**Paul’s Intercessory Prayers for the Ephesians**

*Ephesians 1:15-21; 3:14-21*

**Introduction**

1. For more than one reason, prayer is an important facet of our discipleship.
2. It is commanded by God, and if we fail to consistently engage in prayer, we fail God (**cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:17**).
3. It is beneficial to us, even to the extent of necessity. If we fail to consistently engage in prayer, we fail ourselves.
   1. **1 Timothy 2:5** – Jesus is the mediator between us and God. He is the “go-between.”
      1. ***“the Man Christ Jesus”*** – He was God incarnate. He was Divine, and human.
      2. **V. 6** – He, knowing the mind of God, being God Himself, was able to execute the will of God perfectly. Anything we lacked He provided for on the cross.
      3. **Hebrews 4:14-16** –Not only was He able to execute the will of God, but while living as a man He remained sinless, although tempted.
   2. We pray to God through Christ because He is our mediator between us and God **(cf. John 14:6)**. This is a resource we must not overlook. To do so is to our own neglect.
4. It is something we can do on another’s behalf. This is also a facet of prayer commanded by God. (*We should want to pray for the benefit of others.*)
   1. **1 Timothy 2:1-4** – We are to pray for all men **(*anthrōpos* – human being; mankind)**.
      1. Praying for the leaders of the land can benefit us as we seek to live for God.
      2. **We also pray for others because God wants them to be saved, and so should we.**
   2. Paul emphasized this in his life for others, and we should follow his example.
5. Elements of Prayer (**cf. 1 Timothy 2:1**)
6. Supplications
   1. *deēsis* – prayer; need (Strong).
   2. The word is akin to *proseuchē* (prayer), but is more specific.
   3. “stresses the sense of need” (Vine).
   4. It is a more urgent, serious, and needful matter.
   5. **Hebrews 5:7** – This was the element of prayer used by Jesus in the garden, and on the cross. (***He was in an impoverished state of sever anxiety***.)
7. Prayers
   1. *proseuchē* – prayer addressed to God (Strong).
   2. This word can be both generic and specific. (Context determines.) In this context it suggests any prayer offered to God.
   3. **Daniel 6:10** – Daniel was simply praying. Just as he always did.
8. Intercessions
   1. *Enteuxis* – a falling in with; a meeting with; interview (Strong).
   2. **The concept is that of being in the presence of God, and being able to petition Him, and converse with Him.**
   3. The context determines what is considered more specifically. Thus intercession is used.
   4. **It is an interview with God, a conversation with God, a request to God, on behalf of another.**
   5. **James 5:14-15a** – Pray on behalf of others to God that He might grant them their health. (*Praying for God to intercede on behalf of their health to make them well.*)
9. Giving of thanks
   1. God showers us with blessings physically and spiritually. He deserves and demands our thanksgiving.
   2. **Colossians 3:17** – Giving of thanks is something we do that keeps our awareness of who we are in relation to God, and where the things we enjoy come from.
10. Paul’s Intercessory Prayers for the Ephesians
11. Intercessory prayers for the physical well-being of others is noble and needed. However, this should not be our primary, and definitely not our only, facet of intercessory praying.
    1. **Matthew 16:26** – This same logic should follow us in every facet of our lives. It looks to the spiritual, not the physical.
    2. **Gaining physically in any way, and praying for others to gain physically is not wrong. However, Jesus instruction leads us to be spiritually driven creatures.**
    3. ***What profit is it if a person receives what he needs physically, but is lacking spiritually. We should emphasize the spiritual in our prayers for others.***
12. Paul’s Prayers for the Ephesians.
    1. **Cf. 1:15-21** – Prayer offered after having mentioned spiritual blessings in Christ (**cf. v. 3-13** – Predestination to adoption; redemption; revelation; heaven/inheritance; sealed w/ HS of promise; down payment of our inheritance).
       1. **V. 15-16** – thanksgiving to God for the Ephesians:
          1. **Faith** – faith in God, and faithfulness to God. (Initially in obedience to word. Subsequently as they followed Him daily.)
          2. **Love** – love for God in keeping His commandments. Love for the brethren in thought and action.
       2. **V. 17-21** – requests of intercession on behalf of the Ephesians. (Asking God to do something for them, and/or to them.)
          1. **V. 17-18a** – spirit of wisdom and revelation in knowledge.
             1. Spirit – the disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of any one. (Strong) (A mindset that will influence our actions.)
             2. **Wisdom –** discernment and perception of things of God. (How to apply God’s word.)
             3. **Revelation –** uncovering or revealing. (Already revealed. A fuller understanding of the thing revealed and relating to it.)
             4. **In knowledge of Him –** more than just fact knowing. Involves participation. A drawing closer to God in obedience. FULLER KNOWLEDGE.
          2. **V. 18b** – hope of the Christian; and value of Christian in God’s mind.
             1. **Hope** – assurance of inheritance. Heaven.
             2. **Value of Christian** – Saints are counted by God as riches. We are extremely valuable to Him!
          3. **V. 19-21** – God’s power which is able to work in us.
             1. The same power which raised Jesus from the dead is what works in those who believe.
             2. **Salvation is impossible, unless we have God. With the power of God we will get to heaven**!
    2. **Cf. 3:14-21** – After mentioning the ministry of the mystery of God given to Him, that both Jew and Gentile would be one together in Christ, Paul prays to God on their behalf that they might have the things necessary to bring the glory to God intended by His mystery.
       1. **V. 16-17** – Strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit (**Study of God’s word**), and Christ dwelling in us through faith (**cf. Galatians 2:20**).
          1. As men, we have many weaknesses. Without strength supplied by God we cannot be faithful. (This is accomplished by studying and doing God’s word.)
          2. **The outcome of this strength is Christ dwelling in us. We imitate Him, and are pleasing to God.**
       2. **V. 17b-19** – to be able to comprehend God’s love for us.
          1. **By being strengthened in the inner man, and walking in faith, we come to a greater understanding of God’s love**.
          2. The dimensions of God’s love are vast, and incomprehensible.
             1. **However, when we know God’s revelation, and have a more intimate relationship with it through obedience, we can be filled with the fullness of God’s love.**
             2. **More than understanding the facts, but being able to identify with deeper meanings in personal application of those facts.**
          3. **Passes knowledge** – cannot be attained through man’s wisdom.
             1. This knowledge of God’s love is only attained in Christ.
             2. We can know the unknowable because God has allowed us to.
       3. **V. 20** – This brings to light the power, and confidence because of that power, we are to have in God. This is who Paul is praying to.

**Conclusion**

1. It is wonderful to pray for others’ physical needs and well-being.
2. However, we, like Paul, should not forget the benefits and needs of spiritual intercessory prayers.
3. Pray for each other’s spiritual well-being!