

IP #7

HOW TO PRAY FOR OTHERS

Open your Bibles tonight, if you will, to I Timothy 2. I am going to read the first four verses. This is, I believe, the next to the last message in this series on intercession, next Sunday night we will conclude this series. I Timothy 2:1-4. The message tonight is praying for others, how to intercede for others. Several weeks ago we dealt with the idea of how to pray for the lost, I hope you are doing that. We have our own revival beginning the last Sunday morning of this month, and I hope that you by now have, as God has placed on your heart people who are interceding and pray for. Tonight we are discussing the idea of how to pray and intercede for others besides those who are lost. Beginning with verse 1,

ITM
2:1-4

"I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceably life in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Now this little letter to Timothy is Paul's pastoral course, and he is instructing this young minister by the name of Timothy how to conduct church services. And he says the first thing you ought to do when your church comes together to worship, the first order of business, the primary purpose, the most important thing as you come together is to pray, that's what he means when he says first of all, the exhortation. Here's Timothy as the pastor of that church, when your people come together, when that congregations comes together, the first order of business is prayer, first of all before anything else, which leads me to believe, according to this passage, the primary function of a church as we meet

together like this on a service like this, on an evening like this, is not only to come together to learn the word of God, to hear the word of God, and to fellowship together but we come together to pray first of all, that supplications and prayers and intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men. And notice what the apostle is saying, the church is to do more than to simply pray, it is to pray for others, that is intercession. I exhort that first of all supplications and prayers and intercessions and giving of thanks, who would have ever thought that I am supposed to give thanks for other men, and that as I pray for other men I am to thank God for what He is going to do in their lives and for what He has done in their lives. Now, we have a number of people in our church who are praying and we have a number of prayer groups that meet every week, and I thank God for it, I think it is one of the greatest blessings that God has given our church. But we need a word of warning, you know, it's possible for us to meet all the time and all we ever pray about is ourselves and for ourselves, and that God would help us and that God would do something for us. I think there is a real danger; I don't really think; I know there is a real danger. ^{AND AS} ~~AND~~ I began to pray and more earnestly to learn to pray, I realize^d under the guidance of God that so much of my praying was for myself. Now, it takes a lot of praying to get me where God wants me to be, now I realize that, and I need a lot of praying. But balanced over with praying for myself and praying for others there was a great imbalance. And as I read through the New Testament, all of these passages that have to do with prayer, I discover that primarily prayer is to be made in the behalf of other people, for other people. So let me speak to those of you tonight that are involved in prayer groups, and join together with those who pray. Analyze, assess your own praying for just a moment. If most of your praying, like the farmer who knelt beside his bed that night and said dear Lord,

bless me and my wife, my son and his wife, us four, no more. Now we won't say it in exactly those words. But let me make this suggestion, when you come together to pray, perhaps you should have already taken care of your own personal needs before you come together, and you come together to pray for other people. Did you know that it is a sin against God for us not to pray for each other? Samuel the prophet said God forbid that I should sin against the Lord is ceasing to pray for you. I have listened on tape to the testimony of ^{Dalson} Trotman, that tremendous Christian who was the founder of the Navigators, and who was instrumental not only in winning countless thousands to Jesus but also bringing them to maturity and to the fullness in Christ. And in his testimony he tells of how he came upon this idea of nurturing and maturing and helping these converts to grown. One day he lead a man to Jesus and he rejoiced over this man's salvation, and he left him. A year later he came back to that man's house and he again met this man. Now ^{Dalson} Trotman says he has a terrible memory and he did not recognize this man, and he began to witness to this man again because this man by his life, by his behavior, by his language gave no evidence of being saved. And as he began to witness to him this man said, listen, I have already been saved. When were you saved? I was saved a year ago when you were here, you led me to Jesus. Well, it completely devastated ^{Dalson} Trotman. He was so disillusioned he said, what's going to happen. Here I led a man to Jesus and a year later it's as though he's never been saved. And he went to a preacher, and he read to him Philippians 1:6, he said I want to know is this verse of Scripture true? Paul is writing to people he has won to Jesus. He says, being confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it (that means bring it to completion) until the day of Jesus Christ. ^{Dalson} Trotman says that Paul revealed in that verse that when God begins a good work in a person He's going to complete it.

He said, I find that verse isn't true, and he told about this man that he had led to Jesus and a year later, no evidence whatsoever that he had been saved. And the pastor said, would you notice that verse 4 comes before verse 6. And Mr. Trotman read verse 4, "Always in every prayer of mine, for you all, making request with joy." And the wise pastor said, Paul was confident in verse 6 because he was prayerful in verse 4. Always, always praying for you. That's why he was confident. As you read through the letters of the Apostle Paul you'll find over and over again that same emphasis recurring, always, day and night with tears, praying for you, praying for you. That's why. That's why God said, it is a sin if I cease to pray for you. Now I want you to be real honest with yourself tonight. Can you think of some people who aren't here tonight that we're here a year ago? Or six months ago? With the fire of the Lord in their soul? With the joy of the Lord of their face? And they have fallen by the wayside? You know what you and I do, we step back and say well, I guess they just pretended. Somehow I never really thought that they would make it. Sometimes when a fellow comes and makes his profession of faith, we step back, and let's be honest now, we step back and we say, we're going to see if you can make it. Let me ask you tonight, Christian friend, that person that you're thinking of right now, and that person that you're being just a little critical of because he's no longer with us tonight, and he's out in the world, did you pray for him? Did you hold him up in prayer? Did you intercede for him? Did you bear him to the throne of grace? Did you stand in the gap for him? Did you resist the devil in his stead? Did you pray for him? Paul says, I am confident that God is going to work in your lives, because I was not ceasing to pray for you always, making requests with joy, that's the joy of my life. And before long, we're going to begin asking for those

who are willing to give an hour a week, or maybe two or three hours a week and you'll come up here to church, and you'll have your particular time to join in the ministry of intercession and we've already asked God to give us enough people that we can have people praying every hour on the hour around the clock, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I just cannot fathom what God is able to do, not only in winning lost people, but also in our growth and our maturity and meeting our needs and overcoming our problems if we have people praying for us. I can't tell you how much it means in my own life. I think one of the first experiences I had in this was a number of years ago when I was in a revival meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas, the meeting wasn't going very good, I'd been in those kind of meetings a lot, and to be honest with you, I was just a little bit down in the dumps then, I didn't know a lot of the things I know now and I was under the circumstances instead of above them. And I wasn't too excited about the prospects of that evening service, so when I pulled up in front of the church I noticed that there was a little Nash Rambler station wagon out in front of the church and there were four elderly women sitting in that station wagon, and I thought it was unusual that they should be there that early, and so as I walked up to the church they motioned for me to come over. And I went over there, they rolled down the window, and the lady who was behind the wheel, she said Preacher, we just wanted you to know that we were out here holding you up in prayer. Now, I want you to know that did something for me, that did something for me. All of a sudden I was encouraged, and I'll tell you what encourages me even more, is to realize that over in John 16 Jesus is praying for me, interceding for me, and this is a ministry that Jesus is involved in right now, Hebrews 7:25, Seeing he is able to save them to the uttermost because he ever liveth to make intercession for us. He's interceding for me right now, and Jesus says, as the Father has sent me, so send I you into the world, and the world of God teaches that the ministry that the church is to be involved in tonight is the ministry of intercession. Praying for each other.

Now here's what we are going to do. You know when the Lord came to Mary and revealed to her what He was going to do in her life? Do you know what Mary's response was? Be it unto me according to your word. I think that ought to be the response of every Christian. Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. I want you to work out in my life according to your word, and so what I am going to do tonight is take passages of Scripture, and we're going to learn to pray for each other according to the word of God. In learning how should I pray for this Christian? Or how should I pray for my pastor? Or how should I pray for my government? We're going to look into the Word of God and see how the Bible instructs us to pray. Now, you'll notice in our text, I Timothy 2, he says that giving of thanks and supplications and prayers and intercessions are to be made for all men, ALL, the universal scope of our intercession, we are to embrace all men in our praying. Do you know who the first person is on God's prayer list? For kings and ~~all who are in authority. The first name on Paul's prayer list or those in~~ authority, those national leaders. That's the first thing we ought to pray for. Now, if arrangement, if chronology means anything at all, Paul is saying to Timothy, when you come together as a congregation the most important thing you can do is to pray for other people, and first of all, you pray for the leaders of your country. And you know who the king was, the king was that fellow who was trying to put them out of business. He was their enemy, he was persecuting them and slaughtering them by the hundreds of thousands, and yet Paul said you are to pray for kings and everybody that is in a place of authority. Now I have got to make a confession to you, I had to make it to the Lord, I do not pray for my government as I ought to, do you? If I were to ask you tonight how many have prayed for our President this week, how many of us could honestly say we have done that. We criticize him, boy are we critical, and this is election year and it's open season on politicians, and maybe a lot of them do need to be criticized. But

the Word of God says that we're to pray for them, we're to pray for the leaders of our government, we're to pray that God will work in government. Now notice what a definition of good government is, he says for kings and for all men in authority in order that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty. You know what good government is? It's a government that creates an atmosphere where you and I can live in all quiet and peacefulness, godliness and honesty. We can live and lead a quiet and peaceably life. Can we do that in the United States? There was a time when people in America could lead a quiet and peaceable life, when a women could walk down the main street during daylight or even at night without worrying. When you didn't have to worry about your child walking home from school just three blocks wondering if they were going to make it. There was a time in our country when we did lead a quiet and peaceable life in all honestly and godliness. It's not so today. It's not so today. Why does God say that we are to pray for kings and those who are in authority in order that we might lead this kind of life? I want to submit to you tonight the reason our country is in the mess that it is in is because you and I have not obeyed this admonition to intercede. I believe with all my heart that if God's people had been praying and interceding half as much as they have been criticizing, our country would be better shape than it is tonight. I remember what God said in II Chronicles 7:14, "If my people (whose to blame for the sorry state of the country...my people) which are called by my name shall humble themselves and seek my face and pray and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land." I cannot escape the emphasis there that God says the reason our land is not healed is because my people have not humbled themselves, they have not sought my face, they have not turned from their wicked ways and they have not prayed. You know what

the conviction in my heart is tonight, that if all over this country, if God's people would stop criticyzing, and I'm not saying now that we ought not to see the things that are wrong and try make the wrongs right, you understand what I'm talking about by this, all we w do is criticize. If God's people all across the country would unite to begin interceeding and seeking the face of the Lord, humbling themselves, turning from their wicked ways, I believe God would send gracious revival, all over our country, I believe our government would be different. I do not believe the supreme court would of made some of the decisions it has made in the past years if people had been praying as they ought. I do not believe God would have let certain people be a part of appointed in public plades and elected at certain places if we had been praying as we ought. You read the Old Testament and you will discover that prayer intervenes in national life. You and I just might as well face up to it tonight we're sinning against God if we do not pray for our leaders. If we do not pray for our governmental leaders, we are sinning against God. Why do you suppose God wants us to pray for our government? Why do you suppose that God wants us to lead a quiet and peaceable life. Let's read on. Verse 3, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God. Did you know that good government is God's will; it is not God's will that our government not be the kind that it ought, it is God's will, now I couple that over with ^I John 5:14 where it says if I ask for anything according to His will He hears us, we know that He hears us, then we have the petition that we have desired of ^{him} us. So, good government is God's will. Why is it God's will? Who Verse 4, who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Let's back it up. What is God's will first of all, that all men should be saved. God's desire to save is as wide as God's desire to create, and every person that God created, He desires that man to be saved. Now, if's easier to preach the gospel in a country where there is good government, and where you can

lead a quiet and peaceably life in all honesty and godliness, it's easier in that kind of a land and that kind of government to preach the gospel so that people can be saved. So God says I want tpeople everywhere to be saved, therefore, I want you to pray for good government that we might lead a quiet and peaceable life so it will be easy to spread the gospel. The gretest illustration of that is the doors closing to foreing missions in Red China for having bad government, godless government has shut the doors to gospel witness. I can remember when you could go into a high school and preach the gospel. Can't do it today. Why? You and I didn't\ntercede for our government. It's getting harder and harder and harder to preach the gospel in certain places today, and harder and harder to reach men for Jesus today. Why? Because we haven't been interceding for the government. First of all, when we come together to pray, our intercession, the object of our intercession, we're to pray for those in authority, pray for our national leaders. Secondly, we're po pray for our spiritual leaders. I'm putting in a little plug here, for yours truly. Your-te We're to pray for our spiritual leaders, this includes not only your pastor but anybody who~~s~~ in a place of leadership as far as spiritual things are concerned. Alright, now we're going to look at some passages, Ephesians 6, we're going to learn tonight how to pray according to the word. Be it unto me according to thy word. Ephesians 6:18, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perserverance, and supplication for all saants (there's intercession), verse 19, and for me (Paul says) that utterance may be given unto me that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel forwhich I am an ambassador in bonds. That I may speak boldly as I ought to sp~~ak~~k." YOu ought to pray for your pastor, that an utterance be given to him, that when he has the opprotunity to speak, that God would open the mouth boldly that I mak might b make it manifest as I ought.

It's hard to go into a church and make this clear. You ought to pray that God would do a work wothat it would be clear. In Colossians 4:2&3, Paul Say, "Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving with all praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance." He is saying that he wants them to pray that God would open doors for him to preach, to speak the mysteries of Christ for which I'm also bound, that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak. Pray for your spiritual leaders, for your staff and your pastor that God would give unto them doors of utterance. And when those doors are opened, that we would know what to say. And when we spoke, that it would be clear and obvious in that effect. II Thesalonians 3:1&2, "Finally

bretheren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified. Pray for us that we may be delivered from unreasonable men, for all men have not faith." You ought to pray for your pastor, that God would deliver him from unprincipled men and wicked men. Did you know that a preacher and schoolteacher are the most vulnerable in the world? I'm thinking now that evangelists in God are mightily used. But if some unprincipled men came and said that they were going to help you and support you, but they were not really interested in what he was interested in, they would shackle him and put chains about him. His ministry would be hindered because he fell into the hands of unprincipled men. I've known pastors whose entire ministries were destroyed by just one word of criticism, accusation, and it doesn't have to be proven. It would be so easy for the devil, if you do not pray for me, to destroy the ministry and just by raising up someone to use me and to attack me.

Do you pray for me? I'm not asking for sympathy, I wouldn't change places with the President of the United States, It's so exciting, but I want you to know that I realize that I'm in a dangerous position, and I want you to pray for me. This is what Paul is saying. Pray for all of us, that we may be delivered from people with no principles and wicked people who would try to destroy the effectiveness and influence that you need to build a wall of protection of

intercession around your spiritual leaders. We ought to pray for our leaders of our denominations. Here again, I have been more critical of our denominational leaders than I have been of interceding for them. And again, I make the statement that if Southern Baptists and pastors had spent more time interceding for their denomination and pray for their leaders as we have been instead of throwing stones and criticizing them, our denominations would be more spiritual than it is today. Are you praying for your denominational leaders or are you just making jokes and criticizing them? I'm the first one to confess that I make a lot of mistakes and I'm discovering that I make more mistakes everyday. It just seems that there's so much going on and this church is getting so large, and I forget so many things. I fail to make an appointment, I just don't have time to take care of this and that, and I need to be prayed for. Now let's get down to the point of praying for other believers. I think the best person of all to instruct us as to how to pray for one another is the Prince of Prayers, the Apostle Paul. ^{pp. 115} His letters are filled with prayers for other people. I want you to write down some of these references and read through these over and over again until you can memorize them, and when you begin to pray for the other ~~members~~ members of this church, and for each other, this is what you should pray for. Ephesians 1:16, "I cease not to give thanks for you making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know the hope of His calling, the riches of His glory, and the power that is in them." Can you imagine what would take place in the lives of some of those Mr. and Mrs. Baptists that belong to our church if they would begin to pray by name for this person and this person and just say, "Lord, Father in the name of Jesus, would you give to them a spirit of revelation. Would you open their eyes to that could know what is the hope of your calling, the joy of being a Christian, and to know what is inheritant and to know the power that is working in them."

When one of your brothers is going through a time of trial and difficulty and the devil is oppressing him, you need to pray that God would open his eyes so that he might know the exceeding power that worketh in him. In Ephesians 3:14, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the father of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man," That is one thing you can pray for. Do you pray for your Sunday school teacher, your brothers and sisters in Christ? Do you pray, "Lord, I just pray that you would strengthen them with ~~they~~ might by the spirit of the inner man, that Christ may be at home in your hearts, that you may be able to comprehend the love of Christ." Could you imagine what would happen to this church if we began to pray like that and if people all over the congregation would begin to comprehend the love of Christ. That's Biblical praying. Now let's move to Philippians 1:9, "And this I pray, that your love may abound (Do you know a member of this church that isn't very lovely? A little cantankerous and touchy? And you've shared with your wife, "You know so and so, he's...." And you get on the phone and you meet in the hall and say, "I wonder what is the matter with so and so?"). Why don't you pray for their love, that it may abound. That would be the best thing. Yet have you noticed how Paul is never satisfied? These people have already been saved, but he's not at all content with that. He says, "I'm praying that your love may abound more and more, that you may approve things that are excellent." Sometimes we criticize our young people because we think they don't exercise good judgement or sense. What did Paul say, "I pray that you would approve." That means to try, to test things that are true, ~~that~~ things that are different. He says, "I'm praying that you would be able to understand that all that glitters is not gold. And Lord give them the ability to test things." Do you pray that? I believe that God would answer that prayer and give you wisdom that you would be sincere and without offense in the day of Christ. Do you know a person in our church who has a little pretense in them and they

play the part of a hypocrit? Have you prayed that God would make them honest that they might be sincere? Being filled with the fruits of righteousness? In Colossians 1:9 Paul says, "For this cause, since the day we heard it, do not ceade to pray for you."

Paul never pastored this church, and I like that. Paul did not found this church, he never won anyone to the Lord in this church, but he says that Epaphras, one of my fello laborers came back and told me about what happened and he said, from the first day that we heard it, we do not cease to pray for you and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will. In verse 10, "That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. Pray that they might be fruitful in every good work. Pray that they might be increased in the knowledge of God. Pray that they might be strengthened with all might." I'll tell you what I wish you would do, I wish you would take Paul's four players, two in Ephesians, one in Philippians and one in Colossians. Get down on your knees and pray through that and naming me every time. Then take your Sunday school role and begin to pray thfough that. You know, praying can become a fulltime job. The other day, I was ~~pas~~ praying in my office and everybody the Lord would brign to my mind, I would pray for. The members of this church, some that I don't know very well, I've never had the time to be in their homes. I just thought all of a sudden, that I ought to get the rolladex out of every member of the church and go through it. I need to ;take of three days and jsut go through that thing. I just want you to know, that it would be the most profitable three days that your pastor would ever spend just interceding. That is what is going to happen when we get our prayer chapel started. I had a fellowk tell me the other day, that they just started doing this and we've been sharing some things. He said, "Ron, I just want yo;u to know that you're being prayed for every four hours, seven days a week." I wondered why God had been blessing our church so much lately. Did you know that the other churches pray for ;us? There is a great church in San Antonio praying for us every day, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And them you wonder why the first Sunday in March, without any

promotion, we nearly broke our Sunday school attendance. I wonder what program we're using? I wonder how great our organization is? You can say it's a coincident and be ~~miser~~ miserable if you want to, but it's the Lord, it's God answering prayer, it's people interceding. In January, and February, I was so amazed because of the Sunday school attendance. I checked back, I got a little black book that I ~~ep~~ keep prayer requests in, and I remembered last fall that I had written down and prayed for a long time about our Sunday school attendance. And then I was surprised when God answered that prayer. Matthew 9:38, Jesus said, "Pray therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers." We need to pray that God would raise up witnesses and soul winners in our church. James 5:16, "Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that you may be healed." The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. We ought to pray for the healing fo other people. You say, "Now preacher, you mean to tell me that it's God's will that ever person be healed?" I don't fond that in the word of God. I do not believe that it's God's will that ~~erov~~ every person be healed. I read in the book of Galatians, that Paul, when he went to those churches in Galatia, preached while he was ill. I do not believe that the word of God teaches that all illness is not allowed ~~fe~~ of God. I believe taht a lot of it, is the devil, and not of God's will. ⁶⁵⁴ I do believe that there are many times when illness can be taken away by the prayer of faith. The devil may be the cause of it and I'm going to rebuke him, and if the devil hasn't caused it and it's the Lord's will, I haven't lost anything. But if the devil is behind that illness and I prayed and you have prayed, many people will be healed. Did you know my friend; that there is no ;limit to what God can do for your praying? Prayer releases the ability of God. And we ought to pray for one another. Now let's bow together.