

Invited to Ask – Part 7
It's Time to Pray
Colossians 1:9-14 / Ephesians 3:14-21

Introduction

Good morning! It is certainly a humble privilege to have the occasion to share with you this morning God's Word and the challenge the Lord has laid on my heart. This message is part of our ongoing prayer themed series entitled "Invited to Ask." However, the message today was not last minute in nature, nor did it even begin a few weeks ago when Pastor Matthew offered the opportunity to preach today. Rather, nearly 8 months ago it began simmering in my heart. Since then the Lord has been using it for my own spiritual growth, as well as the application it bears on ministry and leadership here at Crosslink. So, before I dive into the study and application of Scripture, I must unpack that journey, thus painting a clear backdrop that both frames this message and dovetails the current series we have been in the last two months.

8 months ago I had the incredible experience of taking a sabbatical as many of you know. One of the great blessings of being a pastor here at Crosslink is the way you as a church and the Pastor's Council look to take care of your pastors. A pastoral sabbatical here at Crosslink is defined as a strategic time of rest approximately every 5 years. Mine took place during my 6th year of ministry here at Crosslink. It is a time to fully disconnect from the normal pace of life and ministry and have time alone with family, self, and God. Much of my sabbatical last year is recapped on Facebook, so if you are extra curious you can check that out.

I began my sabbatical with a premise based out of Scripture - my life verse to be specific - which is Proverbs 21:1-2, which says:

"The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes. Every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts."

As I prayed for the Lord to work in my life during the sabbatical, I asked the Lord to do two specific things out of that passage – that the Lord would direct my heart and weigh my heart.

From there, I did not specifically pray for a theme verse for which my sabbatical would be structured around. However, just a few days into the sabbatical, the Lord saw fit to challenge me with a verse that would not just shape the remainder of the sabbatical but have a profound ripple effect on my life thru today and beyond.

That verse was Jeremiah 6:16 –

"Thus says the Lord, 'Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'"

I made it a commitment to heed the exhortation Jeremiah spoke of lest I might incur the disaster of consequence like the Israelites were facing for their disobedience.

That verse became a filter and a prayer for the sabbatical.

- I took time to stand by the way and see...
- I took time to ask for “wisdom” (ancient paths)...
- I took time to reflect on the good way...
- I am strategically striving to continue walking in it...

The Lord indeed was gracious in providing a wonderfully refreshing and fulfilling sabbatical.

As the Lord worked in my life through MUCH reading (consuming 9 books in 36 days), prayer, and reflection, Four Primary Sabbatical Takeaways developed.

Testimony

My #1 Takeaway was PRAYER. It was the first major takeaway, but as the remainder of the sabbatical unfolded – it became the most prominent powerful and overarching theme.

Prayer, Peace, Productivity, and Perspective.

And...yes...of course they are alliterated. If you haven't figured that out yet around here when it comes to sermons and divine inspiration that is how both Pastor Matthew and I roll.

It' not just sermons you know – in staff meetings, in planning conversations...things end up being alliterated. We don't quite speak to each other in alliteration...but that may be next!

Whereas there might be other areas in my spiritual life that are more mature and consistent, when it came to prayer, my walk had been truly short of this vital discipline. What the Lord taught me - well, the reality is, I knew the importance already, so rather what the Lord showed me - is the profound improvement the area of my prayer life needed.

Pastor Lance Witt says, “Apart from prayer, all our scurrying about, all our talking, our study amounts to nothing.”

That's the reality I was in, pre-sabbatical.

There is a really awesome God story when it comes to this takeaway of Prayer.

One of the books I read was called “Replenish: Leading from a Healthy Soul” by Lance Witt, former Executive Pastor to Pastor Rick Warren and Saddleback Church in CA.

In one of the chapters I encountered a knock down, knock out, mind blowing, heart stirring revelation. Reading this was a moment in time where all things came into focus and shattered at the same time.

I want to read that excerpt to you...it tells a very vivid story.

READ STORY; Pg. 141-143

19th century Baptist pastor A.C. Dixon-

“When we depend upon organizations, we get what organizations can do. When we depend upon education, we get what education can do. When we depend on what man can do, we get what man can do. When we depend on prayer, we get what God can do.”

For me, in vocational ministry I must realize that ministry can be its own worst enemy. It often destroys itself. Whatever opposes prayer, opposes the work of ministry.

- Busyness
- Lack of discipline
- Interruptions

Our priorities dictate our priorities. We all face distractions, time issues. The importance of prayer rises in proportion to the importance of the things we should give up in order to pray.

One of the opportunities I had on the sabbatical was to spend a brief amount of time being impacted by Executive Pastor Jim Law of First Baptist Church in Woodstock, GA. He is a recognized Executive Pastor among hundreds in this role as the well-known right hand to Pastor Johnny Hunt. Over lunch we could have discussed at length the subject of leadership, organizational strategy, his dynamic 2nd chair leader relationship with Pastor Johnny....and we touched on those things. However about 75% of my time with him was spent on the subject of prayer. When he left to head off to the next thing on his agenda for the day...I wanted to crawl under the table. Not because of how he made me feel – but because I was under conviction...and I didn't like it very much!

Pastor Jim Law said to me, **“Be more concerned about how much time you don't spend in prayer rather than how much you do.”** I have not been able to get away from that statement!

When asked how he prayed, the Reformation church Father Martin Luther said this: “Anything that is to be done well ought to occupy the whole man with all his faculties and members. He who thinks of many things thinks of nothing and accomplishes no good.”

That indictment strikes too close for comfort!

So, my first day back to work was one where I hit the ground running. No joke! But it was met with a long but not nearly long enough lunch meeting with Pastor Matthew in our usual spot at Ruby Tuesday's. We do the garden bar.

Crosslink Family– I need to stop here a moment and throw this out there to you – as I was challenged from Pastor Jim Law – these times of connection, of communication, of comradery between Pastor Matthew and I are so good, so vital – in fact, they are rare in

the pastoral world. I can tell you we are blessed as a church with the heart God has given our Lead Pastor. Implementing his heart for our church is my great privilege. I pray I never fumble that.

Anyway – moving on from the sappy moment...I see a couple of our Marines in the room are getting uncomfortable.

Pastor Matthew, he asks me to unpack the highlights of my sabbatical – highlights being a key word knowing how exhaustingly detailed I can be.

So I share and I get to the point of God teaching me this HUGE lesson on prayer. I share the story I just shared with you a moment ago. Now I happened to know that the idea of a prayer sermon series was one that had been in Pastor Matthew's mind and on his heart since God first brought him to Crosslink. It just hadn't been the time for it yet. We have had beginning of the year message series on Generosity and Serving as those were what God had directed first in the last two years. But as I shared, I noticed the tears starting to form in the eyes of my pastor sitting across from me. Pressing on I finished with the burden God had placed on my heart to direct our church to prayer. To develop a Sunday morning prayer ministry.

And what he said next (I didn't know, wasn't prepared for) – He said, in thinking about sermon development for the coming year I have been praying while you were away that God would show me what to do along the lines of a prayer study for the church and when to do it. And...God just answered the prayer in what He was doing in you.

The compelling challenge God brought to us can bring colossal change in our individual lives and the life of our church! God wants us to be a praying church. That's the God given heart of Pastor Matthew. I want that to be our reality, too.

Transition

The Apostle Paul gives many examples of prayer throughout his epistles. We are going to take a close look at what I call one of Paul's stand out prayers. For many years – going back to days of ministry in Student Leadership at Liberty under the direction of Pastor Dwayne Carson, these verses were repeatedly drilled into my head and I in turn taught them to hundreds of student leaders – yet the Lord has given them new life and refreshed meaning!

Our text for this morning is **Colossians 1:9-14**

Time to wake up from losing that Spring Ahead hour of sleep! If you are physically able, join me in standing for the reading of God's Word.

Scripture

“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to

please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

I. The Commitment for Time in Prayer (vs. 9a)

*“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask...” **Colossians 1:9a***

Paul and Timothy, James, Peter and John, Nehemiah...take your pick, they did not have the sophisticated communication tech and software we have today. They couldn't Skype, they couldn't Instagram, they didn't have a fancy Prayer App on a phone that runs their life, they couldn't call or text. They couldn't saturate Facebook with prayer requests. But they still ministered! They still prayed for each other! Every one of us can minister directly to the spiritual well-being of other believers without seeing or speaking to them. The amazing, supernatural technology surpassing means we have IS prayer.

While Paul gives rich instruction to the church at Colossae, he also gives them examples of his personal and practical ministry. The ministry Paul gives an example of here is that of prayer – intercessory prayer.

Intercessory prayer is the act of praying for others on behalf of others. It can range from casual to intentional and powerful.

Pastor Jim Cymbala describes intercessory prayer as: “prayer that touches God with one hand while reaching out to those being prayed for with another.”

Paul's example of prayer here in Colossians chapter 1 is an example of how to pray for others while simultaneously being a personal challenge to us, the individual, in what our prayer life should include and how we can ask God for these areas to be true in our own life.

It takes devotion, commitment, and time.

1. The Cause Behind the Prayer

“For this reason...”

- Paul is specifically informing the Colossians of how he and Timothy are praying for them. Paul is not with the Colossians. He is in prison. He has learned of the Colossians and their strong faith, but also the great threat of false teaching which had begun to assail and confuse them. He learned all this thru Pastor Epaphras – one of Paul's faithful co-laborers in the ministry.

- So, Paul, removed from the direct hands-on ministry of the Colossian church and prohibited from even being able to go to them – prays for them.
- When we look back to the opening verses of Paul’s letter, we know he is giving thanks for their faith and their love and this is in fact the second time in a few verses Paul says he was “praying always” for them.
- Paul had great desire to see the believers stay steadfast in their faith and be able to counter the false teachings they were exposed to with truth. He did not want to see them fall or fail!

When we look at Paul’s reason for praying, we need to recognize –

The **value** given to prayer must outweigh the **time** spent in it.

2. **The Nature Behind the Prayer**

Four Observations:

A. Frequency - *Without ceasing*

- Recurring and constant – requires two perspectives.
- God-conscious – doesn’t mean a constant act of verbal prayer but rather viewing everything in life in relation to God as 1 Thessalonians 5:17 gives us another example of Paul practicing this type of prayer.
- Pastor Matthew has taken us to the example of Nehemiah the past two Sundays. Nehemiah illustrates for us this art of praying without ceasing.
- People-conscious – Paul calls us to this also in Ephesians 6:18 – “With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”

B. Focus – *For you*

- Whereas Paul could have been concerned about his own needs and situation, he made sure the Colossians had an example of praying for others. In fact, we see Paul giving a demonstration of bearing burdens in prayer as we see in him do in Galatians 6:2.
- Although the Greek words *prayer* and *ask* are nearly synonymous, when used together they stress slightly different aspects of prayer.

C. Spirit Controlled - *Pray*

- Incorporated with his devotion and worship.

- The Greek word used here is the general word for prayer, always directed to God.
- This is a genuine prayer exercised under the control of the Holy Spirit
- Comes from Paul's awareness of his identity in Christ – coming before God as a child to his loving father.

D. Specific - Ask

- Expresses a particular request.
- God has asked us to ASK. To make not demands, but requests for which He has promised to give if we make the requests in the right way.
- “Prayer is not only asking, but an attitude of mind which produces the atmosphere in which asking is perfectly natural.” – *Oswald Chambers*
- The Greek word here expresses a strong emotional interest / tenor to the prayer Paul unpacks in the next few verses.

When we look at the nature of Paul's prayer, we need to recognize –

The **burden** of time it takes to pray is **replaced** when the burden of prayer is **realized**.

II. The Challenge for Time in Prayer (vs. 9b-14)

So what does Paul want to see the Colossians do as they strive to stay strong in their faith? How does he want them to pray? What to pray for?

When it comes to Prayer Time - your time to pray – this prayer is an effectively excellent example to use! Each one of these following points, we can view as an aspect of prayer. A guide. As Paul prayed it, so can we.

1. Challenge to Know the Will of God with Surrender (vs. 9b)

“...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding...” **Colossians 1:9b**

- “Prayer is not asking God to do my will. It is bringing myself into conformity with His will. It is asking Him to do His will and to give me the grace to enjoy it.” – John MacArthur
- When a person is born into God's family by faith in Jesus Christ, they are born with all that they need for growth and maturity. This is the theme of Colossians: “And you are complete in Him” (2:10). Part of the problem that Paul is addressing is that the Colossians were starting to waiver, to falter on this matter. There were attempts to include other knowledge...other teachings, that were contrary to the Word of God.

- Ever believer needs the “knowledge of His will” and to submit or to surrender to that only.
- Filled means complete – “filled full” – being fully equipped.
- Filled also means “controlled by” in this context – being controlled by the Spirit, not by the flesh or some other influence.
- This point conveys surrender – surrender to His will in wisdom and understanding.
- In our time of prayer, we should pray for this type of surrender so we can more fully live in God’s will.

2. Challenge to Walk Before God in Sanctification (vs. 10a)

“...so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects...” **Colossians 1:10a**

- Walk is used in the Bible to refer to one’s pattern of daily conduct. A mind controlled by knowledge, wisdom, and understanding produces a life worthy of the Lord.
- Paul makes several statements like this. To the Ephesians he says their walk should resemble their calling, to the Philippians – their conduct should reflect their witness of the Gospel, to the Thessalonians – walk according to the kingdom and glory of God who calls them.
- The false teachers in Colossae attracted people through the effort of “spiritual knowledge,” but this knowledge wasn’t relatable or compatible with the teachings of Christ. Knowledge and obedience go together.
- Paul is describing the process of sanctification here.
- Throughout the letters of Paul we see the theme of sanctification in prayers or in direct teaching.
- Theologian Wayne Grudem defines sanctification as *“the progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.”*
- Simply put – our prayer life needs a focus that brings about growth in likeness of Christ in our lives.

3. Challenge to Work for the Lord in a Strategic Way (vs. 10b)

“...bearing fruit in every good work...” **Colossians 1:10b**

- Warren Wiersbe said that – “Paul has prayed that we might have spiritual intelligence, and that this intelligence might result in practical obedience.”
- There is no separation between learning and living.
- Fruitfulness also results from spiritual knowledge. It is the byproduct of living in righteousness.
- Bearing spiritual fruit is a human responsibility. The Greek participle “bearing fruit” is in the active voice. This means, while the Gospel has innate fruit-bearing properties, believers must actively – strategically yield to the Holy Spirit in order to produce fruit.
- The “good work” is not the fruit though; rather the fruit must be produced in the sphere of every good work.
- Our prayer life is vital here because – get this – Good works correspond to the goodness of God (Mark 10:18) and are innately good, not just outwardly good in appearance to human observation. Since no person can do such good, it can be performed only by God working through him or her (Romans 3:12).
- Therefore the way in which God produces good works in us is through the proximity and vitality of what our relationship is to Him. This is achieved through our time spent in prayer.
- "True prayer is neither a mere mental exercise nor a vocal performance. It is far deeper than that - it is spiritual transaction with the Creator of Heaven and Earth." - Charles Spurgeon

4. Challenge to Grow in Wisdom About God for Sound Conviction (vs. 10c)

“...and increasing in the knowledge of God...” **Colossians 1:10c**

- Pastor Daniel Henderson describes prayer this way – “Prayer is not a casual recitation of whatever pains and problems pop into our minds on any given occasion. It is the overflow of a heart focused on the conscious presence of Christ, clinging to Him and His Word as the source and scope of our lives.”
- The knowledge of God Paul is referring to is what is revealed in God’s Word. This is something that should continually be increasing as we walk in our life in Christ.
- Philippians 1:9 says “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment.”

- Elmer Towns, Co-Founder of Liberty University is known for his books. Lots of them. Specifically, a style of writing he is known for is his books of the Bible rewritten as prayers - praying through Scripture. I wish I could write like him. He has hundreds of books published. Anyway, if we literally pray through Scripture, we will gain a deeper understanding – and increasing knowledge which will bring about sound conviction for our life.
- Pastor Jim Cymbala said that “God promises wisdom to those who ask as long as they ask in faith. The fulfillment of God’s promises often depends on our walking before Him in sincerity and truth.”
- Sincerity and Truth. Church, it is so essential that we hold fast to this in our present day. Sound conviction is escaping our churches, our leaders...and on and on. We hear and read so much of compromised and far-fetched versions of people’s “truth” they live in. I read a lot of news. Kristin, my wife does not. She says it’s depressing. Why would I want to know that?! She also says – why would she need to – I tell her what she needs to know from the news! She listens to the Michael Miller newscast. I read hard right conservative news sources and fringe far left radical outlets. To be honest – they are often both depressing. In our age of highly informed and saturated knowledge – we lack much true wisdom. It’s getting harder and harder to tell the fake from the fact! We must pray for wisdom! Our Good Good Father is the only fountain of knowledge that is going to lead us to the Son and bring us to be the Light that needs to shine in this dark and confused world.

5. Challenge to Withstand with Steadfastness, Patience & Joy (vs. 11)

“...strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously...” Colossians 1:11

- Each of us face challenges and seasons of difficulty. Some seasons last longer than others. Our prayer life may look and sound different based on our problems, but also our perspectives.
- “We can be tired, weary and emotionally distraught, but after spending time alone with God, we find that He injects into our bodies energy, power and strength.” – Charles Stanley
- Paul knows that living the Christian life is hard. Remember, he was in prison as he was writing this letter. And so, he is praying that the Colossians would find the strength to patiently endure trials and suffering, not in themselves, but through God’s empowerment.
- We must pray so we are connected to the source of strength, God Almighty.
- The words *power* and *strengthened* come from a Greek root word that implies ability, power, and innate strength.

- We must pray so we are surrounded by a sphere of strength, the Holy Spirit.
- We must pray so we look to the standard of strength, which is found in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.
- The three descriptive words as to the goal our strength in Christ should produce all point to one thing – perseverance.
- Steadfastness – points to circumstances sent by God and endurance or the capacity to bear up under those difficult circumstances.
- Patience – refers to the endurance of things imposed by man and maintaining a state of emotional calm in the face of difficulty without complaining or irritation.
- I don't know about you but to achieve those things as Paul says to do so with joy - the only way that is going to happen for me IS through prayer!
- We often use the words *joy* and *happiness* interchangeably. I would say mistakenly so, like the word love is often used. Happiness often depends on happenings. Joy is a state of being made possible only by God's spirit working in us. Joy is a fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22), not a state of fun that is subjective.
- Nehemiah 8:10b reminds us "*Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*"
- Jim Cymbala wrote, "Glum and despondent believers should be sued for false advertising – Jesus Christ is far greater than they're letting on."
- Romans 15:13 challenges us to be "*filled with all joy and peace as you trust Him.*"
- If we pray in that reality – it can be life changing. If we pray for others in that regard, it can be life changing!

6. Challenge to be Worshipful in Our State of Perspective (vs. 12)

"...giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light." **Colossians 1:12**

- "Prayer should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed, a rare delight that is always revealing some new beauty." - E.M. Bounds

- As we pray, we should never forget what God has done for us. This alone should bring us joy expressed as thanksgiving. Being mindful of the status we have in Christ should shift our perspective.
- Before God saved us by His grace, we were truly unqualified for our inheritance. God has by grace qualified the unqualified to share in the inheritance – the eternal life.
- We started out the service this morning singing in worship how we are found in Jesus and that in His presence there is freedom, in the presence of Jesus we are made whole. Jesus is the Light of all and all that we need.
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 - *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”*
- In speaking on worship and prayer, John Piper shares this - “From your heroes you pick up mannerisms and phrases and tones of voice and facial expressions and habits and demeanors and convictions and beliefs. The more admirable the hero is and the more intense your admiration is, the more profound will be your transformation. In the case of Jesus, He is infinitely admirable, and our admiration rises to the most absolute worship. Therefore, when we behold Him as we should, the change is profound.”
- If John Piper has ever said anything that isn’t profound...I haven’t found it yet. Is Jesus the hero of your prayers? Is Jesus the hero of your worship? What Piper is saying here is that in prayer our worship should reflect our state of perspective and that our perspective should be of Jesus that transforms us.

7. Challenge to Pray for the Witness of Our Salvation to be Powerful (vs. 13-14)

“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” **Colossians 1:13-14**

- As we have been rescued and redeemed, forgiven and found in Christ – this reality should be evident through our prayer life into our public life.
- Pastor Carter Conlon wrote - “We live in troubled and turbulent times, and we, as His people, need to be prepared not only to get through the dark days but to be the very ambassadors of Jesus Christ to all those around us who need the hope of the Gospel. The Lord has His people – His church – here on earth for a reason: to be the feet of peace and the very heart of Christ. It’s time to pray!”

With those challenges in mind of what to pray and how – we look to the final point...

III. The Carrying Out of Time in Prayer

In case you hadn't counted yet – there are seven points of application from this passage. It makes a GREAT prayer outline for the seven days of the week.

- For yourself
- For your family
- For others in intercessory prayer

As we reflect on this idea of prayer Paul has given us in Colossians we can find a theme for carrying out this type of prayer.

Paul talks about prayer being:

- Constant – Romans 12:12
- Steadfast – Colossians 4:2
- Alert with perseverance – Ephesians 6:18

We see an example of Commitment - Devotion

We see the Apostles being devoted to prayer:

- Acts 1:14 – Devoted to prayer...and ministry happened
- Acts 4:31 – Peter is engaged in prayer...and ministry happened
- Romans 12:12 – We are to be constant in prayer
- Colossians 4:2 – Paul called the church to be devoted in prayer – so ministry could happen
- Ephesians 6:18 – Paul teaches us to pray at all times as to be ready
- Ephesians 6:19 – Paul relied on prayer...and ministry happened

We too must devote ourselves to prayer.

Ephesians 3:14-21 provides a great review of the next steps for making the commitment of time to pray

We see an example of Bow - Submission

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name...” **Ephesians 3:14-15**

We see an example of Dwell - Relationship

“...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...” **Ephesians 3:16-17a**

We see an example of being Rooted, Grounded, Filled Up - Discipleship

“...and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:17b-19

We see the need for God’s Glory

“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.” Ephesians 3:20-21

- John Piper – “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”
- Psalm 50:15 – *Our calling upon the name of the Lord, our act of prayer to the Father, brings Him glory.*

Conclusion

In his book *Transforming Prayer*, Pastor Daniel Henderson gives a great outline for adjusting our approach to time in prayer that reflects back on our Colossians passage today:

- It’s Time to Pray to seek God’s face, NOT just His hand
- It’s Time to Pray with your heart fixed on God’s glory, NOT just for personal satisfaction
- It’s Time to Pray from the treasury of God’s Word, NOT from a list of your own ideas
- It’s Time to Pray according to the Spirit’s instruction, NOT only from human reason
- It’s Time to Pray with a heart completely surrendered to His will, NOT with a hurried personal agenda
- It’s Time to Pray in anticipation of living triumphantly in the war zone, NOT in satisfaction with your comfort zone
- It’s Time to Pray that God would change you, NOT simply change things

John Piper – “Prayer is a time-consuming labor during which other duties have to be set aside.”

One of my most favorite quotes of all time goes like this:

"If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this." - C.S. Lewis

Some of you were about to be disappointed. You were like – there has been no C.S. Lewis quote – is Michael alright? I was simply saving it...

That perspective of time says a lot about prayer. If our most powerful means we have at our disposal, if our greatest position is on our knees, if our strongest hour is the one spent in prayer – WHY do we avoid it? Why do it marginalize it, why do we abandon it, why do we become so ineffective in it? We literally have access to heaven right at our fingertips (make praying hands), yet we act and think that it is some far off and distant magical fairy tale we don't have time to chase.

It's Time to Pray Purposefully

It's Time to Pray Passionately

It's Time to Pray Productively

- For His Will
- For Spiritual Wisdom
- For your Walk
- For your Work
- For His Way
- For His Worship
- For your Witness

The time required to pray will feel like a burden to pray until the burden to pray becomes burden enough that the time it takes is time well spent.

Church, we must strive to pray with more devotion, more engagement, more reliance on its power than our own, with more steadfast constant perseverance. We can only do so through the One who gives us access to the Father in the first place...Jesus Christ.

May He be the Author and Perfecter of our faith so that He can in turn get the glory as we call upon His name.

He has Invited us to Ask. Church – It's time to Pray!

Invitation / Close