

Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

Colossians 4:2-6

Prayer

Prayer should be earnest. The word 'earnestly' can also be translated 'continual' but with an earnestness in action. This action is seen in Acts 6:4 and Romans 12:12 and the prayers referred to in those texts. At the same time one is to be vigilant (watchful) in prayer with thanksgiving. Jesus prayed on the night before His crucifixion and we see the earnestness of His prayer and we also see that He gave instructions to the apostles to watch, to be vigilant (Matthew 26:36-46). When we pray we are addressing the Creator of all and should give respect to God in our prayers. Too, as James said, we are to ask in faith (James 1:6). Note the model prayer Jesus gave. It is not a prayer for us to memorize and quote for some special power, but a model for us to follow in our prayers. Therein is the respect to God, request for blessings and a thankfulness to the Father of all (Matthew 6:9-13).

Thanksgiving should always be a part of our prayers, for in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). Our

very life is given to us by God. If life has been difficult for you always remember the many blessings you have despite the challenges. And it might also be profitable for us to consider how many of our challenges are self-inflicted as we fail to follow the will of God. Paul reminded Timothy of this particular type of personal challenge in the pursuit of riches (1 Timothy 6:10).

Paul asked the saints in Colossae to pray for him and his companions. The focus of the prayer was to have an open door for the word in order to speak the mystery of Christ. Paul was in chains for his faith but wanted them to pray that he might have opportunity to preach and instill faith in others through the preaching of the gospel (Romans 1:16; 10:17). In addition, he wanted them to pray that he would speak as he ought. Paul had a personal desire to speak well, reflecting the essence of Him for Whom he spoke.

Paul instructed the Colossians in their lives. They were to walk in wisdom toward those outside the church and in a timely manner. Paul wanted them to make use of the time and not waste it. How are we doing in our time stewardship in preaching the gospel? With that he instructed them to be careful with their speech. Note these phrases: "always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one." Solomon wrote, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). It is important what we say, but it is also important how we say it. James gives great attention to the use of the tongue for our growth and maturity (James 3). Speech, communication, is difficult in many circumstances. It will help us all if we follow James earlier words: "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (James 1:19-20 NKJ).