

Sermon Notes

by Pastor Jamie Tonge



BUILDING A HEDGE OF PRAYER

Eph 6:18

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests, with this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints”.

Jude 20

“But you dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit”.

Last Sunday we looked at finding ability to make it through, taking **1 Thess 1:3**.

Work of faith,
Labour of love,
Endurance of hope
In our Lord Jesus Christ

Today we will look at prayer. We have here two verses with reference to prayer, but the whole Bible is one long account of God communing with man from

*His walk in the Garden of Eden in **Genesis Chapter 2** to the dwelling of God with man in **Revelation Chapter 22**.*

Between these two ends of the Bible we have man separated from communion with God in the way seen in **Gen 2** and **Rev 22**. However He has given us an ability to be able to talk with Him and He with us, it is called prayer.

Prayer is the church’s best kept secret and it keeps it from itself!

Yet we know that it’s when God’s people pray that amazing things happen.

There has never been a revival that did not have a great element of prayer. Whenever there is a move of God, then there is always an increase in a passion and desire to pray.

It is clear that we must pray. We have many testimonies of answered prayer, yet we so many times fail to pray.

It is not my intention to look at why we fail to pray, but to encourage us to pray.

Let’s look at the way our *work, labour and endurance* **1 Thess 1:3** tie in with prayer.

We may know that we have a work or ministry of faith, but without prayer it will not come to maturity and fruitfulness as Jesus promised in **John 15**. However it is important to pray in a way that will bring about God’s plan and purpose.

When Robert Louis Stevenson was a boy he once remarked to his mother, "Mum, you can't be good without praying." "How do you know, Robert?" she asked. "Because I've tried!" he answered. This brings to mind a story about another little fellow -- one who had been sent to his room because he had been bad. A short time later he came out and said to his mother, "I've been thinking about what I did and I said a prayer." "That's fine," she said, "if you ask God to make you good, He will help you." "Oh, I didn't ask Him to help me be good," replied the boy "I asked Him to help you put up with me."

There's always our own interpretation on how it should be answered!!

1) Praying for our work of faith. *1Thess 1:3*

As Christians we develop a prayer pattern.

When I was a child my parents taught me to pray, but the prayer was never varied, even yet I remember how it went, there was the "gentle Jesus"..... followed by "bless the family" if revival broke out the Lord's prayer was added too!

Whatever we are doing as a work or ministry for God, then we must pray into it **regularly, relatively** and with **revelation**.

Regularly – Just do it, if you need a reminder then use what helps – write down prayer pointers etc.

Relatively - What is going on now? (like this request from a small boy)

Attending church in Kentucky, we watched an especially verbal and boisterous child being hurried out, slung under his irate father's arm. No one in the congregation so much as raised an eyebrow -- until the child captured everyone's attention by crying out in a charming Southern accent, "Ya'll pray for me now!"

Revelation – What is God saying?

Do it with attitude and let the attitude be one of thanksgiving.

2) Praying for the love of God to empower us. *1 Thess 1:3*

A work of faith will only ever be a pipe dream, if there is no energy to accomplish it.

We go to great lengths to ask for God given visions and ministries, but if we neglect to ask for His love to empower us and to love as He loves, then it will become like this missionary's car.

In a seminary missions class, Herbert Jackson told how, as a new missionary, he was assigned a car that would not start without a push. After pondering his problem, he devised a plan. He went to the school near his home, got permission to take some children out of class,

and had them push his car off. As he made his rounds, he would either park on a hill or leave the engine running. He used this ingenious procedure for two years. Ill health forced the Jackson family to leave, and a new missionary came to that station. When Jackson proudly began to explain his arrangement for getting the car started, the new man began looking under the hood. Before the explanation was complete, the new missionary interrupted, "Why, Dr. Jackson, I believe the only trouble is this loose cable." He gave the cable a twist, stepped into the car, pushed the switch, and to Jackson's astonishment, the engine roared to life. **For two years needless trouble had become routine. The power was there all the time.** Only a loose connection kept Jackson from putting that power to work.

We need the love of God that flows through us to a dying world. **1 Cor 13:1**

3) Praying for our enduring hope *1Thess 1:3*

Endurance, *Hupomone*, cheerful endurance

Hope, *elpis*, anticipate with pleasure

Keep the real vision;

Keep the main thing, the main thing.

Keep Jesus at the centre, He is the hope, the one who we "*anticipate with pleasure*", the one who one day we shall see face to face as He really is, this is what gives us "*cheerful endurance*".

1Cor 13v12 tells us "*for now we only see Him as a poor reflection*" but then it will be all revealed. "*That inheritance kept in heaven for us which can never spoil or fade away*". **1 Peter 1:4**

When we find we are losing sight of the Lord Jesus Christ as the centre of what we are doing, then we have lost our true priorities.

Go back and read the gospels again and get Gods perspective

4) Praying for my local church

Our greatest place of spiritual input and fellowship should be our local fellowship.

The fellowship to which I belong - Local church is a two way street, like so many aspects of the Kingdom Living, you get out what you put in!

Pray for every aspect of your local fellowship.

Its: -

Mission

Meetings

Members

MISSION

Emmanuel Christian Fellowship has a mission statement: -

*To know God and make Him known
Foster a passionate love for God in each other
Be disciples and make disciples
Impact Shetland and the wider world with His love.
Introducing ordinary people to and extraordinary God*

Pray for this to be who we are.

MEETINGS

All the events we put, on our weekly meetings, Sunday fellowship, fellowship, worship, teaching, both adults and children, breaking of bread.

All involved, may I play my part.

Outreach, homegroups, hospital services, leadership, trustees (use the praying daily makes a difference leaflet).

MEMBERS

Pray for everyone in our fellowship by name. Write out everyone's name and pray for them regularly.

Let us never forget prayer is a powerful gift that God has given us - as someone once said "*prayer changes things*".

And He knows what we need before we ask.

You may have heard this story before but it's worth hearing again: -

Dr. Helen Roseveare, missionary to Zaire, told the following story. "A mother at our mission station died after giving birth to a premature baby. We tried to improvise an incubator to keep the infant alive, but the only hot water bottle we had was beyond repair. So we asked the children to pray for the baby and for her sister. One of the girls responded. 'Dear God, please send a hot water bottle today. Tomorrow will be too late because by then the baby will be dead. And dear Lord, send a doll for the sister so she won't feel so lonely.' That afternoon a large package arrived from England. The children watched eagerly as we opened it. Much to their surprise, under some clothing was a hot water bottle! Immediately the girl who had prayed so earnestly started to dig deeper, exclaiming, 'If God sent that, I'm sure He also sent a doll!' And she was right! The heavenly Father knew in advance of that child's sincere requests, and 5 months earlier He had led a ladies' group to include both of those specific articles."

How true are the words of Jesus "*your heavenly Father knows your needs before you ask*" *Matt 6:31-33.*

The work I do in my family, Church, employment and community is a *work of faith*. The energy I use to accomplish it is a *labour of love* and what keeps me going all the time is an *endurance that is inspired by hope*, all because of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:3