

Discover the New You: A New Voice

Prayer can be alien to our proud human nature. And yet, somewhere, someplace, somehow all of us reach the point of falling to our knees, bowing our heads, fixing our attention on God and praying.



Colossians 4:2-16 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here. My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord." I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

Reflections

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. (Ephesians 6:18)

Over the years I have had countless opportunities to pray for and with people, alone and in groups. There have been numerous conversations with people in varied venues about all aspects of prayer: when, where, how, why and what to pray. Let me share two stories:

One Sunday a small boy came to my Sunday School class very concerned about his dog who was injured, so of course we prayed for his dog. After class he told his parents about our prayer, and for weeks I heard complaints from parents and others about "bothering God" with such frivolous issues.

At the age of 21 I was part of a St. John's women's group where the other members were the age of my mother. At a particular meeting we were discussing pies to be prepared for a church function, so I volunteered custard pies. In

response each of these experienced homemakers told of the challenges of baking such pies. When I replied "I never have a problem – I just put the pie in the oven and say a prayer and it comes out fine" there were gasps heard as the women admonished that God had better things to do than be concerned with my custard pies.

These two stories remain with me so that I never forget that there is nothing too trivial to discuss with God. Prayer is conversation with our Father, right?

When a father comes home from work and is greeted by his exuberant children, he hears all about the exciting things they have done that day. The pretty rock and the really neat trick and the dumb thing someone said and the stupid math problems and ... It all comes tumbling out. Children don't stop to think "My Dad is a very busy man with many important and weighty issues on his mind, so I should only tell him things that will sound really important to him."

Then there are those times when a child

comes timidly tapping at the door saying *Dad? Can I talk to you?* This usually precedes a serious conversation about a serious issue – college, dating concerns, grades, denting the car... or worse.

A loving father wants his children to tell him those "little things", and is also approachable for those uncomfortable talks.

Our Heavenly Father wants to hear about all of our concerns – concerns for ourselves and our concerns for others too. He is interested in everything that interests us, no matter how large or small, whether good or bad, easy or awkward.

Have you chatted with your Father lately? He's waiting to talk with you.

--Wendy Woods

Reference:

Hybels, Bill. Discover the New You - Colossians. Small Group Workbook. 1999

Readings

Sunday, May 16

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Colossians 4:2

What does it mean to you to “pray continually” or to “devote yourselves to prayer”?

Monday, May 17

Proverbs 18:21

Has there been a time when someone’s prayers “spoke life” (was encouraging and uplifting) to you?

Tuesday, May 18

Ephesians 6:18

Are there any topics or concerns that you feels are “not worth praying about”? Why or why not?

Wednesday, May 19

Colossians 4:12

When have you “wrestled” in prayer”? What was the situation – and the outcome?

Thursday, May 20

Colossian 4:3

Do you pray for those who are spreading the message of God? Who in particular? Spend a moment making a list of those who fit this description and be intentional in your prayers for them beginning today – keep adding to your list as names come to mind.

Friday, May 21

Colossians 4:12

Are you aware of someone praying for God’s will in your life? What does that do for you?

Saturday, May 22

Philippians 4:6-7

Do you regularly take your cares and concerns to God in prayer? When you don’t, how does that affect you? When you do, how do you feel?

Don't have a Bible? Access these scriptures at biblegateway.com.