

Sermon Series: Why Do I Need the Church?
To be used with: We Pray for One Another
Sermon Title Possibilities: Believing Together
Scripture: Ephesians 3:14-21

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study “*Why Do I Need the Church?*,” this sermon explains that the things the apostle Paul prayed for the saints at Ephesus ought to be the focus of all believers prayers. This message is intended to encourage us to pray for one another’s fortitude, faith, fullness, and focus.

Introduction: The apostle has already spoken to the believer’s spiritual fortunes (1:3-14), and the believer’s spiritual framework (2:1-10), now he speaks to the believer’s fortitude (3:14-21). The apostle provides for us a model, a map, and the motivation to pray for one another. We should pray with the frequency with which he prayed (in 1:15 Paul said that he never stopped giving thanks for them and remembering them in his prayers), and we should pray about the things for which he prayed.

While prayer may be our greatest privilege, it may also be our least practiced spiritual discipline. The truth is, prayer is as essential to the Christian as water is to the fish or breathing is to the human. We cannot effectively and faithfully walk with Christ, witness about Christ, nor work for Christ without a strong prayer-life.

1. We Ought to Pray for One Another’s Fortitude. (v. 14-16)

Here the apostle does not pray for property, prestige, promotion, nor prosperity. He does not go to God for things that we can taste, touch, see, smell, and hear. All of those things are fine to pray for, but Paul focuses on something totally different from these things. He goes to God for strength. He prays that the saints at Ephesus would be strengthened by the Father, through His Spirit, in their inner being.

We should indeed pray for one another. The apostle says in Ephesians 6:18 “Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.” When we intercede for one another, we should ask God to strengthen our fellow believers in their inner being.

2. We Ought to Pray for One Another’s Faith. (v. 17a)

The source of our fortitude is the Father, the subject of our fortitude is our inner man, and the Supplier of our fortitude is the Spirit. However, the center of our faith is Jesus Christ. Notice the first clause in verse seventeen where he says, “and that the Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith.” You see, the Christian journey is a faith-journey. We not only have to trust Christ for salvation,

we have to trust Christ for sanctification. We not only have to trust Christ to be delivered hell, we have to trust Christ to be developed in holiness.

When our faith in Christ grows, the world can see His life in us (Christ is dwelling in our hearts), His love in us (we are established in love), and His logic in us (we are able to comprehend the immensity of God's love). We ought to model after Paul and pray for one another's faith.

3. We Ought to Pray for One Another's Fullness. (v. 17b-19)

When Paul prays that the saints would be established in love, would know the love of Christ, and be filled with all the fullness of God, he is essentially praying for their compassion-development and character-development. The Lord Jesus said that the greatest commandment in the law is to love the Lord with all your heart, mind, and soul, and the second is to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:35-40). When Paul listed the fruit of the Spirit he was revealing the character of Christ is developed in us and comes through us (Galatians 5:22-23).

When we pray for one another, we ought to ask God to bless our brothers and sisters, to develop in their love for God and for other human beings. Our love for one another is what identifies us as followers of Christ (John 13:34-35). We should also pray for one another's character development. Let's ask the Lord to help our fellow-Christians to bear the fruit of the Spirit—so we can reveal Christ to the world through our lifestyles.

4. We Ought to Pray for One Another's Focus. (v. 20-21)

Paul concludes this prayer showing that our God is bigger than any problem, challenge, dream, or vision we may have. Our God is able to do above all that we ask or think. He encourages us to shift our focus from the size of our problem to the ability of our God.

When we pray for one another, let's pray that God will help us to ask great things of God (he is able to do above all that we ask or think), to attempt great things for God (according to the power that works in us), and to anticipate great things from God (to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus).

Conclusion: The priesthood of believers suggests that all believers can pray, should pray, and have a responsibility to pray. There are many things to pray for and about. This passage teaches us to pray for one another's fortitude, faith, fullness, and focus.

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