

We will... Pray (Colossians 4:2-6)

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[0 : 00] If you're a guest with us this morning, my name is Scott and I have a privilege of serving here as a pastor. And we find ourselves in the middle of a sermon series on our member covenant, which is something we say we're trying to articulate the responsibilities we have both to the Lord and to one another.

And so we're walking through different responsibilities that we have. One of the responsibilities that we have as a church body with one another is to pray.

And so today we will be talking about prayer. And it is the encouragement that Paul has there in the book of Colossians, the passage that Rob just read for us. And to get into this topic of prayer, I want to first open with an illustration.

Often after the service we invite individuals to come and have a conversation with me. Why do we do that? Because I want to get to know different individuals who may be visiting the church. Also, I have an invitation for them and a gift to say thank you.

And to learn how I might be better able to minister to this family or this individual upon them visiting. And so that's what I'm aiming for when someone were to come forward.

[1 : 22] And let's assume you were to come forward at the end of the service and you do what has been asked and you begin sharing. You introduce yourself and you say, my name is. And you share with me a bit about your life.

I moved to Spokane here. I was married here. I have so many children here. I, here's my, my employment. I work here. Here's my future aspirations. You just go for it. You tell me your life story.

And let's assume you spend 10, 15 minutes sharing with me many things about your life. You give me a little glimpse of a window into your life. And my response is this.

I turn my back and I just walk away. I don't even acknowledge that you were even talking to me. I hope we would all think that was pretty rude. That was pretty rude. And I hope I would never do that to you.

But I think that's what prayerlessness is from the saints of God to the Father. God has started a conversation with us. And so I want to begin today before we talk about our responsibility to pray for one another.

[2 : 35] What prayer is. So I'm going to give us some theological categories real quick before we get into the passage and in Colossians. But first I want to say that prayer is a response to the Lord. It's responding to the Lord. It's talking to the Lord.

But the conversation with the Lord didn't start with us. This is why prayer is firstly a response and a response to the Lord. And why do I say this? For reason number one is because they already made a way for us to have access to the Father.

Think of it. We were dead in trespasses and sin. We were alienated from God. This is how we began our life. And Jesus has made a way for us to have access to the Father.

In fact, in Hebrews we're told to go boldly before the throne of grace that we might find help in a time of need. We're encouraged to go boldly to the throne room of God. But we only have access to the throne room of God when we pray because of what Christ has done for us.

It's a response. Second, it's a response because he already made a way for us to have access to the Father. But secondly, it's because he has eternally existed. When we worship God for who he is, it is because he has always been.

[4 : 06] There has never been a moment when God has not been. What is praise and worship and adoration for his person? These all recognize that he has always been glorious. So when we praise the Lord in prayer, thanking him for who he is, there's never a moment when he has not been.

He is matchless in his perfections. None is superior to him. He is sublimely triumphed that none is more excellent than the Lord.

So responding to his glory and praise is very appropriate. And it is a response to who he is. And it's in part because he has eternally existed.

And then thirdly, prayer is a response to God because all three members of the Godhead are active in prayer. The convention that we find in Scripture, the normal pattern of prayer in Scripture is that we direct our prayers to the Father.

We have access to the Father through the Son, and our prayers are enabled in part due to the Holy Spirit. So we direct our prayers to the Father through the Son empowered by the Holy Spirit. You say, why to the Father?

[5 : 33] Well, in the model prayer that Jesus encouraged us to emulate when he taught his disciples to pray, he says, our Father, pray this way, our Father who art in heaven.

The Son teaches his disciples to direct their prayers to the Father. Secondly, it is through the Son as the mediator. In Ephesians 2.18, we learn that Jesus is the mediator.

He is the greater sacrifice in the book of Hebrews. And it is because of his sacrifice for sin, he is enabled and paid the penalty for sin.

He is enabled a way for humanity to have access to God, the Father. So we pray to the Father through the Son, we have access to the Father through the Son, and enabled or empowered by the Holy Spirit.

In Ephesians 6.16, it says this, praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplications. We're to pray in the Spirit that he has enabled us to pray.

[6 : 43] So prayer is response to the Lord. That is first thing. Prayer is a response. Secondly, let's handle what the aim of prayer is. What is the aim or the goal of prayer?

The purpose of prayer is simply to know the Lord better. I believe we have Ephesians 3.14-19 on the screen with us. And this is what Ephesians 3.14-19 says.

It says for this, for this reason I bow my knees before the Father. This is the reason for which Paul is going to articulate. This is why I pray. For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, again he's directing his prayers to the Father.

From whom every family in heaven on earth is named, according to the riches of the glory, he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and the length, the height and the depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

[8 : 06] Look with me in verse 17, the Purpose Clause. Look, why is it that Paul bowed his knee before the Father, he says in verse 17, so that there's the Purpose Clause, Christ may dwell in your hearts. The very purpose of prayer is to know the Lord better.

That's the goal. And it says that Christ may dwell in your hearts. The heart in the Greek New Understanding, the first century understanding is like the control center of the whole person.

So, biblically, one's heart is the control center and so it is the repository of one's core commitments. It's one's deepest affections and loves and most foundational hopes to us is represented in one's heart.

So, it controls our thinking, it controls our feeling, it controls our behavior. So, to have a powerful sense, more vivid sense of the reality of God's presence and our shared life with him is what Paul is praying for, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

So, the aim of prayer is to know the Lord better. Look, though, how he also articulates it later on in verse 19.

[9 : 33] He says, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. What is the purpose of prayer?

It's to know the Lord better and Paul says it several different ways in these verses in Book of Ephesians. He's praying that the church in Ephesus would know the Lord better and he's aimed in that one of the goals of prayer is to do that very thing.

So, now that we've handled what word prayer is, it's a response to the Lord, it's talking to the Lord, but it's not initiated by us. The conversation hasn't been started by us. Secondly, the aim of it is to know the Lord better.

So, then we get to our passage in Colossians 4, 2 through 6. I pray that you have a copy of Scripture. It's the passage that Rob read for us earlier.

I'm not going to read it again because Rob already did, but here's going to be the big idea of this message today. You're going to hear Paul articulate to the church at Colossians. Here's the big idea.

[10 : 54] We are to be a people who are devoted to prayer, be devoted to prayer for the effective spread of the gospel. That's the point and I believe on your sermon outline card that is articulated at the top.

Be devoted to prayer for the effective spread of the gospel. He says though in verse 2, he says it and he's going to make this appeal and he's going to make the point and he says, firstly, I want you to continue steadfastly in prayer. Some translations say be devoted to prayer.

The word here is this fervent devotion to prayer. Is your prayer life described as one who gives fervent devotion, who persists in to occupy oneself with earnest diligence?

Do you do that in prayer? It's the very opposite of apathy or this casual prayer life. Paul is calling for an all out earnestness of God's, before God's throne of God's people.

This is a sharp contrast with many half-hearted or casual or humdrum substitutes of one's prayer life. Our calendars and our bank accounts tell us what we value and what we're devoted to.

[12 : 15] If you were to look at my bank account and my checking account and see all the money that I'm spending money on, or all the things that I'm spending money on, you would be able to tell, oh, Scott must really value that.

Or if you were to look at my calendar and every minute of my day was allocated to some activity, and as yours would be, you would be able to tell what I'm value.

If I had a lot of time with my wife, if I had little time for this or little time for that, by the way we invest our time, you would be able to tell what we value.

Same for me, same for you. The average America spends two hours and 23 minutes on social media a day, almost two and a half hours.

The average American spends four hours and 37 minutes looking at their phones every day. Over four and a half hours just looking at her phone. Men in America today spend five hours and 56 minutes, four minutes shy of six hours, on either watching sports or leisure activities.

[13 : 23] Average American man. The average American watches two hours and 48 minutes, almost three hours watching network television. An additional four hours of digital TV, Netflix, Amazon, Apple TV, any of those digital forms of TV.

So a total of six hours, almost seven hours a day just watching TV, average American. So it's not for a lack of time that we don't pray, but it's a lack of priority.

We are devoted people to many different things. We just read about what the average American is devoted to. But this passage is encouraging us to be devoted in prayer.

Have this fervent devotion to prayer. Pray without ceasing and all times. We read this in the 120 disciples when they were gathered at the upper room before Pentecost waiting for the Holy Spirit to come.

It says this in Acts 1.14, it says they continually devoted themselves to prayer as they were up in that upper room, waiting for the Holy Spirit, doing what they were told to do, to wait.

[14 : 39] We are to be of people who are devoted to prayer for the effective spread of the gospel.

But the verse 2 goes on, not only we to continue steadfastly in prayer, but we are to be watchful in it. What are we to be watchful in?

Prayer. This is like the mental imagery I have as one of a sentry who is alert, he's on a wall, he's awake, he's aware, he's attentive, he's on the lookout for potential threats.

When we pray, we're to be on the lookout. We're to be this sentry that stands guard. Why is this important? Because my prayer life can be sometimes quite distracted, and sometimes I'm not steadfast, attentive in my prayer life.

Let me illustrate. I could find myself praying for my wife, and I, thanking the Lord for her, praying for some circumstances in her life, and then all of a sudden I start thinking about, man, and that banana bread she made was very good.

[15 : 46] And I don't know where she got that butter, but it wasn't Kirkland brand, so she didn't get it from Costco. And thinking about Costco, I wonder what gas prices are. I need to fill up, and I think what's the gas prices?

Speaking of my truck, I want to go for a road trip. I remember the road trip we went on this summer, which is true, went to Colorado mountains. I wonder what the leaves fall. I wonder what the leaves are like in the Colorado mountains. And they're changing the autumn colors.

And I wonder if you can see the autumn change of colors all throughout the Rocky Mountains from the space station. And thinking about space station, and I think, oh, the northern lights. We just had some northern lights and all that radiation racing through space to create the northern lights.

And I wonder what kind of radiation protection they have in the International Space Station. And I will circle the solar system in prayer. And I imagine you're not all that together different.

And so we are to be a people who are not only devoted and dedicated to this thing of prayer, but we're to be watchful in it.

[16 : 50] As on guard. Not only that, but we're to be watchful with Thanksgiving.

In this book of Colossians here, we have five things that Paul is encouraging the saints at Colossae, the church there, to be thankful for.

The first one is found in chapter one. It's their salvation. Secondly, they're to be thankful for their growth in Christ. Thirdly, their fellowship with Christ in the church. Fourthly, it's the opportunity to serve Christ in the body to one another.

And then here in chapter four, verse two, he wants the church to be thankful that God will answer prayer according to his purposes.

And when I think about praying and what to be thankful for, we don't have time to look up all these things to be thankful for. But I alliterated four P words to help us remember.

[17 : 55] Believers are to be thankful for God's presence. We see that in Psalm 75, verse one. Lord, thank you for your presence. Ephesians 1.13 tells us upon the salvation that the Holy Spirit, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, we're told.

Thank you, Lord, for your presence. Secondly, believers to be thankful for his provision. Thirdly, believers are to be thankful for his pardon.

That we are no longer slaves to sin, forgiven, purchased off the slave block. We are to be thankful for God's promise.

That we have victory in Christ. And lastly, we are to be thankful for God's purpose. That all things work together for the good. Those who love God and are called according to his purpose.

So we're to be praying with devotion, being watchful, filled with thanksgiving. Notice also for the purpose for which Paul is asking for this prayer.

[19 : 08] Be devoted to prayer for the effective spread of the gospel. Notice how Paul now breaks down why he wants them to be devoted to prayer.

In verses three and four, we see that the effective spread of the gospel will take place with words. And so he's asking the church at Colossae, hey, pray, be devoted in prayer.

Be watchful in it with thanksgiving. For what reason? Because the effective spread of the gospel with your words, and we're going to look at that in a second. And then verses five and six, it's for the effective spread of the gospel with your very life as a testimony bearing witness to Christ.

So with words three and four, with your life, verses five and six. So let's just look at verse three. He's asking them to be steadfast in prayer for what purpose?

For the spread of the gospel with words. Let's look at with me in verse three. At the same time, pray also for us that God may open to us a door for the word to declare the mystery of Christ on accordance of which I am in prison.

[20 : 24] He is asking for an opportunity to speak. Pray for me, church at Colossae, as Paul would say, for the opportunity to speak of the mystery of Christ.

The word mystery here in verse three is, we often think in English of the word mystery and we think, well, it's a mystery. It's an enigma too difficult to figure out.

That's how often we will think of the word mystery in our modern English. In the first century, though, this Greek word is more of a, it is something that was once concealed that has now been revealed. And so in the Old Testament, what was it that was concealed?

That there would be this Messiah who would one day come, who was going to be born of a virgin. He was to be born in Bethlehem. He was going to be born to the tribe of Judah.

And who would this figure be? And one day all the nations will worship him. Just who will this be? Well, that was concealed. That's the mystery of the Old Testament is who this Messiah will be, if you will.

[21 : 29] And then in the New Testament, we see the last prophet say, John the Baptist say, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And John identifies him. So this mystery that was once concealed is now revealed. It's him, follow him. He is the fulfillment for which all of this is, and he is the fulfillment when the Lord cursed the serpent.

There would one day be someone who would crush his head with his heel. One day crush his head. So who would be that one?

Way back in the garden that the Lord said, there's going to become somebody serpent who will crush your head. And all of history waited to see who that person would be.

And there was this anticipation. And so Paul is eager to share this mystery of Christ, this revelation of Christ, the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, and he's praying, Colossian church, please pray for me, that the gospel would be known through my words.

[22 : 59] And then he says, on account of which I'm in prison, what landed Paul in prison is the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And that so incensed, and so he is under house arrest at this time, waiting for trial.

And so isn't it interesting what he asks the church of Colossians to, to Colossae to pray for? I don't know about you, but I may be tempted to say, and pray for my release. And pray that justice would be done and for a favorable outcome.

And pray in the hearing of Caesar that he would dismiss with prejudice my case. And pray for my comfort. I don't like being confined to this little house.

And pray for better food. I would, those would be my request. But Paul isn't concerned about that. He says, I want you to pray for an open door for me to proclaim the mystery of Christ, for me to proclaim the gospel.

So one of the best ways we can pray for each other in the church is we have this responsibility to pray for each other, to pray that we would have opportunity to proclaim Christ.

[24 : 22] He continues in verse four, praying that the spread of the gospel would be with words. He says in verse four that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

One of the, I don't know if you were here last week, but I just loved, and I asked her permission to share Phoebe's baptism video.

How she declared what Christ has done in her life. And then for her to give public testimony, being baptized shortly after and for Pastor Cole to ask her questions.

Do you trust in Christ and Christ alone for your salvation and all of this? And it was very clear just what it is, what baptism is, and what she is giving testimony to in being baptized to us.

And he says, I want to be clear. So pray for me for the open door of opportunity, but pray also that I would make it clear when that time comes that I would make it clear.

[25 : 27] Why is this important? Sometimes I lament a little bit. Another elder and myself had the opportunity to hear testimonies of two individuals who are wanting to join the church.

It's one of the things we have the privilege of doing as elders is to hearing the testimony of those who want to come to, who want to join the church in membership. And why do we do that? Because we want to make sure that we diminish any opportunity for spiritual confusion.

It would be no good to anyone to be a member of a church and for them not to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Example, unfortunately for me, I was a baptized member of a church and I did not know the Lord.

That caused for me many years of spiritual confusion. We don't want to do that. And so we want to listen for people's testimony. But one thing I will say, one thing I lament sometimes is when I'm listening to the testimony of saints.

And that was not the case this morning is sometimes it is hard to understand what is it that gives somebody the assurance of salvation.

[26 : 40] When I ask for people's testimony of what is it that you have the assurance of your salvation, I'll hear a lot of different things. I'll hear about church people going to church, being raised in the Christian family, going to a camp, being baptized in a river.

Not that that matters. Being going to some church program, whether it be youth group or a wanna, or singing in a choir years ago and all of these things.

And I'll hear all of these things. But does that give you the assurance of your salvation? So when you give your testimony before the Lord, you can say all of that.

Because that is part of your story, if any of it applies, it's part of your story. But make it clear to say, but I don't trust in any of that for my salvation. I trust in Christ and Him alone, in His condescension from heaven to earth.

He left heaven to come to earth and He did so and took, being born of a virgin, living a sinless life. He died and paid the penalty for sin.

[27 : 54] Three days later He rose from the grave and He ultimately ascended to the Father. And it's in His sinless life, His death for sin and resurrection from the grave, I place my full weight of my trust.

That He and His act alone and what He did paid the penalty for my sin. And it's in Him and Him alone I have the assurance of my salvation and the forgiveness of sin.

That make that clear. Oftentimes we make all the other stuff clear. I grew up in a Christian home and so we can confuse people with accidentally with what it is to know the Lord.

And may we make it clear. Paul is pleading and asking, pray for an opportunity, but then pray that my words be clear, that I make it clear the Gospel. And I pray that we would grow in our clarity of what the Gospel is and our communication of that one to another.

And to those who don't know the Lord especially. So again, what's the big idea? Be devoted to prayer for the expansion of the Gospel, spread of the Gospel.

[29 : 04] Look with me in verses 5 and 6 because now Paul will say, yes, pray for the open door for my speech, but now I'm asking for you to pray for my life to bear witness for my life.

So walk. Now Paul is just giving the church a collusion just before he concludes his letter. He says, walk in wisdom toward outsiders.

Make them the best use of the time. How one behaves gives credibility to what we say.

If I were to say, well, I'll forgo that illustration.

This is one of the reasons why character qualities are so important for elders. Elders are the ones given to the church to shepherd the flock of God, to be an example to the flock.

[30 : 28] In their character, the qualities are listed in Scripture. There are to be husbands of one wives and there's a bunch of qualities that are not given to much wine, not greedy.

There's many character qualities that are prescribed of who an elder is to meet in order to be qualified to serve as an elder. Why is that so important?

The elders are given the charge biblically to teach God's word and if one's life does not match what one says, then there's a disparity and the credibility of it breaks down quickly.

We all know this. And so Paul is saying to the church at Colossians, hey, Colossians, hey, walk in wisdom with outsiders.

Because your life is going to lend you credibility or disqualify your words, making the best use of the time. Making the best use of the time.

[31 : 26] I recall one year there was a father who wanted to make the best use of time and he realized over the course of years, the family gathering for Christmas would rotate from one family member to another and to hosting every year.

And his rotation was coming up that year and it was going to be at his house and he lamented a little bit that when other, the family, even though they grew up together and they were Christian, that no one really read the Christmas story.

And you would have all thought by attending the family gatherings that it was just a secular Christmas gathering. And he was convicted of this and he thought, I want to make the most of my opportunity.

Here it comes this year and we're hosting. So he bought a nativity set. And it was going to be the first family gift that everyone opened.

And so they opened the family nativity set and he allowed the children to put the figurines when he read the Christmas story in Luke chapter two. So then he read the Christmas story and the shepherds were in a hillside far away.

[32 : 39] So the kids would move the figurines. But he told the Christmas story. This is why we celebrate that the second person of the Godhead condescended to earth being born of a virgin and we celebrate the one whose head was going to be crushed.

The one who John said, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world has just now been born. And so he wanted to proclaim that to his family and he wanted to make the most of the opportunity.

And we all have that sense of anticipation and deliberation about many of the opportunities that we have with our neighbors.

Wendy and I have an opportunity to get to know some of our neighbors here coming up and I look forward to thinking carefully about our time with our neighbors.

And I'm looking forward to that prayerfully and looking for an opportunity to proclaim Christ. But I pray that we all would be like that with everyone at work, at school, in our house, with our family.

[33 : 51] Why? Well, because we're told to be devoted to prayer for the effective spread of the gospel and we're to look for opportunities.

And then he turns in verse six. So why are we to walk with wisdom toward outsiders looking for the opportunity and let your speech be gracious and season with salt?

This is in verse six. So that, here's the purpose, you may know how you ought to answer each person. You may know how to answer each person.

Paul turns from actions in one's walk to one's life in one's speech. Paul is communicating in order for you to have effective witness. Your life, your actions needs to be consistent with Scripture.

So too does your speech. We are to speak with grace and graciousness. Let your speech be spiritual, wholesome, fitting, kind, sensitive, purposeful, complimentary, gentle, truthful, loving and thoughtful.

[34 : 55] In Ephesians, this is kind of a sister book to the book of Colossians, Paul writes, Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as good for edification according to the need of the moment that it may give grace to those who hear.

Let no unwholesome word. This goes beyond just salty language. This goes to insults and things that are not helpful to the hearer or who things that do not give life to another.

Our speech is to be seasoned with salt. Salt can sting when rubbed into a wound, but salt prevents corruption. So our speech should act as a purifying influence, rescuing conversations from the filth that so often engulf it.

So do you contribute to the wholesomeness of a conversation and do you rescue conversations from filth? And the purpose is given.

Why rest, why a wholesome life toward outsiders? Why make most of every opportunity? Why speech be gracious? Why speech having been seasoned with salt so that you may know how you answer each person?

[36 : 14] The purpose is for the effective spread of the gospel. That you may know how to answer each person. You may know what to say and when to say it.

Why? Because we are to be a people who are devoted to prayer. We are to be a people who are devoted to prayer for the effective spread of the gospel.

When I was thinking about this message, I am aided deeply by different aides to do different things.

Many of you outpace me in this regard. Many of you have prayer journals where you journal every day and you write down the things that you are praying for.

For me, I like having a paper like this or a sheet of paper like this. This is something that I use. If you don't have one of these, if you weren't handed one of these, there are some on the welcome center.

[37 : 19] It is meant to be a guide for you to write down things that you can adore the Lord for. The top row is the Acts acronym. Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication is a top row.

How I would use it, supplication is requests being made unto the Lord. After I would every morning say, let's begin adoring the Lord for who He is.

I would take some time to confess sin and then I would be thankful. We are told to do this with Thanksgiving. In the supplication part, I would maybe rotate through the bottom eight categories.

One day I may pray for the staff, elders and deacons. The next day, the different members in the body of Christ that God has burdened me for, for whatever purpose, for whatever reason.

Second, we have missionaries and so whether this be Karris and Tyler or Danny or whoever that you have, that you're praying for, we should be praying for all of them but there are some that you know more familiar than others and we could be praying for them.

[38 : 27] Next, the Gospel Partnership in Churches. This last Thursday, the staff had opportunity to go to Indian Trail Church and we got to sit in a room with over 120 other pastors and elders.

It was a great meeting, seeing together, hear from someone. We ought to pray for Kyle Schwann at Indian Trail, Brett Sweet here two blocks away, Grace Christian Fellowship Central, Dan Jarms over at Faith Bible, we ought to be praying Paul Funches over at Trinity Church out in the valley, his place, Mr. Rhea, Mr. Rhee, sorry, is his name.

We ought to pray for these and for other Gospel partnerships, for the UGM, for any ministry in town that you have affiliation with. Pray for wisdom and understanding, are you facing a circumstance where you say, Lord help me?

And then family and friends and the nations that are unreached. You can go to different websites, Stadia is one of them and see all of the people groups that are yet unreached, the Yi people, the Kajah people who still are without Gospel witness.

And then other. But if this can be a tool, because here's the thing, I want us to be devoted in prayer, but without a plan to be devoted in prayer, it's almost without plan and it won't be devoted in prayer.

[40 : 06] Also, I want to say I'm grateful that I know of many, there's a ladies group that meets in the church. I don't even know when and where they meet, but I just know there's a group of ladies who meet and their whole purpose for meeting is just to pray.

I also am aware that there are some men in the church who pray at five o'clock in the morning on a conference call. They're all on a conference call and they're praying together at five in the morning.

If you need a prayer partner to pray with, do that, have a plan, but we are to be a people who are devoted to prayer being watchful with Thanksgiving.

Have a plan to be devoted to prayer. And second, I'm going to invite us in this way. Every Sunday morning at eight o'clock, we have an all church prayer meeting that happens down in the fireplace room.

If at eight o'clock on Sunday morning, you would like to pray. And you say, I'm not, I want to gain the habit of prayer and this is one way to do it with others. I would love to join you.

[41 : 11] You have to pray to attend out loud. You can, you can join each other silently.

On Sunday mornings, for some reason, my cell phone manufacturer is so kind to send me a notification.

The notification tells me, and it happens to come in on Sunday morning while I'm sitting here. The notification tells me how many minutes a week I spend doing different activities on my phone.

Let me just share with you this. That notification ought to serve as a notice that prayerlessness by any of us is not for a lack of time.

It's for a lack of priority. So I encourage us, as a people of God, we have a responsibility to be devoted to prayer and to pray for one another.

[42 : 21] And we have that responsibility as members together. And it's a great privilege. I would like to close in prayer.

Lord, thank you that prayer is firstly a response.

Thank you for being the one who initiated all things. You initiated creation. You initiated your son being sent to die for sin.

You initiated the drawing of us unto yourself that we may believe. You initiated going to the very throne room of God, making it possible for us to even have access to the Father, to petition Him, to adore Him, to worship Him because of what you have done.

You have made it possible. And so thank you, Lord, that firstly prayer is a response.

[43 : 50] That we get to have a relationship with you whereby we get to talk to you. We get to adore you. We get to confess our sins before you.

We get to thank you for all the gracious and kindness that you've bestowed on us. And we get to petition you and make supplication for the things that are on our hearts and minds.

Lord, thank you also for making it clear, though, that one aspect of prayer that is critically important is for the effective spread of the gospel.

Lord, we thank you for the different churches. We thank you for the different members, how each of us are in different spheres of influence in this city, in this town, where we have this opportunity to declare the mystery of Christ, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thank you, Lord, that we can bolster courage in one another and pray for one another. Lord, there are many needs in this body, in all of our lives.

[45 : 08] And so Lord, thank you that we can come before you and even lift needs up to you. Lord, this week I had the opportunity to hear from Dotty, and so Lord, we pray for her.

She's asked for prayer, and so we pray for her today. We pray that you would alleviate the symptoms that she is feeling.

Lord, I pray that we would be burdened as a church for those without Christ, that we would be attentive to the open doors of opportunity that you've given, and we would have our lives be matching the words that we speak.

You're too glorious, Lord, and it's in your beautiful name we pray. Amen.