

Eternity Daily Bible Study

(A ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Walking In The Spirit - 65

Studies in this series can also be found online at www.globalchristians.org/walkspirit/

Topic: The Ministry of Prayer – Part 1

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Prayer was a top priority for the apostles in Jerusalem:

Acts 6:4 MKJV *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.*

Prayer lies at the heart of revival and should be a top priority for every Christian, especially church leaders who should pray for the spiritual growth of those in their care, just as Paul did:

Ephesians 1:15-20 MKJV *Therefore I also, hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love to all the saints, (16) do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, (17) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, (18) the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, (19) and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us, the ones believing according to the working of His mighty strength (20) which He worked in Christ in raising Him from the dead, and He seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,*

Most Christians pray for their own needs and for the needs of those close to them, for things such as jobs, healing and daily bread - and that is good and fine and Scriptural. God is our helper and delights to answer those kinds of prayers.

However there is a ministry of prayer whereby we pray for God's agenda on the basis of the Scriptures and the knowledge of His will. Jesus' prayer in John 17 for the sanctification of His disciples and the unity of believers is a prayer of this type. For this kind of prayer we need to have an understanding of what God wants done in the situation and our prayer joins with His will in order to bring it to pass. This is clearly the case with praying that laborers will be sent forth into the Harvest:

Matthew 9:36-38 MKJV *But seeing the crowds, He was moved with compassion on them, because they were tired and scattered like sheep having no shepherd. (37) Then He said to His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. (38) Therefore pray to the Lord of the harvest that He will send out laborers into His harvest.*

It is God's will that people be saved, and God's will that people be raised up to proclaim the gospel and bring in the Harvest, but Jesus still asks for us to pray for it!

It is the same with Paul's prayer for the Ephesians above. It is clearly God's will that people will understand Christ more fully - but Paul still prayed for it to occur!

The ministry of prayer is where we use prayer to accomplish the goals of Christian ministry. It is where prayer is used to raise up laborers or when prayer is the means of imparting wisdom and enlightenment to new Christians. Prayer alone can accomplish these things, because prayer is to God, and all things are possible with God.

Things we can pray for in this way include the following:

- 1) Our enemies and those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44)
- 2) God's honor, will and Kingdom (Matthew 6:9-10)
- 3) Daily provision (Matthew 6:11)
- 4) Forgiveness of sin (Matthew 6:12, 1 John 1:9) even for others (1 John 5:16)
- 5) Escape from hard testing and temptation (Matthew 6:13, 24:20, 26:41)
- 6) The blessing of little children (Matthew 19:13)
- 7) Healing (James 5:14-16, Acts 9:40, 28:18)
- 8) Deliverance (Matthew 17:21, Mark 9:29)
- 9) Acts of power that will glorify God (James 5:16-18)
- 10) Wisdom (James 1:5-8)
- 11) Spiritual strengthening in Christ (Ephesians 3:14-21)
- 12) Spiritual understanding for new Christians (Ephesians 1:15-20, Philippians 1:9-11)
- 13) Knowledge of the will of God (Colossians 1:9-11)
- 14) The impartation of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15, 9:17)
- 15) The sanctification of believers (John 17:17-19)
- 16) That believers will 'do no evil' (2 Corinthians 13:7)
- 17) The perfection of believers (2 Corinthians 13:9, Colossians 4:12)
- 18) Fulfillment of the spiritual calling on a Church, with power (2 Thessalonians 1:11,12)
- 19) The unity of believers (John 17:20-23)
- 20) Opportunities for gospel ministry (Romans 1:10, Colossians 4:2-4, 2 Thess 3:1)
- 21) Boldness in ministry (Acts 4:24-31, Ephesians 6:19)
- 22) Laborers for the Harvest (Matthew 9:38)
- 23) The selection of leaders to be sent out (Luke 6:12,13; Acts 13:1-4, 14:23)
- 24) Deliverance from danger (Acts 12:5, Romans 15:30,31; 2 Thessalonians 3:2)
- 25) The salvation of certain ethnic groups – such as the Jews (Romans 10:1)
- 26) The salvation of leaders and those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-4)
- 27) Anything that is for God's glory & purpose (Matthew 21:21,22; John 16:23,24)

[IDEA: Cut and paste the above list into a file and print it out and keep it in your bible. If you are in ministry, share it with others e.g. in the church bulletin. It will remind folks about what God wants us to pray for! BTW the list is based on an E-Sword search on all the uses of the word pray, prayer, prayers, praying etc in the New Testament.]

All of the above 27 things have the following elements in common:

- 1) They are first of all grounded God's will & purposes for His saints and His Church
- 2) Our task is to pray that they shall come to pass in specific real world situations

God's will in Heaven, happens locally on earth, only through our prayers. God's perfect will is brought into reality in our homes, neighborhoods, cities and churches through the intercession of the saints. We cannot just say "If X is God's will then X will happen whether I pray or not" (otherwise why would have Jesus prayed for Christian unity?).

If we want unity in our church and among our churches in our city – then we will have to intercede for it. If we want Russia saved – we will have to pray for it. If we want a moral government with righteous laws, which allows the peaceful proclamation of the gospel – then we will have to pray for it!!

The ministry of prayer focuses on making God's will manifest in each and every home, heart, city and neighborhood. This is far from automatic and involves wrestling against significant powers and principalities (Ephesians 6:10-13) along with fervent labor in prayer (Colossians 4:12).

The ministry of prayer catches God's heart for a certain area or person or segment of society then prays the burden through to completion. Some people have a heart for the homeless, others for students who struggle with their faith, still others pray for the mission fields of the world or for a specific nation or tribe.

In the ministry of prayer the focus is on what God wants done through us at that point of time. It is not about us or our comfort and desires. It is about seeing what God's Kingdom needs, and then asking the Father for it, in faith, and with thanksgiving.

Colossians 4:2 MKJV *Continue in prayer and watch in it with thanksgiving,*

Matthew 21:22 MKJV *And all things, whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.*

1 John 5:14-15 MKJV *And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (15) And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.*

If we petition for the 27 items on the list above we will be praying in God's will and for God's glory. We will be praying out of concern for God's Kingdom, His Church and His salvation to be spread abroad to those who have not yet heard.

God wants to set your prayer life on fire! And that will happen when you pray for the things that God most wants prayed for, on the basis of the promises of God!

Blessings,

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