

Shepherds & Servants 4

Pray For The People

1 Timothy 2:1-4, 8)

Memory Verses: 1 Timothy 2:8

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

4 weeks ago we began a series in the book of 1 Timothy called Shepherds & Servants. The purpose of this letter is to draw the church at Ephesus back to sound doctrine and church order. In order to have sound doctrine and church order, the church must have godly leadership; namely spiritual shepherds called elders and sacrificial servants called deacons. True elders and deacons will protect the Gospel, praise God for his mercy, and as we saw last week, most importantly they will hold to their faith. Today, and fittingly so, we will see that shepherds and servants must also pray for the people.

I'm sure I don't have to convince you that your leaders should be men of prayer. However, it is a good reminder for them and for us this morning that prayer is very important for a church, therefore it is very important for those who shepherd and serve the church. Look with me today at what Paul writes to Timothy, the elder of the church of Ephesus, in **1 Timothy 2:1-4, 8**.

This morning we must see prayer as an urgent need both for our leaders and for ourselves. This morning we are going to pray as a church the prayers that we see in this passage. We will see the responsibility of prayer for the church, how we are to pray for the church, and those outside the church that we must be praying for. Most of all, our leaders will be praying over you this morning as is their duty as shepherds and servants. This morning it is our hope that we will see that **A church, depending on Christ in prayer, pleases the Lord!**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to look at is... **It Pleases The Lord When We Pray For Believers**. Look again at **verse 1**. Paul tells Timothy that he needs to pray for all people in four different ways: supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings. Supplication means that we pray for the things that we personally need. The word in the Greek is best translated entreaties; the root of which means to lack or be deprived of. This prayer expresses a sense of need. Prayers could be better translated as praises or adoration. The Greek word used here is only ever used in reference to the one true God. It therefore carries it a unique element of praise and worship. The Greek word here for Intercessions is only used twice in the New Testament. The other time is

in 1 Timothy 4:5. It literally means to fall in with someone or get involved with someone. It means to identify with someone else's needs, to petition God on their behalf. In supplication we pray for our needs, through intercession we pray for the needs of others. This is where your prayer list for others comes into play. The last element of prayer is thanksgivings. This one I think speaks for itself. We pray in a way that thanks God for the things he has blessed us with. First for our salvation and the salvation of our friends and family, and then for the other blessings he has given us.

If you put all of these elements together you can formulate a very effective way to pray for the church. Just remember the acronym S.P.I.T. Supplication; pray for your self. Confess your sins, asking for God's forgiveness. Pray for your daily needs, asking for God's provision. Praise God and lift him up for who he is and what he has done. If you are having trouble with this one, find some Psalms or passages that praise God and name his attributes and use them in your prayers. Intercede for your brothers and sisters in Christ within your local church and then within the universal church. Pray for their spiritual and physical needs. Thank God for all of his blessings on your, your family, and your church. And yes of course, I know SPIT is a horrible acronym, but know this... 1) God came up with it, not me... and 2) Jesus spit on peoples eyes before praying for their healing so... there is that! If you don't like SPIT you can go with a handful of other prayer acronyms such as ACTS; Adoration, Confession, Supplication, Thanksgiving. Or simply PRAY; Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield. There are others out there too. The point is simple. **You must pray for yourself as a believer and you must pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ, interceding on their behalf before our God in prayer. A church, depending on Christ in prayer, pleases the Lord.**

So this is exactly what we are going to do right now. Let us join together in praying for ourselves and for our brothers and sisters in Christ both in our church and in the world. **First, a prayer of Supplication. First off, confess your sins to God and repent of them asking him for forgiveness. Now, lets pray for any spiritual needs you currently have. If you are dealing with depression ask him for joy. If you are dealing with worry ask him to help you with faith. Now, lets pray for any physical needs you may have. Pray for any healing you need. Pray for any financial help you need. Pray for relationship issues you may be dealing with. Second, a prayer of Praise. Right now praise God for who he is. Call out one of his many names or attributes and praise him accordingly. Tell him that he is Holy, worthy, majestic, powerful, savior, Lord, King of Kings... on and on. Third, a prayer of Intercession. Think of your brothers and sisters in Christ that are a part of your church, small group, D-group, bible study, and pray for the needs they've made you aware of and even the ones they haven't. Now pray for your brothers and sisters in the universal church. Other believers in town, our missionaries in foreign countries, the church in general. Lastly, pray a**

prayer of thanksgiving, thanking God for all he has done for you and blessed you with. Pray, thanking him for all he has done for your family. Thank him for all he has done for this church. Amen.

The second thing we need to see here is that... **It Pleases The Lord When We Pray For Those In Authority**. So we pray for believers, including ourselves, and we pray for those in authority. Look again at **verse 2**. At first glance it appears that Paul is taking a sharp detour. There are clearly many things we could pray for. To put the attention on Kings and those in high positions in between praying for believers and the lost, is a bit interesting. But if we take a step back I think it makes sense. Paul, the main Elder over all the churches he has planted, is telling one of his under shepherds where to place his focus as it pertains to the church at Ephesus. Clearly, there are needs in the church and amongst the believers. Pray for that. But as all good shepherds know, but as an elder you must deal with the spiritual issues of the church and the secular issues of the world. Timothy, of course, answers to God above all, but he must also answer to the government around him. **Going back three years now, we were full steam ahead with a church relaunch and we were clearly focused on the spiritual health of our body here, but then Covid happened and the government strongly recommended churches shut down for a time. In trying to lead a peaceful and quiet life where we respect our authorities, we did online services and outdoor services for a couple of months. It was a hard decision, one which I often question, but we did it because of verses like this. We have to pray for our authorities and respect them.**

We must pray for our **local** authorities, our **state** authorities, and our **federal** authorities. And that means you must pray for them, **regardless** of whether or not you voted for them or **like them**. Do you know who the Emperor of Rome was at the time Paul gave this to Timothy? Nero. An evil and vicious ruler who was throwing Christians into lions dens for sport. Yet notice Paul doesn't say pray for them to be overthrown or voted out of office. He says pray for them in the way they govern. He is in essence saying that we are to pray for them to lead in righteousness and if they aren't to turn towards righteousness. I think one of the main reasons we don't pray for our governing authorities is because we feel that we can do more in that arena through political activism or legislation. According to the Bible, we can't. We can accomplish so much more in our government through prayer than we could ever through politics. I think we would see some real change if we prayed for our government officials as much as we railed against them on social media. I think it's perfect that we are called to pray for authorities here because when we get down to the nitty gritty, Paul is saying that we should pray for their salvation. Simply put, when we pray for our

authorities we will be blessed with more peace than we otherwise would have, and we stand godly and dignified before the Lord. In short when we pray for our authorities we please the Lord. **A church, depending on Christ in prayer, pleases the Lord.**

So let us pray for our authorities together. First, let us pray for our local authorities. Pray for our mayor, Alonzo Jones, for our city manager, Ken Larking, our city council members, Gary Miller, James Buckner, Larry Campbell, Bryant Hood, Barry Mayo, Sherman Saunders, Lee Vogler, and Madison Whittle, for our county chairman, Darrell Dalton and our board of supervisors, Tim Dudley, Nancy Eanes, Bob Warren, Ronald Searce, Vic Ingram, and Robert Tucker. Pray for our city Sheriff, Mike Mondul, and our county Sheriff, Mike Taylor. Pray for our Danville City Schools superintendent, Dr. Angela Hairston and our County superintendent, Mark Jones. Pray that they would have wise counsel, and wisdom. Pray that they would be led by Biblical principals and if needs be, they would come to faith in Christ. Second, lets pray for our state authorities. Pray for our governor, Glenn Youngkin, our Lt. Governor, Winsome Sears and our Attorney General, Jason Miyares. Pray for our state delegate Daniel Marshall and state senators, Frank Ruff, and William Stanley. Pray for wisdom, guidance, and that they would all be Christ followers who love Jesus. Lastly, lets pray for our Federal authorities. Pray for President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. Pray for our Congressman Bob Good and our Senators Tim Kaine and Mark Warner. Pray for the entire senate and house of representatives as well as the President's cabinet, the Joint chiefs, and other officials. Pray that they would be led by the hand of God and that they would put his will first and foremost in the way they govern.

The last thing we need to see here is that... **It Pleases The Lord When We Pray For The Lost**. Of course the last thing we should pray for is for the lost. Look again at **verse 4**. God desires all people to be saved and so should we. We should be praying that they would come to the knowledge of the truth of Jesus Christ. This world is living in darkness, believing all the lies and ignoring all the truth that will set them free. What can turn their hearts towards God? Prayer. Do you truly believe that? If you do you should pray for it. According to one of our outreach programs here at Stone Creek, Bless Every Home, we can pray for our lost loved one and neighbors by praying for their physical needs, their financial needs, their relational needs, and most importantly their spiritual needs. When you start praying these things for your neighbors, co-workers, fellow students, etc... then you will start to see your heart change towards them as well as their hearts turn towards God. **You will see that when you pray for the lost Prayer soon turns to Care**. Eventually care turns to relationship and relationship can turn into opportunities to share. We know we can't save these people, only Christ can, but when we depend on him to do what we can't, it pleases him greatly.

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So let us pray for the lost. Pray for your lost neighbors and co-workers. Pray for your lost family members. Pray that God would give you a greater heart for them, that he would use you to share the Gospel and love of Christ with them, that God would send more representatives of his love to share his love with them, and pray that they would walk out of the darkness into the light of salvation. Pray for the lost around our city, state, and world that we don't even know about. Pray that God would help your heart to yearn for them like never before. Pray that God would give you opportunities to go to them and share the Gospel with them. Pray for our missionaries to lead many to Christ on the field.

Application

The application this morning is simple. We are called to pray and we have prayed. And our prayers please our Lord. Look again at **verse 3**. Prayer is good and pleasing to our God and Savior. Prayer makes God happy, because it shows him that we are depending on him to do what we can't. It expresses a true faith in his power. His power to supply our every need, to forgive our sins, and to save the lost. Look again at **verse 8**. Everyone should pray. This is what God desires. He longs for our prayers. **A church, depending on Christ in prayer, pleases the Lord**

Conclusion

But as we look at verse 8 we also see that he longs for us to pray with our hands lifted high. And he longs that we pray without anger in our hearts. So our last prayer today is this. With your hands raised High, we ask our Leaders to come and pray over you. **Lord give us unity. Lord help us to have your heart. Lord help us to follow you and love you and love like you. Lord let us be your representatives to the world. Thank you for our church, thank you for the gift of prayer. In your name Amen.**