



Basic Lesson 7

Prayer Target

Why Pray for the Church Prayer Target?
Paul in Ephesians

Prayer Target

Especially praying in a group, it is helpful to have a prayer target. Without one, prayers tend to be scattered, a prayer here and a prayer there. **A prayer target keeps you on focus and allows you to pray through all that God gives.**

The brief sharing after silent meditation is where you see the full prayer picture as each shares what they received from the Lord. Deliberately keep the sharing time brief or it will take your prayer time. Your response is between you and the Lord.

The sharing is a time of equipping. As you share, others are now more able to pray with you instead of each person praying only what they received. **You pray with each other until a prayer point is finished.**

This is a time to learn to recognize and follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit as each sharing fits in and complements the total picture. There is no right or wrong sharing, each is important because God gave it.

Basic Principle: Praying for the Church is an example of a prayer target.

The Church is the worldwide Body of Christ. As you pray for the Church, you touch Christians and congregations around the world rather than just your own local church. Expanding your prayer target doesn't diminish it. And you are personally **strengthened** through your prayer as part of the Church even though you are not specifically praying for yourselves.

It is Scriptural.

Paul gave us this pattern of praying for the Church in Ephesians:

- Ephesians 3:18 he prays for the **whole family of God**, covering all believers.
- In Ephesians 2:19 he prays for the believers as **members of the household of God**, another definition of the Church.
- In Ephesians 6:18 as part of the armor passage, Paul encourages prayer and supplication in the Spirit “... **for all the saints** ...” (i.e. the Body of Christ, the corporate Church)
- **v19 “and for me (individually) that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel...”** Here Paul asks prayer for all the saints and himself individually, which is what happens when you pray for the Church.

In context, these verses follow instructions to put on the armor of God making it a significant prayer for **boldness and open doors for the Church** which includes us **individually as it did Paul**. Part of your stewardship as Christ's Body on earth is to extend His kingdom.

Basic Principle: “You are the Body of Christ (corporately) and members individually.”
1 Corinthians 12:27

When you pray for the Church,

- the prayers come back to bless you even though you are not specifically praying for your own personal or family needs.
- Praying for the Church as Christ’s Body will enlarge your prayer vision and capacity.

Example: When praying for pastors in the Church, the Body of Christ, pray Scripture, as **1 Thessalonians 1:5**

“Our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, (supernatural) and in the Holy Spirit, (as directed) and in much assurance, (signs and wonders, healings, revelations to follow the Word) as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.” (open lives)

There is wisdom and safety in praying this way for the Church. Since you are the Church, this prayer in Thessalonians will return to bless your pastor and church as well, even though your prayer focus is to pray for pastors in the Body of Christ, not individuals.

Praying Scripture this way never gets personal, never exposes, never gossips.

Do not pray for pastors exposing what you think their needs are, as – “Pray for pastor so and so, he needs to be more....”

Follow this same rule when you pray for husbands, wives, families in a group.

It is not necessary to single out your family and expose their needs. (Ephesians 5 is a guide to pray corporately for husbands, wives, family members.) In a group, pray scriptural principles, not personal needs.

Another benefit is that as you intercede, your needs will be met.

Matthew 6:33 “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” In context, **these things** are clothing, food, necessities in this life. God knows your needs. As you pray for the things on God’s heart, as He shows you during meditation, He will take care of your needs.

Luke 6:38 “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

This context is not about money, but giving mercy, which you do as you pray for others. You willingly give yourselves to sit before the Lord, giving time and energy to pray for others.

Intercessors by definition do not pray for their own needs. They intervene for others. (Ezekiel 22:30, stand in the gap, the breach sin has made and pray.)

Benefit: God meets the needs of intercessors by giving **“seed to the sower and bread to the eater.”** (Isaiah 55:10)

Seed is the Word of God that is sown as prayer in the heavenlies, the spiritual realm (Isaiah 51:16) and **bread** is the Word that God speaks to you to strengthen you and meet your needs so you can pray for others. (John 6:48, 63)

Pray for Pastors in the Body of Christ, in context of 1 Thessalonians 1:5:

“Our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, (supernatural) and in the Holy Spirit, (as directed) and in much assurance, (signs and wonders, healings, revelations to follow the Word) as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.”

v6 “And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, (disciples who touched others with the joy of the Holy Spirit in affliction)

v7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia (Ancient Greece) who believe.” What kind of example am I?

v8 “For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.” (by faith these converts learned to touch others)

v9 “For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, (new vibrant relationship with God, strong testimonies, fruit that remains)

v10 and to wait for His Son from heaven whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” Being expectant of Jesus’ return will keep your passion for Jesus.

Application: Meditate through these Scriptures. Receive your portion of the Word; see where you line up with the Word, respond and pray it out for pastors in the Body of Christ.

