

PRAYER THAT PLEASES GOD

Part 26 of Foundations 260. 1 Timothy 2:1-7.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. August 24, 2025.

I AIN'T PRAYIN' FOR THAT!

A well-known Christian stand-up comedian won't pray ...

- Prayers unworthy of God.

An example of a prayer that pleases God is found in 1 Timothy 2.

THE CONTEXT & TEXT OF 1 TIMOTHY 2

There was trouble at the church in Ephesus.

- False teachers had infiltrated the congregation.
- So, the apostle Paul sent Timothy to sort things out.

1 Timothy 1:3-4 (CSB) As I urged you when I went to Macedonia, remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach false doctrine 4 or to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies.

In chapter two, Paul gives the first of several instructions to Timothy.

- First on the agenda: prayer that pleases God.

1 Timothy 2:1-7 (CSB) First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good, and it pleases (is acceptable to) God our Savior, 4 who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, a testimony (that God wants everyone to be saved) at the proper time. 7 For this I was appointed a herald, an apostle (I am telling the truth; I am not lying), and a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

PRAYER IS ESSENTIAL

Prayer is the church's priority.

- That's what Paul means by *"first of all"* in verse 1.
- Using four terms for prayer emphasizes the importance of prayer.

PRAYER THAT PLEASES GOD

1. Who should we pray for? - verses 1-2.

- Pray for *"everyone"* - verse 1. That means all types of people and groups.
- Pray also for *"kings and all those who are in authority"* - verse 2.
- Because they have the power to help or hinder the church in its mission.
- Examples: Government, police, employers, and school administrators.

2. What should we pray for? - verses 2-3.

- We should pray for favor.
- We want those in authority to show favor so we can fulfill our mission without hostility or harassment.
- We want to *"lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity"* - verse 2.
- Godliness is attractive because it is loving, good, and wise. Dignified people earn respect. So, godliness and dignity open doors for sharing Jesus.

3. Why should we pray this way? - verses 3-7.

- We pray this way because God is a great Savior - verse 3. He *"wants everyone to be saved."*

- We pray this way because Jesus is the only way to God - verses 5-6. He is the *“one mediator between God and mankind”* because he is the only one who could and did *“give himself as a ransom for all.”*
 - *“Mediator”* links Jesus to the New Covenant that binds God to his people.
 - *“Ransom”* is a word picture for the atoning sacrifice on the Cross. It frees us from our bondage to sin.
- We pray this way because the Christian faith is for sharing - verse 7. God appointed Paul as a *“herald”* and an *“apostle”* (messenger) because Christianity spreads by sharing it in words - explaining, defending, teaching, and preaching.

WE PRAY BECAUSE WE NEED GOD

To do God’s work, we need God to do what we cannot do:

- Open doors and hearts to Jesus;
- Direct those in authority to give us favor so we’re free to share Jesus; and
- Give every church and every Christian a driving passion to live a godly life, be a faithful witness, and share the gospel at every opportunity.

We should include the prayer that pleases God in private prayer, small groups, and church services.

- Pray with the apostle Paul:

2 Thessalonians 3:1 (CSB) ... the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored...

PRAYER FOR GLOBAL MISSIONS ¹

Effective prayer for missions extends beyond praying for individual missionaries to include the broader movement of the gospel worldwide.

1. Pray for more workers: Jesus taught that the harvest is plentiful, but laborers are few. There is a critical need for new missionaries as many retire and fewer step in. Pray for God to mobilize and equip workers, and for smooth transitions as new missionaries prepare to go.
2. Pray for missionaries preparing to serve: Those preparing for cross-cultural service face logistical, emotional, and financial obstacles. Pray for successful support-raising, effective planning, and grace as they adapt to new languages and cultures.
3. Pray for missionaries in sensitive areas: Many serve in regions with governmental restrictions, religious persecution, and unreceptive communities. Pray for their safety, encouragement, wisdom, and fruitful ministry despite opposition.
4. Pray for unreached people groups: Over 7,000 groups remain with little or no Christian presence. Ask God to open doors among the unreached, empower outreach, and establish churches in those populations.
5. Pray for spiritual renewal in Europe: Once the center of Christian influence, Europe has seen a steep decline. Pray for revival and new spiritual vitality to arise in its churches.
6. Pray for leadership and theological depth in the Global South: As Christianity grows rapidly in the Global South, there is a need for deeper theological training and biblically sound leadership. Pray for equipping resources and healthy, gospel-centered churches.
7. Pray for partnerships and unity: The Great Commission is a collective endeavor. Pray for collaboration among missionaries, churches, and organizations to maximize global impact.

¹ Condensed from: <https://mtw.org/stories/details/7-ways-to-pray-for-global-missions>