



“First of All . . . Pray”

[I Timothy 2:1-7]

“To kindle every revival, the Holy Spirit initially uses what Jonathan Edwards called “extraordinary prayer” — united, persistent, and kingdom centered.”

- Tim Keller [Center Church]

1] LIVE: A Life of Prayer [1]

Tim Keller describes 3 basic traits of frontline prayer:

- a] A request for grace to confess sins and to humble ourselves
- b] A compassion and zeal for the flourishing of the church and the reaching of the lost
- c] A yearning [passion] to know God, to see his face, to glimpse his glory [Center Church]

2] LOVE: Pray for All people [2a]

- a] Kings
- b] People in High Positions

3] LEAD [3 Why's?]

- a] “. . . that we may **lead** a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.” [2b]
- b] Pleasing in God’s eyes [3]
- c] It is an Effective response in light of God’s desire for all people - “know the truth” [4]

4] Foundation: Prayer is based on the work of Jesus Christ as Savior and Mediator - Wiersbe [5-6]

5] Paul’s Calling[s] - Preacher, Apostle, Teacher of the Gentiles - in faith and truth [7]

I Timothy 2:1-7 First of **all**, then, I urge that supplications, [deēsis - asking for Godt move in some way] prayers, [proseuchē - general communication with God] intercessions, [enteuxis - directed to one of higher rank]. and thanksgivings, [eucharistia]- expressions of thankfulness to God] be made for **all** people ² for kings and **all** who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires **all** people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for **all**, which is the testimony given at the proper time. ⁷ For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Jeremiah 29:17 But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 For the love of Christ controls [compels] us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

I Peter 2:13-17 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. ¹⁶ Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. ¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Discussion Questions

1. Would you consider prayer a priority in your life [and in the church]? Discuss.
2. Read I Timothy 2:1. What motivates you to pray? Review the four types of prayer in the verse and share which type of prayer takes the majority of time in your prayer life?
3. Read I Timothy 2:2-4. What are the three outcomes of ‘praying for kings and all who are in high positions’ [part 3 of the outline]? Read Romans 13:1-7 and I Peter 2:9-17. How do these two texts add more insight concerning our responsibilities as believers to government officials?
4. Reread I Timothy 2:4. Why is “Coming to the knowledge of the truth” so important? [hint: “root” an “fruit”]
5. Read I Timothy 2:7 What have you been “appointed” to accomplish as a member of God’s kingdom as you serve inside and outside the church? [LCSB]

1 Timothy 2:1-7 First of all, then, I urge that . . . supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people,² for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.³ This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.⁵ For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.⁷ For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

[2] "... providing a peaceful and orderly society was the state's domain, so prayer for it was calculated to ensure that the best possible conditions for spreading the gospel were obtained." [Heibert, The Significance of the Christian Intercession, *Bib Sac*]

[2] "The church's prayers for the world and recognition of the authority of the state are fundamental to the church's evangelistic mission." [Towner, The goal of our instruction: The Structure of Theology and Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles, *JSOT*]

[2] "All evangelism must begin with prayer." [Chafer, *True Evangelism or Winning Souls by Prayer*]

[2] "The 'king' at the time Paul wrote this epistle was Nero, an unbeliever for whom Paul specifically told his readers to pray." (Constable)

[2] The precedent for the practice of God's people praying for pagan rulers goes back to Israel's exile experience. In this context we find the prophetic instruction to display loyalty to the surrounding power structure: "But seek the welfare of the city where I've sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for and its welfare you will find your welfare" (Jeremiah 29:7; cf. Ezra 6:9-10) [New International Commentary of the Old Testament]

Writings Concerning the Early Church's Faithfulness in Praying for their leaders [Swindoll's Commentary, 1 Timothy]

Amazingly, the church has been faithful to pray for its pagan leaders, even during times of terrible persecution. Take note of these quotes from the church fathers living in difficult times:

"Whence to God alone we render worship, but in other things we gladly serve you, acknowledging you as kings and rulers of men, and praying that with your kingly power you be found to possess also sound judgment. [Justin Martyr, AD 110–165, written to Emperor Antoninus Pius, and also addressed to "Verissimus the Philosopher," a.k.a. Marcus Aurelius, under whom Justin suffered martyrdom"]

"Wherefore I will rather honour the king [than your gods], not, indeed, worshipping him, but praying for him. But God, the living and true God, I worship, knowing that the king is made by Him. You will say, then, to me, "Why do you not worship the king?" Because he is not made to be worshipped, but to be revered with lawful honour, for he is not a god, but a man appointed by God, not to be worshipped, but to judge justly. For in a kind of way his government is committed to him by God. . . . Accordingly, honour the king, be subject to him, and pray for him with loyal mind; for if you do this, you do the will of God." [Theophilus, ca. AD 181, shortly after the death of Marcus Aurelius, during the reign of his notoriously capricious and corrupt son, Commodus']

"Without ceasing, for all our emperors we offer prayer. We pray for life prolonged; for security to the empire; for protection to the imperial house; for brave armies, a faithful senate, a virtuous people, the world at rest, whatever, as man or Caesar, an emperor would wish." [Tertullian, AD 160–225, written during the reign of Septimius Severus, a brutal persecutor of Christians]

[3-4] Such a life is "good" (also meaning "beautiful" or "excellent") and "pleases God our Savior". He "wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." This statement accords well with Jn 3:16 and with the declaration in 2Co 5:14-15 that Christ died for all. Salvation has been provided for all, but only those who accept it are saved. "Knowledge" means precise and accurate knowledge. Such knowledge of God's truth is both the root and fruit of salvation. Paul here sounds a frequent note of the Pastorals – true knowledge saves one from error. [Expositor's Bible Commentary]

[3-4] ILLUSTRATION: When natural disasters strike, rescue units mobilize and enter the devastation so that they might help those who will surely perish without them. God has a mobilized rescue unit: it's called the church. And the church's job is to enter this sin-scarred world and rescue the dying with the King's message of life. Notice that God's desire is universal: he wants everyone to be saved. This is God's emotional basis and motivation for unlimited atonement (see John 3:16; Heb 2:9). The gospel is not restricted to any race, gender, ethnicity, class, or individual. So don't let anything prevent you from going to the lost: you have the message with the power to rescue them. [Tony Evans Study Bible]

[5-7] Many believers do not realize that prayer is based on the work of Jesus Christ as Savior and Mediator. As the God-Man, Jesus Christ is the perfect Mediator between the holy God and His failing children. One of Job's complaints had to do with the absence of a mediator who could take his message to the throne of God (Job 9:33). Since there is only one God, there is need for only one Mediator, and that Mediator is Jesus Christ. No other person can qualify. [Wiersbe Study Bible]

[5] These are the two great truths which form the basis of all true religion. Judaism had already been the revelation and testimony in the world of the first: there was one only God. ... Christianity, while fully revealing the one God, presents the second truth: there is one Mediator between God and men. There is one, and there is but one. It is as true that there is but one Mediator as that there is but one God. This is the great and distinctive truth of Christianity." (J. N. Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, 5:160).

[6] "The word ransom in Greek is *antilutron* made up of *anti* (signifying substitution) and *lutron* (the word used for the ransom of a slave or prisoner). The *antilutron* is a payment given instead of a slave or prisoner—that is, in substitution for him or her. The person holding the slave accepts the payment as a substitute. According to Gal. 3:13, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. The law held us captive in its condemnation, and no one but Christ could pay the price to release us from that bondage." [Constable]

(7) "Paul uses preaching primarily to describe the initial delivery of the gospel message (Rom.15:20; 1 Cor. 1:17; 2 Cor. 10:16; Gal. 1:8). Teaching . . . refers to deepening others in Christian doctrine (see 1 Tim. 1:3; 3:2; 4:11). Preaching is the declaration of truth directed at the will. Teaching is the explanation of truth directed at the mind. Both, however, have as their goal a changed life." [Swindoll]