



Pray for one another!

When was the last time we prayed specifically and consistently for fellow believers?

In many churches you need to contract an illness or become a missionary or be the pastor before someone prays for you!

When did you last pray specifically and consistently for a named person who needs to be saved?

The reality is that in most of our churches we pray for 'the lost'.

This four week study is aimed to help us think these issues through and to help us pray for God's bride, the church, His people in the confidence that He will make it a beautiful bride. As we pray for one another we do so in the confidence that we pray in accordance with the will of God.

Introduction

Throughout the Old and New Testament most of the prayers recorded are for the growth in spiritual maturity, unity and love of individuals and the people of God, the church.

So the question we face then is this, “Have we stopped praying biblically?” This series of studies now is intended to help us learn again how to pray for each other and for the people of God.

It is from strong Christ centred churches that love Jesus and their fellow believers that a passion for mission and a unity of purpose arises that transforms the local church and overflows into the community around. Such churches are built through prayer.

Week 1. Praising and praying for the local church

Reading: Colossians 1v3-8

Paul doesn't thank the believers for being faithful, loving and filled with hope.

Why would he? They were not faithful, loving people because of anything they did, but because of what God did in saving them. Since God is the giver of saving faith and grace, he thanks God the Father, for his work in this fellowship of believers.

Verse for reflection:-

‘The gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth’ (Col. 1v6)

Praise for:

1. His love, grace and mercy towards us. He has adopted us into his family, declared us righteous and given us His Spirit. We, the church, are His!
2. Jesus, who delivered us from darkness to light, forgives our sin and gives us life.
3. The powerful work of God in saving people in every generation from every tribe and tongue.
4. Faithful pastors and evangelists who shared the gospel and prayed for us

and continue to serve God.

5. The fruit and growth of God's gospel that we see around us today.

Note: Evangelical Christianity is the fastest growing religion in the world, growing 2x faster than Islam and 3x faster than Buddhism and Hinduism. Over the last 10 years – 300 million people have been saved. However, only 10 million of them are from Europe and North America. (Source:- www.joshuaproject.net).

6. Therefore praise God for the growth of the church abroad (290 million people in Asia, Africa and South America) and pray for Europe and particularly Ireland.

Pray for:

1. We would love God and his church with equal enthusiasm
2. We would have a renewed biblical view of the church and our role within it
3. We would grow in our knowledge of God and confidence in the power of God to save as His word is proclaimed
4. We would become increasingly burdened by the godlessness around us, leading us to pray
5. We would grow in our knowledge of the needs around us and become less inward looking and self absorbed
6. God would call more Pastors and evangelists into full time service and mobilize church members in their local community. (Remember 5.5 billion people today throughout this world need to hear about Jesus and there are still many unreached people groups with no gospel witness.)
7. God would keep and sustain Pastors and evangelists who are serving. Pray that they would have endurance and joy in service.
8. Pray specifically for people in the local community that need to be saved – pray for God to bring to your mind those he would have us pray for, i.e. pray in the Spirit (Jude 1v20). Name names before God and stop just praying 'Lord, save the lost.'

Week 2. Praying for spiritual growth

Reading: Colossians 1v9-14

Verses for reflection:

'we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you.' (Colossians 1v9-12)

It is God who stirs and burdens people to pray and brings spiritual growth. When was the last time you prayed for the prayer meeting in the church or for God to raise up men and women of prayer in the same way you pray for God to call missionaries?

Praise for:

1. His power to act and speak as the creator of all things and ruler of all people and saviour of sinners (Col. 1v16)
2. His great sovereign power:
'Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name; worship the LORD in the splendour of holiness. The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters.' Psalms 29:2-3 (ESV)
3. His power in salvation, giving you new life, His grace that keeps us by His sanctifying power in us,
4. The Holy Spirit who teaches, guides and leads you in the Lord and through His Word that nourishes
5. Those men and women who have prayed for us and who have set an example of constant prayer by faithfulness in the secret place to pray (Matthew 6v6) and at the prayer meeting
6. Answered prayer:
'Blessed be the LORD! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.' Psalms 28:6-7 (ESV)

Pray that:

1. We may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding and walk in a manner worthy of the Lord that will fully please God as Jesus Christ keeps us holy bearing fruit in every good work, increasing in your knowledge, love and devotion to God and being strengthened with Christ's power
2. We may patiently endure in the Lord and honour him in the daily routine of life
3. we would learn what it means to 'pray constantly' so we develop an attitude of mind and heart that is dependent on God.
4. Believers (not forgetting ourselves) would be committed and disciplined in personal private prayer
5. prayer meetings would increase in both the numbers attending and the intensity of prayers
6. God would increase our faith as we pray and give us boldness to pray for 'great 'fruit and growth'.
7. He would protect us from routine, lifeless, ritualistic prayers that are more grounded in superstitions than confidence in God's power to intervene.

Week 3. Praying for joy in Lord and love and unity in His church

Reading: Philippians 4v1-9

Verses for reflection:-

'May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you'. (Colossians 1v11-12)

We are called not just to exist and grit our teeth and think only of joy in heaven, but to 'rejoice in the Lord always.' That is not a natural human response to the difficulties of life; therefore we need to pray for joy in the Lord. Also we have a tendency to seek joy and pleasure in family, work, hobbies, etc. and not God and they often let us down and joy is lost. God is the source of joy not anything or anyone else – we need to pray that our eyes would be fixed on him. What a difference it would make to local churches if they were filled with joyful worshippers who love His church.

Praise God:

1. For those who bring us joy and encouragement
2. For fellow believers especially those we don't always agree with. Actively praise and thank God for them.
3. 'All things were created through [Jesus] and for him.' (Colossians 1v17) that also means that you were created by him and for him.
4. That he is the source of salvation and joy and that in his 'presence there is fullness of joy' and at his 'right hand are pleasures forevermore.' Psalms 16:11 (ESV)
5. That 'The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by His love; He will exult over you with loud singing. Zeph 3:17 (ESV)

Pray that:

1. We would treasure Jesus as your Creator, Saviour, King and seek to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
2. Every believer in your local church will fix their eyes on Jesus as Saviour and take their eyes off other people and over rated possessions
3. The church would gain a new perspective on Christ and learn to enjoy him in good and bad days
4. There would be unity in churches as hearts are centred on Christ
5. The Holy Spirit would search our heart and convict us of any critical, unloving attitudes towards others, so that we would be led to repentance. Our goal is have a heart that overlooks other people's sins and focuses on your own sin and therefore humbly repents before God firstly and then others.
6. There would be willingness to forgive, put to right past wrongs and turn the other cheek.
7. The grace of God would fall upon us anew, to melt bitter hearts, heal wounds and produce genuine love for each other
8. The love of God and joy in the Lord would flood your life and overflow into the life of others in your fellowship.
9. We would develop a servant's heart to humbly give of ourselves to others
10. Every time we meet as a church our goal would primarily be to glorify and enjoy God

Week 4. Pray for Christ's return and the completed work of world mission

Reading: Revelation 7v9-12

Verses for reflection:-

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7v9-10)

Will our prayers be answered? John through his vision answers, 'yes'. This is the picture that should bring us to our knees to pray with complete confidence, knowing that we pray according to God's will when we pray for the church to be made perfect and be brought home. It gives us confidence to pray for the nations and people groups of the world. One day we will stand rejoicing and sing of Jesus, in front of God's throne.

Praise for:

1. our local church that belongs to God and is part of the world wide Church.
2. The church already is loved and seen as beautiful by God because of Jesus finished work on the cross.
3. The church is growing and it will continue to grow and even the unreached groups that today don't know of Jesus will one day have the gospel and a local fellowship.
4. Today you can sing with the angels 'Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God forever and ever!' (Revelation 7v12) in the certain hope that tomorrow you will sing perfectly with them.
5. 'He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.' (Philippians 1v6)

Pray that:

1. We may have an increased awareness of the hope and riches that await us, spurring us on in service
2. God would stir our hearts to see the world as He sees the world, to think God's thoughts after Him and be filled with the knowledge of His will in all

spiritual wisdom and understanding' (Colossians 1v10)

3. God would burden us for the lost and give us a fresh understanding of the miraculous nature of salvation so that we always bathe the church's work in prayer
4. We would have a mission mindset – so evangelism/mission is always at the back of our mind and regularly brought to the front... so that we breathe out prayers to God
5. We would have an inquiring heart to seek out needs, information and pray informed specific prayers
6. A fresh awareness of our responsibility under God to strive as a member of God's church in gospel outreach and mission
7. The gospel may be preached in unreached people groups
8. We would have an increased urgency in presenting the gospel to dying men and women.
9. Christ would come – "Maranatha!" 'come Lord Jesus' (Revelation 22v20)
10. We may the faithfulness to endure in the Lord, remaining pure and committed to Christ until he returns or takes us home