

The effects of prayer

1 Timothy 2: 1 – 7

1) Pray for all people

- Paul uses various words to describe the different types of pray for **all** people.
- The main heart of what he's saying that we shouldn't neglect anyone in prayer because of personal preference or prejudice.
- There are prayer initiatives to pray for groups such as ISIS and Hamas.
 - Some people opposed such initiatives saying that such terrorists deserve hell and we shouldn't bother about praying for them.
 - Once I was speaking to a friend who is a strong Christian and was in the ministry at one time himself. He said that he has no concern for Muslims at all and as far as he's concerned they can all go to hell.
 - Is this attitude the heart of God?
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- Matthew 5: 43 – 45 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.
- To make it more real Paul was writing this letter in about AD 64 during the rule of the emperor Nero who was viciously violent against the Christians of the time.
 - We could probably equate him to ISIS of the present day.
- Now Paul goes on to say that kings and all those in authority should be prayed for.
 - Note that he doesn't say pray against those in authority if they're wicked.
 - Our prayers should be for the benefit of those we're praying for albeit to pray for repentance for the wicked.
- Romans 13: 1 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.
 - This was also written during the reign of the emperor Nero.
- So when we pray don't let our prejudices, although some of them may be legitimate, hinder us from pray for all people.
- We so often complain about the government and extremist terrorist groups, etc. but how much has our complaining changed the situation and circumstances?
- Lord Alfred Tennyson wrote:

*More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.
Wherefore, let thy voice rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or 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 friends?
For so the whole round earth is every way bound by gold chains about the feet of God.*

2) The effects of praying for all people

- Four effects of prayer are mentioned – the first two are to our benefit and the second two are for our transformation and responsibility
- That we may live peaceful lives
 - It's not about merely having peaceful surroundings but being at peace whatever our circumstances may be.

- This is because in prayer we are meeting with the Prince of Peace who fills us with His peace.
- Peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.
- Many times we lose our peace because we focus on our circumstances rather on Him who is Peace.
- That we may live quiet lives
 - Once again this isn't necessary an absence of tranquillity around us but a rest in our hearts
 - Hebrews 4: 1 – 3 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. Now we who have believed enter that rest.
 - We enter by faith and we keep our rest by faith.
 - Prayer is an act of faith and it puts all of our dependence on God on not on ourselves.
- That we live godly lives
 - Prayer brings us close to God and being close to God His godly character infuses us.
 - It is He that enables us to live in godliness and not ourselves.
 - That is godliness in attitude, thought and deed.
- That we may live honest and holy lives
 - The word that is translated as holiness in the NIV is honesty. Basically one word to describe the combination of honesty and holiness is integrity.
 - We submit ourselves to God in prayer and we understand that He knows everything about us and that nothing is hidden from Him.
 - We can hide our thoughts and deeds from people but we can't hide anything from God.
- To sum up the effects of prayer would be to say that the very nature and character of God is revealed to us and to those for whom we pray through prayer.

3) The heart of God for all people

- God wants all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.
- God doesn't take pleasure in the death of the wicked. (Ezekiel 18: 23)
- 2 Peter 3: 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.
- Jesus carried out the heart of God by giving His own life to be a mediator between God and man
- Paul carried the heart of God in His calling to take the Gospel to the Gentiles.
- However even Paul recognised that He couldn't do it on His own and needed the prayers of the saints.
 - Ephesians 6: 19 – 20 Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be 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.
- So let us keep praying for the unsaved and for those who take the Gospel to them.