

PRAY, PRAY, PRAY!

I. 1 Timothy 2:1-8

A. It was maybe a dozen years ago when a lady visiting one Sunday made the comment out loud that we were a "praying church." While she meant it as a compliment, I thought to myself, aren't all churches called to be praying churches? Apparently not everyone thinks so...

B. We've always had a prayerline here and then in 1999 we began sharing prayer requests via email. Despite periodic pruning of the list, the online prayer list has gradually grown. I've done my best to make clear that it's a prayerline not a grapevine and the expectation for all recipients is that they indeed pray.

C. Because much of the church in our day has adopted *attractional* models for their gatherings in order to feel more likable to "seekers," many churches don't leave room for prayer on Sunday. Prayer meetings have also vanished. If some were honest they'd say, *'We like the music and the preaching but not so much the announcements, testimonies, and all those prayer requests!'* That sometimes changes when that person or their family becomes in grave need of intercession. Acts 2:42 (ESV) reminds us what the first church was devoted to: *"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."* We will always endeavor to be devoted to those same core things.

D. Shifting a bit: In our sorely divided nation we see outright disdain for those in power. Our Presidents over the past few decades have had their fair share of haters. That includes evangelical haters. But have Christians been called to hate or called to pray for those in power? And what about fellow believers in Communist nations or those in nations with ruthless dictators--how are they called to pray? Today's text was part of a letter written from Paul to Timothy while the infamous Nero was emperor of Rome. It's both enlightening and instructive.

E. 1 Timothy 2:1-8 (ESV) is from Paul to Timothy and all of us...

1) **V1: 1** *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, (All kinds of prayers for all kinds of people...)*

2) **V2: 2** *for kings and all who are in high positions, (OV 'those in authority') that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. (NIV: in godliness and holiness) (Must we pray for leaders we don't like? And where do bad leaders come from? Daniel interpreted a dream for Babylon's ruthless king, Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 2:20-21 (NKJV) says: **20** Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. **21** And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. **22** He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him." We don't know what God knows nor do we see what He sees. But God sees the beginning of things and the end of things and everything in-between. He sees the heart of all matters. He's a good God. His purposes in the earth will be accomplished, in every nation, tribe, and tongue. And in your life as well. Pray!)*

3) V3: 3 *This (i.e. **Praying!**) is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, (Prayer is not optional. Prayer is not pacifism! Prayer is not a last resort. Prayer is powerful, effective, and something ordained by God. The manliest of men are prayer warriors. David is a prime example.)*

4) V4: 4 *who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (Our ever holy, just, sovereign, and benevolent God, who chooses whom He chooses, deep down has a desire that none would be lost even though many will.)*

5) V5-6: 5 *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, (Jesus is the go-between with respect to God and us. He came to reconcile enemies. Love compelled Him to settle this enmity by taking on our punishment. While men pursue many different ways, Jesus said He alone was the way, the truth, and the life; He alone successfully mediates between us and God.) 6* *who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. (The Mediator and Redeemer are One!)*

*** Jesus is the Mediator who has ransomed us from sin and death. He has done this with His blood. Listen to these affirming Scriptures:**

Matthew 20:25-28 (ESV) **25** *Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. **26** Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, **27** and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-- **28** just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”*

Mark 10:42-45 (ESV) **42** *And Jesus called them to Him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. **43** But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, **44** and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. **45** For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”*

Galatians 4:4-5 (AMPC) **4** *But when the proper time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born subject to [the regulations of] the Law, **5** To purchase the freedom of (to ransom, to redeem, to atone for) those who were subject to the Law, that we might be adopted and have sonship conferred upon us [and be recognized as God’s sons].*

6) V7-8: 7 *For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. **8** I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling... (i.e. Since **The Mediator** has settled the enmity between you and God, let it also be settled between you and others. Therefore, pray *with* one another, *for* one another, despite whether or not you like one another. Pray for everyone: the high and the low, those in power or in poverty, those on thrones, in jails, in hospitals, or mourning in cemeteries. Pray! Pray! Pray!)*

F. So we're called to pray for all people. We're called to pray for people in power. We're called to pray for people in power who we may not like and who may be terrible

leaders. We're called to pray for Neros and Nebuchadnezzars. We're called to pray for Washingtons and Lincolns. We're called to pray for brothers & sisters in Christ as well as those who remain His enemies. For good neighbors and bad neighbors. And yes we get to pray for people who are suffering affliction, hardship, and going through fiery ordeals. Who knows when you'll be next?! Who knows when we'll be the ones standing in the need of prayer?!

G. So if you were called to give an account before God as to the extent of your prayer life, how would that shake out? (*African illustration about Prayer Paths.*)

H. Ephesians 6:18 (AMP) will take us all home, maybe even to your prayer closets:
18 *With all prayer and petition pray [with specific requests] at all times [on every occasion and in every season] in the Spirit, and with this in view, stay alert with all perseverance and petition [interceding in prayer] for all God's people.*

* Close with Prayer...

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

1 Timothy 2:1-8 (ESV)

1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, **2** for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. **3** This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, **4** who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. **5** For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. **7** For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. **8** I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling...

Daniel 2:20-21 (NKJV)

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4 But when the proper time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born subject to [the regulations of] the Law, **5** To purchase the freedom of (to ransom, to redeem, to atone for) those who were subject to the Law, that we might be adopted and have sonship conferred upon us [and be recognized as God’s sons].

Ephesians 6:18 (AMP)

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Bonus Stuff

Pray for Kings and All in High Positions - John Piper (Sermon Text & Recording)
<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/pray-for-kings-and-all-in-high-positions>

Praying for Our Leaders (Redux) - Pastor Steve Bush - January 15, 2016
<http://millersportcc.com/sermons/praying-for-leaders-redux/>

How We Treat the Church is How We Treat Christ - Steven Kneale (Thanks Mark!)
<https://stephenkneale.com/2019/05/15/how-we-treat-the-church-is-how-we-treat-christ/>

Matthew 6:5-8 (NKJV)

5 “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. **6** But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. **7** And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. **8** “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

Luke 18:1-8 (NIV)

1 Then Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. **2** He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. **3** And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' **4** "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, **5** yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she

won't eventually wear me out with her coming!" " **6** And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. **7** And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? **8** I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

Titus 2:1-2 (NIV)

1 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, **2** to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

1 Peter 2:13-17 (NIV)

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, **14** or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. **15** For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. **16** Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. **17** Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

Romans 13:1-7 (ESV)

1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. **2** Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. **3** For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, **4** for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. **5** Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. **6** For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. **7** Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

St. Augustine on Prayer

St. Augustine, the early church father and theologian, described prayer as like a man in a hapless boat who throws a rope at a rock. The rock provides the needed security and stability and life for the helpless man. When the rock is lassoed it's not the man pulling the rock to the boat (though it may appear that way); it is the pulling of the boat to the rock. Jesus is the rock, and we throw the rope through prayer. Prayer is the lifeline that saves the drowning soul. Prayer is the umbilical cord that provides nourishment to the starving spirit. Prayer is the channel by which God's life-giving presence flows to us.

- Rick Ezell, "One-Minute Uplift" Newsletter

Want To See The Heating Plant?

Five young college students were spending a Sunday in London, so they went to hear the famed C.H. Spurgeon preach. While waiting for the doors to open, the students were greeted by a man who asked, "Gentlemen, let me show you around. Would you like to see the heating plant of this church?" They were not particularly interested, for it was a hot day in July. But they didn't want to offend the stranger, so they consented. The young men were taken down a stairway, a door was quietly opened, and their guide whispered, "This is our heating plant." Surprised, the students saw 700 people bowed in prayer, seeking a blessing on the service that was soon to begin in the auditorium above. Softly closing the door, the gentleman then introduced himself. It was none other than Charles Spurgeon.

- Our Daily Bread.

Prayer Path

In one region of Africa, the first converts to Christianity were very diligent about praying. In fact, the believers each had their own special place outside the village where they went to pray in solitude. The villagers reached these "prayer rooms" by using their own private footpaths through the brush. When grass began to grow over one of these trails, it was evident that the person to whom it belonged was not praying very much. Because these new Christians were concerned for each other's spiritual welfare, a unique custom sprang up. When ever anyone noticed an overgrown "Prayer path," he or she would go to the person and lovingly warn, "Friend, there's grass on your path!"

- Our Daily Bread.

Jesus Christ As Mediator

The ESV Study Bible

A mediator is a go-between. He is the one who stands between two or more persons or groups who are in a dispute and tries to reconcile them. In biblical terms, human beings are described as being at enmity against God. We rebel, revolt, and refuse to obey the law of God. As a result, God's wrath is upon us. For this catastrophic situation to be changed or redeemed it is necessary that we become reconciled to God.

To effect our reconciliation, God the Father appointed and sent His Son to be our Mediator. Christ brings to us nothing less than the divine majesty of God Himself--He is God incarnate. Yet He took upon Himself a human nature and willingly submitted Himself to the demands of God's law.

Christ did not initiate reconciliation in an attempt to persuade the Father to put aside His wrath. Rather, in the eternal counsel of the Godhead there was complete agreement between the Father and the Son that the Son should come as our Mediator. No angel could adequately represent God to us; only God Himself could do that.

In the incarnation, the Son took upon Himself human nature in order to accomplish the redemption of Adam's fallen seed. By His perfect obedience, Christ satisfied the demands of God's law and merited eternal life for us. By His submission to the atoning death on the cross, He satisfied the demands of God's wrath against us. Both positively

and negatively Christ satisfied the divine requirements for reconciliation. He brought about a new covenant with God for us by His blood and continues daily to intercede for us as our High Priest.

An effective mediator is one who is able to make peace between parties who are in conflict or estranged from each other. This is the role Jesus performed as our perfect Mediator. Paul declared that we have peace with God through Christ's work of reconciliation: *"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:1).

The mediating work of Christ is superior to all other mediators. Moses was the mediator of the old covenant. He served as God's go-between, giving the Israelites the law. But Jesus is superior to Moses. The author of Hebrews declares, *"For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses--as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself...Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant...but Christ is faithful over God's house as a Son. And we are His house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our our boasting in our hope"* (Hebrews 3:3-6).

- Theological Note, *"Jesus Christ as Mediator"* from *The ESV Study Bible*, R.C. Sproul General Editor, Ligonier Trust, p. 2157.

What Does it Mean that Jesus is Our Mediator?

By S. Michael Houdmann

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-mediator.html>

Question: *"What does it mean that Jesus is our mediator?"*

Answer: A mediator is one who mediates, that is, one who acts as an intermediary to work with opposing sides in order to bring about a settlement. A mediator attempts to influence a disagreement between two parties with the goal of resolving a dispute. There is only one Mediator between mankind and God, and that is Jesus Christ. In this article, we'll see why God has a dispute with us, why Jesus is our mediator, and why we are doomed if we try to represent ourselves alone before God.

God has a dispute with us because of sin. Sin is described in the Bible as transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4) and rebellion against God (Deuteronomy 9:7; Joshua 1:18). God hates sin, and sin stands between all of us and Him. *"There is no one righteous, not even one"* (Romans 3:10). All human beings are sinners by virtue of sin we have inherited from Adam, as well as the sin we commit on a daily basis. The only just penalty for this sin is death (Romans 6:23), not only physical death but eternal death (Revelation 20:11–15). The rightful punishment for sin is an eternity in hell.

Nothing we could do on our own would be sufficient to mediate between ourselves and God. No amount of good works or law-keeping makes us righteous enough to stand before a holy God (Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16). Without a mediator, we are destined to spend eternity in hell, for by ourselves salvation from our sin is

impossible. Yet there is hope! *“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”* (1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus represents those who have placed their trust in Him before God’s throne of grace. He mediates for us, much as a defense attorney mediates for his client, telling the judge, *“Your honor, my client is innocent of all charges against him.”* That is true for us also. Some day we will face God, but we will do so as totally forgiven sinners because of Jesus’ death on our behalf. The “Defense Attorney” took the penalty for us!

We see more proof of this comforting truth in Hebrews 9:15: *“For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.”* It is because of the great Mediator that we are able to stand before God clothed in the righteousness of Christ Himself. On the cross Jesus exchanged our sin for His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). His mediation is the only means of salvation.

- While he is not the author of every article on GotQuestions.org, for citation purposes, you may reference our CEO, S. Michael Houdmann.

How To Pray

"The proper way for man to pray," said Deacon Lemuel Keyes;
"The only proper attitude is down upon his knees."

"Nay, I should say the way to pray," said Reverend Doctor Wise,
"Is standing straight with outstretched arms with rapt and upturned eyes."

"Oh, no, no, no," said Elder Snow, "such posture is too proud."
A man should pray with eyes fast-closed and head contritely bowed."

"It seems to me his hands should be austerely clasped in front.
With both thumbs pointing to the ground," said Reverend Doctor Blunt."

"Last year I fell in Hodgkin's well headfirst," said Cyril Brown.
"With both my heels a-stickin' up, my head a-pointing' down;

And I done prayed right then and there; best prayer I ever said,
The prayin'est prayer I ever prayed, a-standin' on my head."

- Our Daily Bread.