



Series: Rooted & Fruitful (Part 29)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Prayer is one of the most foundational aspects of the Christian life, yet it is often a concept that is difficult to define or comprehend fully. In the world's view, prayer is typically reduced to a wishful act—making requests and hoping that those wishes will be granted. For Christians, however, prayer is much more than a mere transaction. It is essential to align our hearts with God's will and purpose.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul concludes with a powerful exhortation on prayer. He emphasizes the importance of praying at all times, remaining alert, and praying with perseverance for all believers. Even while in prison, Paul's prayer request is not for personal comfort but for boldness in proclaiming the gospel. Through this, we learn that prayer, when rightly understood, not only shapes us but also aligns our desires with God's mission. As we reflect on Paul's words, we are invited to examine the role of prayer in our own lives and consider whether our approach to prayer truly reflects God's desires for us.

## **DISCUSSION**

1. Paul instructs Christians to "pray at all times in the Spirit" (Eph 6:18). In a world that often treats prayer as a wishful request, how would you explain the true meaning of prayer to a pre-believer?

2. Paul writes that we should "stay alert and persevere in prayer." In addition to guarding against external enemies, how can we remain alert to our desires, particularly in today's self-centred culture?
  - a. What are some of the steps we can take to guard against letting our desires drift away from God's will? How can we cultivate a heart that is patient and steadfast in prayer?
  - b. Matthew 6:21 says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." How does persevering in prayer reveal the deepest desires of our hearts? Share with the group some of the things that immediately come to mind when you pray.
3. Paul continues to say that we should pray "for all the Lord's people" (Eph 6:18) so that we can shift our approach to prayer from focusing on our desires towards focusing on the desires of God's heart.
  - a. How can you cultivate a deeper commitment to praying for others? What might that look like in your daily lives?
  - b. Reflect on how the speaker in the sermon described his desire shifting from a casual concern to a deep, burning passion when he saw something that was wrong. Can you think of an example where your prayers have shifted or broadened to align more with God's perspective?
  - c. How has your prayer life evolved or changed as you have grown in understanding God's heart for others
4. Despite being in prison, Paul asks the Ephesians to pray for him—not for his comfort, but for boldness and clarity in proclaiming the gospel.
  - a. Why is this significant? What does this reveal about Paul's priorities?
  - b. Share with your group your last 5 prayers.. What do these prayers reveal about the condition of your heart?
  - c. Do you see your prayer life aligning with God's desires for you and for His mission? If not, what steps can you take to realign your heart to God's purposes?

### **WHAT WILL YOU DO**

In Ephesians 6:18-20, Paul presents prayer as a means of aligning our hearts with God's purposes, not merely fulfilling our desires. It involves staying alert to our intentions, guarding against distractions, and persevering in prayer, allowing God to shape our desires to reflect His will.

Paul's request for prayer while in chains—asking not for freedom, but for boldness to proclaim the gospel—reveals a heart fully aligned with God's mission. As we examine our own prayer lives, we must ask ourselves: Are our prayers shaped by God's desires? Do we pray for boldness to fulfil our God-given mission, no matter our circumstances? Prayers both show and grow our deepest desires to align with God's will.

### **MEMORY VERSE**

“Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.” - Ephesians 6:18-20 (ESV)

### **AN E1R1 REFLECTION**

From First Sunday in Advent (Hope).

The first Sunday of Advent focuses on hope—the confident expectation of Christ's return. As we reflect on this season, we are reminded that the gospel is fundamentally a message of hope, rooted in the promise that Christ has come, is coming again, and will make all things new. This hope is not passive but active—it compels us to share the message of Christ's salvation with others.

As Christians, we share this hope not out of obligation, but because we long for others to experience the same joy, peace, and transformation that we have found in Christ. As we await Christ's return, pray with expectancy. Ask God to open opportunities to share the hope we have in Him, whether through a simple conversation or deeper engagement.

John 1:9 (NIV), “The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.”

Let us pray.