

Life Groups – Winter, 2007
Ephesians

February, Lesson Two

Gathering Question –

Consider the following prayers –

“Lord bless us today.”

“Father, please help me find a parking place.”

“Father, if you will let me win the lottery I will give half of it to you.”

“Father, please just let me make it through this terrible storm, safely back home again and I promise I will start going back to church.”

“God, please forgive me where I have failed you, and help me to live for you today.”

What do you think about these prayers? Anything right or wrong about them?

Prayer

For Christians, prayer is like breathing. You don't have to think to breathe because it comes naturally to you as a human being. It is the way God made you. The atmosphere exerts pressure on your lungs and forces you to breathe. That's why it is so much more difficult for you to hold your breath than it is for you to breathe. In the same way, when you become a Christian you are born into a spiritual atmosphere where God's presence and his grace exert pressure or influence on your life, making prayer a very natural thing. Unless we breathe the atmosphere of prayer we will not survive in the darkness of this evil world.

Too many believers hold their breaths for long periods of time, thinking that just brief moments of breath is enough to sustain them spiritually. This kind of restraint often leads to all kinds of sinful desires. In order to survive, all Christians must continually communicate with God.

Right in the midst of discussing the wonderful acts of God and the great inheritance we have as believers in Christ, Paul explodes into prayers of thanksgiving and praise. These are no trivial thoughts or requests from Paul. In fact, these prayers provide a great model for how to pray for those we love and for whom we have been given responsibility to care for in the faith.

Prayer is drawn partly from the urgency of human needs and partly from the promise and the challenge of God's Word. Through prayer the church resists the assaults of Satan (Ephesians 6:13-20), seeks deliverance, healing, and restoration for the saints (Ephesians 6:18; James 5:15; I John 5:16), supports evangelism (Colossians 4:3-4), and accomplishes many other things for the Lord.

Read and Reflect –
Ephesians 1:15-23

1. If Paul has heard that the Ephesians are doing so well (verse 15) why does he then say that he never ceases to pray for them. Does righteousness provoke more or less prayer? Why?
2. What is the "Spirit of Wisdom?" In your opinion should Spirit be capitalized? Why?
3. What are the "eyes of your heart?" Paul prays that they will be enlightened about what? If hope is about things in the future how can a person "know" hope?
4. What does it mean to you that the incomparably great power that God has for those who believe is compared to the power of God that resurrected Christ from the dead? What are the implications of such a statement to everyday Christian life?
5. Christ is the "head over everything for the church." Practically, what does that mean for the church today? How does it or should it change the way we do things (or does it)?
6. Colossians 3:2 urges Christians to "set their minds on things above." Does this have any impact on the kinds of prayers we pray? Should it? Are there some things that Christians should not pray about? Give a reason for your answer.