

Bible Study Outline

Prayer:

Prayer Defined:

- 1) **An Expression of Worship** – through the act of prayer we recognize and acknowledge God as the ultimate source for all that exists
- 2) **A primary means of communication** - that binds us together with God in intimate and reciprocal relationship
- 3) **Special speech** – directed from people to God

Focus Text: 1 Tim 2:1-3

*¹ First of all, then, I urge that **petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings** be made for everyone, ² for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (CSB)*

Key Point: God in His revelation to and through men, has inspired the use of specific words deliberately, and for the lifting up and education of the reader. Paul could have simply said, “pray for kings,” but he was inspired to point out four specific elements: petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings.

Petitions (supplications)

From the Greek - deēsis – (day -a-sis) - **a seeking, asking,** entreating, entreaty to God

- **Petitionary prayer** fully acknowledges the primacy of God, His position as the Creator and Ruler over the entire universe, and His
- **Petition:** A passionate pleading
- **Petition:** Craves, requests, desires, (seeks) an audience with God.
 - A *formal* request to a king or judge (Like a legal motion)

- We do not submit our petitions alone -- **we have an Advocate!**
- **Advocate** = Greek word meaning: “one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defense

1 John 2:1

“My little children, I am writing you these things so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the righteous one.”

Heb 4:14-16

¹⁴ Seeing then that **we have a great High Priest** who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For **we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses**, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us **therefore come boldly to the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Take-aways:

- Seek an audience with God
- Assume a posture that honors God in His magnificence, glory, and power
- We must remember to bare our souls (be authentic) – speak to God in a manner comfortable to you
- Submit requests (petitions) with passion, and with the understanding that Jesus is advocating on our behalf

(LESSON 3)

Return to Our Text

1 Tim 2:1-3

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- **Question:** If all of these are *types* of prayers, why do you think the Apostle Paul uses the word, “prayer” in the list?

Prayer: From the Greek, *proseuchē*, which can be the general word for prayer (worship); by implication, an oratory (public) -

- **Question:** Which type of prayers, public or private, do you think Paul is mentioning in this passage?
- **Hint:** Clues are found in how we approach studying the Bible.
 - **Question:** What form or category of literature should the book of 1 Timothy be classified as?
 - **Question:** Always understand who the audience is. Who was Paul writing to? What do we know about Timothy and what was Paul’s purpose in writing to him?
 - **Another Key:** Always consider the broader context (the rest of the book, chapter, or surrounding verses) –
- **Answer:** Clearly found in 1 Tim 3:14-15:

¹⁴” I write these things to you, hoping to come to you soon. ¹⁵ But if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.” (CSB)

Paul is most likely speaking of **public prayer (corporate)**, such as done in church, or other gatherings where there are believers present.

- **Question(s):**
 - **For the Men:** Why do you think some men are so uncomfortable praying at home that they will often defer to their wives or the women in their homes to pray, bless the food, etc?
 - **For everyone:** Why do you think many Christians are uncomfortable leading prayer in a public setting?
 - What is the benefit to others when we offer corporate prayers at church, Bible studies, or in small groups, for example?

Question: Review the passage. Who is Paul instructing corporate prayers to be directed toward?

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Bonus Question: Who was the Roman Emperor when Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, and why was this significant considering?

Three reasons for praying corporately for governmental leaders:

- 1) We should **pray for our leaders**, at all levels, no matter how unreasonable they may seem
- 2) **Our ability to assemble peaceably for public worship is dependent** upon laws enforced and upheld by our legislators, administrators, and judicial leaders (“tranquil and quiet” means restfulness unmarred by disturbance)
- 3) **God wants everyone to be saved** and come to the knowledge of the truth

Caution: Public prayer is NEVER about the person praying.

Matthew 6:5, 5 *“Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward.”*

Five Elements of Corporate Prayer (Article by Jon Graf of the Church Prayer Leaders Network)

1 - One Focus (Acts 12:1-8, 13-15, Peter imprisoned)

Key phrase: ⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was praying fervently to God for him.”

- The church was **focused**
- Effective corporate prayer is **topical**.

Matthew 18:19-20

“Again, truly I tell you, if two of you on earth agree about any matter that you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them.”

2 - One Voice

- The entire congregation **prays on the same theme**. (Note Act 12:5)
- Prayer is made accessible in those places **where the most people are gathered**.
- **Focus on the kingdom purposes** of the church’s mission or a particular ministry

3 - Invoking the Presence (Read 2 Chronicles 6-7, Solomon’s Prayer of Dedication)

2 Chronicles 6:40-41

⁴⁰ Now, my God, please let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer of this place.

⁴¹ Now therefore: Arise, Lord God, come to your resting place, You and your powerful ark. May your priests, Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and may your faithful people rejoice in goodness.

We often default to:

Matthew 18:20: *“Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”*

But there is so much more opportunity to experience the power of His presence!

- Seek His “manifest presence”
- When we pray during worship, **shift toward praying entirely focused upward, on Jesus Christ** rather than on us
- We more readily **sense His presence when our prayers become more kingdom focused**.

4 – Desperation (Ezra 8:21-23)

Ezra 8:21-22

²¹ I proclaimed a fast by the Ahava River, so that we might **humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us, our dependents, and all our possessions.** ²² I did this because I was ashamed to ask the king for infantry and cavalry to protect us from enemies during the journey, since we had told him, *“The hand of our God is gracious to all who seek him, but his fierce anger is against all who abandon him.”*

- The more desperate we are about something as a church, the more vibrant our prayers.
- What is happening in our communities that has the church’s attention?
- We must pray with the attitude and sense of desperation, *“We can’t solve this, God; we need You,”*

5 – Agreement

Everyone knows and agrees with what the church is asking of God.

“A Praying Church” Bible Study Series

Jan-Feb 2021

Members often have a different ideas of what should be done and end up praying according to their own, individual agendas

Take-Aways: