



Pray in the Spirit

From beginning to end, Scripture puts great emphasis on prayer. It's our way of bringing the needs of ourselves and others before our Creator and Sustainer, and the primary manner for us to intimately commune with our heavenly Father.

After his graphic illustration to believers about putting on the full armor of God ([Eph 6:10-17](#)), the Apostle Paul wrote of prayer:

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, [Eph 6:18](#)

Paul used similar phrases throughout his epistles, instructing believers to *always be* in prayer (cf: [1 Thes 5:17](#), [Phil 4:6](#), [Col 4:2](#), [Rom 12:12](#)). The idea of being in unceasing prayer may seem odd, difficult, or even impossible. As a baby Christian I used to think, "how can I be expected to pray constantly... aren't I supposed to go to work and do other stuff, too?" But as usual, when we unpack a statement in Scripture we find it to be much more practical than it may appear on the surface.

Paul tells us to ***pray at all times in the Spirit***. The last part is the key. This is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God which indwells true believers (see: [1 Cor 3:16](#)). The Spirit helps us to live in constant communion with God. This communion is both outward and inward; the Spirit listens as we petition, and speaks, often through our "gut feeling" and conscience. Paul touched on this in [Romans 8:26](#) where he wrote, "***for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.***"

While we must have dedicated times of prayer and seclusion with the Father, just as Christ did ([Mark 1:35](#), [Matt 26:36](#), etc.), Paul is not saying we must spend every waking moment on our knees streaming words into the sky. Instead, we should be in a continuous state of communication with the Lord in everything we do. This might look like short discussions with God all throughout the day. I would say this is comparable to spending time with your spouse... not every moment is filled with undivided and directed conversation, but ongoing dialog progresses throughout the day because a healthy relationship is not solely built on scheduled meetings. Involving the Lord in every aspect of our lives with a humble acknowledgment of His omnipresence helps keep our spirit aligned with His Spirit and our hearts in a constant state of awareness of what He is doing around us.

This thought joins nicely with the words of Jesus in [Matthew 6:7](#) when He said, "***And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they***



will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”

Praying in the Spirit also helps us pray for God’s will. It is often very hard to know what or how to pray for something, and I can find myself repeatedly coming back to, “Your will be done, Lord.” But the Spirit inside us actually knows the will of the God and is able to direct our prayers to match His will (cf: [John 14:26](#)). And when we pray God’s will, our prayers are answered! Christ promised this when He told His disciples, ***“if you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”*** ([John 15:7](#)). Of course, this promise is conditional (note the “if”) and requires us to be abiding in Him and praying for God’s will, as He clarified plainly in the context of the that chapter.

Knowing that we are to always be in a state of prayer and communion with God, we must also ***be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints***. Looking back through the preceding verses and chapters of Ephesians, we can see Paul is telling believers that we are to be on the alert for attacks from the enemy. This most often comes in the form of temptation; an un-praying Christian is surely an easier target for the devil than one that is constantly aware of the Spirit’s presence and will! So, we need to pay attention to the spiritual war around us and be on guard for both ourselves and others.

Praying for our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ (the saints) is a noble entreaty. Yet we should be careful not to focus only on earthly things like finances and wellbeing. Paul seemed to care little about his physical circumstances, and it’s likely he spent far more time praying for the spiritual necessities of others than anything else. So when we pray for others, we must also ask for their spiritual growth and protection. While there is nothing inherently wrong with praying for worldly needs, it seems more fitting to *think eternally* and pray that God’s perfect will is accomplished in the lives of our Christian friends and family and that their love of Him is depended.

Our calling from the great apostle, and the Lord who directed these words to be penned, is to *always be in prayer*. What an incredible privilege we have with direct, unending, unrestricted access to the throne of heaven through prayer! Why not take full advantage of this today?

~Associate Pastor Jeremy Preece