

How Important are Prayer and Fellowship to the Cause of the Gospel?

Romans 1:8-15

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For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.
- Romans 1:9-12, ESV

The gospel seems to have fallen on hard times in the evangelical world in recent years. [False gospels](#) are often promoted in place of the [true biblical gospel](#). Is it a coincidence that, at the same time that we're seeing [a decline in the biblical gospel](#), we're also seeing a decline in true fellowship and prayer?

On the surface, we might not see a connection between fellowship, prayer and the gospel. We probably hear the word fellowship and think of eating good food and having fun together. We hear of prayer, and most of us probably feel guilty, thinking of something we know we should do more. We're not sure what either one of these things has to do with preaching and evangelism. For the Apostle Paul, prayer and fellowship were vital to the strength and health and growth of the gospel among God's people and in the world.

As soon as Paul heard of the faith of the Roman Christians, which was "proclaimed in all the world," he began praying for them. Paul took this call to prayer seriously, mentioning them always in his prayers, without ceasing. As Paul was praying for the Romans, part of his prayer was that God would open the way for him to visit them, that they may enjoy face-to-face fellowship.

When Paul longed for face-to-face fellowship with the Romans, he wasn't thinking of the food they would enjoy. He wasn't dreaming of a nice Italian restaurant or of the games they might play. He knew that he could come and strengthen them, and he expected that they would strengthen him. He wanted to impart a spiritual gift, a real blessing, to them. He also longed to be encouraged by them, even as he offered encouragement to them.

The vital importance of both fellowship and prayer remind us that we do not believe, live and promote the gospel on our own. Our faith in the gospel and our faithfulness to the gospel are deeply dependent on God's grace, which is given in prayer and in fellowship with one another. We need to be on our knees because we need the Lord. We need to be in fellowship with one another because we need one another.

One common theme that seems to emerge in the lives of ministers who abandon the gospel is isolation. Leaders who become isolated from deep fellowship and who neglect time in prayer grow self-sufficient, proud and are thus ripe for picking by Satan and his minions. Humility and a sense of dependency keep a Christian on his knees and in fellowship with others. May the Lord grant us the grace to drop to our knees and reach out to one another every day. We cannot do this alone.