating about their commission to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth? I wonder also, did they determine to be willing to lay aside their own ideas, plans and purposes in favor of the kingdom purposes Jesus had been teaching them about? Did they pray, “Not my will/our will but Yours be done?” Did they express private concerns about being persecuted or even killed, knowing that the enemies of Jesus would most certainly oppose them? Did they lay hands upon one another and pray for strength, willingness, obedience and courage? Were they already making plans or simply sitting at the feet of Jesus, awaiting the Spirit’s direction as Jesus told them to do? We *do* know that when the Spirit came, these waiting saints were prepared and ready! Within a very few weeks it was said that they had “turned the world upside down” for Jesus Christ.

It would have been amazing to be in that upper room at this extraordinary moment in history. Yet, in a sense, we can place ourselves there – if we are willing. What if every church or group of believers would set themselves into this very scenario within this passage of God’s word? We, of course, already have the gift of the Holy Spirit. We don’t have to

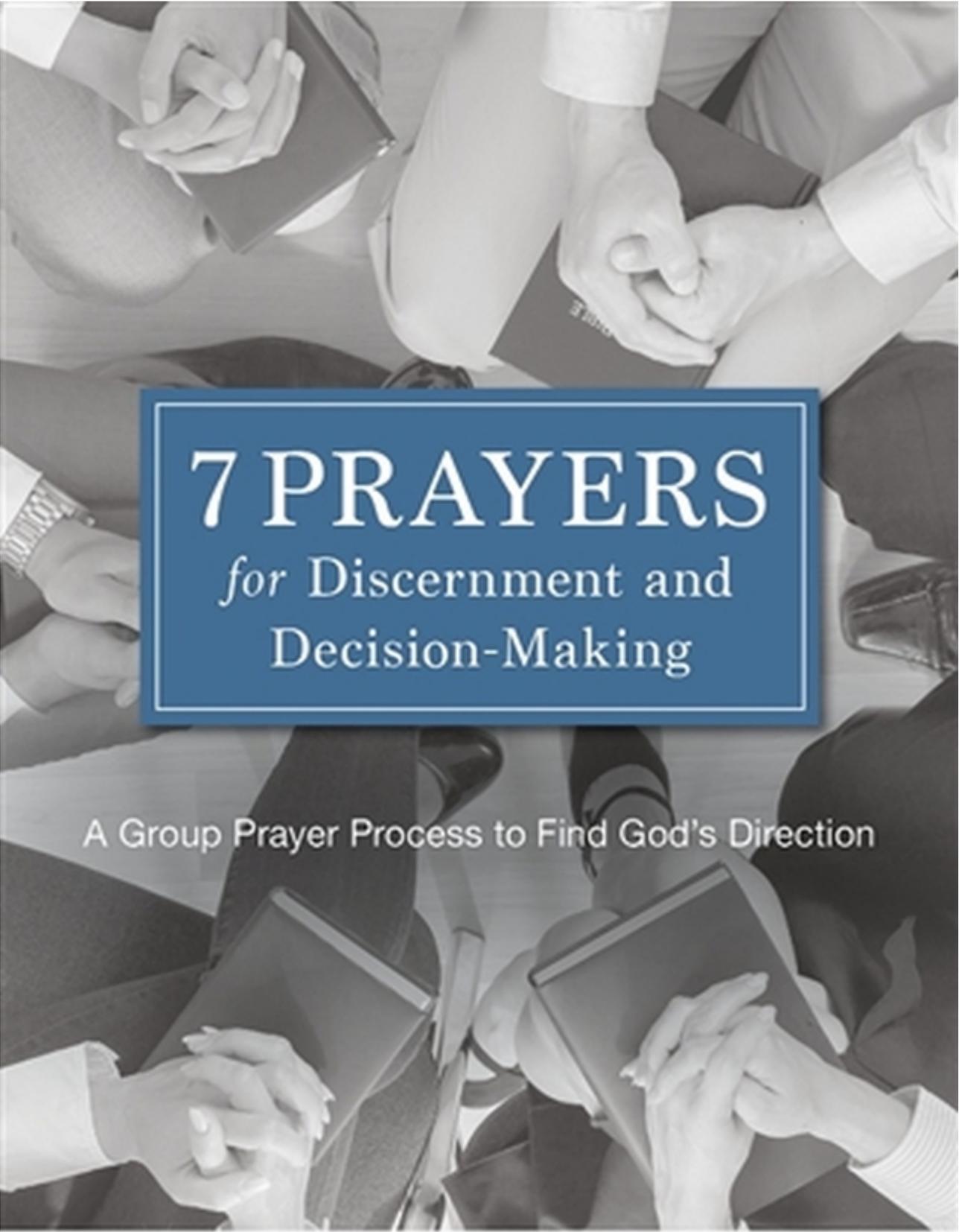
wait for it if we have made Jesus Lord and Savior. But for many of us, our obedience to the commission of Jesus ends there. We have all of the power we will ever need to go into our modern day Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and even to the ends of the earth. Yet, this power lies dormant and unused within so many of us who have chosen only to acknowledge but not act upon the call of Christ to be His witnesses.

Perhaps what is needed is to recapture the essence of the upper room where we can join *together* constantly in prayer as the early Christians did. It would be a place where the presence of God is palpable...a place of laying down our will in favor of the will of God, and a place of listening and of discernment. It would be a holy space where Scripture teaches us and we obey...a place of empowerment, of physical and spiritual healing... a place of building relationships, of serving one another...a place of encouragement and accountability...a place of true discipleship and of making disciples. It would be a launching pad for going into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. It would be...the Church.

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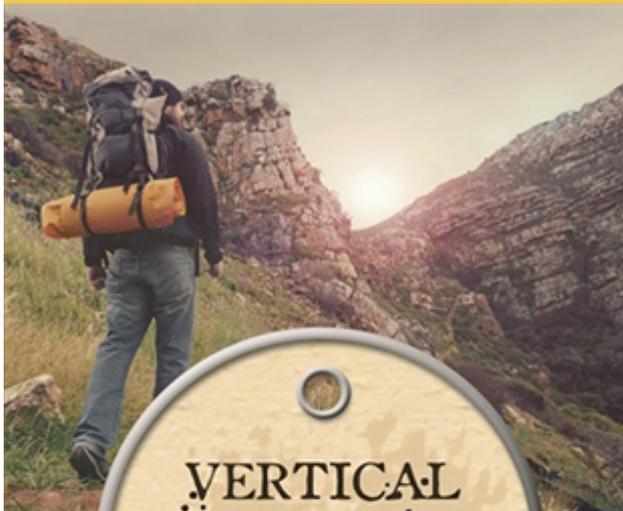
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