

Prayer is a Priority.

1 Timothy 2:1-8



Apostle Paul (~ 5 – 67 A.D.)
By Andrei Rublev (1410)

Prayer is a Priority. Introduction



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Why do we pray?

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Why do we pray?

- Because we want something from God.
- Because that is what Christians do, right?
- Because “all we can do now is pray.”

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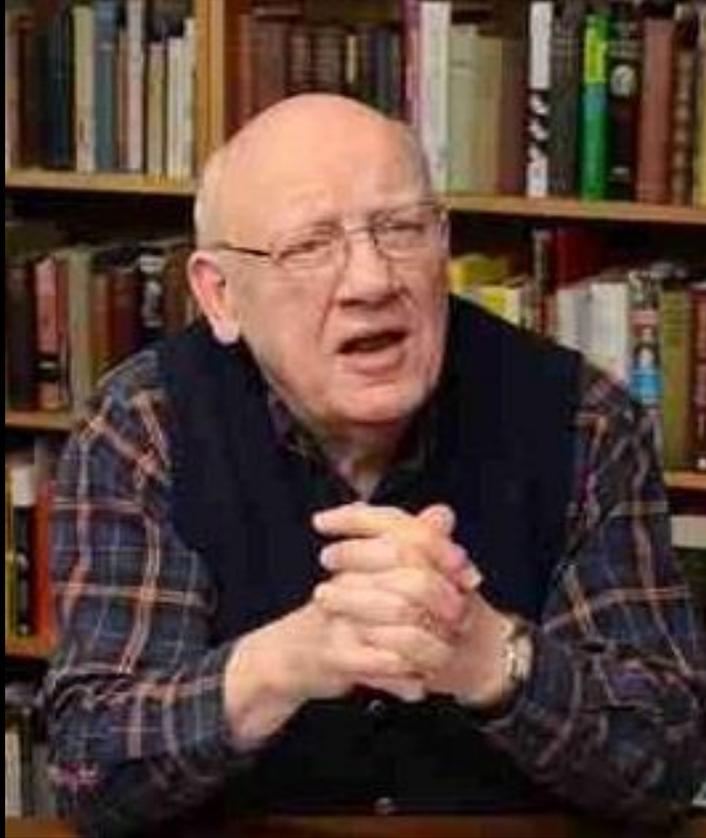
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- Because prayer pleases God.
- Because Christ died to give us access to God.
- Because God wants things done and has invited us to be a part of that process.

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The local church ... prays because prayer is vital to the life of the local church ... The church that prays will have power and will make a lasting impact for Christ.

– Warren Wiersbe

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Don't think of prayer as a last resort;
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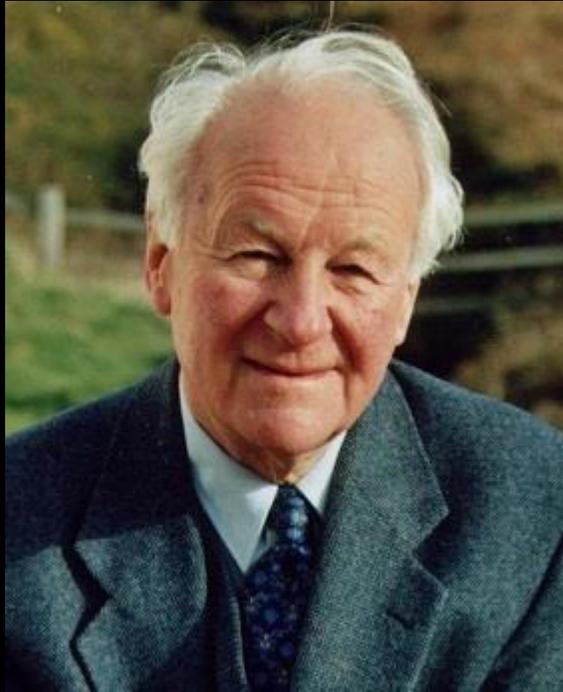
1. We intercede for others. 2:1-4
2. Christ interceded for us. 2:5-7
3. Men need to pray. 2:8

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- 2:1 First of all = first in importance
- Paul wants us to make prayer our priority.

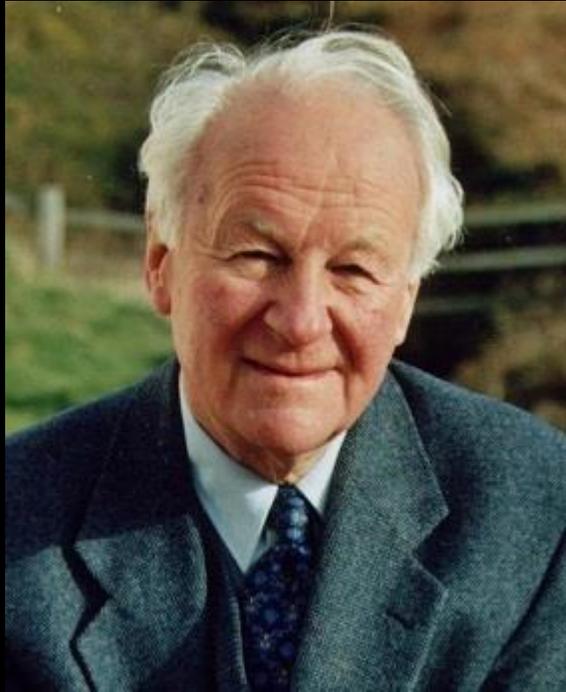
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'First of all' refers 'not to primacy of time but primacy of importance'. For the church is essentially a worshipping, praying community ... [L]ong after the church's evangelistic task has been completed, God's people will continue to worship him eternally ...

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011), pastor
All Souls, Langham Place, London*

1. We intercede for others. 2:1-4



[W]henever we fail to take public worship seriously, we are less than the fully biblical Christians we claim to be ... In consequence either our worship services are slovenly, perfunctory, mechanical and dull or ... we go to the opposite extreme and become repetitive, unreflective and even flippant.

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- **Supplications** are prayers for definite needs.
- **Prayers** – the most general word for prayer.
- **Intercessions** suggest free access to God in order to pray for others.
- **Thanksgivings** should be offered for answers to prayer and, further, for who God is and what He does for us in His grace.

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- **2:1 Illustration of Thanksgivings:** The group in our apartment in Poland, mostly of high school and college age.
- They suggested that we devote our prayer times to praise and thanksgiving.
- **Psalm 103** is a good example of this – and we will read it at the end.

1. We intercede for others. 2:1-4

- 2:1 for all people Prayer should not be made for only a select few, but for everyone we can think of.
- To sum up, it's important to pray for all kinds of people in all kinds of ways.

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- **2:2 peaceful and quiet** These words both mean about the same thing: still, quiet, tranquil, composed or undisturbed.
- **Godly and dignified** Our lives should be characterized by what is honorable.
- These are the qualities of a person which encourage reverence and respect.

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Praying for Rulers:

- Loyalty to Rome was required, by worshiping the goddess Roma and the spirit of the emperor.
- The Jews were exempt. Rome allowed them to pray *for* the emperor in synagogues, without praying *to* him.
- Christians continued this practice – though they eventually lost their Jewish exemption.

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We may find it astonishing that Paul advises particular prayer for those in government (2:2). After all, the Roman emperor was a dictator who imposed emperor worship and executed all who did not obey him ...

*– Solomon Andria,
Madagascan Bible Commentator*

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Yet Paul advises that Christians pray for those in authority, for regardless of whether the government of a country is democratic or dictatorial, those in power play a decisive role in maintaining peace.

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God's Desire:

- When God reveals His will to us clearly in the Scriptures, He gives us something to pray for and work toward.
- World evangelization is one of those things and it starts with us those closest to us.

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2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

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2. Christ interceded for us. 2:5-7

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- 2:5 men = *anthropos*
- It is the same word translated people in 2:1 and 2:4.
- It includes both men and women.
- In 2:8, a different word refers to men as opposed to women.

2. Christ interceded for us. 2:5-7

- **Biblical Non-negotiables:**
- The Trinity is not a belief in three gods.
- Monotheism – There is only one God.
- The Bible presents one God in three Persons.

2. Christ interceded for us. 2:5-7

- **Biblical Non-negotiables:**
- Christ is the Only Mediator
- He alone is fully God and fully human
- He is therefore the perfect Mediator or Arbitrator between God and all of us.

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- **Biblical Non-negotiables:**
- Substitutionary Atonement – Christ gave Himself as a ransom.
- The word **ransom** (*antilutron*) emphasizes that something is given *in place of* something else.

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- **Biblical Non-negotiables:**
- Jesus took our place on the cross.
- In so doing He paid the just penalty for our sin and freed us from slavery to sin and death.

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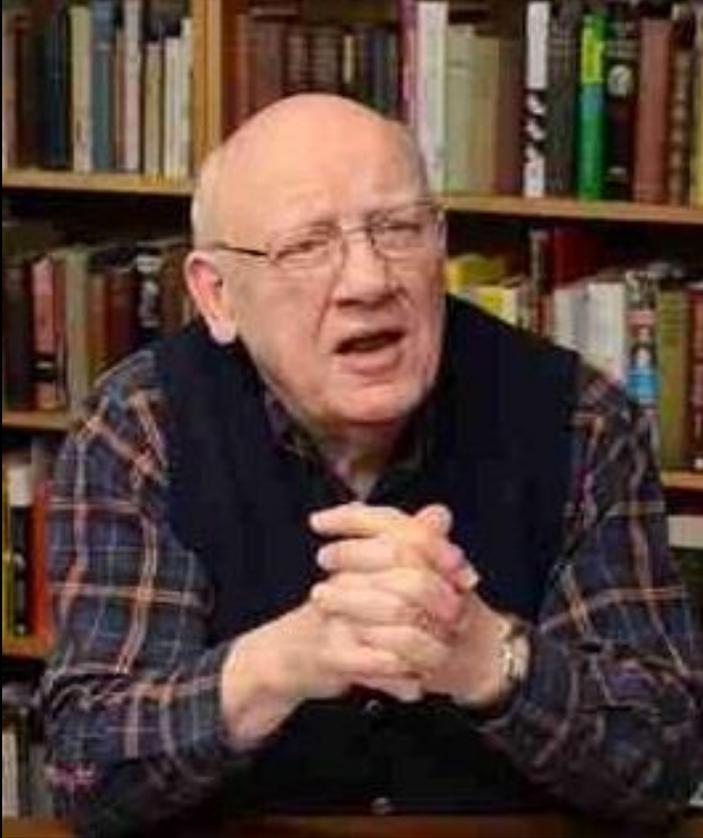
Matthew 20:28 (ESV) (Repeated in **Mark 10:45**)

... the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

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- *As a result of Christ's Atonement:*
- Through faith in Christ we have free access to God the Father.
- We have both the privilege and responsibility to go into God's presence in prayer and worship.

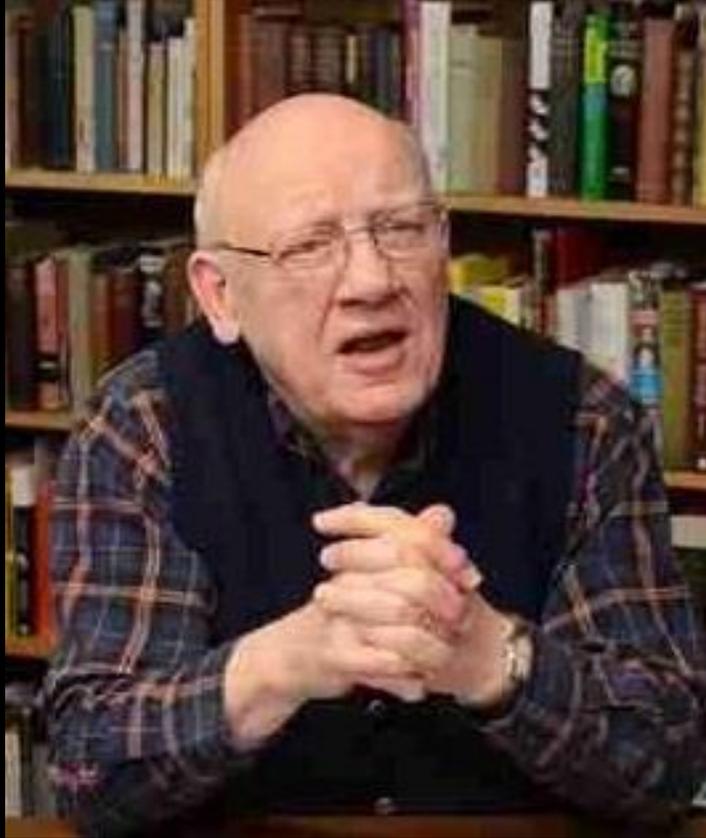
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If the basis for prayer is the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on the cross, then prayer is a most important activity in a church. Not to pray is to slight the cross! To pray only for ourselves is to deny the worldwide outreach of the cross. To ignore lost souls is to ignore the cross.

– Warren Wiersbe

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“All people” is the key to this paragraph: We pray for “all” because Christ died for “all” and it is God’s will that “all” be saved. We must give ourselves to God to be a part of His worldwide program to reach people before it is too late.

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Hebrews 10:19-22 (ESV)

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus ... ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

3. Men need to pray. 2:8

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- This word for men literally means “adult males”.
- **May we generalize?** Men normally respond best to simple, clearly defined goals.
- Paul limits his instructions to one verse so Timothy doesn't have to beat around the bush. **Men need to pray.**

3. Men need to pray. 2:8



The fact that men without distinction of ministerial function were to pray is significant. Not only were the deacons, or elders or presbyters, or bishops, to pray, but the “men” were to pray. There is no priesthood in the church except the common priesthood of believers.

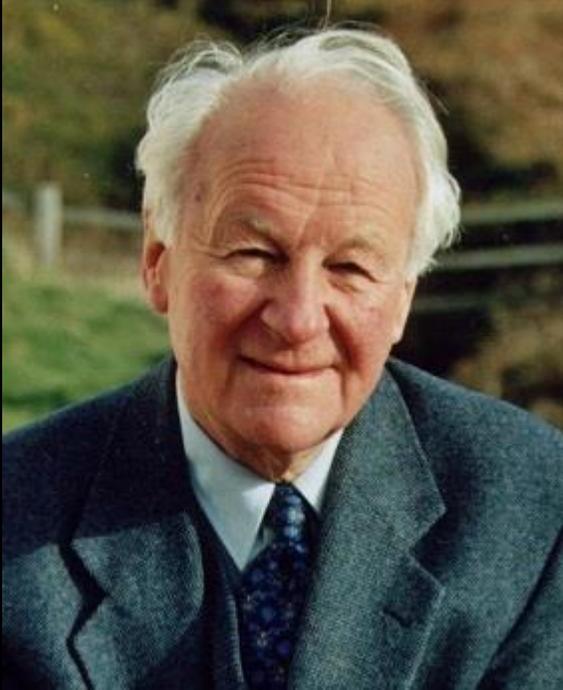
*– James M. Gray (1851 – 1935),
President of Moody Bible Institute*

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Hindrances to Effective Prayer:

- **Lack of holiness** – Holy hands imply that the men's lives need to be pure to make their prayer more effective.
- **Anger and quarrelling** – Neither of these will usually lead us into prayer.
- **A bad relationship with your wife** – Not listed here, but Peter mentions it in **1 Peter 3:7**.

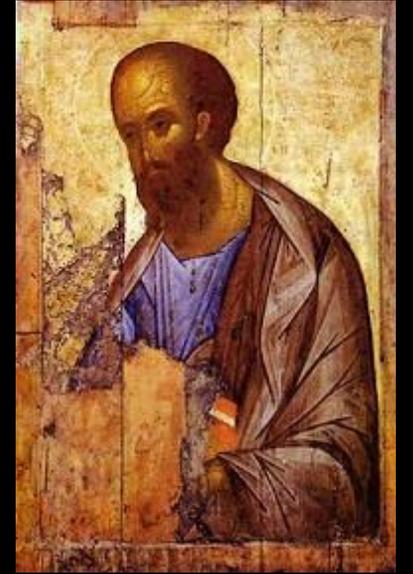
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Both men and women prayed in the early church (1 Cor. 11:4–5), but the emphasis here is on the men. It is common to find women’s prayer meetings, but not often do we find men’s prayer meetings. If the men do not pray, the local church will not have dedicated leaders to oversee its ministry.

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Prayer is a Priority. Conclusions



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Why should we pray?

- Because prayer pleases God.
- Because Christ died to give us access to God.
- Because God wants things done and has invited us to be a part of that process.

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1. We should pray for all kinds of things and all kinds of people in all kinds of ways.
2. We should especially pray for our rulers – and that through them we would enjoy quiet and peaceful lives.
3. We should especially remember to give thanks.
4. We should especially pray for the lost.

Prayer is a Priority. Conclusions

5. We should keep in mind that Christ is our only Mediator.
6. We should keep in mind that Christ died to give us free access to God the Father.
7. Men especially need to pray. (Perhaps they specifically need to learn to be less self-reliant and more God-reliant.)

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Don't think of prayer as a last resort;
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- Let's end with **Psalm 103**.
- Then let's gather in groups to pray together before we sing a final worship song.