

We Pray for One Another

The Point: The church is strengthened as we pray.

Ephesians 3:14-21

Dr. Greg Pouncey of First Baptist Church in Clinton, Mississippi shared a story about his mother. She experienced a stroke that left her in intensive care. Dr. Pouncey received the alarming news while at church. Overwhelmed by the situation, Dr. Pouncey nevertheless began the instant thinking process to reestablish order in his life while trying to get to his mother who lived ten hours away. How could he get there quickly? Who would preach on Sunday and Wednesday? How could he ever reschedule the many, many meetings for the upcoming week? Dr. Pouncey said it was a blessing that he received the news at church (the body of Christ). Members of the body immediately began to pray.

Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21 tells us to do just that ----- pray. Pray for others, not just ourselves. Pray for spiritual needs as well as physical. Pray for the power and presence of Christ to be vividly demonstrated through His church (v. 14-17a). Paul knelt before God, an act of humility and reverence. The scripture says Paul prayed before the Father. Before implies a face-to-face or intimate encounter. We are members of His family and thus have this same access in prayer.

“Christians have the opportunity to pray for the presence of God to be manifested through their local church as they pray for one another” (Dr. Pouncey). Paul was praying for the Ephesians to have the hand of God on their lives, giving them strength and power to do what He had called them to do. This strengthening of the believer occurs through his Spirit. God had a storehouse of riches to lavish upon

the Ephesians who had turned to Christ, and Paul prayed for God to strengthen them by His Spirit, according to those riches. Paul prayed for “Christ to dwell in your hearts through faith” (v.17). Christ dwells in them. They pray for one another. The church is strengthened and grounded in its relationship with Christ.

Ephesians 3:17b-19 tells us to pray for a deeper sense of God’s love. In verse 18 Paul prayed that we “may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God’s love.” By using these dimensional terms, Paul was pointing out that God’s love was as real as the Temple of the Ark of the Covenant. For Paul, God’s love was real, immense, and effective. Paul wanted the Ephesians (and us) to try to wrap our minds around the vastness, the immensity of God’s love. In verse 19, Paul moves from God’s love to Christ’s love.

Understanding Christ’s love and responding to it is a lifetime endeavor. Paul prayed that they would be filled with all the fullness of God. This means they (and we) have a strong sense of God’s presence and guidance in our daily lives, moving toward complete maturity in our relationship with God. This journey continues until we stand before God.

Paul’s doxology in v.20-21 clearly tells us to pray that God (him who is able) would be glorified through the church. God is glorified by the life, death, and resurrection of His Son. God is also glorified by Christ’s followers as they serve Him faithfully. “Paul presented the ultimate purpose of our praying together, living together, serving together and everything else we do in the church and beyond. That purpose is the glory of God.” (p.118 Bible Studies for Life, Personal Study Guide).