

How we should pray for fellow Christians: Part 1

Introduction:

Sometimes in a Prayer Meeting, in a House Group or even during a formal Church Service we are asked to pray for fellow Christians who are completely unknown to us. We may have no idea of their needs, family concerns or background. How then can we pray? For what should we ask, other than a simple "Bless them Lord!" which indeed may be appropriate and which heartfelt prayer we know our gracious Lord God will answer!

These short "sermon outlines" may help us to be a little more specific and to focus our prayers on the needs of our sisters and brothers, especially those living under persecution, or those who feel inadequate to face the daily challenges to their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reading:- Ephesians 1, verses 11 - 23 (NIV)

Why we should pray:

Everything is *"for the praise of His (that is God the Father's) glory"* - verses 12 and 14. It is also in verse 6. So our calling as His children (sons and daughters) in verse 6, our lives in verse 12 and our ultimate possession of our inheritance in verse 14 are all *"for the praise of His glory."* Our salvation in Jesus Christ - the Son, and our sealing by the Holy Spirit is in order that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified. Our prayer for our brothers and sisters is to further that work. Paul, in praying for his fellow Christians, gives a reason for his prayers. v.15. He has heard of their faith and love and wants them to know more of God the father.

What we should pray:

We should note that, in this instance, Paul prays specifically for the spiritual welfare of his fellow Christians, rather than for their material needs.

- 1) He gives thanks for the Christian witness of the "saints" at Ephesus. How often do we give thanks to God that, even in places where there is persecution, there is an ongoing witness in the lives of "ordinary" Christian people - rightly called "saints"!
- 2) He remembers them! Again, how often do we remember to pray for our sisters and brothers? They are unknown to us by name, yet many of them in desperate need of the encouragement and reassurance that can come from a deep knowledge of the spiritual power of God.
- 3) Here is the key! That *"the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. . . . that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened"* It is this spiritual knowledge that is vital for the ongoing Christian life and endurance of those under pressure - here in the U.K. as well as overseas. Paul then goes on to list the three things for which he specifically prays that they may know:-

- "the hope to which he has called you"*. Those who believed in Christ and were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit (v.13) are guaranteed an inheritance with Christ.
- "the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people"* - The promise that we shall be with Christ in glory. (John 14 v. 3: 1 Thessalonians 4 v.17. Etc.)
- "and his incomparably great power for us who believe."* The great power which God the Father demonstrated when He raised Christ from the dead is available to us. The word Paul uses in Greek is *"dunameos"*, the root of "dynamic", "dynamo" and "dynamite"!

If we pray anything for our brothers and sisters in need, this should be a priority!

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