

## Devoted to Prayer

This week's memory verse: Colossians 4:2

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

This week's study is focused on our prayer life. As you read through Colossians 4:2-6 notice the kind of prayer Paul is asking for. The call of a Christian is to be devoted to prayer, trusting in God alone for every good thing in accordance with His will.

### Read Colossians 4:2-6

1. What does it mean to be devoted to prayer?

Ask people to share: I think it means I learn that God is involved in all things including ministry and without His intervention nothing of value will come out of my work for Him. Therefore, my first priority in ministry should be that of prayer.

*Also look at 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17*

2. How might your life look differently if you were devoted to prayer?

Let people share.

3. How might our Church look different if we were more devoted to prayer?

Let people share. Although many in our church are indeed devoted to prayer, if our church would begin to pray in unity of purpose together more and more I believe we will see God move in powerful ways.

This becomes an extremely important message to small groups. The reason we meet together in homes in small groups is because we become much closer and we can bond together in unity and pray together in one purpose. Every week when you gather, you should gather for study but also for prayer. Paul's focus on prayer in Colossians should be the focus of our prayer in small groups. It is OK to pray for your sick grandma or you unemployed brother but first and foremost God wants us to pray for His Kingdom purposes as Paul requests in this passage.

4. What are the specific prayer petitions you see that Paul is asking for in Colossians 4:3-6?

He prays for an open door - to proclaim Christ - with a clear message. He prays God's people will act wise towards outsiders – and make the most of the opportunities God places before them as witnesses. Paul prays that when we do speak to people, our words would be full of grace and seasoned with salt and that through the truth of Jesus Christ we would have an answer of hope for everyone who asks.

5. If you were to write down a summary of Paul's prayer request, what would it be he is asking for?

It is all about Evangelism: Paul is asking for the opportunity and power of God to allow Him and the Church to be a witness to the love and hope that is in Jesus Christ.

6. Are these the kind of prayers you regularly ask for?

Allow for discussion and reflection

7. Back in verse 2, our memory verse this week, Paul says that as we are devoted to prayer we should also be, "watchful and thankful". What does that mean to you as it applies to the types of prayer we are discussing?

Begin watchful and thankful with a prayerful devoted heart to God's Kingdom work means that I expect God to move in each of these areas (watchful), and I am grateful He allows me to be involved in His work (thankful). It also means I have great hope that God will do what He lays on my heart and I can thank Him in advance knowing He will do what He promises.

8. What does it mean to...

- Have God open the door to the message? It means God opens the heart of people. It means that He places a desire for Himself in the heart of a man. When someone seeks God or asks a spiritual question, God is at work in that person's life. Jesus taught that no one comes to Him unless the Father draws Him. That means to me that unless God is at work, my message has no power. But when God opens the door, my message has the power of Christ.
- Proclaim the mystery of Christ? This means that I will be His witness. I have had truth revealed to me in Jesus and I can share. My job is to proclaim good news, the Gospel of Jesus.
- Proclaim the message clearly? When God takes over, He also leads the meditation of our heart and our minds. He guides my very words by His

Spirit. I should seek and invite God to speak through me when I proclaim Christ.

- Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders? Being wise means to act like a Christian, not a hypocrite. Jesus demonstrated love and I am called to love and show mercy.
- Make the most of every opportunity? In a book I recently read the author said, “Sometimes I think we need to quit praying for an opportunity to share and take the one God has in front of us.” Paul’s prayer here turns from request to action. He prays that we will obey and do the best we can when God opens the door.
- Let your conversation be full of with grace? A reminder that we sinners are saved by grace and we should never forget. Our message should always come from that perspective and not as a better than thou perspective. When we recognize we are sinners saved by grace and our words are full of grace, then we offer up the same grace to those in need that we ourselves are experiencing.
- Be seasoned with salt? Salt makes things taste good and it preserves them. Our conversation should show the person how amazingly blessed we have been by God and how blessed we continue to be by the power, presence and provision of God. It should demonstrate to others that God wants to pour on the same blessing for them.
- Be ready to know how to answer everyone? This implies a constant connection with Jesus and the Word of God. If I remain devoted to prayer and the Word God will give me the answer. I must however rely and trust in the power of the Holy Spirit to guide my every thought and word and be ready to respond whenever God is ready for me to go to work.