

“Pray also for me”

Praying & interceding for God’s servants

Scripture reading: Eph.6:18-20; 1 Thess.5:25.

Possible first reactions:

1. “Praying for missionaries is only for a certain kind of Christians. And I’m not that kind of believer!” *God calls all believers to become a part of His worldwide mission – not if or when we have time!*
2. “Praying isn’t *my* ‘thing’. I serve the Lord in other more practical ways.” *Spiritual things are not airy-fairy, but as real as anything that is visible.*
3. “Okay, I guess you’re going to put us on another ‘guilt trip’ for not praying enough.” *Be motivated by God’s Spirit – all of us can grow in this area; but condemnation “no”.*

Are there any answers or is there any help for people like you and me??? What does God want to say to us?

A few questions to consider:

1. How important is prayer really? What are some foundational convictions that help us understand and appreciate the significance of prayer?
2. Who are these special people “servants of God” who need prayer?
3. How can we pray more effectively, especially for God’s servants?

WHY PRAY FOR GOD’S SERVANTS???

Foundation convictions based upon God’s Word:

1. Prayer is God’s plan. Therefore, it is both a privilege/honour & a responsibility/ministry – for all believers, not just for the super-saints.
2. Prayer is working together with God to advance His kingdom. “Your kingdom come.”
3. Prayer is God’s way to bring help to all believers. God’s servants involved in spiritual tasks need constant spiritual help, protection et al. Without prayer – we are severely weakened. See Paul’s own requests.

WHO NEEDS OUR PRAYERS???

ALL called to serve the Lord :

1. Those on the home front, and those serving overseas.
2. God's servants (eg pastors, youth workers, evangelists, leaders etc.), and their wives and families.
3. Nationals, and foreign missionaries.
4. Those we know, and those we only know as, eg "pastors in China".
5. People in "spiritual tasks" (eg church work, preaching), and those with "administrative responsibilities" (eg computer work, finance et al).
6. Full-time workers, and also part-time workers.

HOW TO PRAY FOR GOD'S SERVANTS????

1. Pray as the Spirit prompts & reminds – "in the Spirit" (Eph.6:18). Alert to the Spirit, allowing Him to prompt and lead you anytime, anywhere in praying for God's servants.
2. Pray with the attitude of a "worker" with God, working hard for God, not as a leisure or relaxation exercise. See example of Epaphras (Col.4:12-13).
3. Pray with faith, not by sight. Trust God for the fruit of your prayers around the world, whether you hear the results or not.

WHAT TO PRAY FOR???

Prayer requests for God's servants (from personal experience & observation – not in any particular sequence):

1. **TEMPTATION:** we are all human and weak including God's servants, prone to fall into all kinds of temptation with potential to wreck our ministries. Yes, sexual sins (in the mind as well as in hiding, eg Internet). Also in hidden areas of the heart (eg jealousies, hatred, unforgiveness, etc.). Remember that God's servants are real people, with the same human struggles that any Christian has anywhere.
2. **PERSEVERANCE:** in the face of opposition both from outside and within. A spirit of not giving up. In the face of frequent battles with discouragement. Feelings of "what's the use?" Failures.

3. SELF-DISCIPLINE: to keep from taking spiritual matters for granted; to up with spiritual disciplines of reading the Word and prayer. Also in other forms of hard work like learning another language.
4. POWER: to so live and move by the Spirit so that “living water” (life) flows into the lives of others to refresh them, our words have a “cutting thrust” to them piercing the hearts of our hearers.
5. PRIORITIES: the priority of a growing hunger & love for God above all others, and also an ability to prioritise daily work responsibilities.
6. OPENNESS: to receive correction, rebukes & counsel from leaders (Prov.12:1; 15:32). Openness to learn from older missionaries, from the nationals. Openness to change.
7. BOLDNESS: to speak the truth in love with fellow-workers (confront), as well as to share the Gospel with unbelievers rather than just being “Mr Nice Man”.
8. LOVE: for fellow-workers as well as for the nationals. A love in action (visible) for those we work with, ie people from different backgrounds, cultures, and personalities etc. A willingness also to love the nationals and their language & culture.
9. GROWTH: in Christian character, eg in overcoming subtle forms of pride and self-centredness; growing in humility and into the likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ.
10. VISION: a clear vision for what God wants us to give ourselves to – and a vision for what they are given to do – to see any aspect of “ministry” as partnership with God.
11. DISCERNMENT: to recognise their own needs – humble enough to admit to a problem and humble enough to seek help. Spiritual discernment also of the *real* needs of others, eg those to whom they will be ministering.
12. FREEDOM: from inner spiritual & emotional bondages/weaknesses, eg fear of man, of failure – a willingness to allow God’s Spirit mould them through the pains & problems of life and ministry, including through conflicts.

Summarising . . .

1. Prayer is a command from our Father, not just a suggestion. It is for all believers regardless of busyness or status in life.
2. Prayer is tuning in to God’s wavelength for advancing His spiritual kingdom all over the world. It is doing God’s work, God’s way. It is working together with God in work that cannot fail even though filled with challenges and hard work.
3. Prayer is God’s way to help lighten the burdens of His servants and to strengthen their hearts so that they keep growing and going.

4. Prayer is action, not just talk.

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July 1999