

Why We Need to Pray

1. The reading 1 Tim 2:1-7
2. Introduction
 - a. There are so many reasons to pray
 - b. LifeWay Christian retailer survey:
 - c. What do Americans pray for?
 - i. 82% family and friends
 - ii. 74% own problems
 - iii. 54% for good things that happened
 - iv. 42% own sin
 - v. 38% people where natural disasters occur
 - vi. 37% God's greatness
 - vii. 21% to win the lottery
 - viii. 20% people of other faith/no faith
 - ix. 13% that their favorite team would win
 - x. 13% for government leaders
 - xi. 5% for celebrities
 - d. Interesting no?
 - e. But is praying for fam, friends, problems truly what is most important?
 - f. Are these priorities biblical?
 - g. Transition: Today we will find out
 - h. The title assigned to me is: Why We Need to Pray

1. Prayer is a top priority
 - a. Proof – v.1 - 'first of all, then'
 - b. Explanation
 - i. Prayer is first in order of issues – women having authority over men, qualifications of elders
 - ii. Prayer is first in importance of these issues
 - iii. Illustration - Example of prioritizing prayer – Jesus
 1. Mark 1:35
 - a. Jesus' example:
 - b. 3am- 'early in the morning while still dark'
 - i. Falsehood of 3am = devil's hour
 - c. Complete privacy –'left the house, went away to a secluded place'
 - d. Did not pray in a closet
 - e. Took a hike to Shenandoah just to pray
 2. The point: Praying was the most important thing to Jesus!

- c. Application
 - i. Challenge: Do you pray?
 - 1. If Jesus prayed, do you pray?
 - 2. Is prayer truly important to you?
 - 3. Text message prayer – brief thank you for food?
 - ii. True test: Pressure
 - 1. When schedule is being filled with deadlines
 - 2. Pray more or less?
 - iii. Prayer only when convenient?
 - 1. Jesus waking up at 3am to pray in the woods
 - iv. Argument from greater to least: If Jesus prioritized prayer, God in the flesh, how much more should we?
 - v. Prayer should be ‘first of all’
 - vi. Summarize: we pray because it a top priority

Transition: So now we know how important prayer is but now we will see what exactly should we pray for!

- 2. Prayer makes us gospel focused
 - a. Context
 - i. False teachers – v.3
 - ii. False teaching:
 - 1. Jewish myths
 - 2. Mosaic law saves
 - 3. only Jews/Jewish converts could be saved
 - iii. Fight the good fight – v.18
 - iv. Effect
 - 1. some began to stop praying for others’ salvation
 - 2. only prayed for themselves
 - b. That’s why Paul wrote to pray for other people to know Christ!
 - i. Proof – v.1
 - ii. ‘I urge that entreaties, and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made’
 - iii. Extreme importance -> 4 nuances of prayer
 - 1. ‘entreaties’
 - a. Request based on need
 - b. So the question: what do people need?
 - i. Philippine typhoon – many lost homes, some died
 - ii. Need: shelter, food
 - iii. Join our church sending donations

- c. But do you know what people need even more than food/shelter?
 - i. Answer: 3 John v.2
 - ii. John prayed for prosperity and good health? Prosperity gospel?
 - iii. The balance – ‘just as your soul prospers’
 - iv. Prosperity and health, only if the soul is doing well!
 - v. In other words prosperity of soul > prosperity of body
- d. The extreme need for the gospel – man committing suicide at apartment
- e. ‘What good is it if a man, gains the whole world but loses his only soul?’
- f. Application
 - i. Importance of praying for needs of poor and hungry
 - ii. Heartlessness of not praying for their soul
 - iii. Example of Jesus
 - 1. John 6:27 – Food is nothing compared to the food of eternal life
 - 2. John 6:35 – Jesus is the food of eternal life – ‘I am the bread of life’
 - 3. Importance to Jesus – starving soul > starving body
 - iv. Be careful of donating to humanitarian relief efforts
 - 1. Only help people’s physical needs not spiritual
 - 2. Some so called ‘Christian’ organizations do the same
 - v. Give aid to churches who are helping rebuild houses but also preaching the gospel
 - vi. Jesus fed poor → to preach the gospel to them
 - vii. Not Jesus fed poor → feed poor
 - viii. We need to pray for people to be saved
- 2. Next nuance: ‘prayers’
 - a. General prayer
 - b. Ask God for anything
 - i. Least to greatest – college student stressful exam week → someone in an accident
- 3. ‘petitions’
 - a. Request being made to someone
 - b. Like petitioning to a congressman
 - c. We petition to the true king Jesus

- d. A person who can actually change anything: God
- e. Petitions -> an almighty God
- 4. 'thanksgivings'
 - a. Thanksgiving coming
 - i. Everyone grateful for the turkey
 - ii. Just heard 'popeyes turkey'
- iv. Result – prayer makes us gospel focused
 - 1. Makes us see everyone as a soul in need of Christ
 - 2.
 - 3. Application
 - a. Are we sharing the gospel?
 - b. When was the last time you shared the gospel with anyone?
 - c. Encouragement: start praying for people to come to the Lord Jesus
 - d. Remember: pray for both starving body and starving soul
 - e. Matthew 9:35-38
 - f. People are suffering, people need Christ

Transition: Let's look at the third reason why we need to pray

- 3. Prayer makes us care for everybody
 - a. Who do we pray for?
 - b. Answer continuing v.1 – 'entreaties, prayers, petitions, thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men'
 - i. Explanation
 - 1. Remember the context
 - a. Church believed only Jews or Jewish converts can be saved
 - b. Effect – praying only for Jews/converts
 - 2. Back to survey
 - a. Only 20% pray for people of others faith/no faith
 - b. More people pray to win the lottery than for the lost to be saved!
 - 3. That's why – Paul says, 'pray for all men'
 - a. Not just white men, black men, green men, but all men
 - ii. Challenge
 - 1. Pray not only for Filipino countrymen
 - 2. Pray for:
 - a. Korean hairdresser
 - b. White cashier at Trader Joe's
 - c. Salvadorian family next door

- d. Indian doctor doing your checkup
 - 3. Rev 7:9-10
 - a. Every tribe tongue and nation will be saved by the lamb
 - 4. Exclusive prayer?
 - a. Only pray for family, friends, coworker, neighbor to be saved?
 - b. Only people we have deep relationships?
 - c. What about people we barely know?
- iii. Biggest group we fail to pray for
 - 1. V.2- 'for kings and all who are in authority'
 - 2. Conviction – pray not only for buddies to be saved but now the president?
 - 3. Over 2 millenia, majority of government leaders disagree with Christian ethics
 - a. Roman empire
 - i. Threw Christians in coliseum with lions
 - ii. Used Christians as lamp in the night – hanging them on post and lighting them on fire by the streets
 - 4. Do Christians usually like their government leader? Probably not
 - a. Guarantee = almost everyone dislikes something about current president or past presidents
 - 5. Challenge – Paul says pray for them – pray for the president to be saved
 - a. Even if the president in Jan, oval office, we don't like
 - b. Pray for their wellbeing, pray for them to come to Christ
 - c. Pray for governor
- iv. Continued challenge, not only kings
 - 1. 'all who are in authority'
 - a. Your boss that you don't get along with
 - b. Your teacher
 - c. The police
 - 2. Paul says pray from the be saved too
 - a. Almost like Paul is saying pray for your enemies to be saved
 - b. Pray for ISIS?
 - c. Pray for Kim Jung Un – murder Christian firing squad for owning bible?
- v. That's why Paul tells us to pray for 'kings and all in authority'
 - 1. These are the people we neglect to pray for
 - 2. Only 12% pray for government leaders
 - 3. More people pray for Redskins > government leaders
- c. Pleasant side effect of praying for everybody
 - i. Proof – v.2

- ii. 'so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity'
 - 1. Because of current political trend – Christians are seen as the enemy
 - a. Homosexual? – Christians are just hateful (Westboro Baptist)
 - b. Abortion – Christians don't want to women to have a choice over their body – bigots
 - 2. Christians are murdered in communist and Islamic governments
 - 3. But prayer disarms
 - a. Nothing ends hatred like telling someone you are praying for them
 - b. When Christians pray for government leaders, no longer political enemy but friends!
 - 4. Power of voting -lead to greater power of prayer
 - a. 2 millenia Christians would laugh if you told them you can vote for a king
 - 5. Prayer is more powerful than voting!
 - a. American Christians can get way too caught up in politics
 - b. Prayer brings more peace than voting!
 - i. Illustration: good friend started talking about who we voting
 - ii. Starting to get heated – understand why people lose friends over politics
 - iii. But it was praying for his soul that defused and kept the friendship going
 - iv. Roman Empire did not always persecute Christians
 - v. Periods of time where they gave Christians freedom to preach
 - 1. Even protected Paul with Roman legion in Acts
 - vi. But when the government will persecute us, and that's guaranteed, Jesus said they hated me they will hate you
 - vii. Persecute us for faith, not because they see us political enemies

d. Summary

- i. That's why we need to pray!
 - 1. It makes us care for everyone, love everyone
 - 2. At times brings peace
- ii. Application
 - 1. Pray for everyone to be saved
 - a. Pray for non-Filipinos

- b. Pray for the athlete or celebrity you really enjoy watching to know Christ!
 - i. These are people we barely know so we tend to not pray for their souls!
- c. Pray for the president
- d. Pray for your enemies
- e. Conclusion: care for everybody's soul

Transition: Final reason why we need to pray

- 4. Prayer makes us focus on God
 - a. Proof – v.3
 - b. 'This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior'
 - c. Explanation
 - i. God wants peace so Christian can share the gospel
 - ii. It pleases him
 - 1. Effect of prayer – prayer makes us focus on what pleases God
 - a. What will please me today v. what would please God today?
 - b. 74% of Christians more concerned about pleasing themselves than pleasing God
 - d. What else pleases God?
 - i. Proof v.4- 'who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth'
 - ii. Explanation
 - 1. God is pleased that all 'kinds' of men be saved
 - a. Many times when bible refers to 'all men/people'
 - b. Usually referring to all kinds/variety
 - c. More than every single individual
 - d. Paul tells us to pray all kinds of men
 - e. Not make a list of 7.6 billion names and pray for every one
 - 2. Point: God is a savior and he wants to save people
 - a. We need to care about what God cares about
 - i. God wants people 'to come to the knowledge of the truth'
 - ii. What is the truth? Answer: v.5
 - 1. 'For there is one God, one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus'
 - 2. People worship idols, gods they made for themselves

- a. Made of wood, stone, clay, money, fame, and power
 - 3. People need to know – only one God
 - 4. Only one way of salvation
 - 5. Only way is to come through Christ
- b. When we don't pray we forget what God cares about
 - i. We forget people are going to hell
 - ii. We forget God wants to save
 - iii. We forget Jesus is offering the free gift of salvation to all
 - 1. Proof
 - 2. V.6- 'Who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time'
 - 3. Gospel: Jesus was prophesied in the OT to save
- c. But Paul did not forget about all this
 - i. Proof v.7
 - ii. 'For this I was appointed..'
 - iii. 'I'm not a preacher/apostle for fame, money, ego'
 - iv. But for this: The Gospel of Jesus Christ
- d. Paul knew his goal and mission
 - i. Did not let worries make him forget
 - 1. 'I am the telling the truth not lying'
 - 2. False teachers slandered Paul saying he's fake apostle
 - 3. But Paul's prayer helped him focus on God and remember his sole purpose in life
- e. Application: When we pray for people to be saved
 - 1. We focus on God
 - 2. We remember our mission and purpose on Earth
 - a. Save souls
 - b. Glorify God
 - c. A lot of boredom. Apathy, and lack of growth, come from forgetting that we are here to help people come to Christ
 - d. This world is temporary
 - 3. We focus on eternity rather than temporary
- e. Summary: That's how powerful prayer is: makes us focus on God

Transition: In conclusion let's look back at the survey and see how it compares to what we just learned.

5. Conclusion

- a. What do Americans pray for?
 - i. 82% family and friends
 - ii. 74% own problems
 - iii. 54% for good things that happened
 - iv. 42% own sin
 - v. 38% people where natural disasters occur
 - vi. 37% God's greatness
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 - x. 13% for government leaders
 - xi. 5% for celebrities
6. According to 1 Tim 2:1-7 the most important were
 - a. God's greatness (37%)
 - b. 30
 - c. 32
 - d. People of other faith/no faith (20%)
 - e. Government leaders (5%)
7. What was most important to God are the ones that Christians pray the least for
8. Let's reprioritize our prayers and glorify God