

Healthy Church – Pray Like the Gospel Matters 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Last Sunday we talked about how “the gospel is to shape the church”... However, the gospel falls on deaf ears unless God gives the ears to hear it...

Here in lies the importance, and the power, of prayer! It is why Paul counsels Timothy saying, **“I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, & thanksgivings be made for all people...”** Prayer is of utmost importance...

The church’s effectiveness in the world begins not with programs or strategies, but with earnest prayer. We are to invest in neighbors, leaders, missionaries, & the next generation by first bringing them before God, trusting that He desires for all people to be saved through the work of the one Mediator, Jesus Christ.

Paul lays out an effective prayer strategy for Timothy (& for us) 1 Timothy 2:

- **Supplications** – It means to acknowledge our need(s) & bring them before God... Living in a broken/fallen world produces true & legitimate needs that ought to bring us before the One who can/has done something about it!

This word emphasizes a sense of urgency & dependence on He who is *the Great Physician... Good Shepherd... Savior of the world... Lord of All...*

Examples - Asking God to: heal our sicknesses... Grant wisdom in difficult situations... Help in our times of unbelief... Provide in times of hardship...

A healthy church doesn’t hesitate to bring its needs before God! Supplication reminds us that we are utterly dependent upon Him!

- **Prayers** – It means communing with God... not just transactionally, but relationally! This is the most common Greek word for prayer in the NT.

It includes Adoration... Confession... Praise... Listening... Dwelling w/God.

Application: Prayer is first about knowing God, & being known by Him, before it is about asking for and receiving provisions from Him.

- **Intercession** – It means to stand before God & petition Him on the behalf of others. The emphasis here is not on ourselves, but those around us!

Examples - Praying for government officials... leaders... missionaries... unbelieving friends... struggling believers... the persecuted church...

Application: Intercession moves us beyond self-centeredness! It seeks to reflect the love of Jesus, who continually intercedes on our behalf.

- **Thanksgiving** - It means to express gratitude for God’s grace & provision.

We thank God for: His salvation... Answered prayers... His daily provisions... The faithfulness of fellow believers... Our leaders & governing authorities & the peace that is provided through them...

Thanksgiving keeps prayer from becoming merely a list of requests.

Application: Gratitude fuels faith... When we remember God’s past faithfulness, we trust Him more confidently with present/future needs.

Together these 4 distinct words paint a good picture of what a balanced, God-centered, heart-felt, gospel-shaped prayer life looks like.

Prayer is more than just an act of obedience... it’s a posture of worship! Would you/I consider our prayer life to be an offering of worship to the Lord?

A consistent theme throughout this letter to Timothy is the revealing & advancing of God’s saving mission of redemption in this world. Prayer is the first and primary way we get to participate in that!

Our approach shouldn’t be “*We have to pray*”, it should be “*We get to pray!*”

Too often churches are known for what divides them... Prayer is a powerful means, and testimony, of what should unite us!

Wouldn’t it be nice to be able to live “a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way”? Prayer can make that happen because

A prayer-filled life/church is:

- Dependent on God rather than self!
- Focused on the advancement of the gospel, not divisive arguments!
- Unified in Christ, instead of quarrelsome in doctrine!
- Concerned for all people!
- Marked by holiness!
- Faithful in worship!

Next week’s sermon will continue to address some of these specific distinguishing marks of a healthy church, but we must start with prayer!

So that’s what we are going to spend the rest of our time doing this morning - Praying as a church... for our church... for the lost... for our world... for the 5 Things Every Christian/Church Needs to Grow - Prayer, Worship, Bible Study/Small Groups, Service (ministries) & Stewardship (giving)!

May we, Brunswick Reformed Church, be known as a praying church!

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