

**Rules for Saints in Society: Prayer (Colossians 4:2-6)**  
**By Pastor Jeff Alexander (4/13/2014)**

**Introduction**

1. We come to the end of Paul's admonitions to the Colossian church.
  - a. These final admonitions (3:18-4:6) are detailed instructions based on 3:12-17, primarily v. 17.
  - b. These instructions relate to saints in their conduct at home, at work, and in the society at large.
  - c. Everything that believers do must be under the authority of Jesus Christ, in His power, and for His glory. This is particularly important while we wait for His return.
2. The section before us (Rules for Saints in Society, vv. 2-6) will be covered by two messages.
  - a. Today's message addresses prayer and its importance in the spiritual conflict raging around us.
  - b. Next week's message will address our wisdom in witness as we live in society.
3. Praying is essential to one's spiritual progress—growing in faith and overcoming self, sin, and Satan.
  - a. Prayer is the means that believers have to commune with God and get supplies from God.
  - b. Praying is commanded; it is not optional.
  - c. Prayer is essential to spiritual welfare.

**How important is prayer?**

Jesus, the perfect Son of God needed to pray to His Father: *"But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray"* (Luke 15:16). How much do we need to pray?

**I. Devoted Praying**

1. Prayer is to be approached with the mentality of a slave's devotion to his tasks.
  - a. The Greek term for "continue steadfastly" or "be devoted" (*proskartereo*) is a command to *wait on* or *attend* to something with great focus and intensity.
  - b. In other words, prayer is to be approached with *continuous* and *intense* devotion (Psalm 30:5, 6).
2. The command assumes—
  - a. Wholehearted devotion to *God*, not the need prayed for *per se* (Matt. 6:9, 10, 33)
  - b. Patience and persistence at delayed answers (Luke 18:6-8)
  - c. Full commitment to kingdom advancement (Acts 14:22).
  - d. Absolute confidence that prayer is effective (Mark 11:24).

**II. Watchful Praying**

1. What Paul expounds in Ephesians 6:10-20 concerning spiritual warfare is reduced in Colossians to a single term, *watchful*.
  - a. Jesus employed the concept of watchfulness with Peter, knowing that Satan was set on his destruction (Matt. 26:40, 41; Luke 22:31-34).
  - b. In this period of history between Christ's first and second comings, we are on the frontlines in the assault on Satan's strongholds (2 Cor. 10:3-5).
2. Ephesians 6 amplifies the necessity of prayer in spiritual warfare.

- a. Two commands demonstrate this.
  - 1) First, “be strong in the Lord” (v. 10). Verses 11-17 explain *how* we can be strong using the armor of God.
  - 2) Second, “praying at all times” (v. 18). Praying is to the armor what oil is to an engine. It makes the armor effective.
- b. We are flesh; the war is spiritual. Prayer is how we are able to engage in that spiritual arena.
- c. Paul qualifies praying in order to be effective.
  - 1) It is to be carried out on a continual basis: “at all times.”
  - 2) It is to be empowered by the Holy Spirit: “in the Spirit.”
  - 3) It is to involve thorough and intense praying: “with all prayer and supplication.”
  - 4) It is to be accompanied by vigilance: “keeping alert.”
  - 5) It is to be done with determination: “with perseverance.”

### III. Thankful Praying

- 1. Praying in faith anticipates a gracious answer from God for which the one praying expresses gratitude.
  - a. Whether God answers positively or by refraining, His actions are always gracious and right.
  - b. Thankfulness recognizes a fixed hope of ultimate victory. That hope enables the saints to endure any difficulty and hardship now.
- 2. Thanksgiving demonstrates the proper attitude of one before His God (Rom. 1:21).

### IV. Intercessory Praying

- 1. One of the most important kinds of praying is intercessory: “*pray also for us.*”
- 2. Intercessory prayer takes the prayer away from self and focuses on others (James 5:16).
- 3. The Lord calls for His own to recognize their need for others to labor with them in prayer for the on-going progress of the gospel (Rom. 15:30).

### In light of this passage, we need to ask—

- 1. Do I recognize the importance of prayer?
- 2. How much do I give myself to praying?
- 3. Do I understand the nature of spiritual warfare?
- 4. Am I a thankful Christian?
- 5. How much do I pray for those who minister the Word?
  - How much for the salvation of souls?
  - How much for the needs of brothers and sisters in Christ?

**“A prayerless soul is a Christless soul” —C. H. Spurgeon**