For Small Group Discussion  
 -The obvious exercise during this small group session is to pray for the church. List below some of the ways that God is leading you to intercede for Bay Point Christian Church:

1.

2.

3.

4.

-Read James 5:13-20. See how James makes a connection between our “righteousness” and the answer to earnest prayer. Obviously, Jesus is our righteousness, but are there some things that might be standing between you and the Lord that could impede your prayers? Spend time this week confessing and receiving healing from his hand.  
   
 Have a great week. We love you,

Jay and Mona

“A Powerful Witness…Earnestly Prays”  
 Text: Acts 12: 1-19 Pastor Jay Cave  
 Sermon Notes:

For Your Consideration:  
 Today’s lesson is about the power of earnest prayer. The Bible has much to say on the topic. James 5:16 tells us that earnest (or fervent prayer) “has great power as it is working.” This week we will see it displayed.   
 As the church expanded into Samaria and beyond, it perhaps became threatening to King Herod Agrippa I, who was then the overseer of Judea and Samaria. The text says he laid violent hands on some who belonged on the church, including James the brother of John and killed him with the sword. An article from “The Orthodox Church in America gives an interesting account of his execution: “The Jews persuaded Herod Agrippa (40-44) to arrest the Apostle James and sentence him to death (Acts 12:1-2). Eusebius provides some of the details of the saint’s execution (CHURCH HISTORY II, 9). St James calmly heard the death sentence and continued to bear witness to Christ. One of the false witnesses, whose name was Josiah, was struck by the courage of St James. He came to believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah. When they led the apostle forth to execution, Josiah fell at his feet, repenting of his sin and asking forgiveness. The apostle embraced him, gave him a kiss and said, “Peace and forgiveness to you.” Then Josiah confessed his faith in Christ before everyone, and he was beheaded with St James in the year 44 at Jerusalem. St James was the first of the Apostles to die as a martyr.

This would have been a serious blow as James was one of the three central disciples of Jesus and pivotal to the expansion of the early church. However things got worse with the imprisonment of Peter. Had his arrest not been during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, he would have certainly been executed. However, Peter was put in prison until the festival ended  
 It was during this time that the church went into “earnest prayer.” The Greek here means “passionate, fervent, and continuous prayer,” and we can certainly imagine how the hearts of the believers went out for Peter. In verses 6-19 we get a view of exactly how these fervent prayers were answered.   
 On the very night that Peter was going to be killed, an angel appeared and walked him through his release. Once he was on the street by himself, the angel left Peter, who went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark. It is almost comic how Peter struggles to identify himself and be welcome back into the fold. A few thoughts about earnest prayer.   
 -it can be done anywhere. The disciples are in a home.   
 -we often tend to disbelieve or ignore the answers. The disciples are prayer for the release of Peter and when Peter arrived, they ignored him at first and then were frankly amazed when he showed up!   
 -earnest prayer needs to be accompanied by a pure heart. Read James 5:13-20!