

5. Your Pastor and Missionaries Need God's Encouragement

Discouragement is a frequent problem on the mission field. Slow progress can be discouraging. People leaving the church, for good or bad reasons, can be discouraging. When a family leaves a big church not too many people notice. But when a family leaves a church that only has three families, it is a BIG loss.

a. Ask God to lift them up when progress is slow.

- 1) Pray that God will help them keep their focus on the Lord.
- 2) Pray that God will cheer them with increased progress.

b. Ask God to lift them up when problems get them down.

- 1) Whether the problems are people problems, family problems, financial problems, or other problems, preachers need prayer.
- 2) Let them know that you are praying for them. Someone once said, "More people fail for lack of encouragement than for any other reason" and I would not be surprised if that was true.
- 3) "David encouraged himself in the LORD his God." (1 Sa 30:6) Pray that your pastor and missionaries will do the same.

Conclusion: The Apostle Paul requested, "Brethren, pray for us." If you know the Lord, you can pray for your pastor and missionaries. Remember to pray for the five "E" needs of your pastor and missionaries. Pray that God will enrich, enlighten, empower, enable, and encourage them.

In his book *The Power of Prayer*, R.A. Torrey wrote, "Many of us are tempted to criticize the foreign work because of the meagerness of the results, but ought not our criticism to begin with ourselves? May it not be that the meagerness of the results is the consequences of the meagerness of our own prayer?" – p. 53

Will you take up the challenge "Brethren, pray for us"? Your fervent prayers can make a big difference!

Song: Teach Me To Pray – 346

Pray for Us

19 May 2019 PM – 1 Thessalonians 5:25 – Missions19 – Scott Childs

Introduction: E. M. Bounds on page 53 of his book *Preacher and Prayer* wrote, "Prayer, to the preacher, is not simply the duty of his profession, a privilege, but it is a necessity. Air is not more necessary to the lungs than prayer is to the preacher. It is absolutely necessary for the preacher to pray. It is an absolute necessity that the preacher be prayed for. These two propositions are wedded into a union which ought never to know any divorce: the preacher must pray; the preacher must be prayed for."

The NT contains 24 commands to pray. Seven of those times we are commanded to pray for others. Though the Thessalonian Christians were only babes in Christ, they were able to pray. The Apostle Paul valued and coveted their prayers for him and his missionary colleagues. Our text reads, "Brethren, pray for us." (1 Thessalonians 5:25)

We know that prayer is important, yet prayer is often one of the most neglected Christian duties. Why don't we pray more than we do?

- Is it because prayer is not a priority to us?
- Is it because sin prevents us from getting through to God?
- Is it because our prayers are so general that we get no clear answers?
- Maybe it is in part because we don't know what to pray for.

Transition: If you know Christ as your Saviour, you have a duty to pray, not only for yourself, but for others, and particularly for your preacher and missionaries. This evening I want us to consider five needs that your preacher and missionaries have that you ought to pray for daily.

1. Your Pastor and Missionaries Need God's Enrichment

a. I am not talking about their financial enrichment.

b. Pray that God will enrich them spiritually.

- 1) They need meaningful personal devotions.
 - a) Pray that they will not neglect the Word, but will learn from it and apply it each day.
 - b) Pray that they might memorise and meditate on the word. God promised to bless those who, ". . . delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law . . . meditate day and night." (Psalms 1:2)

- c) Pray that they will *“Pray without ceasing.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:17) and become men of prayer.
- 2) They need Holy Spirit’s filling each day. The verse *“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;”* (Ephesians 5:18) is passive meaning that we must allow the Spirit to fill us.
 - a) To do this they will need to confess and forsake sin.
 - b) They will also need to draw near to God.
 - c) Pray to this end. This is so important for every Christian, but even more so for your pastor and missionaries.

2. Your Pastor and Missionaries Need God’s Enlightenment

a. They need God’s enlightenment as they study.

- 1) Every preacher struggles to know what God wants him to preach. Pray that God will give wisdom.
- 2) Every preacher also struggles to know exactly what God was saying in a text and how to best present it to his people. He must *“rightly divide the word of truth”* (2 Ti 2:15) and then rightly apply it to practical situations.
 - a) If you don’t get fed from a sermon, it may be in part because you did not pray for the preacher as he was preparing.
 - b) Pray earnestly for this important need.

b. They need God’s enlightenment as they shepherd the flock.

- 1) Caring for the spiritual needs of people requires wisdom from God.
- 2) They also need God’s wisdom for leading, planning, delegating, counselling, and using their time efficiently. Remember the admonition, *“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”* (Ephesians 5:15-16)

3. Your Pastor and Missionaries Need God’s Empowerment

a. They need God’s power as they witness

- 1) Pray for open doors to witness. The Apostle Paul

requested, *“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.”* (2 Thessalonians 3:1) (i.e., run and glorified by sinners accepting it).

- 2) Pray for their boldness. Witnessing boldness comes from God.
- 3) Pray that the Holy Spirit will work through them and open hearts. Paul and Silas experienced this when they were in Philippi. Acts 16:14 says, *“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.”*

b. They need God’s power as they preach

- 1) A sermon without God’s power is little more than a speech.
- 2) Your pastor and missionaries need to be able to say with Paul, *“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:”* (1 Corinthians 2:4)
- 3) Only God-empowered preaching will convert sinners and edify saints. Jesus said, *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”* (John 15:5)

4. Your Pastor and Missionaries Need God’s Enablement

a. Pray that God will enable them to stay healthy.

- 1) Poor health is a big hindrance.
- 2) Pray that your pastor and missionaries will get sufficient rest, avoid sickness, be strong and energetic.

b. Pray that God will enable them to avoid danger.

- 1) This was a burden to the Apostle Paul for he added to his prayer request, *“And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.”* (2 Thessalonians 3:2)
- 2) Missionaries in primitive areas especially need prayer for God’s protection.