



Study 2

OUTLINE

- Follow through on the homework from the last study
- The privilege and responsibility of prayer
- What affect our prayer has on others
- About Intercession
- Why prayer is necessary for people to be saved

THE PRIVILEGE & RESPONSIBILITY OF PRAYER?

"Why pray?" asked the talkback caller to the Christian radio program, "Afterall, God has ordained everything anyway." The host of the radio program gave a concise yet accurate answer- "We should pray because God commands us to do so." He's right of course and in this way prayer is a responsibility, yet prayer is not *just* an act of obedience. God invites us to pray. He invites us to influence the course of world history and the condition of individual human hearts through prayer.

1. How do know that the Prophet Samuel regarded prayer as a responsibility based on First Samuel 12:23?

Notice how Hebrews 4:16 tells us to approach God in prayer.

Praying For Others

2. Should we regard First Timothy 2:8 as a command (for all believers)?
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3. Is Second Corinthians 1:11 portraying prayer as a responsibility (command) or a privilege?
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There is a great mystery about prayer. The mystery might be considered as -

God ordains everything.

We are able to change things by prayer.

When we pray, are we changing the plan of God?

Scripture seems to present God's ordained plan as being outworked and furthered by the prayers of His people.

4. How does Colossians 4:3 show us that it is probable that Paul thought this way about prayer?
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Why would the Apostle Paul make the request found in First Thessalonians 5:25 unless he believed that it would make a difference?

Many believers have come to realise that praying for others, even in the midst of their own challenges, has fostered spiritual maturity in them.

WHAT AFFECT OUR PRAYER HAS ON OTHERS

If our prayers had no affect on others then it's reasonable to think that Jesus would never had instructed His followers to do so, or even modelled its practise. Some people believe that God can not change a person's heart - a person must be willing to change before they can be changed.

Praying For Others

5. Note who Jesus said His followers should pray for?

Matthew 5:44

Luke 6:28

6. Note who Jesus prayed for in these references-

Luke 22:32

John 17:9

Jesus seemed to think that prayer could spiritually strengthen people, convict people, restore people, and bless people. Praying for others can at least achieve these things. The Apostle Paul thought that when people prayed for him doors of effective opportunity could open for him to preach the Gospel. He also thought that when people prayed for him, it could encourage and strengthen him. By the way he prayed for the Ephesian church it is apparent that he believed that praying for believers could result in them receiving deeper insight into God and His Word (refer to Eph. 1:18).

7. Discuss answers to prayer for yourself or others that you are aware of.

8. The early Church faced a huge problem in Acts 12. What was it? How did they react to this problem? What was the result?

Note the type of praying recommended in James 5:16.

ABOUT INTERCESSION

To *intercede* is to *intervene*. In a prayer sense, to intercede is simply to pray for others *intently*. When fellowshiping with your Bible Study group, listen closely for what needs others in your group have that you can intercede for.

9. Consider First Timothy 2:1. What is being commanded? What is the goal of this command (read the context of this verse).
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The Holy Spirit is an intercessor (Romans 8:26-27) and so is Christ (Isaiah 53:12; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). What greater modeling of effective prayer can the believer have?

Interceding involves constant prayer on behalf of another. It is more deliberate, persistent and focussed than ordinary prayer. Some people feel particularly called to commit their lives to the ministry of intercession. Only eternity will finally reveal what a vital role they might have played in shaping events, individuals and nations.

10. Sometimes there is a physical sensation when the Holy Spirit uses us to intercede for others. What does Romans 8:26 seem to suggest might accompany Spirit-led intercession for others?
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11. What did the prophet say that God would wonder about as recorded in Isaiah 59:16?
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Who can you pray for more intently? Who can you pray for regularly? Down through the centuries, great Christian pray-res have often kept Prayer-Lists with the names of people they are praying for. Do you have such a prayer-list?

11. What type of praying does First Thessalonians 5:17 call for?
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We should intercede for the lost to come to know Christ. There will be times also when we should interceded for our Church. If you are ever uncertain which one to do, do both.

WHY PRAYER IS NEEDED FOR PEOPLE TO BE SAVED

We pray for people to be saved. But why? If, as some people believe, not even God can change a heart, what is the point to praying to God to change someone's heart toward salvation in Christ?

12. In Jeremiah 24:7 God foretells that His people will one turn to Him with a new heart. We suspect that this is a prophecy about the coming New Covenant. But why does God have confidence that this happen?
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Jeremiah's contemporary, Ezekiel, also prophesied about the coming New Covenant. In Ezekiel 11:19 and 36:26 he announces that God will do something extraordinary. If we realise that God can actually do this, it should affect both our confidence and approach in prayer.

13. Discuss what Paul is actually requesting in Colossians 4:3 and Second Thessalonians 3:1-
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14. What does Acts 14:27 teach us about what God can do in a person's heart?
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Praying For Others

Someone has used military terms to describe the relationship between prayer and evangelism. He said that prayer is like “air cover” while preaching is like “ground cover”. One without the other makes the other less effective (note Acts 6:4).

15. Perhaps we should pray what Paul prayed for Philemon in Philemon 6? What difference do you think this type of praying might make for our church?
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16. Ponder Romans 10:1. Paul believes something about what prayer can achieve. Read on Romans 10 and discuss what Paul goes on to say is necessary for this Romans 10:1 prayer to be answered.
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We can pray -

-  *For God to open people’s hearts toward the Gospel.*
-  *That God reveals to a person their true spiritual condition.*
-  *For a person to hear the Gospel (Romans 10:9-17).*
-  *For a believer to be an effective and fruitful witness (Philemon 6).*
-  *That a person may be given the gift of faith and the gift of repentance (Acts 11:18).*
-  *For God to confirm His Word with signs and wonders (Hebrew 2:4).*
-  *For preachers to be clear, bold and compassionate in their preaching of the Gospel.*

Your homework for our next Bible study meeting is to do the following-

1. Continue to pray daily for the needs of those in your Bible Study Group (you’ll need to note what those needs are)
2. Write a “Prayer List” of people you know who do not yet know Christ and pray regularly this week for these people.
3. Pray for those in your Bible study group to be more effective in their evangelism.

Amen.