



“Household Identity”
Ephesians 1:15-23

Main Idea: We should give thanks and pray for other believers!

When believers are faithful, thank God and pray for them (15-16).

- *Give God thanks for those who have faith in Jesus and love for the church (15).*
- *Remember God’s people in your prayers (16).*

As Paul considered the grace of God in the lives of these believers and the testimony of their faith and love, he went on to tell him how he thanked God and prayed for them. Paul said that he was constantly giving thanks to God as he heard about the faithfulness of these believers. Under difficult circumstances, they were continuing to hold fast to their faith in the Lord Jesus. In the midst of difficulty, the evidence of their faith was seen in the way they loved other believers. As a result, Paul gave God thanks for these believers. He also went on to say that he remembered them in his prayers. While thanksgiving is certainly a part of prayer, supplication is too. Paul wanted these believers to know that he was lifting them up to the Lord as he looked to the Lord for what only God could do and could provide in their lives. Paul sets an important example for us. It’s not an isolated example, but it’s the very pattern of Paul’s prayer towards his brothers and sisters in Christ. When believers are faithful, thank God for them, and pray for them. This should include giving God thanks for those who have faith in Jesus and who love the church. It should also include remembering God’s people in our prayers. These are fundamentals in the household of God.

1. Do you have a heart of thankfulness when you think about other believers who are faithful to the Lord and his church? Why? Take time to give thanks for one another right now, encouraging each other with how you see faith and love in each other’s lives.
2. On the other hand, how do you feel towards those who say they are believers but aren’t faithful to the Lord and his church? Why? Take time to pray for those people right now.

3. How do you remember God's people in your prayers? In your group, what are some ways that each of you try to remember to pray for God's people? As a group, how do you encourage this each week among the people in your small group?

Above all, pray for the spiritual health of other believers (17-23).

- *Ask God to give them wisdom and revelation to know him more (17).*
- *Ask God to open their eyes to know their hope in Jesus (18-23).*

Paul gave a detailed summary of how he prayed for these early believers. The overall prayer is clear: Paul prayed for the spiritual health of the Ephesian believers above anything and everything else. Specifically, there are two important aspects of his prayer. First, Paul asked God to give them wisdom and revelation to know the Lord more (17). Paul asked God to work through the Spirit in order to open their eyes to see the truth about the Lord and to bring wisdom for understanding and application of that truth in their lives. Second, Paul asked God to give them spiritual enlightenment to fully realize the hope that they had in Christ. This hope included some specific things that Paul prayed that the believers would understand: (1) That they had a glorious and eternal inheritance in Jesus; (2) that they had the power of God at work in their lives, which was the very power of the resurrection and the risen, victorious King of kings; (3) and that they were the church, which was the very body of Christ, filled by the living Lord. Wow! Oh that we would pray for each other in this way still today! More than the temporary needs that we have in our lives on earth, spiritual health is our greatest need and of the greatest benefit to us and to others. Today, we should still pray for the spiritual health of other believers. Like Paul, ask God to give other believers wisdom and revelation to know him more. Similar to Paul, ask God to open the eyes of other believers to know their hope in Jesus.

1. When you think of "prayer meeting," what tends to be the focus of prayers at these types of gatherings: Physical or spiritual needs?
2. What are Paul's prayers in scripture focused on? Look at some of his prayers to answer this question: Romans 15:14-33; Ephesians 1:15-23, 3:14-21; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-14; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; and 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12.
3. Why are prayers for the spiritual health of others so important? How can you use Paul's prayers to help you pray for others in this way?
4. Take time to break into groups of 2 or 3, and use this prayer of Paul's in Ephesians 1 to guide your time in praying for other believers in our church.