

## God Is Listening

By Nathan Warner

Too often we are slow to see when God answers prayers for ourselves or for others. Sometimes, this causes us to spend less time in prayer or to stop having faith that God answers prayer.

We know that God is eternal, unchanging, and all-knowing, but for us frail mortals, time or distractions or our limited perspective can dull our senses so that we might not even see God's answer right in front of us. Consider the story of Peter's deliverance from jail:

“So Peter was kept in prison, but **earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church**. Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, ‘Get up quickly.’ And the chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, ‘Dress yourself and put on your sandals.’ And he did so. And he said to him, ‘Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.’ And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him.

When Peter came to himself, he said, ‘Now I am sure that the Lord has sent His angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.’ When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where **many were gathered together and were praying**. And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. They said to her, ‘You are out of your mind.’ But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, ‘It is his angel!’ But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, **they saw him and were amazed**” (Acts 12:5-16).

All of these Believers were praying in earnest for Peter. God answered their prayers that very night, but they could not see that God was acting miraculously for Peter, and they could not believe that God had heard their prayer and was actually answering it. Perhaps, they might have given up praying after a while because God didn't seem to be answering their prayers. Were they expecting it? Well, in their own words, you'd have to be “out of your mind.” They were **AMAZED** to find answered prayer literally standing on their doorstep!

Like them, we often pray for people across town or across the planet, and we cannot always perceive the miraculous things God is doing for them, much less ourselves. This can cause us to feel less inclined to spend time in prayer or believe God will answer it. We need to understand that when we pray, God IS listening, and He is always acting for our eternal good. We need to believe that when we pray in accord with His will, He is answering our prayers. We should not be surprised, ignore the evidence, or disbelieve God's answer when He answers us!

It is also such a comfort to Believers to know they are being upheld in faithful prayer. I'm sure Peter was comforted many times after this miraculous answer to prayer when he considered people were praying for Him to God!