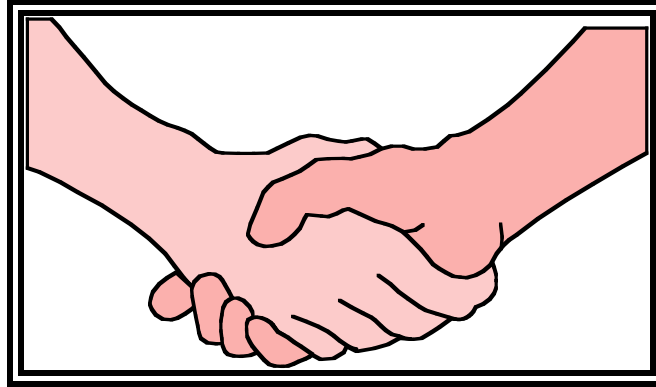


# BEING A CLEAR MINDED PRAYER HEAD

First Peter 4:7-9



Prayer is the believer's focus on God. At times it requires maximum self-control. Being sober allows a person to pray. Being drunk robs a person of self-control, and consequently hinders them from praying. Even mild intoxication clouds the mind. Peter has been urging the believers there to stand out from the world and its practices. While they may not want to listen to their message, if the believers live godly lives, their lives will do the preaching for them. But they must live self-controlled lives.

## THE END IS NEAR

Peter now introduces the concept of "last days". This is a concept that was an essential part of his very first gospel message.

1. In Peter's first message, what did he say would happen in the last days? (Acts 2:17)

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If it was the last days on the day of Pentecost, then it was certainly the last days when Peter wrote to these believers. The great event linked to the last days, would be the return of Christ. Peter was longing for the return of Christ and felt that it was near to happening. Everything that had been predicted as leading up to the return of Christ, appeared to have been fulfilled. There was a cruel dictator who had set himself up as God (Caesar), the church was going through tribulation (massive persecution), many Christians could not buy or sell because of economic persecution, and the gospel had been taken to nearly every nation in the empire. All of this seemed to point to the imminent return of Christ. If Christ was coming back soon, then believers should prepare themselves.

2. When Christ gave the parable of the bridegroom coming for his 10 brides, it was a picture of Him coming for His people. What were the ten brides doing immediately before the bridegroom came? (Mtt. 25:13)

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The ten virgins are typical of the church. Half of the church is described as going to sleep and having no oil in their lamps.

3. What is oil typical of? (1Sam. 16:13; Isa. 61:3)

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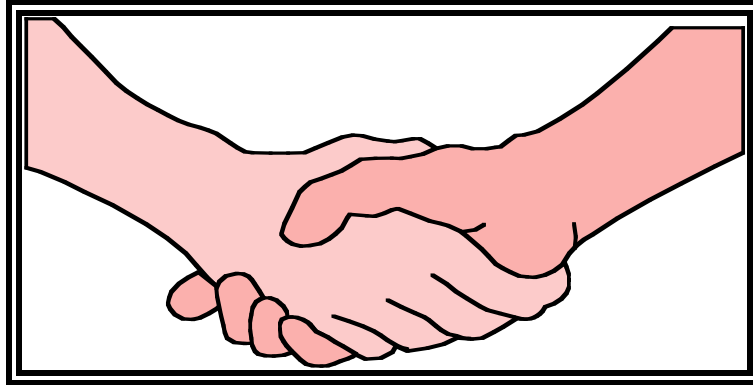
The last days church needs to be full of the Holy Spirit. It's no longer good enough for just one or two representatives of the church to have the anointing, the *true* church must rise up and seek the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

## BEING SELF-CONTROLLED

Self-control is perhaps the greatest indicator that there is a difference between believers and the world. And the greatest vehicle for reaching deeper self-control is prayer. Prayer is our communication with the invisible God. Being invisible, it is easier to be distracted by the visible. Urgent things press in on us. Thoughts pop into our minds. Time is over-committed. All of these things must be dealt with, and this requires self-control.

4. What will be the condition of people in the last days? (2Tim. 3:3)
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## LOVE ABOVE ALL



Another way that the Christian community should stand out from the world is by how they relate to each other.

4. In what way did Jesus say that the world would know who His disciples were? (Jn. 13:35)
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5. How did Paul say that Christians should relate to each other? (Rom. 12:10)
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6. What will loving one another result in? (Prov. 10:12; 17:9)
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## DEGRUMBLIZED HOSPITALITY

The first church was characterised by continual hospitality (Acts 2:46). Hospitality was regarded as *entertaining strangers*. Therefore it is the means by which people get to know each other.

7. What do these passages say in regard to hospitality?

- a) Rom. 12:13 \_\_\_\_\_  
b) 1Peter 4:9 \_\_\_\_\_  
c) 3John 7-8 \_\_\_\_\_

*Amen.*