

Strive Together in Prayer Romans 15:30-33

An appeal to pray (30)

verse 30

The authority behind the appeal – “by our Lord Jesus”

1. It is Christ’s will that the church would pray in this way
2. Jesus spent much time teaching His disciples to pray
 - *Question:* Examples?

The grounds of the appeal – “by the love of the Spirit”

1. The love that the Spirit produces in us for one another
2. **Gal. 5:22** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love...”

The content of the appeal – “to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf”

1. In Greek, the verb “to strive” was used of military battle and wrestling contests. It literally means to fight or to wrestle.
2. Our English word, “agonize,” comes from this Greek word.
3. This word is used similarly in:
 - **Col. 4:12** “Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.”
4. *Question:* What does this word communicate about the praying that Paul has in mind?
5. Paul is asking this church to do something he has been doing for them
 - **Rom. 1:9–10** “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God’s will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.”
6. It is Christ’s will that we would intercede for other believers, including missionaries
7. This is part of Christian fellowship

We can strive together in prayer with our evangelism teams, our missionaries, other churches, one another, etc.

The apostle's prayer requests (31-32)

“that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea”

1. Paul is headed for Judea (vv 25-28)
2. Jerusalem was the center of Judaism
3. From the time that Paul began proclaiming Jesus in synagogues (Acts 9:20), he was marked for death by Jewish leaders
4. Paul knew there were fanatical Jews in Jerusalem who would try to oppose him, as ended up happening (Acts 21:27-36; 23:12-13)
5. “the unbelievers”
 - NASB “those who are disobedient”
 - The word has the basic idea of being obstinate and unpersuadable
6. Paul's purpose in this request is revealed in his words to the Ephesian elders
 - Acts 20:22–24 “And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

“and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints”

1. Refers to the aid he plans to bring (vv 25-27)
2. It was possible that unbelieving Jews would put pressure on believing Jews not to accept the gift (cf. Acts 21:20-21)
3. Requests prayer that the Jerusalem saints would not be offended by the gift, but would receive it with loving gratitude for what it was, a gesture of brotherly love
4. Only then could the gift show the fellowship created by the gospel between Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ

“so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company”

1. All our plans and hopes are subject to God's will
2. **Matt. 6:10** “...your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”
3. **1 John 5:14** “And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.”
4. **Luke 22:42** “saying, ‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.’”

5. Prayer does not try to change God's will
6. **Rom. 1:10** "always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you."

Question: Did God answer this prayer? Explain.

Question: Why are we to bring requests to God in prayer?

A benediction (33)

verse 33

This is a blessing that forms part of the epistle's conclusion

"the God of peace"

1. The God who gives peace
2. Includes...
 - Peace with God
 - Peace of mind
 - Peace with others, including between Jewish believers and Gentile believers
 - Ephesians 2:11-16

MacArthur: "On the human level, Paul's life as an apostle was far from peaceful. As far as outward particulars were concerned, he lived in uncertainty and often turmoil. He was under almost continual threat against his physical safety and life. But he knew intimately the God of peace, and he lived himself *in* the peace and settled tranquility that God gives to those who faithfully abide in His will."¹

Conclusion

Let us apply this passage to our prayers this evening!

- Striving together in prayer
- Praying according to God's will
- Praying that brethren would know and experience God's peace

¹ MacArthur, *Romans 9-16*, 356.