

“The worst sin is prayerlessness. We usually think of murder, adultery, or theft as among the worst. But the root of all sin is self-sufficiency, independence from God. When we fail to wait prayerfully for God’s guidance and strength, we are saying, with our actions if not our lips, that we do not need Him. How much of our service is characterized by “going it alone?” (P.T. Forsyth)

One of my great passions is that we would be a Church of prayer!

The objective, measurable barometer as how much we trust God is this: do we pray? together? how much? for what?

- As a local church, we gather to pray together for many reasons. When we pray together:
 - ✓ it reminds us together that salvation is in God’s hands.
 - ✓ it reminds us together that we are not our own, but we belong to Him.
 - ✓ it unites us together when we gather to pray.
 - ✓ it strengthens us because the Devil hates it when we pray.
 - ✓ it edifies us because prayer is a means of grace – for our growth.
 - ✓ it humbles us together that we’re desperate for God
 - ✓ it affirms to us together that God Is God.

Background to Romans

- **Romans is the Road To Righteousness = It asks & answers: *how can God forgive you?***
 - The book vindicates God as the God of Righteousness who is JUST in punishing sin & the JUSTIFIER of guilty sinners
 - It’s the theology of God’s action in saving sinners – by himself & for Himself.

Short overview of Paul’s prayer today (Romans 1:8-15)

1. Thanksgiving (8-9)
2. Requests (10-15)
3. Affirmation (16-17)

THESIS — Paul’s prayer for the Roman believers provides a PATTERN OF PRAYER for us as we pray for the brethren:

I. THANK GOD FOR ALL THE SAINTS! (8)

A. THANKSGIVING

II. CONTINUALLY PRAY FOR THE SAINTS! (9)

A. INTERCESSION

Be sure no time is so well spent as that which a man spends on his knees. (J.C. Ryle)

III. PRAY FOR GOSPEL ADVANCEMENT! (10)

A. MISSIONS

Paul is praying for a “prosperous journey” to come to Rome. When we read about his journey in the Book of Acts, it doesn’t look exactly prosperous—he went as a prisoner (after being arrested in the Temple in Jerusalem, was falsely accused by the Jewish authorities), he got into a terrific storm at sea, the ship was lost, and he was bitten by a viper when he made it to land. Yet it was a prosperous journey. (J. Vernon McGee)

IV. BE UTILIZING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT FOR THE CHURCH’S GOOD! (11)

1. EDIFICATION (2 Cor 12.19 - all things for your upbuilding!)

Romans 1:8-15 — “Paul’s Prayer: Thanksgiving, Intercession, Encouragement, Gospel-Growth”

Mini overview of “spiritual gifts”

1. Spiritual gifts are given to **every** Christian. (Eph 4; 1 Pet 4)
2. Spiritual gifts are found & cultivated in the **context** of the **local** church.
3. Spiritual gifts are **supernaturally & graciously** given.
4. Spiritual gifts are for the **purpose** of **building** up Christ's body corporately.
5. Spiritual gifts are to be **cultivated, excelled** at and **employed** by God's power!
 - These are given by grace, by God, to saints, for church’s growth!

V. PURSUE MUTUAL ENCOURAGEMENT! (12)*A. ENCOURAGEMENT***VI. PRAY FOR MUCH FRUIT IN FAITHFUL MINISTRY! (13-15)***A. GOD’S GLORY!*

Learn & exemplify Paul! Paul prays with:

- ➔**BreadthWidth** = all the saints
- ➔**Depth** = with theological precision
- ➔**Length** = with gospel to spread
- ➔**Height** = to HIS God, thru Jesus Christ
- ➔**Heart** =because he loves them; to be mutually encouraged

A prayerless church member is a hindrance. He is in the body like a rotting bone or a decayed tooth. Before long, since he does not contribute to the benefit of his brethren, he will become a danger and a sorrow to them. Neglect of private prayer is the locust which devours the strength of the church. (Charles Spurgeon)

Praying for families in your local church.

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The Lord calls all believers to pray at all times in the Spirit ... and to be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for *all* the saints (Eph 6.18). What a privilege. But it may appear to be daunting and a bit impossible to pray for everyone in your local church. Where do you begin? How do you start? What could be a helpful guide to aid you in praying for your local church?

In what follows, I provide some ways to pray for the families in your local church. Pray for...

- 1. For marriages to be holy.** Consider praying for the marriages to be holy. This refers to the husbands and wives fulfilling and pursuing their God-given roles as laid out in Scripture. Pray for marriages in your church to be godly representations of the gospel of Christ. Pray for set-apart, other-worldly, heavenly-minded marriages at church.
- 2. For singles to be faithful.** Earnestly seek God in intercessory prayer for the singles in your local church to obey what Paul says of them in I Corinthians 7: to have undistracted devotion to the Lord (v.35). Pray that they would utilize their singleness for Christ’s glory, to pursue the saints with selfless zeal and with relentless passion.
- 3. For widows to be disciples.** Pray for the widows in your church to pursue good works, to show hospitality, to serve the saints by selfless, foot-washing service, to assist those in need, and devote herself to every good work.
- 4. For retired to be disciplined.** Ask God on behalf of the retired men and women to live like Caleb with full strength and vigor for God, to take on great tasks and duties for Christ’s sake, and to emulate Anna who worshiped constantly, fasted, prayed, and lived a life of gratitude (not grumbling and complaining!) to God. Pray for them to be busily disciplined and continually strengthened by God to do His work, with untiring energy, out of love for Christ.
- 5. For women to be submissive.** Seek God on behalf of the wives and young women to be submissive to their husbands, to be quiet (as opposed to boisterous and self-focused), gentle, obedient to authority, and to be sensible, pure, workers at home and to not dishonor the Lord but to adorn the doctrine of Christ in all respects.
- 6. For men to be humble leaders.** Plead boldly and persistently with God to raise men and cultivate in men a Christlike emulation so as to be humble, gentle and sacrificial leaders. Ask God for men to not be self-willed but self-effacing and others-focused.
- 7. For children to be obedient.** Pray for the young children to obey their parents in all things. Pray for the children to receive God’s blessing and follow God’s Word as they grow in godly homes and hear God’s Word taught.
- 8. For teens to be Spirit empowered.** Appeal to God for young people to be Davids, young men devoted to God with hearts that follow Him and set God before them continually. Pray for more Josephs, young people fleeing

Romans 1:8-15 — “Paul’s Prayer: Thanksgiving, Intercession, Encouragement, Gospel-Growth”

from immorality (literally!) and living with paramount integrity, trustworthiness and love. Pray for young people to be like Jesus, totally about the “Father’s business” in this present evil age in which we live.

9. For babies to become missionaries. Seek the Lord boldly and open your mouth wide to the God who is able to do far more abundantly beyond what you think or imagine to raise up and grow the smallest of nursing babies in your church to be missionaries for Christ’s work and service. O pray for men with an open map and an open Bible who believe God’s sovereignty and go with Spirit-empowered and evangelistic zeal to preach the gospel to the rough, the savages, the unreached, and unengaged peoples of the world. O God, amaze us for your glory!

10. For shut-ins to rest in Christ. Come to the throne of grace for those who are homebound in your church. Maybe there are the elderly who aren’t able to leave their homes, maybe people in the final stages of cancer or a terminal illness. Seek the Lord on their behalf that they would rest in Christ and not be bitter, or angry, or resentful or pessimistic. Pray that those who find themselves confined to the home would rest in Christ and bathe in Scripture and reflect on and proclaim God’s faithfulness.

11. For families to be little churches of worship. Plead earnestly that every home would be, as it were, a little church, earnestly and consistently about the worship of God in the home, led by the father, with the families gathered together to read the Word, sing God’s praises, and pray together -- all for God’s glory. Pray for the homes to be worship gatherings where God’s blessing would rest upon those homes and where families would prepare in the homes for worship corporately with God’s people.

O FOR A THOUSAND TONGUES TO SING

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise,
The glories of my God and king,
The triumphs of His grace!

My gracious master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honors of Thy name.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
’Tis music in the sinner’s ears,
’Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.

He speaks, and, listening to His voice,
New life the dead receive,
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe.

Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb,
Your loosened tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Savior come,
And leap, ye lame, for joy.

I felt my Lord’s atoning blood
Close to my soul applied;
Me, me He loved, the Son of God,
For me, for me He died!

Look unto Him, ye nations, own
Your God, ye fallen race;
Look, and be saved through faith alone,
Be justified by grace.

Harlots and publicans and thieves
In holy triumph join!
Saved is the sinner that believes
From crimes as great as mine.

Glory to God, and praise and love
Be ever, ever given,
By saints below and saints above,
The church in earth and Heaven.