

Praying for Spiritual Health in Others
Selected Scripture
December 1, 2013

Introduction

Our prayer lists are most often about the physical needs of others. Someone is sick and we pray that God will heal him or her if this is His will. Sometimes we pray that the doctors gain wisdom and understanding in what they are dealing with. For others if one of their family members or friends have died, then we pray that God will provide comfort and peace for the family. There is nothing wrong in praying for people's physical needs. Scripture gives us examples and exhortation to pray for others in need.

Numbers 12:13 *So Moses cried out to the LORD, "O God, please heal her!"*

Note: Miriam had spoken against Moses because he married a non-Jewish woman. God was angry with her and caused her to have leprosy. Moses prayed that God would heal her.

Acts 12:5 *So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.*

Philippians 2:27 *Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.*

Note: Epaphroditus was the messenger that brought Paul gifts from the Philippian church.

James 5:14 *Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.*

It is good to pray of our physical needs; However, I believe that as a church, we are missing a most valuable component of our prayers and petitions, and that is to pray for each other's spiritual health. I know we are lacking in this area. We need to remember what Paul says

2 Corinthians 4:16 *Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.*

We need to understand that the physical body is temporary. It is not permanent. However, our spirit is eternal. We are to be more preoccupied with the spiritual matters rather than the physical. I believe that if we focus less on physical needs and more on spiritual needs, there will be a dramatic difference in God answering prayers. We are setting our minds on things above and not on things on earth. I want us to look at Paul's statement about his praying for others and how we can imitate Paul in our daily walk with the Lord.

To be clear, praying for other's spiritual needs does not mean that we are thinking that we are better than another. If we have true love for one another, then we want to see the best in each other. We want others to grow spiritually all for the glory of God.

I have looked through Paul's prayers and found four areas that we are to be praying for others' spiritual health.

I. Prayer

- We are to pray always

1 Thessalonians 5:17 *pray continually.*

Colossians 4:2 *Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*

- Does not mean that we pray on our knees all the time
- Have the spirit of praying at all times

Nehemiah 2:4 *The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven.*

- We are to pray alertly

Ephesians 6:18 *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

II. Knowing God

- Knowledge of God

Ephesians 1:17 *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better.*

- Know Him better
- Know God through Jesus Christ

John 14:9 *Jesus answered: "Don't you know Me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

- Know His character, attitude, and action
- Knowledge of His will

Colossians 1:9 *For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.*

- His will
 - Being holy

1 Thessalonians 4:3a *It is God's will that you should be sanctified.*

- Giving thanks

1 Thessalonians 5:18 *give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

III. Loving Others

1 Thessalonians 3:12 *May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.*

Philippians 1:9 *And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more*

- This is the ultimate command of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - Love one another
 - This should be our character, works, attitude always
 - Why?
 - This is a command
 - It is the outflow of our regenerated heart

1 John 4:7 *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.*

- Action love

1 John 3:17-18

17 *If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? **18** Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.*

- Knowledge of God and loving one another cannot be separate

1 John 4:12 *No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.*

IV. Faithful Service

2 Thessalonians 1:11 *With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of His calling, and that by His power He may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.*

Colossians 1:10 *And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,*

- God created us to do good works

Ephesians 2:10 *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

2 Corinthians 9:8 *And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

- What are the good works?
 - Kingdom work
 - Selfless service
 - Mercy
 - Sharing
 - Bearing other's burdens
 - Giving
 - listening

V. Living Blameless

1 Thessalonians 3:13 *May He strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all His holy ones.*

Philippians 1:10-11 *so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ-to the glory and praise of God.*

- Living a holy life
- Living such a life that others cannot accuse you of doing wrong

VI. Sharing Faith

Philemon 6 *I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.*

- Pray that others share the gospel
- Pray for the boldness and clarity to share the good news
 - Even Paul asks others to pray of him in this area

Colossians 4:3-4 *And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.*