

- 3) Paul longed for more open doors for the Gospel.
 - a) He wanted to speak the mystery of Christ.
 - b) He also wanted to make this known, as he ought to speak.
 - c) In Ephesians 6:19, he expresses the need for boldness to open his mouth to make known the mystery of the Gospel. He faced the same human hindrances that we face when witnessing.
 - 4) Praying evangelistically is praying for the spread of the Gospel.
- b. If Paul needed a door of utterance, we certainly do.**
- 1) This is something we must pray for ourselves. We must pray for opportunities to open up, and for boldness to push open doors that are not fully shut. We must pray that God will lead us to people who will listen. If you have not witnessed to anyone recently, you need to pray fervently that God will give you opportunities and the boldness to speak when He does. Use the Gospel hand that I taught you.
 - 2) This is also something that we ought to be praying for our pastor, our missionaries, and our church family. You are not the only Christian who struggles to witness, we all do. However, we need more of Paul's zeal and passion for witnessing.
 - 3) We all agree that we are living in what looks like the last days. Jesus could come to take all Christians to heaven this evening. If he does, those without Christ will be left behind.

Conclusion: How well have you been praying for others? God wants us to pray unselfishly, empathetically, and evangelistically. This evening let's ask God to improve our praying for others. Certainly, pray for yourself, as you need God's grace to fulfil your duties, but do not neglect praying for others.

Song: Teach Me to Pray – 346

Praying for Others

22 October 2023 PM – Text: Colossians 4:3-4 – Topic: Prayer – Series: Col23

Introduction: In Colossians 4:2, the Holy Spirit had Paul challenge the Colossian believers to pray steadfastly, to watch for the tempter, and to thank God for His grace. Continuing this theme, he urges them to pray for others.

Transition: I find, in Colossians 4:3-4, three duties relating to praying for others that I want to share with you this evening.

1. Pray Unselfishly (Showing unselfish concern for the welfare of others)

a. It is right to pray for yourself.

- 1) God has commanded us to pray for ourselves (v.2).
- 2) It is right to pray, to watch, and to give thanks as you pray. We unpacked these facts in the sermon on Colossians 4:2.

b. As you pray for yourself, pray for others.

- 1) Our text begins with the word “**withal**”. The word from which it is translated simply means at the same time.
- 2) Paul commanded the Colossian believers to pray for God's grace to do their difficult Christian duties, to watch for the devil's traps, and to be thankful for God's provisions, but **at the same time**, he wanted them to pray for him and his mission team.
- 3) Paul was not asking them to do something that he was not doing. In fact, he set a great example in this matter.
 - a) Paul regularly thanked God for many saints (Ro 1:8-10; 1 Co 1:4; Eph 1:16; Php 1:3-4; Col 1:3; 1 Th 1:2-3; 2 Th 1:3; 2 Ti 1:3; Phm 1:4).
 - b) He prayed for their wisdom and knowledge (Eph 1:17; Col 1:9).
 - c) He prayed that they would have hope (Eph 1:18; Ro 15:13).
 - d) He prayed that they would have peace (Ro 15:5-6; 2 Th 3:16).
 - e) He prayed that they would be strengthened spiritually (Eph 3:16; Col 1:11).
 - f) He prayed that they would grow in love (Eph 3:17; Php 1:9).
 - g) He prayed for their spiritual growth (Php 1:9-11; Col 1:10; 2Co 13:7; 1Th 5:23-24).

h) He prayed for opportunities to minister to them ^(1Th 3:9-10) <https://thinke.org/blog/10-powerful-prayers-the-apostle-paul-prayed-over-gods-people-andrew-hess> (edited)

- 4) At the same time that we pray for our own needs, we need to take time to pray for others. God does not want us to be selfish, self-centred prayers. We are to pray for our enemies (Mt 5:44), pray for each other (Eph 6:18), pray for sick believers (Jas 5:16), and pray for all men (1Ti 2:1). The prophet Samuel said that it would be sinful of him not to pray for his people. (1 Samuel 12:23)

"Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:" We are to bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2).

Therefore, pray unselfishly. As you pray for yourself, pray for others.

2. **Pray Empathetically** (Understanding and entering into another's feelings)

a. Paul asked for prayer.

- 1) As Paul wrote this letter, he was in a Roman prison guarded by a soldier (Ac 28:16), bound by a chain (Ac 28:20). Yes, the guards allowed him to have visitors and to preach (Ac 28:30-31), but he was still a prisoner awaiting trial.
- 2) Our text tells us that he was in bonds because he had preached the mystery of Christ (Col 4:3).
- 3) His prayer request was not necessarily for his liberty. He desired an open door to preach.
- 4) Paul was asking the Colossian believers to pray for him and his co-workers there in prison. To do this, they must pray empathetically, trying to put themselves in his shoes as they prayed.

b. We, too, are to pray empathetically for others.

- 1) The most effective way to pray for your preacher is to know his study schedule, his ministry duties, and his burdens, and then pray accordingly. He needs wisdom to know God's choice of texts to preach. He needs God's

enlightenment as he studies. He needs to know the best way to apply Bible truths so that they will meet needs in the congregation. He also needs encouragement when the devil attacks.

- 2) This is also true of our missionaries. Do your best to envision their culture, their family, their home, their isolation, their language barriers, their financial needs, their evangelism, and their preaching. If you are a lady, get to know the missionary wives. What do you know about their children? Carefully read their prayer letters. Soak in the photos. As you pray, be as specific as your memory permits. Pray for each missionary as if you were kneeling beside them.
- 3) As you pray for other church attendees, seek to feel their burdens and concerns. How would you appreciate others praying for you? That is likely the way you ought to pray for them. Pray as fervently for them as you pray for your own needs. Pray specifically.

In addition to praying unselfishly, ask God to help you pray more empathetically for others, especially for your pastor, our missionaries, and other church attendees.

3. **Pray Evangelistically** (With a burden for the spread of the Gospel)

a. Paul requested an open door of utterance.

- 1) He was asking for an open door to speak the Gospel. An "open door" could be literal if he were knocking on doors trying to share the Gospel. However, it is more likely a figurative term for a good opportunity.
- 2) News of Paul's bonds for preaching the Gospel spread widely. In Philippians 1:13, he states that his bonds were known in all the palace and in all other places. Zodiates Word Study Dictionary explains the palace as, "*The praetorian camp at Rome, meaning the camp or quarters of the praetorian cohorts (Phil 1:13). These were a body of select troops instituted by Augustus to guard him and to have charge of the city.*" In Philippians 4:22, Paul sends greetings from believers in Caesar's household. Perhaps, he had led them to Christ.