

Join us in being on mission with God!

**OUR VISION**

To continually mature and grow as a united body of Jesus-imitators who live out God's greatest commandment to "Love" by exalting God and serving one another, and His greatest commission to "Go" by reaching into and shaping our local, regional, and global communities.

## "Prayer in an Unfriendly Culture"

**A promise of victory for those who trust God**

*Zechariah Chapter 14*

### Getting Started

*After an introductory time, discuss the following questions in your group or class.*

Decades ago, opponents of organized religion began challenging prayer in the public schools. Some school districts tried to find a compromise in allowing time for a moment of silence. But that was not permissible in Illinois, according to district judge Robert W. Gettleman. He ruled that a moment of silence statute was a "subtle effort to force students at impressionable ages to contemplate religion." According to the judge the state goes to far if there is the *possibility* that a student might *contemplate* religion.

The tension between Christianity and culture is not going away. It is becoming more acute. One of the greatest assets Christ's church enjoys is not public prayer in school, but the daily intercession of God's people wherever they may be. How should we pray in a hostile culture. Paul lived in such a world. And he describes for us the role of prayer in an unfriendly culture as he writes to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:1-8.

### Revolutionary Power of Prayer

Prayer is like a display of nuts and bolts in a hardware store. It comes in many varieties. Each kind of prayer is suited for a different task in the economy of God.

1. Define the differences between the words used for prayer in verse 1.

Requests: \_\_\_\_\_

Prayers: \_\_\_\_\_

Petitions: \_\_\_\_\_

Thanksgivings: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What kinds of factors determine which kind of prayer is best at the moment? What are some ways to insure that your prayer life includes all the forms Paul mentions?

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3. Verse one tells us the scope of our prayer. Who is to be included in our prayers to God? Why do you think God tells us to pray this way?

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4. Give some examples of how you might intelligently pray for the following people:

A friend who is critical of Christianity: \_\_\_\_\_

A 9-year-old girl who lives next door: \_\_\_\_\_

A convenience store clerk: \_\_\_\_\_

A car mechanic: \_\_\_\_\_



**1 Timothy 2:1-8**

<sup>1</sup> I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--  
<sup>2</sup> for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and pleases God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all men-- the testimony given in its proper time. <sup>7</sup> And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle-- I am telling the truth, I am not lying-- and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles. <sup>8</sup> I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

5. What categories of people do you normally pray for? How might God have you enlarge your circle?  
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6. Why do you believe Paul emphasizes praying for those in authority?  
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7. In what ways could prayer lead to a “peaceful and quiet” life for those who are followers of Christ?  
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8. Given Paul’s lifestyle and his fearless proclamation of Christ, what do you think he did *not* mean when he urged Timothy to pray for this kind of prayer?  
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9. Verse 3 reminds us that God is pleased when our lives are marked by godliness and holiness. What are some of the things we tend to substitute for these two qualities that we think impresses God?  
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10. In verse 4 Paul expresses the same thought two different ways. The idea of being saved is compared to the process of coming to the knowledge of the truth. How are these two concepts alike?  
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11. List some of the aspects of the work of Christ that Paul discusses in verse 5-7?  
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\_\_\_\_\_
12. Verse 8 describes some characteristics of the person of prayer. With what kind of spirit are we to pray? How does that make a difference?  
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**Getting Personal**

1. What kind of harmful attitudes do you have to challenge in order to pray the way Paul urges Timothy?  
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2. Where do you need to attack a spirit of anger or disputing? How can you tell when you’ve made progress in doing so.  
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