

Hello OCF family,

I am sure I speak for all of us when I say that I long to meet with you in person again and fellowship together. Through this coronavirus pandemic, as well as the present disunity we are seeing in our nation, it is evident that we need to be in a posture of prayer more than ever. That is why I want to bring to your attention the words of apostle Paul in the following scripture:

Galatians 4:19

Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I'm going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives.

As I read this portion of scripture, I felt the Lord wanted to remind us that, "He is still at work.." (John 5:17). We may not be able to meet in person, but we still have this amazing gift and opportunity called prayer. Paul reminds us in this portion of scripture that it is the power of prayer that fully develops people into God's character. I recently stumbled upon someone from my basketball ministry about 50 meters from my house. I had been praying for him for over a year and invited him to church in January of this year. He never showed up, but though I never saw him, I kept on praying that Christ would be fully developed in him. Well, when we met a few days ago, he and his wife were at a transition in life and quickly accepted my invitation to fellowship with us online on May 31st, which they did. As I pondered on this experience and many others like this that I have had throughout my time at OCF, I was reminded that beyond our physical gatherings and efforts to evangelize in person, prayer is, and will always be the most effective way to minister the gospel.

Until you see the fullness of prayer it is very easy to take prayer for granted, so I want to take this time to appreciate the OCF family, leaders, Klothes Kloset volunteers, ushers, greeters, safety team, sunday school teachers, and nursery attendants, who have devoted their time and energy just like apostle Paul laboring in prayer through this challenging time.

Prayer is a source of power that at best, most of us have only a superficial understanding of. Prayer is the heart's sincerest desire. Prayer is the direct application of the dynamic power of the universe. Prayer is a daily appointment with God. Prayer is the breath of God Almighty not only worship; it is the invisible emanation of humanity's spirit – the most powerful form of energy that one can create. Prayer is a force as real as terrestrial gravity; it's the only power that overcomes the laws of nature. In open defiance of medical science, prayer restores health where all else has failed. Prayer heals the wounds of sorrow and disappointment regardless of their course. Countless men and women have been lifted out of disease, placed beyond the grips of poverty, and released from the clutches of despair by the serene power of prayer. These acts have been termed miracles, but a constant hidden miracle takes place in the hearts and minds of individuals who discover that prayer supplies them with a steady flow of sustaining power in their daily lives.

So in this time, let us remember the labor pains of apostle Paul knowing that even a woman suffering the pains of labor, when her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world (John 16:21).

Thank you all for your support and prayers. Because of them, OCF is still thriving. The church building may be closed, but the body of Christ is still very much alive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil', with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

Pastor Phil