

1 Timothy
B.) The Church and its members
1. 2:1-8 Preeminence of prayer
2:1
“Much prayer, much power”

I. Introduction

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I. Introduction

Having discussed the importance of *proper doctrine* within the local church Paul now moves on to discuss the *proper devotion* within the church. When People think of the church most think only of Sunday, they believe that is the only day that the church has any relevance into people’s lives. The truth is what happens on Sundays is only a tape measure or thermometer of what ought to be happening throughout the week. I recall the story of a Christian father with his son as they were touring a historical church building in another town. As they went into the sanctuary the boy asked his dad what the bronze plaque on the wall was for. The father glanced at it and said, “*Son that’s a memorial to remember all the people who have died in the service.*” The boy didn’t quite understand as he related it to his own church and asked his dad, “*Which service did they die in, the first or the second?*” Too many folks that have died spiritually in the public worship service at church as they haven’t realized what this time is for. Chapters 2-3 bring in the 2nd division in the main teaching which is to instruct on the order and leadership of the local church. This will be divided into two groups:

- a. 2:1-15 The order of the public worship service

b. 3:1-13 The qualifications for leadership within the local church
The first order to set straight is public worship service which has **three elements:**
PRAYER, PRAISE and **PREACHING**. We shall only look at **prayer** this morning.

II. Vs. 1a Why prayer

Vs. 1 The use of the phrase “*first of all*” does **not** refer to time but importance. Paul is saying that “*prayer*” is the most important part of public worship. Before discussing important issues as the qualifications for leadership, or how to run benevolence within the church Paul sets out to prioritize the Church service and first on that list is prayer. It is a sad truth that prayer has for the most part lost its number 1 status. In most churches if you announce a banquet or some other activity people will come out for it but if you announce prayer very few folks show up. Most churches more time is spent on the announcements than they do in prayer. It is one of if not the reason for the decline of the western Evangelical church. The truth is where there is “***Much prayer, there is much power! But where there is little prayer there is little power!***” The practice of public prayer cannot be regulated and forced by outward command it must be prompted by inward conviction of need. Jesus quoted from two passages in the Old Testament (Isa. 56:7 and Jer. 7:11) in Matthew 21:13 saying “*It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'*” Paul put prayer first for **two very good reasons:**

1. **Prayer focuses our attention on our sole resource right at the start:** As we come into prayer our hearts may be heavy with need but by carrying them to the throne of grace to the one that promised in Matthew 11:30, “*My yoke is easy and My burden is light*” we can empty our heavy load. Peter encouraged us in 1 Peter 5:7 to “*cast all our cares upon Him, for He cares for you.*” There is never a better place to start a church service then to unload all our cares at His alter. Jesus invited us to do so in Matthew 18:20 saying “*where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am in the midst of them.*” In John 14:14 Jesus said, “*Ask anything in My name, I will do it.*” I’m not sure how we

as a church can encourage this better but I wonder how much more glorious our time together with Jesus would be if we started with a time where we take the cares of our heart and bring them to the one that cares for us. Perhaps we could offer communion and prayer prior to service as well as after service? Or maybe we could have prayer cards that we could spend time in prayer over for those who wish? The challenge we have is to fit all into an orderly time frame.

2. ***Prayer puts everything into perspective***: Many times as we get up and get ready we become preoccupied with our own daily grind just to get to church or we start to focus on what we have to accomplish after church. But when we get together and hear the real life burdens of our friends and family our hearts move off of ourselves and onto other's needs. Without starting with prayer first we can succumb to the notion that what we are about to encounter is "*all about us*". We are not at the center of our own universes, God is a God who cares for the hurts and heartaches of all humanity. We are here to come to work, and prayer is working wisely, baring others burdens before the Lord in prayer. E.M. Bounds, that great prayer warrior once said, "*It's a great thing to be willing to go to men for God, but it's a better thing still to be willing to go to God for men!*"

Many Christians have abandoned going to church completely and even more don't see it as a priority as they say that they can just worship at home watching TV or walking out in the forest. I suppose that this is true to an extent as God is not limited to only being in a Church building. But Hebrews 10:25 tell us to "*Not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*" ***We gather not just to receive but to give to each other a little of our time to help carry someone else.*** We are a community of believers who ought to have the Navy Seal mentality of no man left behind! Almost every week someone come up to me and tells me how their time here this hour and half has changed their life and I always say the same thing, PRAISE THE LORD. You see I know that it was not me nor someone else that has changed their life it was that they through the Holy Spirit have had an encounter with Jesus who has done just as He said He would do when we are gathered in His name, He was here! The Psalmist Asaph was experiencing an extreme difficulty theologically: "*Why the wicked seem to prosper while those that love God seem*

to suffer.” He said in Psalm 73 verse 16-17 that trying to understand this was so painful it had begun to affect his witness of God until he went into ***the sanctuary of God!*** It was there as he lifted up that dilemma that he gained perspective.

III. Vs. 1b Three types of prayer

Vs. 1b There are over seven different words for prayer and four of those seven are used as we see the **variety of prayer**.

1. **Supplication**: The word literally means a petition or request of the people. These were request and needs of the people, situation or circumstances of peoples pains, struggles, pressures and heartaches that they were going through. But **unlike** the word “**prayer**” below these are requests that that the body of Christ can also get involved in. Like the request that may come in for a person in need of food and the Holy Spirit prompts you by reminding you that that you have the means to answer that request. The early church was doing what Paul had said they should be doing in Galatians 6:2 “*bearing one another’s burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ.*” One way in which we do this is by the use of what call our “*prayer chain*” where the needs and requests of the people come to be prayed over by those who have requested to be on the list to pray over the needs of others. ***I don’t know why someone wouldn’t want to be a part of this unless they just didn’t have a way to receive the list.*** Twice in the last week people who have been placed on this list for prayer have contacted me to say that because of those prayers God has worked in a powerful way to spare their life or the life of a loved one. This list can be **anonymous**, but it is **confidential** and we try to be **very concise** to the **specific need** so as to not to be weighed down to reading through it.
2. **Prayers**: This word in the Greek means prayer but it also is the word used for worship. The difference between “***Supplications***” and “***Prayers***” is that this is a request that **ONLY** God can meet. This is the kind of request where we have the privilege of lifting up our brother or sister who has a burden, suffering or heartache that requires only us to bring it before the everlasting throne of grace, peace and comfort. These are the kinds of needs that I don’t have answers for, and the great thing is that I don’t have too nor do I need to explain it before God so He can grasp enough of it to help. No, he knows before I ever have the privilege have carrying this burden before the King of Kings. We are to bring those requests before the Lord like the friends of the paralytic did by removing the roof of the house and lowering their buddy to the floor in front of Jesus to receive His touch.
3. **Intercession**: This word in the Greek literally means an interview an “*intimate request made by a friend to a king on behalf of someone else.*” This is a wonderful expression of corporate prayer as we are children of the King and come to our Heavenly Father in the intimacy of that relationship sharing with a special need that someone else has. There is an old Hymn that put it this way: “***You are***

coming to a King, with great petitions to bring, for His love and power are such that no one can ever ask too much!" Far too much of our public "Intercession" sounds like we have **mixed up who we are praying too**. I often hear well intentioned intercession sound like this: "*Father God, I want to bring Old Fred too you now, He has just gone into the hospital, and the Dr. has told him he has a spot on the left lung about a ¼ inch in length that they used a MRI to detect. Father God, it would be real nice if you could visit him at St. Pats he's in room 703 and will be their tell Friday the 7th.*" Now, I know the intension of the heart is good but God the Father is all knowing and everywhere present, and all powerful. But that prayer has mixed up who the hearer is. The way that request was made shows that it was intended for human ears to hear. Now, if the person prayed to God the Father the prayer would sound more like this: "*Father God, please touch Fred, you are Great Doctor, touch him and heal him according to your will and plan, reveal yourself and your presence to him Lord so that he would know your love. Thank you Lord for I know that you are going to do wonderful and great things for Fred, Amen!"*

IV. Vs. 1c Praise

Vs. 1c Next Paul brings up in conjunction with prayer the 2nd aspect of the Sunday worship service and that is PRAISE! Singing God's praise is the natural and normal way of expressing ourselves our self's after we have come to Him in prayer as we begin to praise Him before we ever have received answer to our prayers. *We aren't just singing songs, we are praising God!* Over the years I have had folks come and complain about worship and generally what they are complaining about is style and I always tell them that *the worship music isn't for them, it's too God.* He is far more interested in the heart that is praising Him than He is into the tempo and style of the music! How else can we explain why God recognizes the poor quality of sound some folks like me have and God accepts it as worship? Like most things in a Church service people just forget who they are singing too. Ah, but you watch the same folks at a sporting event or a sale at their favorite store and man are they excited and animated singing the praises of the teams win or price they got on sale. Why can't we get that excites about our Lord who "*Only does great things*" on our behalf? I think there ought to be some unhindered alleluias, some heart felt spontaneous applause to our Heavenly Father. At very least just a little more

passion in our thanksgiving. These songs are “*Love Songs*” to our Savior, expressions of our heartfelt gratitude for all that He has done and is doing on our behalf.