

# The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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We Need To Pray! (Part 1)

I Timothy 2:1-2, 8

We turn to I Timothy 2:1,2, and 8 for the text of this message. In this passage, Paul gives to Timothy and us some commands about prayer. The Bible says, *“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”* These verses will form the foundation for this message on prayer.

As you read these verses, you cannot help but notice the series of words that are used to describe prayer. I have read these verses many times and have heard many people make reference to supplications, intercessions, etc. I have always thought that these words referred to different kinds of prayer, and they do, but when I began studying these words intently, I discovered some interesting thoughts. In fact, when I began working on this message, I thought that the main points would be centered around these four ideas. The ideas that these words express are discussed in the message, but not as I originally thought. The preparation of this message opened up things that I had not initially seen. I hope this message about prayer will help you, as it did me, to more intently pray and spend time with God.

As I will show you in the following paragraphs, the first three words in this verse mean the same thing—prayer. As we will see, they are often translated with the English word *prayer*. They are translated differently in this verse to supply a distinction and not use the same word repeatedly. But each word is used to talk about praying for

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ourselves and others.

The first word is supplications. It is defined as a need, an indigence, a seeking, an asking, an entreating, and an entreaty. The Greek word used in this verse is found 19 times in the New Testament. It is translated using five different English words. Seven times it is translated with the singular word prayer. Five times it is translated with the plural form prayers. Four times it is translated with the singular word supplication. Two times, one of them in our text verses, it is translated with the plural form supplications. One time, in Philippians 1:4, it is translated with the word request. It is interesting to note that the word is translated prayer unless another word for prayer is found in the same verse. What I am trying to get us to realize, based upon the words of the New Testament themselves, is that prayer is having a need, a seeking, and an asking. There is not a special word that we must use when a need is bigger one time than another. Any need, any time that we need to ask God for something, is a time that we can pray. Sometimes I have heard people use the word supplication when they are referring to praying for themselves. There is nothing wrong with that, but as we will see, prayer by its very nature is personal. Someone will ask, “Preacher, what are you trying to say?” I respond, “We need to pray!” Stop worrying about whether it is supplication or prayer. They are the same thing. Do you have a need? The only thing you can do with that need is pray about it. Bring it to God. He can take care of it.

The second word used in this passage is prayers. It is found 37 times in the New Testament. It is translated with the singular word prayer 21 times, and the plural form prayers 15 times. The only time it is translated with a different word is in James 5:17. There it is translated with the English word earnestly. In the Greek language you have the verb for prayer followed by the noun for prayer. It is similar to what is found several times in the Hebrew language in the Old Testament. To emphasize something, they repeat the same word. The rules of English do not allow a word to be repeated, so we translate it “prayed earnestly.” James is trying to tell us that Elijah

meant business when he prayed. It is a great example to us. Do not haphazardly say something as a “prayer.” Jesus addressed this issue many times in His earthly ministry. We should mean business with God!

One idea of the word prayer is worship. While we should always be in the mind of prayer, there should also be a set time when we put everything else aside and just focus on our relationship with God. We will expand upon this thought as the message unfolds, but our prayer must include some thoughts when we acknowledge how great and marvelous God is. If our prayer consists only in asking for God to meet our need, it is not true, Biblical prayer.

The third word used in I Timothy 2:1 is intercessions. The singular English word intercession is found five times in the New Testament, but it comes from another Greek word. The word used in I Timothy 2:1 is found only twice in the New Testament. Interestingly, it is also in I Timothy—chapter 4, verse 5. There it is translated with the English word prayer. The word is defined as a falling in with, an interview, and a coming together. That is the essential thought of prayer—a coming together with God. What a wonderful truth to acknowledge. You and I, because of what Christ did for us, have direct access to God. We could look at other verses to prove this, but the very word itself means to come together with God. We have an amazing privilege! But do we come together with God? May God help us to take advantage of that wonderful opportunity.

The final introductory thought is the phrase “*giving of thanks.*” It is found 15 times in the New Testament and is translated five different ways. One time it is translated thankfulness. The phrase, giving of thanks, is used 3 times. It is translated 8 times as thanksgiving, one time with the plural form thanksgivings, and with the word thanks 2 times. Prayer is not Biblical prayer without thanking God for what He has done in the past. As with the other words, we will discuss this further in the message, but prayer must

consist of praising God for the blessings that He has given us. For one who truly wants to spend time with God, that will not be a hard thing to do.

While the words themselves are used interchangeably and do not provide a distinction, their usage does indicate a distinction in the process of prayer. True, Biblical prayer is not just asking God for something. It is not just praising and worshiping God. True, Biblical prayer is a coming together with God so that we may worship and praise Him, and also that we may bring our needs before Him. They are all essentials to prayer. That is the meaning of the words used at the beginning of this passage. Now let us look in more detail at the remainder of the passage and other related verses.

As we consider the thought of We Need to Pray, we will look at it in four main divisions. First, we will cover The Process of Prayer. Second, we will think about The People for Prayer. Third, we will ponder The Practice of Prayer. And last, we will discover The Product of Prayer.

While traveling and preaching in many churches across the country, one thing is very evident. Most believers do not pray. Oh, we will hurriedly say a prayer in the morning and right before we go to bed. We will also thank the Lord for our meals. But we do not spend time in prayer. This is not a new problem for believers. While we may be sidetracked from praying as we should by modern things that others in past centuries did not have to worry about, most of God’s people throughout history have neglected to pray as they should. That is why some of the classic books that we still read today are books on prayer. They were trying to encourage the people to pray. I will confess at the beginning of this message that I often waste more time than I pray. Sometimes I feel burdened to pray more, but I end up doing other things or just wasting away what time I do have to pray. This message is not just for you. I need to hear again what the Lord has to say about prayer. I need to pray.

Some may think that it is the duty of the preacher to pray, but praying is not just something that the preacher should do. All believers should take time to pray. There are many examples in the Bible of men who were not preachers, but who were men of prayer. The list would include Joshua, Hezekiah, and Daniel. These were men who were political leaders, but they prayed. God expects women to pray as well. We find examples of women praying throughout the Bible such as Hannah, Elisabeth, and Mary. If you are saved, God wants you to pray.

But do we know how to pray? Do we know what prayer consists of? We have considered the words at the beginning of our text, but we must not stop there. Those are only the beginning of the great subject of prayer. The disciples asked Jesus in Luke 11:1, "*Lord, teach us to pray.*" Have we ever taken time to learn what it means to pray?

Over the next several months, we will look at many passages about prayer. A few will be examples of people who prayed. We can learn from them how to Biblically pray. Most of the passages will be admonitions about prayer. May we learn from them, so we can pray as we ought to pray.