



Sermon Series: Being An Authentic Church

To be used with Session: Growing in Christ

Sermon Title Possibilities: How to Pray for Others

Scripture: Colossians 1:9-14,21-29

Connection with Unit Theme To complement the Bible study, “Being an Authentic Church,” this sermon provides a roadmap for churches to authentically engage in transformative prayer, deepening connections, aligning with God's purpose, nurturing in love, and persevering in faith. As the congregation embraces these principles, the church becomes a more authentic and spiritually vibrant community, committed to supporting and transforming lives through the powerful practice of intercession.

Introduction Prayer is a foundational and practical aspect of our faith. We ask others to pray for us and as leaders, challenge others to pray for each other. In Colossians 1, Paul gives a practical outline on how we can frame our prayers to pray for others. This becomes an opportunity for us to dive into the transformative power of prayer as intercessors. In the midst of diverse cultural influences, the Apostle Paul, writing from his imprisonment in Rome around 60-62 AD, penned a letter to the Colossian Christian community. Facing challenges from various theological influences, Paul sought to reinforce the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ in their faith. Faith that is not just for us individually, but to share the gospel with others.

1. Pray with Insight: (Colossians 1:9-10).

Like a doctor understands the symptoms when diagnosing a patient, effective prayer requires understanding the spiritual landscape of those for whom we intercede. In the diverse landscape of Colossae, the believers faced a blend of Jewish legalism, pagan mysticism, and ascetic practices. Before launching into supplications, Paul encourages them to immerse themselves in understanding the needs and struggles of their fellow believers. This insight is not just about individual concerns but about navigating the theological challenges of their time. Ask people specifically what they need prayer for without assumption. This insight centers our hearts and minds to align with God's plan for their future, not our opinions.

2. Pray with Purpose: (Colossians 1:11-12).

Prayer is not to tell God an agenda, it is to align ourselves with God's agenda. Paul was challenging the church and challenges us to align ourselves with God's purpose. Prayers with and in tandem with God's purpose was crucial in Colossae's context. False teachings sought to diminish the significance of Christ. Paul urged believers not to dictate outcomes but to pray for wisdom, strength, and endurance as they navigated their unique path. Just as

an artist sketches a masterpiece with a vision in mind, praying with a clear vision of God's purpose helps us trust His artistry to paint the details.

3. Pray with Love: (Colossians 1:14,21).

Picture nurturing a delicate flower in a diverse garden. Gentle care, sunlight, and nourishing water coax it to bloom. This is the image of our heart when we pray for others. May our prayers be the sun-kissed water that helps faith blossom amidst challenges. Colossae was influenced creatively by people who sought to disrupt the unity of believers, Paul emphasizes infusing prayers with the essence of Christ's love. Here our hearts are tender with compassion and unwavering belief in Jesus. The love we pray about is the source not just a goal.

4. Pray with Perseverance: (Colossians 1:23).

With insight, purpose, and love, Paul challenges the church to not give up! For the people in Colossae, in the face of theological challenges, persistent prayer was a powerful tool. The same goes for us today! With a heart that is postured correctly, a steady stream of faithful, unwavering prayer sustains spiritual growth. Not only will prayer affect others, but it will also ensure that we persevere no matter the trials that come. Paul likens it to a sculptor chipping away at a block of stone, shaping a masterpiece. Consistent prayer chips away at doubt, fear, and obstacles, revealing the divine beauty within.

Conclusion: Our prayers, like the Colossian church, are a spiritual superpower; capable of bringing profound change to the lives of those we lift before the throne of grace. May our prayers be filled with insight, purpose, perseverance, and above all, the love of Christ.

Author Bio

Dr. Justin R. Lester is the Pastor of Friendship Baptist Church in Vallejo, California. He is the Author of, "Necessary Endings" and other works to enrich the local Church.