
The Prayer of the Righteous Is Powerful

James 5:13-18 (page 180 in the black Bibles)

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Our series on prayer has focused on the attitudes a believer must have in order to pray effectively. We have seen such attitudes as desperation, humility, sincerity, persistence, love, vulnerability, confidence, alertness, thankfulness and reflecting God's greatness.

In today's passage James mentions prayer in every verse.

Prayer is powerful and effective when it is used as God has designed it to be used. The emphasis for today's text is on the prayer of faith (15) and the prayer of the righteous person (16b).

James has already mentioned prayer twice in his epistle.

James 1:5-8

James 4:1-4

The Importance of Prayer in All of Life's Circumstances (v. 13)

Is anyone among you suffering?

"Suffering" – to suffer/endure evils, hardship, troubles; to be afflicted.

He must pray.

"Pray" – general term for prayer that includes all types of prayer (Eph. 6:18, Phil. 4:6)

Is anyone cheerful?

"Cheerful" – to be of good cheer, joyful, (good courage-Acts 27:22, 25)

He is to sing praises.

"Sing praises" – to sing, sing psalms

The Importance of Prayer in the Life of the Church (vv. 14-15)

The responsibility of the sick (v. 14a)

Is anyone among you sick?

“Sick” – to be sick, weak, feeble, (physically; then morally)

He must call for the elders of the church.

“Elders of the church” – also called overseers and pastors (Acts 14:21-23; 1 Pet. 5:1-2; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9)

The responsibility of the elders (v. 14b)

They [the elders] are to

pray over him,

“The prayer offered in faith” [by the elders] (v. 15)

“The prayer” is a different word for prayer which occurs only twice elsewhere, where it means “vow” (Acts 18:18; 21:23).

Its cognate verb, however, refers to a fervent wish or petition (Acts 26:29; 27:29; Rom. 9:3). (Moo, Pillar Commentary)

There are many promises in Scripture that encourage the believer to pray in faith.

James 1:5f,

Hebrews 11:6;

anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

“Anointing with oil” – medically or symbolically; Symbolically to denote consecration, “being set apart for God’s special attention in prayer (Moo, Pillar Commentary, p. 240).

“In the name of the Lord” – as His representatives; with His authority

The result of the elders' prayer (v. 15)

will restore the one who is sick,

and the Lord will raise him up,

and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

John 5:14; 9:1-3

Application for the whole church (v. 16a)

Therefore, confess your sins to one another,

and pray for one another

so that you may be healed.

1 Cor. 11:27-34

General Statement (v. 16b)

The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. (ESV)

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (NIV)

“Prayer” another word for prayer denoting petition/supplication (Eph. 6:18; Phil 4:6)

“The righteous person” – objectively, declared righteous by faith in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:21);
Subjectively, living obedience to God’s word (1 John 2:29; 3:7-12)

“Powerful and effective”

Illustration of a Righteous Man's Prayer (vv. 17-18)

Elijah

1 Kings 18:20-46

He was a man with a nature like ours,

He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

Application:

Prayer is central to the life of a Christian. Whether suffering or cheerful the believer is in one way or another to be in continual communication with God.

Prayer is central to the life of the Church. The church should be known as a people of prayer.

As James wrote, "pray for one another">

Jesus referred to the temple as a "house of prayer" (Mt. 21:13; Mk 11:17; Lk. 19:45-46).

Let's ask God to help us in our effectiveness as we pray for the church and for our unsaved family, friends and neighbors.

Come join us for prayer tonight at 7:00.