

# The Elder's Spiritual Life

## Becoming a Praying Leader (3)

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### *Detailed Outline*

This is the third message on prayer and the fifth and sixth lessons on prayer from Ephesians 6:18-19.

#### **V. Always Be Praying for Others.**

Ephesians 6:18: **Making supplication for all the saints.** The Christian has his armor on, and he's part of a large army of soldiers for Christ. Now, what do we do once we have the armor on? We pray for one another because the battle is severe. There's hardly anything better you can do for those under your pastoral care than to regularly and persistently pray for them.

1 Samuel 12:23: **Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you.**

As shepherds of God's people, you need to know this verse. Samuel thought it was a sin not to intercede for the needs of the saints. This is especially important for leaders. They should be models of prayer. Elders are to be intercessors for others.

Have some kind of systematic, orderly prayer procedure so that you can say, "I pray for all the saints." Be a praying elder. Remember what the twelve apostles said: **We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word** (Acts 6:4).

#### **VI. Always Be Praying for Missionaries and the Gospel.**

Ephesians 6:18c-19: **Making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains that I may declare it boldly as I ought to speak.**

Paul says, pray **for all the saints**. Well, he's a saint too. Thus he says, "As you're praying for all the saints, pray for me. I need prayer."

If you look at Paul's epistles, we see that he believed firmly that the prayers of the churches directly affect his success, his liberty in the gospel ministry, his gospel mission. Thus he calls upon the churches to pray for the advancement of the gospel through his ministry.

Paul has two specific prayer requests:

- 1. Paul wants to proclaim the mystery of the gospel with clarity and with the right words and concepts (v. 19).**

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Paul is surrounded by elite Roman guards, who are all polytheists. They are very proud of their Roman gods and proud of their long history. How would you tell them that a Jewish Messiah died on a cross at the hands of the Romans and that he is the Savior of the world? They didn't believe in a messiah or the Old Testament. How could you possibly convince them of the gospel?

### **2. Paul wants to proclaim the mystery of the gospel with boldness and courage (v. 20).**

Even Paul sensed the need to be a bold and courageous ambassador for Christ before a Christ-rejecting world. He too needed to have courage to speak the Word of God to the enemies of the gospel.

## **VII. Practical Suggestions for Improving the Elders' Prayer Time Together**

- 1. Use a prayer guide for elders' meetings.**
- 2. Appoint a prayer facilitator.** Someone needs to be appointed by the elders and authorized to take charge of the prayer meeting.
- 3. Pray shorter prayers.** By praying shorter prayers, more get to pray. Long prayers can put people to sleep.
- 4. Be alive and participate during the prayer time.** Don't sit there in silence, don't be passive. Say "Amen!" Say "Thank you, Lord!" See 1 Corinthians 14:16.
- 5. Use prayer request cards.** Ask people to give you prayer requests.
- 6. Break into small groups.** Maybe you pray for five or ten minutes and then break into groups of two and make it a special time to pray for one another and one of those families on your list.
- 7. Sing together.**
- 8. Be specific.** Pray for people by name.
- 9. Be creative and energetic in your prayer time.**
- 10. Evaluate your prayer time together.** Evaluate your prayer meeting in order to improve it. Be creative, be pressing forward.

Let me close with one of the greatest quotations I've ever read on prayer. It is by Martyn Lloyd-Jones:

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*When a man is speaking to God, he is at his very acme. It is the highest achievement of the human soul and therefore it is at the same time the ultimate test of a man's true spiritual condition. There is nothing that tells the truth about us as Christian people so much as our prayer life. Everything we do in Christian living is easier than prayer. (Studies in the Sermon on the Mount, 2 vols., [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971], 2:46)*