

Prayer - Week 3

Supplication (asking)



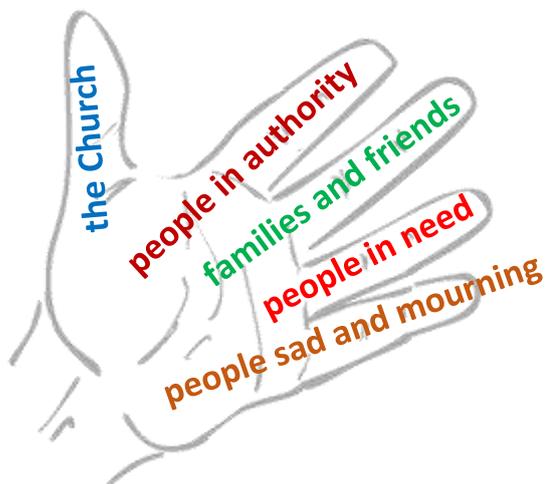
I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Saviour, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. For, there is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone.

(1 Timothy 2: 1-6 NLB)

Pray for others

Notice that the Apostle Paul urges us to pray for everyone. Jesus even said we should pray for those who persecute us, people who hurt us or are unkind to us. (Matthew 5:44) That sounds daunting, but Paul probably didn't mean that we should pray for everyone every day, although over a period we perhaps ought to pray for a range of people with different challenges and needs. Whenever you pray for someone in need there are always others associated with that person who also need our prayers. If we are praying for the drug addict then we can pray for their families, counsellors, and all affected by the addiction. If we are praying for people whose homes have been destroyed by earthquake, again we can pray for their families and friends, rescuers, people providing humanitarian aid, insurers, community leaders, etc.

Here is one structure that both highlights the people we should remember in our prayers and provides a model for intercessory prayer.



The Church; pray for the worldwide church, the national church, Presbytery and the church in your parish. Pray for its minister and Elders and all who take responsibility for leadership. Pray for unity, that the Gospel will be proclaimed and the church will be a channel of God's love, grow in discipleship and grow in number. Pray for Christians persecuted for their faith.

People in authority; politicians and governments, leaders of industry and commerce.

Your families and friends.

People in particular need, physically, mentally or spiritually ill; people, hungry, homeless, abused, exploited, neglected, lonely, anxious, or in some way hurting, or struggling with life or relationships, people you may have read about in the news. Pray for peace and reconciliation in situations of violence, conflict and war.

People who are sad and mourning the loss of people they love, whether through death, geographical distance or in some other way.

Pray for yourself

There will be all sorts of things you may want to pray for yourself. You may be in a place of torment and confusion and need God's comfort, reassurance and guidance. You may be seeking direction in your life. Whatever it is, ask.

Listen

The Lord and his disciples were travelling along and came to a village. When they got there, a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹She had a sister named Mary, who sat down in front of the Lord and was listening to what he said.



(Luke 11:38-39)

After six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him".

(Mark 9: 2-3 & 7)

Stop talking! Prayer requires us to listen to God.

We should expect prayer to be answered, for Jesus said, "You may ask for anything in my name, and I will do it" (John 14:16); and "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer". (Matthew 21:22) However, our prayers are not necessarily answered in the way we might expect, so expect the unexpected.

Our prayer should change us. For example, if we pray for an end to poverty, we should expect to be challenged in our giving and in our attitude and actions towards political and social structures.

Often the answer to prayer is that God requires us to change, but importantly we need to listen to what God is saying to us.

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For reflection

How broad and deep, how encompassing, how narrow and shallow and limiting are my prayers for others?

Psalm 119:33-40

“Point out your rules to me, and I won’t disobey even one of them.

³⁴ Help me to understand your Law; I promise to obey it with all my heart.

³⁵ Direct me by your commands! I love to do what you say.

³⁶ Make me want to obey you, rather than to be rich.

³⁷ Take away my foolish desires, and let me find life by walking with you.

³⁸ I am your servant! Do for me what you promised to those who worship you.

³⁹ Your wonderful teachings protect me from the insults that I hate so much.

⁴⁰ I long for your teachings. Be true to yourself and let me live.”

For doing

Click on these links and use them as a prayer.

[God make my life a little light](#)

[Make me a channel of your peace](#)

Take a newspaper story and write a list of all the people who might be affected by it. Use this as a prompt for your prayer.

Take time to listen. Ask, “what is God saying to me in response to my prayer?”