

Partnership in the Gospel – Prayer for Gospel Partners

Praying for Our Church Missionaries & Local Gospel Workers

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This is the year of 'overwhelmed' life in: media, a pandemic, economy, job security, political issues, political threats outside our country, and the list seems not to stop. It would be easy to keep prayer short, loud and urgent for the huge issues we face. Those desperate prayers are not too taxing. We see the need, we pray, we text and get others to pray and it is over. But that doesn't seem to be the model of prayer we see in Scripture. Throughout the New Testament we see the Apostle Paul requesting prayer, thanking churches for prayer and writing his prayers for them. Sharing or teaching the Gospel and prayer are strongly glued together in the life of the Apostle Paul. He rarely separates them.

Romans 1:8-10

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you."

Eph 6:19-20

"Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words maybe given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should."

Phil 1:3-6

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Col 4:2-4

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 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. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should."

2 Thess 3:1

"...pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured just as it was with you."

Therefore, prayer for Global missionaries and local Gospel workers is a necessity and a habit we want to build into our local church. Where to start?

First, bring prayer for Gospel workers – global and local – into our Sunday morning prayer space. We have people to lead us in prayer as a church and help us pray together as a church. What better time to remember our global partners and local partners each Sunday? Could our Missions teams see this as a key part of their ministry to help bring the church's Gospel partners' prayer needs before the church. For many years, we had this as a monthly time of prayer (3-5min) with a special person from the Missions Team praying, but gradually over the last 3 years we have moved to incorporate these prayer requests into the main prayer time of the service by emailing them to the person leading in prayer. Every Sunday, we lift up one of Gospel Partners (5 in total) and help our church to pray consistently that the Gospel would be shared beyond our church and beyond our borders.

Second, bring prayer for Gospel workers into the fabric of the church weekly small groups. Encourage every small group (growth group) to adopt a Gospel Partner of the church and build

a 'living' partnership with the missionary or missionary family or local Gospel unit (See paper on Building Living Partnerships). If your church has 5-10 small groups or 20+ small groups, it doesn't matter. An adoption of Gospel partners within small groups allows for much prayer.

Third, through prayer God helps us to teach one another about prayer. We learn that prayer is something that all can do. We are reminded in prayer that the work of the Gospel belongs to God as we ask him to work. Prayer also reminds us that we partner with God in this work of the Gospel. He invites us to ask him to do his good work in helping people to both hear and understand the Good News of Jesus Christ. In prayer, we are asking God to send the Good News to people we will never meet and places we might never go. We are partnering in the Gospel to see the message of the Lord Jesus spread wide and as 2 Thess 3:1 reminds us, to spread rapidly.

Finally, in our local church and in our homes, we can model prayer to our children and learn to pray as a family. Prayer is for everyone. Children can be encouraged to pray together, and parents can be encouraged to lead them. The time, place and amount of time is not the issue. The great issue is that parents set the 'pause' button and pray with their family.

A simple example at my home, where my elderly mother was living with me for 8 years, was to stop and pray as we closed down for the evening. We would read a short passage of Scripture and pray around the world in a simple way. Of course, we were tired at the end of the day, so to keep us remembering what to pray for – we put an area of the world and/or group of people in the world for each day.

Monday – North Africa & the Middle East.

Tuesday – Central Asia.

Wednesday – East Asia & India.

Thursday – University student ministry in Australia and around the world

Friday – Youth – High School Christians in our churches and for our schools. We take time on Fridays to pray for RI teachers, Christian teachers, Christian youth and Youth leaders, ministries we know who share the Gospel with children (eg. Quizworx).

Saturday & Sunday – we pray for our pastors and leaders in churches and also in Govt.

We keep it simple. We pray Scripture. We pray for people in those areas that we know and partner with by name. We ask God to take the Gospel to people who need to hear. We ask God to raise up new labourers. We close by thanking God for His good work in bringing people to Himself and helping them to grow in His Word. Prayer focuses our attention at the end of a long day on the One who longs to be at work in us and beyond us.

Lord, teach us to pray well.



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