



The First Duty of the Church—Pray

1 Timothy 2:1-8

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Introduction: this begins a significant section in the teaching of **1 Timothy**, a section that covers the duties and order of the church.

The Resurgence of Prayer

A remarkable *Newsweek* article entitled "Talking to God" claimed that 78 percent of Americans pray at least once a week, and 57 percent report praying every day or even more often. Ninety-one percent of women and 85 percent of men pray at some time. This includes 94 percent of blacks and 87 percent of whites.

"Some of these prayers," *Newsweek* continued, "are born in extremities: there are few atheists in cancer wards or unemployment lines. But in allegedly rootless, materialistic, self-centered America, there is also a hunger for a personal experience with God that prayer seeks to satisfy."

The authors concluded, "Even in the University, the temple of all that the Enlightenment has distilled, prayer has found a home." "It was very rare 20 years ago to find vital, vibrant religion on the college campus," says David Rosenhan, professor of law and psychology at Stanford University. "Now there are prayer meetings here that are attended by 300 to 500 students regularly."

—Focus on the Family

The first duty of the church is basic: it is the duty of prayer.

- Pray for all men (v.1).
- Pray for civil authorities (v.2).
- Pray for all men to be saved (v.3-7).
- Pray everywhere and pray in the right spirit (v.8).

I. Prayer: pray for all men. (1 Timothy 2:1)

Not a single person is to be omitted or left out. We are to pray for all persons:

- the high and the low.
- the educated and the uneducated.
- the important and the unimportant.
- the rich and the poor.
- the leader and the followers.
- the old and the young.
- the friend and the enemy.

Pray for all men. Do not neglect, ignore, or bypass any person. Every person needs prayer; every person needs God: His salvation, care, direction, approval, and acceptance. Therefore, pray for all men.

Note: this is an *exhortation* (*parakaleō*) to pray, which means that it is both an encouragement and a charge. The believer is both *encouraged and charged* to pray. He is given the encouragement and charge to pray just as a soldier is encouraged and charged to fight.

"**First of all**" stresses just how important

prayer is. **"First of all"**—above all else, of supreme importance—put prayer first. **"First of all"**—before all else—pray for all men.

Note that four kinds of prayer are mentioned. This also stresses the importance of praying for all men.

A. There is **"supplication"** (*deēseis*). This refers to the prayers that focus upon special needs—deep and intense needs. When we see special needs in the lives of people—all people—we are to supplicate for them. That is, we are to be carrying the need before God with a great sense of urgency and plead and beg for the person or persons. The idea is that of intense and deep brokenness before God in behalf of others—that God would help and save the person.

Thought 1. Just think what a different world this would be, what a different community we would have if we really took the names and needs of people before God and pleaded for them in an intense brokenness and in tears.

Just think.....

- how many more loved ones would be saved and helped?
- how many more within our community and state and country and world would be saved and helped?
- how fewer problems would exist within society?

Scripture emphatically declares: **"Ye have not, because ye ask not."** ([James 4:2](#)).

B. There are **"prayers"** (*proseuchas*). This refers to the special times of prayer that we set aside for devotion and worship. We are to have set times for prayer, times that we set aside to worship God and

when we pray for all men.

C. There are **"intercessions"** (*enteuxeis*). This refers to bold praying; to standing before God in behalf of another person. Christ is our Intercessor, the One who stands between God and us in our behalf. But we are to intercede for men, to carry their names and lives before God and to boldly pray for them, expecting God to hear and answer—all in the name of Christ. We are to intercede for all men—to stand in the gap between them and God, boldly praying and asking God to be merciful and gracious in salvation and in deliverance.

D. There is **"thanksgiving"** (*eucharistias*). This means that we thank God for hearing and answering—thank Him for what He has done and is going to do for all men.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" ([Matthew 5:44](#)).

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" ([Matthew 7:7](#)).

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" ([Luke 18:1](#)).

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots" ([Luke 23:34](#)).

"And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell

asleep" ([Acts 7:60](#)).

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" ([Ephes. 6:18](#)).

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God. and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 4:6-7](#)).

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving" ([Col. 4:2](#)).

"Pray without ceasing" ([1 Thes. 5:17](#)).

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are...he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" ([James 5:16-18](#)).

II. Prayer— Civil Authorities: pray for civil authorities, for kings and for all who are in authority. ([1 Timothy 2:2](#))

- No matter how good or how bad they are, pray for them.
- No matter how moral or immoral they are, pray for them.
- No matter how just or unjust they are, pray for them.

The thought of praying for evil rulers is shocking to some people.

Just think of the evil rulers in the world even today. But remember: Nero was on the throne in Rome when Paul charged believers to pray for the king or emperor. And Nero had already burned Rome and had blamed it on Christian believers. In fact, he was presently launching a violent persecution against the believers.

Donald Guthrie says, *"This Christian attitude towards the State is of utmost importance. Whether the civil authorities are perverted or not they must be made subjects for prayer, for Christian citizens may in this way influence the course of national affairs, a fact often forgotten except in times of special crisis"* (The Pastoral Epistles. "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries," p.70).

Matthew Henry says, *"Pray for Kings...though the kings at this time were heathens, enemies to Christianity, and persecutors of Christians...because it is for the public good that there should be civil government, and proper persons entrusted with the administration of it"* (Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol.5, p.811).

There are **two reasons** why we are to pray for rulers.

A. We pray for rulers so that we can lead quiet and peaceable lives.

The only way the citizens of a nation can live quiet and peaceable lives is for the ruler to be filled.....

- with wisdom and knowledge.

- with morality and justice.
- with courage and boldness.
- with compassion and understanding.

Therefore, believers must pray for the rulers to be filled to the brim so that the rulers can bring about peace and security throughout the land. Then and only then can the citizens of a land live quiet and peaceable lives.

B. We must pray for rulers so that we can live godly and sincere lives. Believers want freedom of worship for all citizens.

1. They want freedom of worship, and freedom of life and choice, the right to worship and live for God without being opposed and persecuted.

2. They want freedom of life and choice, the right to live *sincere or purposeful lives*, the right to pursue their own lives and wills without being opposed by a ruler.

Thought: People desire, even crave freedom: freedom of life and choice and freedom of worship.

This is the reason we must pray for rulers.....

- for wise and knowledgeable rulers.
- for moral and just rulers.
- for courageous and bold rulers.
- for compassionate and understanding rulers.

"By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked" ([Proverbs 11:11](#)).

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" ([Proverbs 14:34](#)).

"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work" ([Titus 3:1](#)).

"Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king" ([1 Peter 2:17](#)).

Continued in next edition...



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