

## Another Consideration of P R A Y E R

Prayer is simply defined as 'talking to God.'

Let's consider some important points -- concerning prayer.

First of all,

### WHY should we pray ?

Human beings ought to pray because we NEED to. Talking to God helps us!

Life's problems can sometimes cause anyone to despair:

**Psa 88:1-4** O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee:

2 Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry;

3 For **my soul is full of troubles:** and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.

4 I am counted with them that go down into the pit:

I am as a man that hath no strength:

Mankind looks to God for • help, • purpose, and • direction.

Prayer is 'trans-dispensational' .... (people have always prayed - and always will) ....

BUT prayer is also 'dispensational' .... (people should pray intelligently - not ignorantly).

Failure to rightly divide - the subject of prayer - results in both confusion and disillusion.

Have you ever heard anyone - or do you (yourself) - ever ask God to be with someone?

In all probability, we either are, or have been, guilty

of not praying after the design that God gave to us

through Paul's special revelation in the dispensation of grace.

So, today, let's look at the Pauline Pattern for Prayer.

### God INVITES us to pray:

God wants us to talk to Him about everything that concerns us.

Nothing is off limits. We can pour out our hearts to Him:

**Phil 4:6** Be careful for nothing; but **in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.**

The verse that follows that one is extremely important that we realize ---

because it is OUR 'prayer promise' from God.

**Phil 4:7** And **the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

Notice that we are NOT promised that we will get anything we ask for ....

(the way they were in 'Times Past' in **Matt 21:22** And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.)

but, instead, we ARE promised PEACE to support us.

### We are always WELCOME in Christ:

**Eph 1:6** To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein **he hath made us accepted** in the beloved.

### Paul 'started out' his new life in prayer:

**Acts 9:11** And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, **he prayeth,**

### Paul prayed ... on his knees .... WITH other people:

When he was leaving Miletus for Jerusalem, Paul sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church to come and see him off:

**Acts 20:36-38** And when he had thus spoken, **he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.**

37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,

38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

### Paul prayed .... when he departed on trips:

**Acts 21:5-6** And when we had accomplished those days, we departed (that is, Paul left the city of Tyre, from verse 3 in this chapter) and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and **we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.**

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

### Paul prayed .... even when he got a 'bad rap' .... late at night .... from a jail cell:

**Acts 16:22-25** And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

25 And **at midnight Paul and Silas prayed**, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

### Paul prayed FOR other people .... on a REGULAR basis .... all the time:

Let's take a look at Paul's prayer list:

Paul always spoke to God about the saints at Rome:

**Rom 1:9** For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that **without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;**

Paul gave thanks in prayer for the Ephesian saints:

**Eph 1:15-16** Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 **Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;**

Paul thanked God in prayer for the Philippians:

**Phil 1:3-4** I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,  
4 **Always in every prayer of mine for you all** making request with joy,

Paul was thankful for the Colossians:

Col 1:3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **praying always for you,**

Paul talked to God and thanked Him for the Thessalonians:

1 Thess 1:2 We give thanks to God always for you all, **making mention of you in our prayers;**

Paul always remembered to pray for Timothy:

2 Tim 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that **without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;**

Paul prayed for Philemon all the time:

Phile 1:4 I thank my God, **making mention of thee always in my prayers,**

We looked at Paul's prayer list .... next, let's see

### **WHAT Paul prayed for:**

Let's compare Paul's **prayer requests**

with what 'so-called Christian people' normally pray for today.

Paul asked for **SPIRITUAL** things for them.

We ought to **follow his example**. For the Colossian saints, he prayed:

Col 1:9-12 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it,  
**do not cease to pray for you,**  
and **to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will**  
**in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;**  
10 **That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,**  
**being fruitful in every good work,**  
**and increasing in the knowledge of God;**  
11 **Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power,**  
**unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;**  
12 **Giving thanks** unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Typical prayer requests on most church lists today

are for sick people in the hospital or having surgery --- physical stuff.

How different from that were Paul's prayers for the Philippians:

**Phil 1:9-11** And this I pray,  
**that your love may abound yet more and more**  
**in knowledge and in all judgment;**  
 10 **That ye may approve things that are excellent;**  
**that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;**  
 11 **Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ,**  
**unto the glory and praise of God.**

Paul prayed for others to be in good spiritual health:

**2 Thess 1:11-12** Wherefore also **we pray always for you,**  
**that our God would count you worthy of this calling,**  
**and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness,**  
**and the work of faith with power:**  
 12 **That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you,**  
**and ye in him,**  
**according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Listen carefully to Paul's petition for the saints at Ephesus:

**Eph 1:17-19** **That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,**  
**may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation**  
**in the knowledge of him:**  
 18 **The eyes of your understanding being enlightened;**  
**that ye may know what is the hope of his calling,**  
**and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,**  
 19 **And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe,**  
**according to the working of his mighty power,**

In **1 Cor. 13:13**, faith, hope, and charity are the 3 things that will abide. That's what Paul spoke to God about .... for the Thessalonians:

**1 Thess 1:3** **Remembering without ceasing your work of faith,**  
**and labour of love,**  
**and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ,**  
**in the sight of God and our Father;**

Here's another thing Paul prayed about:

**1 Thess 2:13** **For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.**

We ought to pray for our friends the way Paul did.

He desired that Philemon would be able to express his faith in a meaningful way:

**Phile 1:5-7** Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

**6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual**

**by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.**

7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Evidently, Paul's friend also learned to intercede in prayer:

**Col 4:12** Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, **always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.**

Paul also prayed for his relatives. He yearned for them to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (which is God's will --- according to **1 Tim. 2:4**):

**Rom 10:1-2** Brethren, **my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.**

2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

So, 2 important things to remember about prayer are:

- 1) We are to pray continually --- all the time.
- 2) We are to be thankful in prayer to God.

**Col 4:2** **Continue in prayer**, and watch in the same **with thanksgiving**;

We are supposed to keep on praying:

**1 Thess 5:17-18 Pray without ceasing.**

18 **In every thing give thanks:**

for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Paul gave instructions to Timothy about his prayer life:

**1 Tim 2:1-4** I exhort therefore, that, first of all,

**supplications,** (that means entreaty ... petition ... a humble request) **prayers,**

**intercessions,** (that means 'go-between' or mediate .... pleading in behalf of others)

**and giving of thanks, be made for all men;**

**2 For kings, and for all that are in authority;** (those leaders in government)

**that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life** (Pray for some peace and quiet!)

**in all godliness and honesty.**

3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

(that's what we just read in Romans that Paul prayed for Israel)

**Paul Requested Prayer for Himself (and his companions):**

**1 Thess 5:25** Brethren, pray for us.

Let's look at how Paul wanted people to pray for him.

Paul's #1 thing was to get out God's WORD:

**2 Thess 3:1-2** Finally, brethren, **pray for us,**

**that the word of the Lord may have free course,**

**and be glorified,** even as it is with you:

2 And **that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men:** for all men have not faith.

Paul needed to fulfil his God-given commission of spreading the revelation of the mystery, as the spokesman introducing the dispensation of grace:

**Eph 6:19-20** And for me, **that utterance may be given unto me,**

**that I may open my mouth boldly,**

**to make known the mystery of the gospel,**

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds:

**that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**

Paul asked for prayer that he would have courage to spread the message God had given him for the Gentiles. He had even been imprisoned for it:

**Col 4:3-4 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ,**  
for which I am also in bonds:

4 **That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.**

### **Prayer is something you can do anywhere:**

**1 Tim 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where,** lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

### **Paul knew that prayer helps:**

Paul recognized that lots of folks were thankful for his ministry, and they showed their gratitude by giving and praying:

**2 Cor 1:11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us,** that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

### **The Holy Spirit helps us pray:**

Since we have limited understanding, God's Spirit aids our fleshly weaknesses.

He assists us when we don't have words to express our deepest feelings ....

when we don't know what to say:

**Rom 8:26-27** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities:

for **we know not what we should pray for as we ought:**

but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,

because **he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**

Mainline denominations commonly use those verses to teach that the Holy Spirit 'adjusts' .... 'converts' .... and 'changes' our prayers to make them fit the will of God.

But, if you think about it, that really isn't necessary .... because God already knows .... WE are the ones who don't know what to pray for.

The intercession does not need to take place in heaven with the Father.

It needs to happen inside of US.

God's Spirit probes into our heart .... and brings God's Word to our mind.

When we meditate on the verses .... we re-think situations from God's view.

The Holy Spirit illuminates the scripture ... which reveals a course of action for us to do.

Again, we are motivated by God working IN us:

**Phil 2:13** For it is **God which worketh in you both to will and to do** of his good pleasure.

Here's a companion verse to go with Rom. 8:26-27.

It also shows that when we don't know what to do, God's power works IN us:

**Eph 3:20** Now unto him that is able to do **exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think**, according to **the power that worketh in us**,

Our mind should be programmed to THINK God's way .... according to HIS will:

**2 Cor 10:5** Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ**;

Keep Rom. 8:26-27 in memory, that God's Spirit searches our hearts, He knows

God's mind, and interceeds for us according to God's will .... which we CAN know:

**Rom 12:2** And be not conformed to this world:  
but **be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,**  
**that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**

God has revealed His will to us in His word. It is no longer a mystery:

**Eph 1:8-9** Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;  
9 **Having made known unto us the mystery of his will**, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

When we have a burden .... or when we are confused about something ....

during prayer, the Holy Spirit gives us light .... and our heart aligns with God's word:

1 Cor 14:15 What is it then?

**I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also:**

I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Praying 'in the Spirit' is to think through a circumstance while talking to God about it, by meditating on scripture from God's view:

Eph 6:18 **Praying always**

**with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,**

**and watching thereunto**

**with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;**

The promise of prayer today (we already read in Phil. 4:6,7) ....

is NOT physical circumstances being changed .... it is having God's peace.

Our sufferings teach us to be patient ....

experience brings in hope ....

Understanding prayer in the dispensation of grace gets rid of confusion:

Rom 5:1-5 Therefore being justified by faith, **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but **we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;**

**4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:**

**5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.**

Even bad things (sufferings, tribulations, afflictions) mixed in .... work together ....

for our good. Don't play out all the negative possibilities that could happen:

Rom 8:28 And we know that **all things work together for good** to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

When we pray with understanding .... of how prayer works today ....

we get a different attitude ....

instead of getting OUT of our troubles .... we realize we can get THROUGH them.

**2 Cor 12:10** Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Paul had to LEARN to be CONTENT. We should too:

**Phil 4:11** Not that I speak in respect of want:  
for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

May we remember these simple words of scripture .... and pray accordingly:

**1 Tim 6:8** And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

Paul said Timothy was sick alot (1 Tim. 5:23) .... but he didn't recommend prayer as a cure. Paul understood that God was no longer working that way anymore.

We already read in Eph. 3:16 that it is our inner man where God strengthens us,  
so we should direct our prayers from that perspective:

**2 Cor 4:16-18** For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

**17** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

**18** While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

May we focus on the invisible, unseen, spiritual, yes, eternal things --- rather than the immediate, visible, physical, fleshly, and temporal things:

**2 Cor 5:7** (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

Let's pray that way, as well.

This is David Dowell saying, "Think about it!"