

# Persevering in Prayer

BY PASTOR BRIAN BRODERSEN



***Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.***

Luke 18:1

*May God move upon us  
in such a way that we  
develop a heart of prayer.*

Prayer is the fuel that empowers the church to advance the kingdom of God. The Bible is full of examples of men and women in prayer: There are more than 300 references to prayer in Scripture. From Genesis to the Book of Revelation, we find that the servants of God—those men and women who served the Lord throughout biblical history—were men and women of prayer.

We all know prayer is important, but we need to be reminded of how vital prayer is to our lives personally, to the church, and to the furtherance of God's kingdom.

Jesus said that men should always pray and not lose heart. But how do we do that? Is there a method? We don't want to develop a method in which prayer becomes just a routine. When that occurs, prayer can become rote—then we end up in a rut, and ultimately we rot. Fortunately, the Scriptures provide us with steps in prayer.

## **Pray Without Ceasing**

In Ephesians 6, Paul concludes his teaching on spiritual warfare by urging believers to pray. He first exhorts them to pray always (verse 18a).

Paul also encouraged us to **pray without ceasing** (1 Thessalonians 5:17). And this is one of the beautiful things about prayer: I

can pray without ceasing as I set my heart in an attitude of prayer. As often as I am inclined to, I can lift my heart to the Lord in prayer. John Wesley, the great evangelist, beautifully described the man of prayer: "His heart is ever lifted to God, at all times and in all places. In this he is never hindered, much less interrupted, by any person or thing. In retirement or company, in leisure, business, or conversation, his heart is ever with the Lord. Whether

he lie down or rise up, God is in all his thoughts; he walks with God continually, having the loving eye of his mind still fixed upon Him, and everywhere 'seeing Him who is invisible.'"

That description depicts somebody well advanced in having this heart of prayer. I can't say that it describes me, but I certainly would like to be there. But, potentially, we can be like this. This is undoubtedly what Paul had in mind when he said to pray without ceasing. He knew that it isn't possible to spend your entire life in a prayer meeting or in your prayer closet. But he knew that all throughout the day—in whatever duties we're involved in, whatever activities we might be engaged in—we can have a heart that is set in an attitude of prayer. And may God do that in our hearts. May God move upon us in such a way that we develop a heart of prayer.

We need to change our mindsets about prayer. Sometimes I find myself thinking of things to pray about while I'm doing other things, and I'll say to myself, *When I get to my prayer time later, I'm going to pray about all these things.* Suddenly I'll catch myself and think, *Why don't I just do it right now?* I can pray anywhere. I can do it anytime, anyplace—that's the beauty of it. We are to pray always, and may God

help us to learn this constant, instant attitude of prayer.

## **Pray in the Spirit**

Next, Paul says we are to pray **in the Spirit** (Ephesians 6:18b). Jude also says we should be **praying in the Holy Spirit** (Jude v. 20b).

I believe this is referring, primarily, to prayer that is directed by the Holy Spirit. As we come to the Lord in prayer, we ask Him to lead us. Personally, sometimes as I begin to pray, my mind is foggy and my heart is a little bit cold. But I know I need to pray, so as I begin, I ask the Lord to lead me. *Lord, put upon my heart those things that are near and dear to Your heart—those issues, concerns, and things that pertain to what You are doing—not just in my life, but in the lives of people that I know.*

When we follow the leading of the Spirit as we pray, He helps us stay focused. It's as if prayer comes naturally. I love those times when I'm praying for something and, just as I feel I've finished, the Lord brings something else to my mind to pray about. Prayer time is not a stress or a strain; it just comes naturally as you are in tune with His Holy Spirit. Thankfully, even if we do get distracted, God understands and He still hears our prayers.

## **Intercession**

Sometimes the Lord subtly prompts us to pray, though we may not realize it. We've all had those moments when someone suddenly comes to mind for no apparent reason. Take those opportunities to intercede for them. There's a good chance that the Lord is bringing them to your attention because He wants you to pray for them.

We will conclude our look at Ephesians 6 in the next issue. And may the Lord reignite in each of us a passion for prayer. 🙌