

Paul was a man of prayer. Prayer was the foundation of his life, of his amazing influence, of his suffering and endurance, of his burning passion for the souls of men and consequently he is the one man, apart from the Lord Jesus Himself, who is most qualified to instruct us in prayer.

**Ephesians 6:18a: “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.”**

- Grammatical Usage: “**praying**” on in the Greek, “proseuchomenoi” meaning, “exchange/interact”; “**at all times**” or, “en panti kairo” meaning, “in every season”; “**in the Spirit**” or “en Pneumati” meaning, “in the power of the Spirit, possessed and moved by the Spirit”; “**supplication**” or “deesei” meaning, “petition; request”.
- Literal Interpretation: Consciously interacting in every circumstance, recognizing and welcoming the leading of the Holy Spirit, I make my request.
- Contextual/Comparison: God keeps His Word, God continually uses His Word. In the verses before us there are seven vital truths about prayer:

#### 1. Prayer is the Great Essential

Paul speaks of the armor we are to put on, and then he goes straight on without a break – “**Praying at all times....**” It is tremendously important for a soldier to have on the right armor and to be equipped with a sword, but what is equally important is that the soldier should keep in constant communication with his Commander-in-chief (**Hebrews 2:10**). The Christian, while he is on the field of battle, is in direct touch with the throne of God, and the prayer-line of communication with our risen Lord must never be broken. Prayer is the great essential...not optional but...fundamental.

#### 2. We must Pray at All Times.

Paul not only exhorts us to pray, but to pray “on all occasions”, and this reminds us of **1 Thessalonians 5:17**, which means that we are to seek to live in the very atmosphere and attitude of prayer. It is most important that we should have set times for prayer – like Daniel who prayed three times a day (**Daniel 6:10**); like David who prayed three times a day (**Psalms 55:17**), and later told us that he prayed seven times a day (**Psalms 119:164**); and like the Savior who constantly withdrew into the place of prayer (**Luke 6:12**). Then, we may pray at special times: for instance, when in trouble (**Psalms 55:16**); when needing guidance (**James 1:5**); when tempted (**Psalms 69:1**); when persecuted (**Psalms 7:1**); when disturbing letters arrive (**Isaiah 37:14**); when sickness threatens (**James 5:14**); and whenever there is a need of any kind (**Philippians 4:6**).

#### 3. We Must Employ All Kinds of Prayer.

“All kinds of prayers and requests” suggests that prayer may consist of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, petition, supplication or intercession. But consider the following three “kinds” of prayer – individual prayer (**Matthew 6:6**); the prayer of agreement (**Matthew 18:19**); and corporate prayer (**Acts 12:5**).

#### 4. We Must Keep on Praying.

We are always to keep on praying and to remain alert (**v. 18; Luke 18:1** and compare **Luke 11: 5-8**). We need persistence (**1 Kings 18:43**). The words “be alert” indicate that there are perils in prayer, and so there are! There is the peril of: (1) distraction. How often other things crowd in and prevent us from praying! (2) disinclination. This may be due to tiredness or to preoccupation with worldly things; (3) discouragement. Perhaps we have prayed once, or even twice, and then we have become impatient because the answer has not come! (4) despair. The situation sometimes seems so impossible – even for God! – so instead of trusting Him we are overwhelmed with a sense of frustration and even of futility of prayer; (5) defeat. Yes, overwhelming defeat! (**Judges 16:20**).

#### 5. We Must Pray for All Saints.

It is, of course, impossible to pray individually for all saints, and yet in a general sense, and certainly in a systematic sense, we may do so. We may pray, for example, regularly and systematically for: (1) God’s suffering saints; (2) God’s sinning saints. Do you ever pray for these? – for Christians who are tempted and overcome by the world, the flesh and the Devil – backsliders who have been tripped up by the wiles of the Enemy? (3) God’s shut-in saints. So many who love the Lord are laid on one side by sickness, and such sickness has been permitted for the furtherance of the gospel (**Philippians 1:12**). These afflicted ones need prayer that they may receive grace to testify to the power and sufficiency of Christ. Pray for the new converts (**Acts 9:17**); for workers to be thrust forth (**Matthew 9:38**); for the printing of Christian literature (**Psalms 43:3**); for open doors for the gospel (**1 Corinthians 16:9**); for Satan’s power to be broken (**Luke 13:12-16**).

#### 6. We Must Pray for Workers in the Forefront of the Battle.

**Vv. 19, 20** teach us that those who are in prominent positions in Christian service are in special need of the prayers of God’s people (**Acts 4:29**). How should we pray for preachers, evangelists, teachers and leaders in God’s harvest field? That they may have utterance, boldness and grace to preach the gospel.

#### 7. All Our Praying to be Effective Must Be “In the Spirit”.

Here is the key to it all – **“in the Spirit” (v. 18)**. **Romans 8:26-27** sheds tremendous light upon this action: **“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”**

It is gloriously true that, as William Cowper wrote, “Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees”; and Alfred Lord Tennyson was right when he wrote:

“More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of, wherefore, let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain before me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep and goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?”

- Conclusion: If all things are born of prayer, will I commit to praying?