

# The Prayer for Beginning Workers

*Acts 13:1-5*

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Introduction: We come this evening to the third example of corporate prayer evidenced by the early church. We have previously considered the church's prayer for a bolder witness (4:23-31) & the church's prayer for a believer's welfare (12:1-19). In Acts 12 we learned the lessons of (1) the sovereignty of God; (2) the supplication to God; & (3) the strategy by God. Here in chapter 13, we are given an identification of those ministering & an illustration of those ministering as prophets & teachers. First identified is *Barnabas* (mentioned earlier in Acts 4:36-37; 9:27; & 11:22-26. Then we learn of *Simeon that was called Niger*. His nickname means "Black" & indicates that he was probably from Africa. *Lucius of Cyrene* might have been a co-founder of the church in Antioch (11:20). *Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch*, as thought to have been an adopted brother ("a designation given to boys of the same age as royal children"). It was this Herod who had John the Baptist killed. Note the mystery & sovereignty of God's grace in the life of these 2 individuals. *Saul* is listed last, but becomes the focus from this day forward in Acts. An illustration of the phrase that "*as they ministered to the Lord...*" implies such men mentioned in Acts 6, who were full with honesty, the Holy Ghost, wisdom, faith, & compassion. This sets the stage for the church's corporate prayer for the "beginning workers." Here we learn of those who were (1) Called by the Spirit; (2) Commissioned by the church; & (3) Compelled by the Lord.

## I. Beginning workers are **called** by the Spirit (13:2)

### A. Their calling: "*The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas & Saul...*"

1. Saul had earlier been called by God to minister to the Gentiles (9:15).
2. Barnabas is now summoned to work with Saul.

### B. Their consecration: "*...for the work whereunto I have called them.*"

1. Barnabas & Saul were already involved in service for the Lord.
2. Barnabas & Saul were apparently sensitive to the Lord's calling.

## II. Beginning workers are **commissioned** by the church (13:3)

### A. Their recognition by the church:

1. "*They had fasted & prayed, & laid their hands on them...*"
2. Compare Acts 14:26, "*...from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.*"

### B. Their responsibility to the church:

1. Implies accountability to the workers,
2. Indicates accountability by the workers (see again 14:26-27).

## III. Beginning workers are **compelled** by the Lord (13:4)

### A. The workers are "*sent*" (loosed; released in 13:3, "*sent them away*"):

1. The church has confirmed the calling of these workers.
2. The church has consecrated the calling of these workers ("*fasted & prayed, & laid their hands on them*"). [Consider a study of "*fasted*" & "*laid their hands on them.*"]

B. The workers are “*sent forth by the Holy Ghost*”:

1. “*Sent forth*” > thrust out; compelled by the Lord (cf. Matthew 9:37-38).
2. “It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit, working through the local church, to equip & enlist believers to go forth & serve” (Wiersbe).

Summary: “The modern mission board is only a ‘sending agency’ the expedites the work of authorized by the local church” (Wiersbe).

Conclusion: How do our church prayers compare with those of the early N.T. church? Do we pray for a bolder witness – for ourselves & for one another? Are we awed by the **omnipotence** of our God? Are we aware of the **opposition** we face? And are we anxious for **opportunities** to witness?

Do we pray for the welfare of other believers – for their safety; recovering from sickness; strength & sufficiency in ministering.

And do we pray for beginning workers – asking the Lord to send forth laborers into His harvest?

Consider those who are **called** by the Spirit, **commissioned** by the church, & **compelled** by the Lord.

Are we, as a church, continually & steadfastly praying?