

2 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

⁵ For there is one God;

*there is also one mediator between God and humankind,
Christ Jesus, himself human,*

⁶ who gave himself a ransom for all

—this was attested at the right time. ⁷ For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth¹ I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

⁸ I desire, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument; 1 Timothy 2:1-8 NRSV

There is probably no more subject that is used or abused as the subject of prayer. We are people of faith, and prayer should be something we do on a regular basis. The challenge I think is for us to remember how valuable prayer is in our relationship to God. For sometimes prayer can be a "cop out" to not deal with something. In a candid classroom discussion when I was in seminary, a fellow student lamented that if they had a disagreement with a professor about a grade on paper they knew they weren't going to get a "hearing" when the professor said "let's pray about it". Then prayer can be routine and even monotonous. Consider this humorous story:

I heard about a little girl. One night her mother said, "Did you say your prayers?" She said, "Yes, I did, but I didn't say those same old things to God we always say every night. I told Him the story of the three bears. I thought He'd want to hear something different tonight.

However the scriptures make it very plain that prayer is one of the most, if not the most important thing Christians can do. One of the best examples is this portion of Paul's letter to Timothy. Commentators will tell you that the first verse is "heaped" with words in regards to prayer. In fact he begins by making it the FIRST priority. What is even more interesting is his command to pray for all kings and those in authority. Most kings were not "just rulers", and ultimate "king" at that time was the roman emperor. Following this command had to be a bit hard to take because it was Rome who was persecuting Christians, and the emperor was considered to be a god.

Yet Paul sees it as keeping an orderly society, and making it easier to proclaim the good news of the gospel.

This year we have been following Luke's gospel. One of the things that Luke gives to us in his account of Jesus life is Jesus devotion to prayer. It comes up many times and many different situations with the ultimate time in the Garden of Gethsemane before Jesus is led away by the authorities

Perhaps in this challenging day and age we need to follow Paul's on prayer especially when there is so much controversy especially in regards to leaders of the government.

Christian history has many examples of how prayer became the "launching pad" for many revivals of the faith when things looked grim. In fact Luke tells us that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, the "birthday" of the church was preceded by a time of constant prayer.

Someone once wrote "The person that fails to pray does not cheat God, but ultimately cheats themselves".

Friends, let's not "cheat ourselves". Let us be people of prayer, "early and often" .

Pr. John Van Haneghan