

## The View from Here

### Group Prayer

Why should we ask others to pray for us? Is prayer something like a petition drive ... you know, the more signatures you get the better?

Many times during my ministry, as in every pastor's ministry, a member has asked me to pray for him or her. Of course, absolutely I will. The individuals prayed for are always pleased to know I would continue to plead their case before the Lord. Sometimes I find out from the individual that he or she had hundreds of people all over the country already praying for her. It certainly is a great blessing to have so many Christian family and friends.



As I consider this, it brings up some questions about prayer, especially those that are being offered up by many people in a common cause: why should we ask others to pray for us? Is God more likely to be persuaded when a whole bunch of people pray for something? What benefit would there be for a lot of people to be praying in the same way? And how about posting prayer requests on Facebook, or other forms of social media?

To be fair in our assessment, we will assume the prayers are being offered up in Christ's Name and through faith in Him. So, why should we ask others to pray for us? Some might say it's because "misery loves company". But the truth is, we ask others to pray for us because the Savior did so. Remember how, three times, He asked the disciples to pray with Him in Gethsemane. There are times when we need the fellowship; times when our problems overwhelm us; times when we wish to have our thanks amplified. The church has been doing that since day one. In fact, Acts 2:42 says the early Christians "***devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer.***"

Is God more likely to be moved by the prayers of many people? The answer to that is really a yes and no. First, we are told that the prayers of a righteous individual accomplish much. Be assured, God can hear one person just fine. But the Lord implies that the prayers of many are a good thing. In 2 Chronicles (7:14) the Lord says, "***if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.***" I think that's especially important for us as believers today when we see the moral decay running rampant in our society. Our land indeed does need healing!

Let's remember what St. Paul asked of the Church in Corinth. He said in 2 Corinthians 1:11, "***You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.***" It would seem that a group's God-pleasing prayers for a good purpose are never bad and can actually be the right thing to do, especially because of the promised benefits. One of the promised benefits is the fact that we don't need to face our problem alone. Our prayers can also give witness to the world. St. Paul encouraged the church in Ephesus to "***be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints,***" and by that he meant all the fellow believers who together make up the church. Therefore, I love the idea of prayer meeting technology. If a Facebook post can prompt even more people to pray, I don't suppose it bothers the Lord one bit. However, there is one thing about prayer which does upset

the Lord ... it's when people dictate to God the time and manner in which He is supposed to reply instead of seeing Him as our gracious Father who wants to give good gifts to His children.

We know God is in control ... His will is done ... may His will be done among us also!

That's the View from Here.

Pastor Bill Winter