

Prayer Opens Doors

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction: Col. 4:2-4

- A. Prayer is an important indicator of our faith. It is an expression of our conviction that God is in control.
 - 1. One who does not truly believe, prays in vain - James 1:5-8
 - 2. Matt. 21:21-22; 1Thes. 5:16-18; Luke 18:1
- B. God attached powerful promises to prayer
 - 1. He wants us to trust Him with our fears and burdens - 1Peter 5:7
 - 2. He will listen to all of the requests of His children - Phil. 4:6

I. CHRISTIANS ARE DEVOTED TO PRAYER

- A. Col. 4:2 - Consistent in the habitual practice of prayer
 - 1. Prayer is not an emergency help line. God expects us to call on Him in crisis, but not only in crisis.
 - 2. Instead of Jonah in the belly of the whale at the bottom of the sea, be like Daniel praying multiple times every day.
- B. Communication is critical to building relationships.
 - 1. The closer the relationship, the more time folks spend together.
 - 2. The more we love God, the more time we spend talking to Him

II. CHRISTIANS EXPRESS PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

- A. Col. 4:2 - They remember the blessings and answers to prayers and thank God for His generosity
 - 1. They remember to Whom they are talking and show Him respect and give Him the glory He is due
 - 2. Do we ask petitions more than offer praise? Do we ask for more than we return thanks for what we've been given?
 - 3. On my wall is a plaque that asks: "What if you woke up this morning with only those things that you thanked God for yesterday?"
- B. Expressing praise and thanks to God is worship; we worship God with both our public and private prayers - Heb. 13:15

III. CHRISTIANS PRAY THAT GOD'S WILL BE DONE

- A. Jesus did not want to suffer what He was about to suffer, but He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane for God's will to be done - Luke 22:42
 - 1. He knew that God's will is superior to the will of any being in this world
- B. It is the will of God that all people be saved - 2Peter 3:9; 1Tim. 2:3-4
 - 1. God's desire for all people to be saved is so strong He sent Jesus to offer Himself to die in their stead - John 3:16-17
- C. While Jesus is in Heaven interceding on behalf of the saved, He has tasked the saved with carrying the message of redemption to the lost on His behalf
 - 1. Mark 16:15-16; 1Peter 2:9
- D. Col. 4:3 - Paul asked for prayers that he might complete the Lord's task
 - 1. We are instructed to pray that we will fulfill our responsibility.

- F. Col. 4:4 - Paul had every reason to be concerned.
 - 1. He was in prison for proclaiming Christ. Continuing to preach Jesus would bring about his execution.
 - 2. Aside from social pressure, what have we to deal with? - Rom. 8:18

IV. GOD CONTROLS THE DOORS

- A. God can close and open doors - Acts 16:6-10
 - 1. Sometimes the faithful knock on doors God has closed. Simply because it is closed today, does not mean it will be tomorrow; keep knocking
 - 2. When Paul was behind a closed door, he asked for prayers that God would open it, and he waited for and accepted God's answer
 - 3. Keep moving forward; even God cannot direct a stationary object
- B. God will open doors if we keep asking and keep turning doorknobs.
 - 1. 2Cor. 2:12-14
 - 2. "When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us." (Alexander Graham Bell)
- C. God wills that you bring the light of the Gospel to the lost - 1Cor. 16:8-9
 - 1. Satan will oppose us or try to keep us from seeing that the door has been unlocked
 - 2. Sometimes we are our own adversary; our fear, our inertia, our prejudices, our weaknesses
- D. God often opens the door for just one soul
 - 1. Acts 8 - Philip was called away from the city to one man in the desert.
 - 2. Acts 10 - Peter journeyed to a house with one family.
 - 3. Acts 16 - Paul preached to a small group of women and baptized one.
 - 4. Sowing one seed today can produce an abundance in the future.
 - 5. It takes little vision to see how many seeds are in an apple, but it takes tremendous vision to see how many apples are in a seed.

V. GOD WILLS THAT WE HAVE COMPASSION FOR THOSE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR

- A. Luke 19:41-44; Rom. 9:3
- B. The frequency and intensity of our prayers for the salvation of others is one of the most accurate measures of our gratitude for our own salvation.
 - 1. God opens doors as a reward for faithfulness - Rev. 3:7-8
- C. Challenge: let us include in every public prayer led here a petition that God would open doors for us to reach the lost, that He would increase our opportunities, and that we would have the courage, will, and love to lead them to salvation.