

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 1. 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](#)).

III. Jesus Christ, Mediator— Prayer— Salvation— Ransom— Redemption: pray for all men to be saved, both rulers and citizens, both high and low. (1 Timothy 2:3-7)

There are five reasons given why we are to pray for the salvation of all men, including all rulers.

A. First, God is our Savior and He wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. As pointed out earlier ([1 Tim. 1:1](#)), *God our Savior* is one of the great titles for God. God is our Savior, the source of our salvation. God is the first Person who has cared for and loved man. God loves us and He is not willing that any should perish; therefore, He has taken the initiative and provided the way for us to be saved.

Note: God wills all men to be saved, but not in the sense of a decree. God has not decreed that all men be saved. This is evident by the ungodly and unrighteous lives lived by so many. God wills all men to be saved in the sense that He loves and longs for them to be saved. If any man perishes, it is his own fault. God has done all He can. He has provided the way for man to be saved. If a man is now lost, it is his own choosing.

Note the words "the knowledge of the truth." What truth is it that God wants man to know? The truth that is covered in the points that follow: that there is only one God, and there is only one Mediator who gave Himself a ransom for all—the truth that all can be saved from sin and death and judgment to come through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. God loves man so much that He has provided *the way* for man to be saved. *That way* is the truth, and *that truth* is the truth that God wants man to know.

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" ([John 14:6](#)).

This is the reason we should pray for all men, both rulers and citizens, high and low, educated and uneducated, moral and immoral, just and unjust, civilized and savage, saved and lost. God wants all men to be saved regardless of who they are and no matter how evil they may be.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" ([2 Peter 3:9](#)).

"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" ([Ezekiel 33:11](#)).

B. Second, there is only one God, not the many gods of men. If there were many gods, then there would be many ways to reach the heavens of the gods. But there are not many gods. Logically, there could not be many gods. When we speak of God, we mean the Infinite and Supreme Majesty of the Universe. There can be only one Supreme Being, only one Infinite Being. If there should be many gods, then they would not be infinite or supreme; therefore, they would not be God.

The point is this: since there is only one God, there can be only one way to reach Him—only one way to be saved. Why? This is the discussion of the next point.

"There is none other God but one" ([1 Cor. 8:4](#)).

"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" ([Ephes. 4:6](#)).

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" ([1 John 5:7](#)).

"Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears" ([2 Samuel 7:22](#)).

"For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone" ([Psalm 86:10](#)).

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no savior" ([Isaiah 43:10-11](#)).

"Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God" ([Isaiah 44:6](#)).

"For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD and there is none else" ([Isaiah 45:18](#)).

C. There is only one mediator between God and men. Man must have a mediator if he is to be saved, if he is to approach God and be acceptable to God. As asked above, why? Because there is only one perfect Person: God Himself. No man can stand before God, not in his own name or righteousness. Man is imperfect, and God is perfect. Man cannot make himself acceptable to God no matter what he does.

Imperfection is unacceptable to perfection. If perfection accepted imperfection, it would no longer be perfection. Perfection has to be just and righteous, which means that it has to reject imperfection. God cannot accept imperfect man. God has to be just and righteous and reject man in all the imperfection of his thoughts and behavior.

How, then, can man become acceptable to God? God has to make man acceptable. God Himself has to handle the sin, condemnation, and death of men. But how? There was only one way: God, the Perfect Person, had to become Man. God had to come to earth in such a way that man could understand Him and understand what He was doing. This He did by partaking of flesh and blood and coming to earth in the person of His Son, the Man Christ Jesus.

God Himself had to conquer sin. He had to live a ***perfect and sinless life*** as a man in order to handle sin. By living a perfect and sinless life, He became the Ideal and Perfect Man, the Ideal and Perfect Righteousness that could cover and stand for all men ([Hebrews 2:14-15](#)).

**"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;
¹⁵ And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" ([Hebrews 2:14-15](#)).**

This is part of what is meant by Jesus Christ being our Mediator. He stands before God as the Perfect Man, and He also stands between God and men as the Perfect Man. He is the Ideal Pattern of all men, of just what a man should be.

Therefore, when a man really believes in Jesus Christ.....

- God takes that man's belief and counts it as the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- God accepts the man's faith and honor in His Son as righteousness.
- God lets the righteousness of His Son, Jesus Christ, cover the man.
- God accepts the man's faith as the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Very simply stated, the man is not righteous, but God takes the man's faith in His Son and credits his faith as righteousness. Jesus Christ stands as the Mediator between God and men; He stands as the Mediator of perfection and righteousness for man. The point is this: since there is only one Mediator, we must pray for men to come to know Him. And we must rush to proclaim Him to all men so that they can know about Him and have the opportunity to follow Him.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" ([John 1:14](#)).

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" ([John 14:6](#)).

"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake" ([John 14:9-11](#)).

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" ([1 Tim. 2:5](#)).

"But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" ([Hebrews 8:6](#)).

"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" ([Hebrews 9:15](#)).

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" ([Hebrews 9:24](#)).

"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven" ([Hebrews 12:24-25](#)).

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" ([1 John 2:1](#)).

D. The man Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all. The word "**ransom**" (*antilutron*) means to **exchange something for something else**. The man Christ Jesus exchanged His life for the life of man; He gave up His life for the life of man. How? By the cross. Jesus Christ took the sin and condemnation of men upon Himself and bore their judgment for them. Christ died for man; He bore the judgment of God against sin for man.

As the Ideal and Perfect Man, Christ could do this for man. Since He was the Ideal Man, His death was the ideal death. Therefore, His death can stand for and cover the death of all men.

If a man really believes and trusts that the death of Jesus Christ is for him.....

- God counts the death of Christ for the man.
- God actually **counts** the man as having already died in Christ.
- God accepts the man as free from the guilt and condemnation of sin because

Christ has already paid the ransom price for sin and death.

This is the glorious gospel of God: man can now live forever in the presence of God. Jesus Christ gave Himself as a ransom for sin and death.

When man receives Christ Jesus into his heart and begins to follow Christ.....

God gives him life now and forever, abundant life and eternal life. When the man finishes his task upon earth, God will transfer him right into His presence—quicker than a flash of lightning. The man never has to taste death.

The words "**testified in due time**" mean that God sent His Son in the fullness of time. When it was time for Christ to come to earth, He came.

Now note: we must pray for men to believe that Christ died for them—pray that they might be saved. And we must rush to proclaim the glorious news that Christ Jesus has paid the ransom price for us: we can now be set free from sin, death, and condemnation. We can now live with God eternally.

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" ([Leviticus 17:11](#)).

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" ([Matthew 20:28](#)).

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" ([Romans 3:24](#)).

"For ye are bought [redeemed] with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" ([1 Cor. 6:20](#)).

"Ye are bought [redeemed] with a price; be not ye the servants of men" ([1 Cor. 7:23](#)).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" ([Ephes. 1:7](#)).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" ([Col. 1:14](#)).

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" ([1 Tim. 2:5-6](#)).

"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" ([Hebrews 9:15](#)).

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" ([1 Peter 1:18-19](#)).

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" ([Rev. 5:9](#)).

E. Ministers are ordained or appointed to proclaim the salvation of God.

Note: Paul said three things about himself.

1. God had appointed Paul to be a “**preacher**” (*kēruux*): a herald, an ambassador who was appointed by a king to go forth and proclaim the message of the king.

The minister is a preacher who is sent forth by God to preach the truth about Jesus Christ.....

- that He is the Mediator between God and men.
- that He has given Himself as a ransom for all.

"And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach" ([Mark 3:14](#)).

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" ([Mark 16:15](#)).

"Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life" ([Acts 5:20](#)).

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" ([2 Tim. 4:2](#)).

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" ([1 Cor. 1:17](#)).

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" ([1 Cor. 9:16](#)).

2. God had appointed Paul to be an “**apostle**” (*apostolos*): a person who had been sent as a very special witness and on a very special mission. The minister is sent forth on the special mission to bear witness that Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and men. Jesus Christ has paid the ransom price for man.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" ([John 15:16](#)).

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" ([2 Cor. 5:20-21](#)).

3. God had appointed Paul as a “**teacher**” (*didaskalos*): a person who instructs people reproof, correction, and righteousness.

Note Paul's stress upon his call from God: **"I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not."** God had called him to proclaim and teach the salvation in Christ Jesus. Apparently, there were some at Ephesus who questioned Paul's call and ministry.

The point is this: God has called ministers to proclaim the faith and truth of the Mediator and the great ransom price that He paid for man's salvation. Therefore, we must pray for *all men*—that they will receive the message of the minister and be saved.

"Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" ([Acts 18:9-11](#)).

"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding" ([Acts 28:30-31](#)).

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues" ([1 Cor. 12:28](#)).

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" ([Ephes. 4:11](#)).

IV. Prayer: pray everywhere and pray in the right spirit. (1 Timothy 2:8)

A person should never stop praying. He should be praying all day long as he walks throughout the day. He should develop an unbroken communion and fellowship with the Lord, praying for all men—for both the ruler and the citizen, the high and the low, the lost and the saved—all over the world.

He should pray for those of his.....

- | | |
|---------|-------------|
| ♦ home | ♦ church |
| ♦ city | ♦ community |
| ♦ state | ♦ country |

He should pray for those in.....

- North America
- Central America
- South America
- Africa
- Russia
- India
- Pakistan
- Europe
- Romania
- The Middle East ...and on and on.

The believer is to pray and to keep on praying. He is to pray everywhere—no matter where he is. **But note: the believer is also told how to pray.**

A. He is to pray **"lifting up holy hands"**; that is, he is not to come before God having touched or handled **"the forbidden things"** (William Barclay. *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p.74). He is not to come with sin in his life.

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" ([Psalm 66:18](#)).

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" ([Isaiah 59:2](#)).

"And there is none that calleth upon thy name that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities" ([Isaiah 64:7](#)).

B. He is to pray without anger or feelings in his heart against someone else.

Very simply.....

- God does not accept us unless we accept others.
- God does not forgive us unless we forgive others.

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" ([Matthew 5:23-24](#)).

"But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" ([Matthew 6:15](#)).

"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" ([Matthew 18:35](#)).

C. He is to pray without doubting. There is no need to pray if we do not think God is going to hear us. If we ask Him doubting, we are not trusting His presence and power to meet our need. We are actually denying God's care and power. We are destroying the name of God among men. Therefore, we must believe God when we pray.

"And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" ([Matthew 21:23](#)).

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" ([Mark 11:24](#)).

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" ([Hebrews 11:6](#)).

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord" ([James 1:6-7](#)).