

Colossians 4:2-6

December 17, 2023



MAIN POINT

Prayer is one of the most critical components in our efforts of evangelism.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

How do you define “prayer”?

What ways do you best communicate with God?

If you pray regularly, how have you seen God make a difference in your heart’s attitude and in your life?

For some believers, prayer seems to be a high-minded, grandiose exercise that is avoided for fear of messing up. For others, it is so simple that its importance is often overlooked and neglected. In today’s passage of Scripture, the apostle Paul provides us with a solid understanding of prayer, particularly its necessity for growing in true Christian community.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO COLOSSIANS 4:2.

What does the command to “devote” yourself to something mean to you?

How can the devotion we have in other areas of life apply to prayer?

The Bible also says to “stay alert” as we pray. What obstacles tend to lull us into a sense of complacency when it comes to prayer?

How does being thankful make a difference in your prayer life?



While emphasizing the importance of a disciple's inner prayer life, Paul also reminds believers that prayer is not just an act of solitude. It is tied to the lives of other believers and greatly impacts those outside the kingdom as well.

🌿 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO COLOSSIANS 4:3-4.

Paul reminded the Colossian believers of the importance of prayer to missions and evangelism. How do you think our prayers help grow the kingdom of God?

If you are honest with yourself, do you really think your prayers make an impact on the saving of souls? Explain.

What Bible verses can you think of that affirm the power of prayer?

In addition to praying for your pastor and for missionaries, how can prayer help you personally live an evangelistic lifestyle?

Having focused much on the discipline of prayer for the individual and for the Christian community, Paul then turns to how prayer prepares us for an outward lifestyle that creates healthy evangelistic opportunities.

🌿 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO COLOSSIANS 4:5-6.

What does our management of time have to do with acting wisely toward those who don't yet know Christ?

What are some practical ways we can act with wisdom through prayer and evangelism?

What does "gracious" speech sound like? How does our speech act as seasoning as we interact with those we are praying for?

Prayer is such an important discipline in the life of a believer. As with all our faith journey, it should be personal but not private. As we grow in this important area of Christian life, we'll join with others and see fruit in our families and churches, but also in our communities. An evangelistic prayer strategy will go a long way in seeing God's kingdom come to fruition around us.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How can you practically plan for prayer? What time, places, or helpful resources can help you prepare for prayer?



For whom will you pray? With whom will you pray regularly?

How can you encourage others to pray with you and for you as you prioritize your prayer life?

PRAYER

Close your time together by sharing prayer requests, praying for each other, and the group.

Father, thank You for teaching in Your Word about prayer and giving us many models of prayer in Scripture. Thank You most of all for Your Holy Spirit, who empowers us to pray faithfully. Give us the courage to speak boldly out of a rich and healthy prayer life.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead to next week's scripture passage:

December 24, 2023 --- 1 John 2:22-23



COMMENTARY

Paul ended his epistle as he opened it, urging his readers to prayer. The structure of these verses resembles the opening prayers of the epistles. The only direct statement in these verses is, “Devote yourselves to prayer.” The command to pray concerned general watchfulness and Paul’s ministry. Paul hoped for an open door to be faithful to his calling and for clarity in communicating the message. In other epistles, Paul said, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17) or its equivalent. The same general tone occurs here. The specific word translated “devote yourselves” means “to persist in.” Though the word is different, the meaning is the same. Prayer was to characterize the Colossian church.

Paul requested that they pray for an open door for the gospel (4:3). Paul always sought ways to communicate the gospel. In these verses, Paul disclosed the reason for his success in witness as well as the reason he hoped to speak. His success was because he looked to the Lord to supply the wisdom for the opportunity. They were to pray that he would find an open door. The apostle lived for such opportunities that were often the redeeming virtues of his circumstances. He knew, however, that God provided these doors of ministry.

Paul asked for ability to walk through such doors as would open. Consistently in Colossians, the term “manifest” refers to revealing what is hidden (3:4). Paul looked for new situations in which he could make the gospel known. On the one hand, Paul did not pray specifically for a “preaching point,” as though that were the only approved means of spreading the gospel. On the other hand, v. 3 makes clear that Paul thought it imperative to speak the word. He hoped, therefore, for an oral ministry. He hoped further that he would do justice to the nature of the gospel so that the witness would be clear.

Having discussed a door of opportunity in ministry, Paul turned his thoughts to wise conduct. The verb used, which is translated “be wise in the way you act,” occurs frequently to identify proper conduct. Generally, translators use some form of the word “walk.” Wisdom provides a proper environment for the Christian’s walk. The theme of wisdom occurs frequently in this epistle, and that probably reflects a major concern of the false teachers as well. Literally, Paul said, “In wisdom be walking.” Thus godly wisdom encompasses the life, as well as the words. At the beginning of the epistle, Paul prayed for the Colossians to know wisdom; here he prayed for them to live it. The phrase “making the most” comes from a verb meaning “to buy up,” as if finding a bargain. Here it conveys the idea of making the most of one’s time spent with unbelievers.

Wisdom was necessary because of their Christian testimony. The “ones outside” needed examples of God’s wisdom. Paul’s concern was the non-Christians’ response to the gospel and the attitude of Christians toward them. Divine wisdom results in a positive witness.

