

**Subject: *Praying for Our Nation***

**Scripture: *1 Timothy 2:1-4***

Prayer makes a world of difference. Paul speaks to the issue of prayer in the church. He exhorts (strongly urge) us to pray “first of all” (first in importance, first and foremost). Prayer is the most important thing in the church. We can do more than pray after we’ve prayed, but we can do nothing until we have first prayed. Jesus said in Matthew 21:13, “My house shall be called the house of prayer.” Prayer is not an option; it is an obligation. Prayer can do anything God can do, and God can do anything. Prayer moves the hand that moves the world. But prayer needs direction. Jesus’ disciples asked Him, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Lk. 11:1).

### **THE NATURE OF OUR PRAYERS (vs. 1)**

How should we pray? Four words are used to describe prayer.

- Supplications

This word stresses the urgency and intense desire of the person who is praying. Warren Wiersbe said this is “intense prayer that comes from need that is felt.”

***James 5:16*** *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

- Prayers

The word supplication could be a request made to God or another person, but the word “prayers” is only used of a request made of God. This word implies the idea of reverence and the sacred nature of prayer.

- Intercessions

We usually think of it as prayer offered on behalf of someone else, but that would be true of all these words. This word carries the special idea of drawing close to God and entering His presence with ease and freedom.

***Hebrews 4:16*** *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

***James 4:8*** *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.*

- Giving of thanks

We give thanks for the privilege of prayer and we give thanks in advance for answers to prayer. ***1 Thessalonians 5:17-18*** <sup>17</sup> *Pray without ceasing.* <sup>18</sup> *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

***Philippians 4:6*** *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

Praying people are thankful people. They don’t forget where their blessings come from.

### **THE FOCUS OF OUR PRAYERS (vs. 2a)**

Who should we pray for? Two kinds of people are mentioned:

- Pray for kings (top leaders)
- Pray for all who are in authority (all branches and levels of government)

We need to pray for them instead of criticizing them. We should pray for kings whether good or bad and for all government officials, good or bad. The Roman Emperor at this time was Nero. ***Romans 13:1-6*** Government officials are the ministers of God. In some countries the head of state is called the Prime Minister.

## **THE BENEFIT OF OUR PRAYERS (vs. 2b)**

What is the result of our prayers?

- We can have a quiet and peaceable life

This means at least three things: no war abroad, no rebellion at home, and no persecution from the government.

- We can live in all godliness and honesty

Godliness refers to religious devotion and honesty refers to integrity. Our founding fathers came to America to have religious freedom. The greatest freedom is the freedom to worship and serve God. We have seen a lot of our religious freedom taken away. Some have tried to define the separation of church and state to mean the separation of God and government. Some now want a completely secular state with no mention of God or the Bible at all. That's not what our founding fathers had in mind. We have taken prayer and the Bible out of our public schools, but as someone said, as long as there are tests we will have prayer in school.

The First Amendment to our Constitution says: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." In other words, the government is not to endorse a particular religion over another one, but at the same time the government should not prevent citizens from exercising their religion freely.

## **THE REASON FOR OUR PRAYERS (vs. 3-4)**

Paul mentions two things in connection with our prayers:

- This kind of prayer pleases God

The purpose of prayer is not to get man's will done in heaven, but to get God's will done on earth. This kind of prayer involves real faith in God. **Hebrews 11:6** *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

- This kind of prayer opens the door to evangelism

God has a desire for all people to be saved. In order for people to be saved they must know the truth. Lost sinners are not saved through ignorance. Salvation depends on knowing the truth. Paul then moves into verses 5-6 where he lays out the truth of Jesus Christ, who He is and what He did for us so that we may be saved.

Do you remember when Philip met the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8? Philip asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The Ethiopian replied, "How can I unless someone help me?" People need the truth and they need our help to know it and understand it. We need to thank God for the freedom we have to share the Gospel and we need to use that freedom while we can.