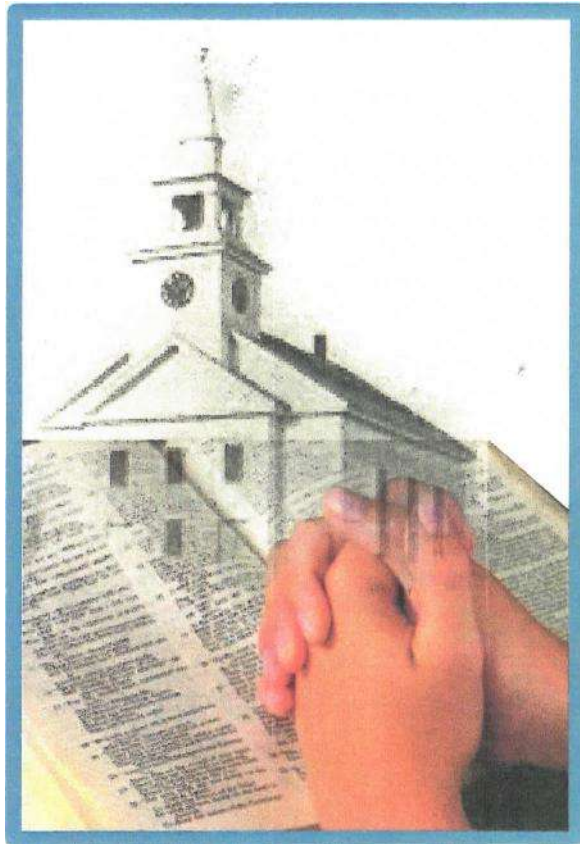


Teach Us to Pray



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DEDICATION

**This booklet is lovingly dedicated to all my
grandchildren and great grandchild.
They really are a glory to an old man.**

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TEACH US TO PRAY

INTRODUCTION

LUKE 11:1

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, TEACH US TO PRAY, as John also taught his disciples.

LUKE 18:1

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought ALWAYS TO PRAY, and not to faint;

**"My greatest failures have been 'prayer failures.'
John R Rice**

I remember as a boy in church listening to a man my dad would call upon to pray. He often made the following statement in his prayer: **Lord, teach us how to pray, and what to pray for.** I've often found in local church ministry, we make prayer requests, whether for revival, mission conference, or some special need, the sick, etc., and cover it in prayer by saying, *LORD BLESS* and then we add a name or situation. Our specific prayer is usually about one or two sentences at most. In Mark 1:35 we read the following of our Lord: ***And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary***

place, and there prayed. In the great trials of HIS earthly life Jesus prayed, be it in the wilderness or in Gethsemane. HE rebuked the disciples for not being able to watch (pray) with and for HIM one hour. When is the last time you spent an hour in prayer. We notice the great Abrahamic Covenant was established by prayer. Daniel prayed three times each day. David wrote many Psalms that applied to either the Bible or prayer. He stated concerning the matter of prayer, **seven times a day** he prayed. In Heaven, Jesus is our intercessor and instructed us to use HIS name in prayer, that is, to pray in HIS name, that which you believe is holy and the will of God. As a matter of fact, we are warned about praying wrongly; James 4:3 **Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.** And Psalm 66:18 **If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:** Proverb 28:9 seems to militate against those who call us legalists for having Biblical standards: **He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.** We also find that prayer is part of worship. Not only on earth, but Malachi 3 tells us that a book of remembrance is written. In the early church in Acts 2, they stayed in an upper room for ten days. When they came out, 3,000 souls were saved. The church prayed again in Acts 4, and 5,000 were added to the church. The exhortation in Acts 2:42 **And they continued**

steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine [this is referring to the preaching and teaching of the Word. They were steadfast, that is fixed on it in mind and effort] ***and fellowship***, [this speaks of partnership. Same word used in speaking of the partnership of marriage] ***and in breaking of bread***, [this, I believe refers to the observance of the Lord's supper] ***and in prayers*** [this is the time of corporate prayer. In Acts 12, they prayed as a local church for Peter's release and he was miraculously released by an angel from prison. In Acts 13:13, the first missionaries were both called and sent out when the men were together praying].

Many times our sermons on prayer are seen in one of several ways: first, we are rebuked for a lack of prayer. Secondly, we are told that prayer includes praise, confession, thanksgiving, and petition. I've heard men say those things aren't prayer because prayer is only asking. But when you read David's prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:11-14, we find that those things are in the prayer. (Sometimes, preachers like to say something new or something no one else has said). Thirdly, we hear sermons on why God doesn't answer prayers. Some of these things here could be rightly seen in some of the passages I've shared with you already. Fourthly, we see some things happen only as a result of prayer as Jesus told his disciples when they could

not cast out a legion of devils, ***This kind cometh not out but by prayer and fasting.*** [*Fasting* is abstaining from food and normal activities and entertainment, to give ourselves wholly and completely to prayer].

But, this is not what is covered in Luke 11, when a disciple asked Jesus to teach them to pray. John's disciples were taught to pray by John as well. I remember years ago as a young person hearing a Christian college educated man, who was also prolific at teaching on prophecy say, "The evangelist asked us to pray five minutes a day for the meetings. I raised my hand to promise I would. After I started, I realized that it was really hard to pray for five whole minutes on only one subject. There are people who pray in our prayer room while the preaching is going on Sunday and Wednesday. I believe it is vital. How do they pray for the entire time? They should pray in agreement. That is, as I say "We need to..." or "We need to stop..." they are praying "Yes, Lord, if anyone is having a problem with this sin of co-mission or omission, I pray that you will convict them and they will get it right." Or they may pray for people to understand clearly what the Lord is trying to say to them through the sermon. Years ago, a man came up to me in our parking lot. He said, "Your preaching made me sick. I could not stand to hear you preach. I told a close friend in

the church about it. He said, 'Why don't you pray about it and ask God to help you receive it.' Then the man said to me, "I still hate your preaching, but I am getting to a point where I can listen without being totally repulsed." I said to him, "Praise the Lord! That is my prayer that God would use HIS Word through my lips to speak to your heart." He turned away and was soon out of our church and joined a contemporary church. So, how are we to pray? How can we pray for such things and pray an hour as Jesus did? The purpose of this booklet is to **TEACH US TO PRAY!**

But, there is a second purpose involved, and that is: **don't quit!** That is, don't give up in prayer. In Luke 18:1, Jesus said ***Men ought always to pray and not to faint.*** At times, things go wrong (maybe life altering wrong), and we get discouraged. A man is tempted to say, "**I've been faithful to God all these years. Why has HE allowed this to happen to me?**" We go for a while, but it is as if none of our prayers are answered. I think Job 23:8-10 ***Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: 9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: 10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*** It seemed to Job that no matter which way he looked,

God was not hearing him nor listening to him. Have you ever felt as if prayer is a waste of time, and only a sentimental time in which you were speaking in the air? Yet v10, Job said ***HE knoweth the way that I take: and when HE hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*** Deep in that inner man, Job knew God was aware of everything. He knew the Word and knew that he was doing right. So he knew to not faint and give up on prayer. He knew the goodness of God. He knew God would reward it one day. He needed only to remain faithful in prayer. **We must realize that the local church loses the battle without prayer warriors who don't quit.** Prayer warriors who fight the good fight of faith and don't give up, even when it seems the opposite of our requests is happening. The first step to God is prayer. The Holy Spirit prays for us as well, Romans 8:26, ***Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*** Jesus certainly doesn't quit. We read in Hebrews 7:25 ***Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*** It seems as if God the Father is begging us to pray in Jeremiah 29:11-14 ***For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not***

of evil, to give you an expected end. 12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. 13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. 14 And I will be found of you, saith the LORD... Also

Jeremiah 33:2, 3 Thus saith the LORD the maker thereof, the LORD that formed it, to establish it; the LORD is his name; 3 Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

Two verses come to mind in regard to praying, particularly as it pertains to the local church. As we pointed out in Acts 2, the church had been praying together when the Holy Spirit manifested HIMSELF through them and 3,000 were saved. There are other actions taking place throughout the Bible when men prayed. In a day when iniquity abounds, and when preachers who once preached Bible standards and separation from the world, and were not willing to turn to the flesh to accomplish the work of the Lord, are now compromising. Jeremiah 17:5 ***Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.*** They make flesh the arm to accomplish the work, thinking that they must come off as one of them, instead of wanting them to become like Christ because we are

modeling Christ. Ephesians 1:15,16 ***Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 CEASE NOT to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;*** He prayed for them continually. We next see Colossians 1:9-11 ***For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, DO NOT CEASE TO PRAY FOR YOU, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;*** Do you see in these verses that they not only do not cease to pray for them, but we are told how they pray for them. As a Pastor, I have attended many meetings with other pastors in which our main prayer requests concern either health, or some material need. It is not that those things should not be prayed for, because they should, but the above verses show the weightier things for which we should pray.

The goal then is twofold: to teach us to pray as a local church; and to continue in prayer. The question then becomes, Will you be a prayer warrior, being one who prays

important ways in which you get involved in the worship of God on the local church level, is to pray Scripturally for your church. Hopefully this booklet will help you to accomplish this.

**.LESSON ONE: PRAYING FOR THE
PASTOR AND PASTORAL
STAFF PART ONE # 1 -7**

- 1. Pray that the pastor will have utterance. By that we mean that when he preaches, no one can be indifferent to the Word of God.**

Praying for utterance is a prayer request of the Apostle Paul as seen in Ephesians 6:19 ***And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,...*** By *utterance* it is meant that the Holy Spirit will be the power in his voice that holds, demands, and commands the attention of all those assembled in the auditorium. (Also, those who listen by way of radio, internet, and any other means). There is also a twofold purpose: 1) To make known the mystery of the gospel; 2) and to preach it boldly. The desire is for the Holy Spirit to take the message home to their heart so that they will understand completely the message from God. *Utterance* is also needed in order that **no one** can be indifferent to the Word of God. That also means the preacher needs this understanding: He must understand that "not being indifferent" means that it might make some (or many) people mad and others happy. The worse thing is that people would be indifferent to God's Word as delivered

from HIS messenger the Preacher.

2. Pray that his messages will glorify Christ and edify the saints. Pray that the unsaved and backslider will be convicted and disturbed about their condition. It is especially important that no one leave the auditorium unmoved.

The only way to glorify Christ is through preaching the Word, for the Scriptures testify of **HIM** and it's in them ye think ye have eternal life, John 5:39. However, it is very important that the preacher stress that Jesus is the only way to heaven; HE is Emmanuel = God come in the flesh; HE is Almighty Revelation 1:8 / ***am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, THE ALMIGHTY***. Two things we need to understand is that Jesus is the Living Word, John 1:1-3; The Bible is the Written Word, 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; John 17:17. 2 Timothy 4:1, 2 even tells the preacher how to preach it. Isaiah 55:11 states about the Word: ***So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*** It is important that the preacher preaches the Word in order for Christ to be glorified. HE is

glorified when souls are saved. HE is also glorified when we learn about HIS character: HE is holy; HE is love; HE is altogether righteous; HE is full of grace; HE is the just judge; HE will save any who will come to HIM; HE chastens HIS own; HE forgives and intercedes. The preaching will then edify the saints. God got angry when the prophets in Israel did not warn the people of their sins. They too made their worship worldly as well as the daily life of the people, turning God's grace into lasciviousness. "Edify" is to build up in sound doctrine and to help equip the saints. Notice 1 Peter 5:2-4 ***Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.***

According to v1 of this chapter, this is addressed to the elders (i.e. pastors), and according to Hebrews 13:7, 17; and James 3:1; there is a great accountability for the pastor before God. To oppose fundamental preaching and teaching is bad for you, but it is worse for the preacher who won't preach it from God's Word. This equips the saints, if they walk with God. John 15:18-21; 16:33, show trials will come. This was central in Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17:14-17 ***I have given them thy word; and the world hath***

hated them, because they are not of the world, even as am not of the world. 15 I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil 16 They are not of the world, even as am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. Then 2 Timothy 3:12, 13 promises: ***Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*** Our prayer should also include the backslider and unsaved that they will be convicted greatly about their sin and condition. Pray that if they don't get right with God the Holy Spirit will go out of the auditorium with them to convict them and keep bringing it to mind. Pray that no one leaves the auditorium unmoved. (That can't happen if the sermon is watered down and only positive.)

- 3. Pray that his messages will have both the milk and meat of God's Word to feed all the Saints, and will be outlined well as to hold the interest of the congregation. In other words, that he might rightly divide the Word of the Lord, and that the Word would go forth unhindered and triumphant.**

This is a hard task. The pastor must be Holy Spirit filled to do this. The sermon needs to have milk for the newest saint, yet meat for the most mature. It is therefore of utmost importance that you pray that the preacher will be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, Colossians 4:2-4 **Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; 3 Withal prayin.g also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: 4 That I may make it manifest, AS I OUGHT TO SPEAK.** 1 & 2 Timothy are books that were addressed to a pastor of a local church. The two books of Timothy are a local church manual. There we see the Pastor is commanded in 2 Timothy 2:15 **Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.** As you pray and the preacher studies, pray also that the Word would have *free course*. 2 Thessalonians 3:1 **Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have FREE COURSE, and be glorified, even as it is with you:.** By *free course* it is meant that the Word would go forward unhindered and triumphant as it is preached. But notice again that the Apostle requested the people of the local church to pray for him. In these first three, we see the importance of prayer. That's why we need people who understand this is more than just saying "Bless 'em Lord!"

WE SHOULD KNOW WE OUGHT TO NEVER CRITICIZE THE PREACHER IF WE HAVE NOT PRAYED FOR HIM ACCORDINGLY. We must pray for the preacher more than we criticize him. Actually, criticism of the preacher should be made directly to him, and with scripture to back up the accusations.

4. Pray that the pastor will have godly wisdom for counseling people as they come to him with their problems.

Godly wisdom comes from the Bible. There is a worldly wisdom. That is not what is needed. Psalm 119:24 states: ***Thy testimonies also are my delight and MY COUNSELORS.*** This is speaking of the Word of God. All counseling must be based on the Word of God. The pastor is not one who works out compromises in order to make peace when those compromises go against the Word of God. For example, in Matthew 10:34-38 we read, ***Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than***

me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. The faith is not to be in the pastor, rather the counselor should show that the counsel is from God. The counselor is merely a messenger. Matthew 10 focuses on the home. How many have lowered standards about their children when they were going the wrong direction, instead of standing for Christ. The Pastor will not always be liked for his answers if he gives God's answer, which is exactly what he is supposed to do. Pray that the pastor will have quick recall of the Scriptures as they apply, so they will be ready to be used in counseling. Again, we must pray that the preacher will be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in these things.

5. Pray that he will have with that wisdom a gift of administration for decisions to be made which affect the church spiritually and materially.

God's desire is that the local church be stronger this year than last year. Our strength should continue to grow, while at the same time giving ourselves to disciple new converts. We have the *Building Blocks* book and *Local Church Fellowship* books written by the pastor in the bookstore and free on our website. These can be used to take people

under your wing and disciple them. In your prayers, remember he must often make decisions on things that affect the entire church. We want to be stronger spiritually with greater knowledge of the Word of God, and more holy and righteous. We want to develop witnesses for Jesus. We want to be stronger in fellowship (i.e. partnership) seeing this local church as the call of God upon each of us to do our part to be the best we can be, while always seeking to improve upon it. We want the church to be stronger numerically as it takes more people to not only pay the bills, but to expand on missions worldwide. We also need to take care of the buildings and grounds that God has provided. Repairs and improvements are always needed in the physical realm. Pray diligently for God to use the pastor in these things.

6. Pray he will have perceptive understanding to be able to discern the deceit of the devil and his false doctrine. Pray he will be able to articulate it in such a fashion to help God's people to clearly see the error. Pray also the pastor will have the spiritual perception to know the spiritual needs of the church, as God would have it, and be God-directed in preparation of messages. In other words, pray

that he will have a gift of exhortation and articulation of God's Word accordingly.

The devil deceived many with Promise Keepers, the emerging church, psychology, philosophy, and the worldly contemporary movement. They're all deceitful. Therefore the Holy Spirit needs to speak through the pastor to articulate it very well in order to help God's people avoid the error. John 3:19-21, shows not all will, but those who will heed God's warnings, need instruction. They also need a pastor who is sensitive to the Holy Spirit in order to articulate what HE wants for the church spiritually, as well as each Christian individually, through the medium of preaching and teaching, (i.e. Ephesians 4:11-13). Pray the pastor will be able to exhort the people in the power of the Holy Spirit.

7. Pray that the Almighty love of God will flow through his life and pour out to others.

John 14:34, 35 are quite clear about the Lord's will and command for which we are called into account: ***A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my***

disciples, if ye have love one to another. This commandment is to all Christians, but notice it is to the disciples first. The spiritual leaders who were sent out to evangelize the World. We do need to understand that people have ideas of love that are often pacifist in nature and unholy in execution. It is love to stand for Christ and against error. The bottom line is to rescue the perishing and care for the dying. Preachers often get discouraged by getting so focused on the work, that they neglect their walk with God. That always leads to discouragement and quitting. Uphold him in prayer because you love the Lord Jesus Christ, the preacher, and the people. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 demonstrates that love.

**LESSON TWO: PRAYING FOR THE PASTOR
AND PASTORAL STAFF PART
TWO # 8-14**

- 8. Pray that God's leading will be as familiar to the pastor's heart as the voice of his wife is to his ear. Pray that each time God speaks to him he will know it is the voice of God. Pray that God's leading and speaking would never cease in his life. Pray that he will always be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in preparing messages and in preaching them.**

It is of utmost importance that the pastor know the voice of God in his heart. Satan will try to deceive him, so he needs to know the difference. God's voice should be more familiar to him than the voice of his own wife to his ear. Pray **daily** that God will speak to him, which calls for the pastor to be in the Word and thinking on it daily. It is important for the pastor and the local church that God speaks **daily** to him **all his life**. Pray especially that he will be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in preparing messages and in preaching them. Psalm 1:2, 3 ***But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth***

forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

9. Pray that his zeal and enthusiasm will be renewed and refreshed each and every day in the ministry.

Too often the preacher allows disappointments, the opposition from people, betrayal from those he has helped, gossip, people leaving the church, and a host of other things to make him discouraged and ready to quit. Some pastors just go through the motions and do not give it their all. Again this calls for the pastor to keep his eyes on the Lord via his walk with God through the Word, prayer, and his daily service in the ministry. Once anyone's eyes are on people, Satan will discourage them. 1 Peter 4:12-14 ***Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.***

10. Pray that he will be filled with the Holy Spirit and that the fruit of the Spirit will be manifested in and through him. (Galatians 5:22, 23; Ephesians 5:9).

When anyone is saved, they are given the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. With HIM we find 2 Timothy 1:7 ***For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*** The pastor particularly needs prayer that he allow nothing to hinder the work of the Holy Spirit in him for **power, love, and sound mindedness**. What he needs is seen in Isaiah 11:1-4 ***And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: 2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; 3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: 4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.*** This passage is a prophecy of Christ in both HIS earthly ministry and the Millennium. It is how HE will be

in HIS humanity. According to Philippians 2:5-8; 1 Peter 2:21-23, we are to emulate that commitment. Notice in the Isaiah passage the first thing is the **Spirit of wisdom**. Wisdom is the knowledge of right and wrong with just judgment as to action. With the many attacks of Satan in this spiritual battle, (Ephesians 6:12; 1 Peter 5:8, 9; James 4:7), the pastor needs this wisdom as he oversees the work of God in and through the local church. Next is the **Spirit of understanding**. This involves both **perception** and **discernment**. At least six times we are told that Jesus "perceived" something. The first area where a pastor needs perception is in the study of the Word of God. He needs to be able to see the deep truths that lie hidden beneath the surface and seek to understand it so he can teach it to God's people. He also needs to perceive the deceit of the devil as he seeks to infiltrate Christ's local church, Jude 4; Galatians 3:1. A similar area then in understanding is **discernment**. Constantly facing many pastors are new marketing schemes, doctrines, movements, and practices that are introduced by Satan so subtly, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; 11:13-15. As a result, the preacher needs discernment between the spirit of truth and error, truth and deceit, truth and a lie. He also needs to discern between the spirit of Holy and unholy, Just and unjust, righteousness and unrighteousness. He needs to discern between good and bad, good and evil.

A study of the seven churches of Revelation 2 & 3 reveals that didn't happen with the "angel" (pastor) of those churches.

Next in the Isaiah passage, is the **Spirit of counsel**. Again, it is important that you understand that this counsel is for himself as well as for others whom he may need to counsel. However, he must help the people to understand that the counsel does not come from the preacher. He is only the messenger. The counsel comes from God. He also needs quick recall of the Word of God for these things. The bottom line is, he must make sure the people know they need to have their relationship with the Lord to be such that they can get their counsel straight from **HIM**. **[Note: One of the most terrifying things to me is that I'll wrongly teach a doctrine, or give counsel that is not of God. That is why I want to clearly know HIS voice in my heart]**. Next is the **Spirit of might**. This is power in three specific areas: preaching, prayer, and personal witnessing. This is followed by the **Spirit of knowledge**. **I**, as both a preacher and a Christian, want to know my Lord intimately. I want to know HIS person and HIS Word. I want to know God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit so well in their person and being, that I will have that knowledge in the deepest recesses of my spirit. Next on the Isaiah list is the **Spirit of**

the fear of the Lord and quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. We know by the book of Proverbs 8:13 ***The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.*** Now you can see all these requests for the pastor, and pastoral staff coming together. In having the **Spirit of wisdom and understanding**, we find in Proverbs 9:10 ***The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*** If you begin to understand holiness, you will hate evil. A pastor needs to be of quick understanding because things try to work their way in stealthily. This then also calls for perception for the pastor. Finally, the preacher needs a **Spirit of righteousness**. Again we go back to Deuteronomy 6:25 and see that it is obeying the commands of our Lord, not only the ten commandments. Not only the do not's, but also the do's.

11. Pray for his family as Satan seeks to tempt them into rebellion and stubbornness, fornication and adulteries, and other devilry, such as drugs, drink, and all ungodliness.

As one reads 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6, he sees that one of the requirements for pastors is that their children are disciplined well and not living in a continual pattern of riot

and unruly. Will they mess up? Yes! But a pastor must have the wisdom to protect his children from the world by punishing all these unrighteous things, not trying to justify them before man and the local church. Satan will try harder on the pastor than most families because it can cause problems for the entire local church. People who don't live in a preacher's home do not need to make comments on how they have failed to teach or discipline their children, when they don't know. They weren't there. But, they need to uphold this in prayer. More prayer than gossip is what is needed. Some criticized Billy Sunday for his children. But understand, they went awry after leaving home.

12. Pray that the pastor will be filled with the knowledge of God.

Again this refers to three areas of importance: HIS person; HIS Word; and HIS will. This was covered in number 10, but is repeated here because of the great importance it is for ministry. There is a great responsibility upon the pastor to immerse himself in God's Word to accomplish these things as seen in 2 Timothy 2:15. Philippians 3:10 states: ***That may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.*** A quick reading of

2 Corinthians 11:23-33 shows that Paul had suffered these things before writing the book to Philippians, and yet he says ***THAT I MIGHT KNOW HIM!*** That indicates there is so much more to know about the Lord. Certainly Paul knew HIM and that he would suffer those things, yet there was so much more to know of HIS person, Word, and will.

13. Pray that the pastor will grow in power and favor with God and man.

In Luke 2:52, we find that the humanity of Christ had this testimony as a boy of twelve and the years following: ***And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.*** As one reads the story of Joseph in Genesis, one finds that God gave him favor with God and man. The same happened for Samuel and David. This in no wise speaks of compromise and doing what you need to do in order to get men to like you. Rather this is that work of God in a preacher in which he gains a respectful hearing as he preaches and teaches the Word of God. Acts 17:11 ***These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*** He gained the attention of the people. The purpose then for power and favor with God and man is that

the preacher can effectively communicate the Word and Will of God as it is to men as they are. This is very necessary in revival and Christian growth. It is very important that you pray for this.

14. Pray for Divine guidance in administration and dealing with all problems.

It is especially easy for a pastor to get in the flesh in these areas of administration and dealing with problems. Many things hit suddenly and we find that we weren't prepared. At those times we especially need Divine guidance, as we do at all times. At times, people have been use to a style of both preaching and administration that has satisfied their confidence. But we read in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 ***Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.*** The question must always revolve around, "does it break a Biblical principle, or is it in any way unethical?" Problems will come, administrations, and preachers, will change, but it is the same Lord over all. We need to pray that the pastor will have, and always seek, **Divine guidance** in every situation, including the day to day and the sudden problems that arise.

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****Concluding this section on praying for the pastoral staff, never feel that you have a right to criticize the pastor if you are not praying on a regular basis for the above. Sports teams do not practice only five minutes a day. Armies do not train for the battle with only five minutes of training each day. So why do so many Christians think that five minutes a day is enough and maybe too much time to spend in serious contact with God?**

LESSON THREE: PRAYING FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

- 1. Pray for God to give each member the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God. Ephesians 1:17 *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:***

Here is the doctrine of the Godhead. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ is addressing the humanity of Christ. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ was God come in the flesh, Matthew 1:23; Revelation 1:8; 1 Timothy 3:16. HE was 100% God and 100% man. We often say the God-man. HE lived HIS human life subjected to the Father, but also in full subjection to the life of mankind. That is, HIS humanity never turned to the deity of HIS person in the trinity in order to deliver HIS humanity. Satan tried to get HIM to do that when he tried to get HIM to turn the stones into bread. It is in HIS humanity we read 1 Corinthians 15:26-28 ***The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son***

also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. This is why HE told us that the true worshipers of God worship HIM in spirit and in truth. God is a Spirit. HE, as Ephesians 1:17 states, is the Father of Glory. Moses was told no man could see HIM and live. Philipians 3:20, 21 says ***For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*** We read in 1 Timothy 6:15,16 ***Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; 16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which NO MAN CAN APPROACH UNTO; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.*** When we receive our glorified body, then we will be able to see HIM in the fullness of HIS glory. So God the Father of our **Lord** (HIS deity and ownership of us), **Jesus** (HIS humanity that would be our sin bearer), **Christ** (HIS anointing to be the substitute, the Messiah who would save us). The Father gives all who are in Christ the Spirit (Holy), gives us **wisdom** and revelation in the knowledge of God. Wisdom is just judgment as to action and the ability to discern when Satan seeks to present

another Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:4), not the true Jesus who is holy, harmless, the Son of God with power. [See 1 Timothy 6:15, 16 above]. We also see the Holy Spirit gives the **revelation** in the knowledge of HIM. Revelation is an unveiling. This is where we see perception, or understanding. When one gets married he only thinks he knows his wife. He is usually in for a rude awakening. The same for her. Over the years, by both experience and knowing her person, he knows her well enough to not say certain things at times. He learns also what to say. He knows what will cause a problem between them. He learns by accumulated knowledge in his spirit of her person. This is how we need to seek to know God. Automatically we can know then when something would displease **HIM** and hinder our relationship, and we can know when things will please **HIM**. In praying for one another, this is perhaps the most important prayer request. That is, that each member gain this personal intimate knowledge of God. It is better to pray this for a person than to gossip or spread news about the person's failures.

2. Pray that each member may know the hope of HIS calling and the glory of HIS inheritance, Ephesians 1:18. *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may*

know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

For the eyes of our understanding to be enlighten, we must have a passive reception in order to have understanding on our part. In other words, we don't resist the Holy Spirit by refraining from reading and meditating on the Word of God, and we don't resist the conviction, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness by refusing to both hear or do accordingly. There is a desire to be in God's house, not only when the doors are open, but especially as the Word of God is taught as it is to men as they are. But what is this understanding about? It is about "What is the hope of HIS calling." This is not speaking of your personal calling, rather of the calling of Christ. HE was called of the Father to take on flesh to be the sacrifice for our sins. (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2). The hope is seen in 1 Timothy 2:3, 4 ***For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*** The hope of HIS calling is that all men might be saved. If you are saved, the hope of HIS calling has its fulfilment in you. But, that is just the beginning. Man was created in God's image to have fellowship with HIM. Having *your eyes enlightened by*

Spirit of God, is to see the eternal home and the impact of how we live this present Christian life on it. We therefore pray that each member will get this vision of Christ and eternity set in their heart's vision, that it might affect the way they live now. But not only the hope of HIS calling, also the glory of HIS inheritance. Remember, it is the inheritance of the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to remember Romans 8:17, 18 in this light, ***And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and JOINT-HEIRS with Christ; IF so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with THE GLORY WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED in us.*** It is the glory of Christ, but we can share in it based on our life here as a Christian. Woe if it be *saved so as by fire*. I think of the New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven as written in Revelation 21. It has twelve foundations, each a precious stone with the names of the twelve apostles on it, and twelve gates of pearl with the names of the tribes of Israel on them. Streets of gold so pure that it is as transparent glass. The Lord Jesus is the light of it, seven times brighter than the sun. The height, depth, and width of it are equal in size. It would measure from Denver, Colorado to the Atlantic Ocean each way. That should excite our heart when we read John 14:1-3 ***Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.***

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. If you did not like another Christian because of an attitude they have, things they do, etc., pray that they particularly would gain this knowledge. It will change them as it should us if we dwell on and understand the importance of this request we should make for brethren.

3. Pray that we each might know HIS power.

Ephesians 1:19 *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,*

It is hard to wrap your head around the exceeding greatness of HIS power when we think HE is both omnipotent and omniscient. It is for us who believe. This is not believe as to believe a fact. One can believe eating certain foods is unhealthy for you, but it may not stop them from eating those foods. That is a belief only. But belief that is faith affects your life. So we pray for ourselves and our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to have this faith in God that affects the way they live. That will always be according to God's Word.

But what does "the working of HIS mighty power" mean? It is seeing HIS power in answered prayer; HIS work in affecting and directing the events of our daily life; and HIS power in our personal witness. Oh that each member of Central Baptist Church would know that power. And, Oh that we would pray for it for each other.

4. Pray that each member will be filled with the knowledge of God's will, and will walk in a way that is pleasing unto God, Colossians 1:9, 10 *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of HIS will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

It is important to be filled with the knowledge of God's will. We know by the following two passages what is foremost with God. Psalm 145:17 ***The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*** Anything in God's will, will not be contrary to righteousness in anything for HE is righteous in all HIS ways. Secondly, we see that HE is holy

in all HIS works. We know that deceiver the devil has misled a person when they try to do anything in life, and especially in God's work, if it has any hint of the flesh and worldliness in it. That work is **not** of God! The next passage is 1 Peter 1:14-16 ***As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*** The will of God will not include fashioning, (that is emulating with a religious veneer, the world), i.e. the former lusts rather, it will be holy. Things of purity, ethics, witnessing, faithfulness, devotions, etc. we learn by studying God's Word. We also learn HIS will and how to please HIM. Pray for one another to gain this knowledge by diligent study of God's Word, and for the Holy Spirit to give this knowledge.

5. That each member will be strengthen in all might to be patient, longsuffering, with joyfulness, Colossians 1:11 *Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;*

In a church there will be friendly and unfriendly people.

There will be hypocrites and deceivers. One may find problems in the church or problem people. If you have prayed about membership and you know this is the church of which God would have you to be a part, then leaving, or just coming and not giving it your all makes you part of the problem for both the church and the work of the Holy Spirit. We need to pray that each of us will be strengthened with HIS might to be patient, that is abide under the load, not giving up in our effort, our walk with God, as well as love for the brethren. Also, that we will be longsuffering. Too many quit or give up on the church, people, and problems, especially when we feel we are being attacked unfairly or unrighteously. The mature Christian doesn't leave nor just sit in his seat week after week having quit in his attitude and service. Lastly, we need patience and longsuffering with joyfulness, which comes only by keeping our eyes on Jesus, instead of reacting to *how people treat me, or the way they think of me, and what they say about me.*

6. That our love for one another might abound.

Philippians 1:9,10 *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of*

Christ;

This is agape love. It must be involved in judgment (justice before God being undergirded with love, in dealing with people and all matters of discipline and work). It must be with knowledge, that is, knowledge of Christ and HIS Word. It is to prove the things that are excellent from heaven's point of view. This must be a sincere love for the brethren which can only come about by our yielding to the Holy Spirit. This should not be only a stated love, rather it should be an abounding evident love which we can only do by yielding totally to HIM. Love the brethren by allowing God to love them through you, Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 13:1

7. Pray for each member to be mindful they represent the Lord Jesus Christ through THIS local church wherever they go. 2 Corinthians 5:20 *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

The local church has a ministry in the World, as the Bible teaches. We are in the world but not of the World, as Jesus prayed in HIS high priestly prayer of John 17. Every day pray and ask God to keep you mindful that you represent

HIM and HIS person. HE wants you to do it through your local church, which HE ordained for this age. That is why a local church should be a Bible preaching church. Pray the same for each member of the church so none of us bring ill repute to the name of Christ and/or to HIS house, as representatives of Jesus Christ.

8. Pray that each member would be faithful to attend all services, Hebrews 10:25 *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

This is an imperative command, meaning one will give an account for it at the Judgment Seat of Christ. But again, we should do it because we love the Lord and know it is well pleasing in HIS sight. Since Hebrews 13:17 states: ***Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*** We ought to realize that the pastor gives account of what he preached and how you heeded it. God still holds you responsible for what is preached if you could be there, but decided not to go

to church simply because you didn't want to go, (or did not feel like it), not because you were sick or working. Your attendance is an encouragement to fellow believers and a testimony to your neighbors.

**9. Pray for laborers for each ministry who are
submissive to and filled with the Holy Spirit.
Ephesians 5:15-18; Luke 10:2.**

Godly laborers are people who do the work faithfully, rightly, energetically, submissive to leaders and Spirit filled, giving their best at all times. They do it without quitting. As in all the above, we pray for one another to be that type of person. By the way, seek if you might be the laborer God has called.

**10. Thank God every day for Central Baptist
Church.**

1 Thessalonians 5:18; 2 Thessalonians 1:3

Notice the first passage for it is also an imperative command for which we will give an account. It states: ***In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*** That includes thanks for your local church and its people. The passage in 2 Thessalonians 1:3 **We are**

bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; shows the Apostle Paul thanking God for the local church at Thessalonica. He prayed and thanked God for them because their faith (knowledge and practice of doctrine) grew as 2 Peter 3:18 commands to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He also thanked God that their love (charity) abounded toward one another. He thanked God for they were allowing God to work in them and through them. You can love any brother or sister in Christ if you allow the Lord to love them through you. You cannot condone, nor overlook sin by **not** rebuking it, but you can love them enough to rebuke and pray for their victory over it. Yes, there are people who are hard to love. Ask God to help you to not just love them, but have an **abounding love** for them! It is HIS will, as one plainly sees Christ wanted it to be the identifying mark of the local church, as seen in John 13:34, 35. May all these requests be made for one another on a regular basis.

LESSON FOUR: PRAYING FOR LEADERS OF THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES OF CBC

1. Pray that they will have godly insight and understanding of the spiritual condition of those to whom they minister, and that they will know how to minister accordingly. Acts 8:20-23
But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

In this passage one finds that Simon the Sorcerer had made a profession of faith. He was also baptized. He had taken a major hit on his income when the revival in Samaria was taking place. Now, no one needed to resort to his witchcraft. Peter is called down to Samaria to minister to these new converts. As Simon sees him laying hands on people and they're healed, he offers Peter money to find out what he

needs to do in order to have this power. Then Vv 20-23 gives Peter's answer. God had given him the spiritual perception and insight to see the need of this man. He addresses that need. We remember the Lord Jesus Christ did the same thing with the rich young ruler when HE told him ***sell all that thou hast and follow me.*** But we are also told that before HE makes that statement the record states: ***Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*** Jesus loved him but told him what he needed, although it would make the rich young ruler sorrowful as he goes away. Jesus, nor Peter, were arrogant, unkind, nor unloving. Each leader needs to know how to minister to the people in the ministry which God has given them. They need to know precisely the need and also know precisely what God would have them to say.

2. Pray that each leader will be truly burdened for and love those with whom they minister. John 13:34, 35 *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye*

have love one to another.

Think of the ones to whom Jesus is speaking. HE is speaking to the twelve. We will see in Acts 6:2-4 there is a problem in the early church. The twelve who carry this command of John 13:34, 35 must keep their perspective upon their call. Notice what it says: ***Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*** The twelve must give themselves to the study of the Word, its proclamation, and prayer. Therefore they must find men to lead in this area who are of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom. The people recommend and then these men are under the apostles (who are the pastors at this point). They instruct, but allow the men to carry out the duty since God wants the pastor to labor in the Word and in doctrine. Whereas in the first request it is for the people, here it is for the people who minister with us in the particular ministry over which God has placed a person as the overseer. The leader of the ministry cannot be partial due to familiarity, personality, or some

other thing that would cause us to favor one of the co laborers in a ministry over another. We must pray that the leader will have a genuine love for each while at the same time realizing that there are differing gifts, abilities, and personalities. They must be peace makers while at the same time preventing one's "quirks" from hindering the ministry. They will need to correct fellow laborers in love, but they will also need to pray for them and teach them how to serve. Pray that they will know their helpers so well that they will have a burden for their ministry to help them achieve God's will in ministry, as well as to love and pray for them on a daily basis.

3. Pray that each will be prayerful and Spirit directed in preparation of lessons, music, their programs, or whatever the case may be. Acts 16:9, 10 *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.*

In every ministry, leaders need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit of God. In this passage we see the Apostle Paul is set on going to Asia in order to preach the gospel, with great intentions and desire. However, God leads him to go to Macedonia to do the same thing. We are meeting in western civilization today because he followed that call. God had a specific place to which HE wanted Paul to go. Earlier in Acts 5, Peter and John are before the council. They will be whipped. Notice in Acts 5:29-32 ***Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, WE OUGHT TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also THE HOLY GHOST, WHOM GOD HATH GIVEN TO THEM THAT OBEY HIM.*** After preaching the gospel to these religious leaders, he tells them about obeying the call of the gospel, which is, to receive Christ, **then** they will have the Holy Spirit. These leaders work with adults and children in these various ministries. We need men and women dealing with us and our children and grandchildren who love God and are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, not promoting their own agendas, rather serving as followers of Christ. We must hold these leaders up in prayer

so that nothing draws them away from seeking God through HIS Word as they prepare programs, lessons, or whatever is needed. They must glorify Christ, be holy, and edify the saints. As all ministries of our local church, the ministry must ultimately fulfill the great commission. Pray for the leader to be prayerful, committed to Christ, and Holy Spirit-directed.

4. Pray that the Word of God and not the manner in which they give it will be offensive.

1 Corinthians 10:31-33 *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: 33 Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*

The gospel is an offense to many. Hard Bible preaching is an offense. Think of Stephen preaching just before they stoned him to death. He is seen as he prays asking God to not lay this sin to their charge. Jesus spoke of being harmless as a dove and wise as a serpent. Ephesians 4:15 mentions, ***SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE***. John 15:18-21 speaks of being persecuted. Jesus explained, if they have persecuted **HIM** they will also persecute you. Matthew

5:10-12 mentions being falsely accused and persecuted for righteousness sake. On we could go concerning persecution for truth. Obnoxious attacks on the person are things that make us offensive more so than the gospel. When Paul is rebuked for calling the High Priest a whited wall, he immediately apologizes. Our weapons are not carnal. Don't give an offense. Many times there are talented people who may have arrogant, condescending attitudes, or a demeanor that portrays moodiness. They are unapproachable. Some want to assert their authority more so than guiding the ministry in which they serve. Pray that each will teach and honor the Lord and HIS Word without watering it down or compromising it, yet at the same time fulfil Acts 24:16 ***And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*** Remember, ***not seeking mine own profit, but THE PROFIT OF MANY, THAT THEY MAY BE SAVED.***

5. Pray that each leader will grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:18 *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

Every Christian and every leader begins to fall when their personal walk with God begins to wane. This includes not meditating in the Word seeking to KNOW HIM all the more, and seeking to glorify HIM. Philippians 3:10 ***That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*** the Apostle Paul sought to know HIM all the more even though he had suffered great things for HIS name's sake. (See 2 Corinthians 11:23-30). For new converts to grow spiritually, for the church to grow spiritually, its leaders must grow spiritually. For us to enjoy the Lord and have a relationship instead of a religion only, we need to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is vital to any local church that will serve God in righteousness and not have their candlestick removed, Revelation chapters 2 & 3.

6. Pray for wisdom for the office in which they serve, that they will work it for the honor and glory of Christ, 1 Corinthians 10:31 *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* 2 Corinthians 6:3 *Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:*

Wisdom is the knowledge of right and wrong with just judgment as to action. We read that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, in the book of Proverbs. Our personal life and the ministry to which God has called us is to bring glory to God. Our life should in no wise bring offense to anything that is pure and holy that the ministry be not blamed. It should not be void of work. One should not occupy a ministry just to have a position. Many of the people to whom we minister, have no one who is praying for them, nor influencing them spiritually. There is a great responsibility on these leaders to do the ministry to reach the souls with the Word and help them to learn how to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ through the Word of God and its application. They must be committed to the ministry of the local church to which God has called them.

7. Pray for renewed zeal and enthusiasm for each of our leaders in their ministries each day. 1 Corinthians 14:12 *Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.* Galatians 4:18 *But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.*

Leaders need not only to be gifted in the ministry to which they are called, but they fail it miserably if they do not maintain a zeal for the ministry. As a ball player who always tries to improve himself, a business man seeking to expand his income and net profit, so to a lover of the Lord Jesus Christ and HIS ministry should motivate each worker to daily seek the Lord's encouragement in ministry. Leaders, as David, must encourage themselves in the Lord, 1 Samuel 30:6 ***And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.*** Pray for a renewed zeal and enthusiasm for each leader, especially in the light of criticism and opposition.

8. **Pray that each leader will seek to live a holy, separated from sin, dedicated unto God, life.**
2 Corinthians 7:1 *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

The leader is often a role model. He or she is to model Christ. If you are in a position of leadership, someone is watching you. On the job, in your home, or your

neighborhood, people know if you are a Christian if you are faithful to church and have a semblance of ethics and morals, while also attending church. It is of utmost importance then for a leader to particularly model Christ. They need our prayers. If they are going to have the power of God on their life they must be separated from sin, and dedicated unto God, meaning that every aspect of life is not their decision, rather God's. They are to be directed by God through HIS Word. That means that there will be no aspect of pleasing the flesh in order to gain acceptance at the expense of HIS holiness. 1 Peter 1:14-16 ***As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for am holy.*** As one sees, not emulating, (i.e. fashioning), the lusts of life which are done in ignorance, one then can be holy. The next generation needs these godly leaders now. ***Pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest to send forth laborers.***

LESSON FIVE: PRAYING FOR THE BUS MINISTRY AND THE DEACONS

- 1. Pray that each bus captain, (and the others who work on his bus route), will visit faithfully. Pray that God will help them to discover more effective ways for canvassing and talking to people. Acts 2:46,47 *And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.***

It is important that a bus worker have favor with parents and children. There is much in the news today about molestation of children. From the moment one first meets a parent on door to door visitation, it is important that a parent view that person as trustworthy who is wanting to pick up their children and bring them to church. [By the way, I like to include in my prayers for the bus ministry that God would protect these children from anyone who would molest or bully them.] The text above shows us the key to gaining favor. First they were

56 in one accord with the people of God. It was not unity

for unity's sake. The unity they had is seen in Ephesians 4:1-7 ***I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. 7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of***

Christ. This is the oneness which is worthy of meditation and introspection on our part. Since they did not have local church buildings at this time, they met in houses. Don't forget, over 3,000 souls were added to the church that day at Pentecost. They broke *bread from house to house*, which many believe is referring to observance of the Lord's supper, eating *their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.*

They had sold their possessions and goods and parted to all men as they had need. Therefore they ate their meat with gladness. We remember the children of Israel ate manna in the wilderness and complained about it. It tasted good but they wanted more. This movement in Acts 2 found they ate with singleness of heart. That is they were in one accord. In bus ministry, it is often unappreciated and dealing

with the poorer sections of town. We seek souls for whom Christ died and desire to bring them to the Christ we know and love and allow **HIM** to change their lives. As we have this one accord, are faithful to the church, are not looking to promote ourselves and measuring what happens to others to what happens to us, we find that God gives us **favor** with all the people. True joy is somewhat contagious making other people desire what you have in your person. It is wonderful to see someone who is not about having things and position, yet they are full of joy. Behind all of this is faithfulness to the task and seeking better ways to contact people and talk to them as we seek to bring people to Christ. Mind you, **this is not watering down the Word or compromising with the flesh in order to draw people, but it is the law of kindness, meekness, and love.** It then follows that God would give each of these bus workers a personality that makes strangers comfortable and trusting of them. This is so the buses will be filled to capacity. **The bus ministry is the nearest example in the church of what foreign missionaries do. It is seeking to bring them to Church that they may hear the gospel and be saved, baptized, and taught to observe all that HE commanded us.** This elongated explanation is so that we each realize the importance of the bus ministry to the church and that we understand the importance of this request.

2. Pray the Lord of Harvest that HE would give us more laborers for the bus ministry. Luke 10:2
Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

Laborers are people who labor. We need bus workers who not only drive or monitor on the bus on Sunday mornings, they also get out on a regular basis to visit. It is important that we pray God will give this burden for the souls of children to younger adults who will be faithful laborers who will make contacts. The bus ministry is hard because many times it is unappreciated and takes time, cutting into our leisure and pleasures. For example, one is into sports, so they don't do the bus ministry. One will never do the bus ministry if they don't gain singleness of heart and a love for souls and the glory of God. We need young adults who can take this on as a family ministry. So as we pray, we need to pray for God to give us people who will labor. People who will visit and then get up early Sunday morning to ride the bus and welcome the children. They also need to be people who are faithful to church. The labor is for souls. It is our desire to reach the children with the gospel and then to

follow up with visits to the home that may bring in their parents. Ultimately we want to bring the entire family to salvation. So pray for the salvation of the children and their parents on the bus route. Pray that the Sunday school teachers will follow up on the visits for their class by visiting the children who come to their class via the bus. Pray that between the bus worker and the teacher, they'll be able to share the gospel and bring them all to Sunday school and church.

3. Pray for the mechanical operation and order on the buses as they travel each week, praying for their safety. 1 Chronicles 29:11, 12 *Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. 12 Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.*

The bus ministry is not an income producing ministry. It does not charge for people to ride to church on the bus.

Fuel is expensive. When brakes, an engine, a transmission, etc. go, it can cost thousands of dollars. We've read of church bus accidents. That is why our drivers must not only be CDL with passenger endorsement approved, they must also have physicals and blood test on a random but regular basis. Yet, the protection from accidents and disaster must come from the good hand of the Lord upon us. We should pray regularly that each time the buses go out there would be no wrecks, flat tires, or any other type of mechanical breakdown. The LORD is the greatness and power for HE is omniscient and omnipotent. HIS is the glory, power, and majesty for HE is King of kings and Lord of lords. HE is the **only** Potentate, (i.e. absolute ruler). HE is head above all for HE is Sovereign. The Sovereignty of God is that HE has a right to do whatever HE wants with that which is HIS. As Creator, all things are HIS. The second half of verse 12 says, ***in thine hand is power and might;...*** The word *power* has the idea of all authority is in HIS hand. The word *might* refers to the strength to do all things. Therefore, knowing Philippians 4:13 teaches we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us, we ask because the rest of the verse states, ***and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.*** It is thus imperative that we ask that the good hand of the LORD be upon every aspect of the bus ministry, even its safety, as well

as its workers. It is also imperative that we pray that the workers will know how to keep order on the buses as they travel, see the potential problems, and protect the children as they ride, so no one bullies or molests them in any way.

4. Pray that the zeal and enthusiasm of each worker will be renewed and refreshed each week in the bus ministry. Galatians 4:18 *But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.*

In the hot days of summer without air conditioning, and having loud children on the bus, it is easy to get discouraged and want to quit. Especially when it seems that most people in our own church don't seem to care. Some may think that those children don't need to be here. If they cause a problem, those who oppose it will speak against the buses. The workers also get here early on Sunday and then get home later than most after church. That is why it must be a love for God and a commitment to see the souls of these children saved, knowing that without it, they may never hear the glorious gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Some of these homes will have drugs, alcohol, pornography, and other things that are iniquitous and immoral. There will

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be no God or spiritual direction in their home. So pray that their zeal will be renewed and refreshed each week. Also pray that our own people will encourage them, as well as to pray for their ministry.

DEACONS

- 1. That they will be kept from fornication. Satan has used this in many churches to destroy the good work that God has accomplished in the past. Ephesians 5:3 *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Colossians 3:5, 6 *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:****

We are told that in fornication that a man sins against his own body. In addition, we find that fornication does not become saints. It causes the wrath of God upon the children of men, even saved men. Satan will always make sure the news gets out. While the Pastor counsels with the mate
to

stick with the marriage, and the husband to repent and get right with her, there will always be hypocrites in the church who will gossip and act as if they witnessed every act of the fornication with which the one was involved. People who may have at one time looked up to the deacon, while at the same time others were upset the deacon did not back them up when they tried to bring up an issue, will cause the church to have factions and people to leave. Pray for great conviction of the Holy Spirit against the temptation to commit fornication by deacons. Pray also that he would find any who would be a temptress to be repugnant and repulsive.

2. Pray that each deacon will be, and remain, full of faith and the Holy Spirit. Acts 6:3 *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.*

This passage will give the local church the criteria for choosing deacons. We must not only pray for these kind of men, but we must pray they will remain these type of men. 1 Timothy serves as a church manual for the local church. Notice in 3:8-10 ***Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of***

filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. These verses contain that which each Christian should strive to be by the power of the Holy Spirit and their walk with God in HIS Word in obedience and faith. If you don't pray for the deacon concerning these things, never criticize or find fault with him.

3. Pray that they will grow spiritually and assist the pastor faithfully. Acts 6:2, 3 *Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.*

The apostles would serve as the Pastors of the early church in Jerusalem. They laid out a criteria, as led by the Holy Spirit, to recommend men for the office of deacon. The book of 1 Timothy gave more detail as well. The first business of the pastor is to labor in the Word of God and prayer, and then minister the Word of God to the congregation. As

someone has so smartly stated: God doesn't want sermonettes preached by preacherettes to people who can't wait for it to get over so they can go out and smoke their cigarettes. But notice the wording above: it is the Apostles, (i.e. pastors) who appoint them over this business. Although they are given authority in serving tables, they also are under the direction of the pastor. It is not only important that a man meet the qualifications to become a deacon, it is just as important that we pray that he grows spiritually and assist the pastor faithfully as per the Scriptural instruction. These good men need your continued prayers. Find out the names of your deacons and pray for them by name each week.

4. As with the pastor, ask God to keep HIS good hand upon the family of the deacon. Satan tries hard to attack leadership in the church. 2 Samuel 12:14 *Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.*

The passage deals with the result of David's sin with Bathsheba. As a pastor, when I have had to tell a parent or church member "NO" about something, they will mention a deacon who may have had a child that fell into fornication.

This has given the enemies of the Lord a chance to sow discord in the church at the expense of the deacon's home. That blasphemes the name of the Lord. Children have a free will. The parents can control things and have them in subjection when they are little. Often, in their later teen years, or even their young adult life, there are those who hold the parents responsible as if they never taught their children that immorality is sin and they should always abstain. Pray for your deacons families. Go out of your way to learn their names to pray for them by name.

5. Pray that they would have godly wisdom in decisions they need to make in working with the pastor. Acts 6:3 *full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.*

I have often wondered if Diotrephes was a deacon. He seems to have had the office of deacon in the church as he prevented people from helping the men of God as they traveled. Notice how 3 John states it in Vv 9, 10 ***I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. 10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive***

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brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Obviously he was not acting under the direction of the Holy Spirit, nor in godly wisdom. There is a difference between worldly wisdom and godly wisdom. Preachers who turn to the arm of flesh and build large churches are using the wisdom of worldly marketing schemes. But, that is not godly wisdom. Again, as a man full of faith, the deacon must strive to be in one accord with the pastor as the pastor is the overseer appointed by the head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must pray that the Lord will protect them from the temptations of the devils to give them a spirit of opposition and rebellion. Sometimes bosses and heads of businesses have a hard time with this if they are deacons, because they are used to having their will and commands carried out. Your prayers are needed for all our deacons as Satan seeks to attack them and hinder the work of the local church thereby.

**"Preaching the Gospel,
as it is, to men as they are."**