

PRAYING WITH PAUL (1)

What did Paul pray for?

A. Introduction

1. What should we be praying for?

There are a number of places in the Bible we can go to, to answer this question.

2. The thirteen letters that Paul wrote have much to teach us about prayer and the things that we should be praying for.

How?

They include actual prayers.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." (Ephesians 1:3)

They include prayer reports.

"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." (Philippians 1:4-5)

They include prayer wishes.

"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his good grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word." (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)

They include prayer requests.

"Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed." (Romans 15:31-32)

They include exhortations to pray.

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful." (Colossians 4:2)

3. Much of Paul's teaching about prayer is devoted to praying for others, especially members of local churches.

They can help us to pray for one another.

They can help us to pray what is best for one another.

4. How should we be praying for one another?

B. We should give thanks to God for one another

1. Give thanks for their saving faith.

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world." (Romans 1:8)

"I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus." (1 Corinthians 1:4)

"For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers." (Ephesians 1:15-16)

"And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe." (1 Thessalonians 2:13)

2. Give thanks for their active faith.

"We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints – the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you." (Colossians 1:3-6)

"We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3)

"I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints." (Philemon 4-5)

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." (Philippians 1:3-4)

3. Give thanks for their growing faith.

"We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing." (2 Thessalonians 1:3)

C. We should make request to God for one another

1. Pray that they would know God better.

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better." (Ephesians 1:17)

2. Pray that they would live godly lives.

"Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong." (2 Corinthians 13:7)

"We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is for your perfection." (2 Corinthians 13:9)

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God." (Philippians 1:9-11)

"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light." (Colossians 1:9-12)

"May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones." (1 Thessalonians 3:12)

"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

"With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfil every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith." (2 Thessalonians 1:11)

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

"May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you." (1 Thessalonians 3:12)

"I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ." (Philemon 1:6)

And by doing so glorify God.

"so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 15:6)

"to the glory and praise of God." (Philippians 1:11)

"We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thessalonians 1:12)

3. Pray that God would give to them what they need.

Knowledge.

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better." (Ephesians 1:17)

"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God." (Colossians 1:9-10)

"And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ." (Philippians 1:9-10)

"And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of the fulness of God." (Ephesians 3:17-19)

"I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe." (Ephesians 1:18-19)

"I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come." (Ephesians 1:18-21)

Strength.

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being." (Ephesians 3:16)

“being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.” (Colossians 1:11-12)

“May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.” (1 Thessalonians 3:13)

“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.” (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)

Hope.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

Unity.

“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 15:5-6)

D. What about those who are not members of local churches?

1. There are a few occasions when Paul prays for people to be saved.

“Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.” (Romans 10:1)

“Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?” Paul replied, “Short time or long – I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.” (Acts 26:28-29)

2. Why are there not more prayers for those who do not believe?

Because Paul was writing to members of local churches.

Because if God answered Paul’s prayers for members of local churches, (i.e. God’s people actually living as God’s people), it would benefit those outside of God’s people.

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:1-4)