

Pray

Ephesians 6.18 says, “Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints” (NRSV). This admonition to pray follows Paul’s discussion on the armor of God (see Ephesians 6.10-17). Paul urges the Ephesian believers to put on the full armor of God and then challenges them to pray. Thus, the call to prayer occurs in the context of spiritual warfare. Prayer is a battle, and prayer is required to win the battle. So Paul urges them to pray and explains to them how to pray.

First, pray in the Spirit. Jude said the same thing, “But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit (vs 20). To pray in the Spirit is to pray with the help and strength of the Spirit. This does not refer to praying in tongues or in some private prayer language. Rather, it means that when you pray the Spirit helps you know what to pray for and also gives you faith to believe God for what you pray for.

Secondly, pray at all times. 1 Thessalonians 5.17 says, “Pray without ceasing.” This, of course, does not mean that you pray every second of the day. What it does mean is that prayer is a regular, consistent part of your life. Prayer is a natural part of your day-to-day lifestyle. When you wake up in the morning, you pray. When you face a difficult situation, you pray. When you talk to a friend in need, you pray. You have set times of prayer, but you also engage in prayer throughout the day as needs arise.

Thirdly, pray with alertness and perseverance. Jesus said, “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak” (Matthew 26.41). We must be watchful and alert in prayer. This is because Satan is ever trying to send distractions our way to keep us from prayer. Thus, we must be alert when we go to prayer. We must also persevere in prayer. At times we are tired or maybe we don’t feel like praying. Yet, the Bible tells us to keep on praying and not to give up. Jesus told a story about a persecuted widow who kept going to the judge until he gave her justice (see Luke 18.1-8). In the same way, we must persevere in prayer knowing that God will send the help we need in due time.

Lastly, pray for all the saints. In the New Testament the saints simply refer to God’s people. If you are saved, then you are a saint. So Paul is telling us to pray for all of God’s people. It is obvious that we cannot pray for every single believer by name. Yet, we can pray for the worldwide church, that God would bless the gospel as it goes forth around the world. And we can also pray for the saints in our local congregation. A strong church is a praying church. Each day we should bring our church and the pastor (see Eph 6.19-20) before God’s throne in prayer. Satan is defeated when we pray.

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