

**Scripture: 1 Timothy 2:1-7**

**Sermon Title: A Call to Prayer**

**Theme:** We have a call to prayer and a call to what we are to pray for.

**Introduction:**

Prayer receives a lot of talk today. I think it always has; even in the public spotlight, no matter how much we don't want to give Jesus Lordship, no matter how much it is illegal to mix our faith into certain public areas; people still respect prayer. They may not respect the content of your prayer, but they still want prayer. People desire prayer; we are all in desperate need of prayer, aren't we? So, we have prayer at the President's inauguration. At President Obama's inauguration Pastor Rick Warren led the prayer. Prior to that, Franklin Graham and Billy Graham would lead the prayer.

We have prayers led at sporting events. For example: CBS news reports this:

Pastor Joe Nelms came through with a car-racing invocation that won't soon be forgotten. His prayer before the Nationwide Federated Auto Parts 300 managed to fuse unusual automotive praise with a memorable spousal shout-out.

Nelms began the prayer straightforward enough, thanking God for all his blessings. But then his list of gratitude grew increasingly creative.

First he thanked the Man Upstairs for "all the Dodges and Toyotas and the Fords." He then gave thanks for "GM performance technology," "Sunoco racing fuel" and "Goodyear tires that bring performance and power to the track."

Then Nelms got personal: "Lord, I want to thank you for my smokin' hot wife tonight, Lisa, and my two children, Eli and Emma, or as we like to call the 'The Little E's.'"<sup>1</sup>

Let's turn in our Bibles to 1 Timothy 2:1-7 and we will see that the Bible challenges us to pray; also, this passage tells us what to pray for, the goal of our prayer and the confidence we can have in who we pray to.

**Let's read 1 Timothy 2:1-7:**

*First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.*

- I. In verses: 1-2: The apostle Paul writes about the objects and contents of prayer

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-31751\\_162-20082959-10391697.html](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-31751_162-20082959-10391697.html)

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- a. Notice as we look at verse 1 that Paul urges the people; he writes, “I urge...” The verb this is translated from just carries the idea of encouraging or exhorting. Paul is exhorting us, challenging us to take this instruction on prayer so seriously. Now, what does he say?
- b. He says that we pray with petitions. This doesn’t simply mean that we make a list and get many people to sign it. No, this has the idea of our prayer life being a humble list to God. This carries the idea of pleading to God.
- c. Then Paul simply says, “Prayers.” I urge you to pray. The noun used for “pray” is the most general word we can use to pray. In fact, prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of praise, prayers of intercession and all other types of prayers fit under this noun’s definition.
- d. Then Paul urges us to intercession: this is praying on behalf of other people’s needs.
- e. Then we are urged to pray in thanksgiving. Never forget what God has given you.
- f. It is so easy to simply come to God with our needs while forgetting what we have been given. Things like giving thanks prior to eating a meal are not that common anymore.
- g. We pray in petition, intercession and thanksgiving: One source tells me: “These three terms indicates that the initial prayer term distinguishes the element of insufficiency by the requester, the second highlights devotion by the seeker, and the third underscores the childlike confidence of the petitioner.”<sup>2</sup>
  - i. So these prayer terms are all very important. Prayers of petition show that we are merely human coming before God. We are insufficient and we ask for God’s help in humility. We pray in intercession simply coming to God with the needs of others. We come giving thanks recognizing what God has provided.
  - ii. Now, Paul writes under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that these prayers are to be offered for all mankind. No one is left out. Now, this doesn’t mean that we are to list everyone by name. We might, but this just means that we can pray for anyone. Don’t leave people out because you don’t like them, or because they are a different social class, or because they vote different, or because you didn’t vote for him or her. The word translated “all” literally means “everyone.”
  - iii. These false teachers that Paul had been writing about might have limited prayers to a specific group.

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<sup>2</sup> New American Commentary

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- h. But verse 2 specifies a few groups to pray for. We must pray for kings and all those in authority. This is not the only time Paul mentions praying for our leaders. Our leaders have a great task on them; pray for them.
  - i. I think in some ways we could classify actors as people with a great influence. Pray for them, that God will work through them.
  - j. Now Paul writes that when we pray we may live “peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.”
  - k. As Christ followers, we must never miss this. This doesn’t mean that we pray simply so that the politicians don’t bother us. No, we pray and as we pray and go day to day we live in godliness and holiness.
  - l. Also, this list that Paul gives us; it is not an exhaustive list. I think Paul’s point is that we pray in all ways, about all things and in all times.
- II. Now, in verses 3-4: we see the goal of prayer: Let’s read verses 3-4 again: *This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*
- a. First, this is good and pleasing to God.
  - b. I think that is amazing in and of itself. Isn’t it nice to think that we can be good and pleasing to God? Here He is the God of the universe, the creator of all and we can please Him; we can be good in His sight. Also, God is our Savior. This means our redeemer. We’ll come back to that.
  - c. Now, the Bible says, God wants all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth. Now that verse is redundant. “Saved” and “knowledge of the Truth” are both used to mean salvation.
  - d. As I said a few weeks ago, the term “saved” means that we are saved from the wrong things that we do. God is holy, pure, and perfect and when we sin, or do something wrong, it breaks God’s perfect law and we must pay by eternal hell. So, God through Jesus made a way for us to be forgiven. We call that saved.
  - e. This is a major principle: God loves all. It doesn’t matter whether you are male or female, black or white, American, or French, German, Egyptian, etc, etc and etc. God loves all. God wants all to be saved.
  - f. The false teachers likely taught that salvation was only for Jewish people, but that is not true. God loves all.

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- g. So, a goal of our prayer is salvation. As we pray for people, pray for their salvation. Pray for their spiritual state. Ask God to make you think like an evangelist.

III. In verses 5-7: Paul writes about the confidence of the goal of prayer: (Jesus paid a ransom for our sins). Let's re-read verses 5-7: *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.*

- a. We have confidence that there is one God. Isn't it nice that we don't have to think about pleasing all these gods? There is one God.
- b. There is also one mediator between God and mankind.
- c. These false teachers might have taught that angels were mediators. There was a problem with the worship of angels in the first century.
- d. But no, our mediator is the man Christ Jesus. Jesus came as one of us and He mediates for us.
- e. Verse 6 tells us how Jesus can mediate. This is because He paid our ransom to God. Listen to what one scholar writes about this: "The concept of paying a ransom was a commercial idea. The concept was used outside the New Testament to describe the **setting free of captives taken in war or the liberation of slaves from their owners**. The sum of money paid for setting free was known as the "ransom." In the passage Paul plainly stated that Jesus' death is the price paid for the release of humankind from captivity to sin."
- f. We have this confidence when we pray. We have confidence in God.
- g. So, Paul says that God made him a herald of the Gospel. A herald was one who announced major news. He was a herald to the gentiles.
- h. This means that Paul saw himself as one who was to go around and announce the good news of Jesus to the gentiles.
- i. Gentiles are non Jews.
- j. Again, the false teachers might have reserved salvation for Jews only. That is why Paul specifically said, "I'm telling the truth, I'm not lying." Salvation is for all.

**Close:**

One of the great shaping personalities of Protestantism was **Martin Luther**. We sometimes have the impression that all this brilliant monk did was nail a list of protests on the church door in Wittenberg.

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Nothing could be further from the truth. He worked as an inspired man, preaching, lecturing, and writing daily. The complete edition of his papers runs into thousands of pages. He worked inconceivably hard, and yet in spite of all this, Luther managed to pray for an hour or two every day. He said he prayed because he had so much to accomplish. We are recipients of this hope, and in a world that is so corrupt and needy, we also need to pray.<sup>3</sup>

### **C.S. Lewis**

“The Christian is not to ask whether this or that event happened because of a prayer. He is rather to believe that all events without exception are *answers* to prayer in the sense that whether they are grantings or refusals the prayers of all concerned and their needs have all been taken into account.”<sup>4</sup>

Pray

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<sup>3</sup> Jones, G. C. (1986). *1000 illustrations for preaching and teaching* (174). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

<sup>4</sup> (Jeeves Malcolm A. and Myers David G. *Psychology Through the Eyes of Faith*. 1987. Harper Publishing San Francisco. Christian College Coalition. Page 92. C.S. Lewis' book *Miracles* New York Macmillan, 1947 page 215.)