

January 29, 2006

Patchogue Church of the Nazarene - "One Another" Series

"Pray For One Another"

James 5:16 & Eph 6:18

[Click here for the notes that were in the bulletin](#)

God created us for community. We really do need each other. Speaking of needing each other:

A skydiver is enjoying his free-fall, when he realizes that he has reached the altitude where he must open his parachute, he pulls the ripcord, but nothing happens. "No problem," he says to himself, "I still have my emergency chute." So he pulls the ripcord on his emergency parachute, and once again, nothing happens. Now the man begins to panic. "What am I going to do?" He thinks. "I'm a goner."

Just then, he sees a man flying up from the earth toward him. He can't figure out where this man is coming from or what he's doing, but he says to himself, "I hope he can help me. If he can't, then I'm in real trouble." When the man gets close enough to him, the skydiver cups his hands and shouts, "Hey, do you know anything about parachutes?"

The man coming up cups his hands and yells back, "No! Do you know anything about gas stoves?"

Last week we talked about commitment or being devoted to one another. Today's topic is prayer, we must "Pray For One Another." We must understand and believe that prayer is one of the most important things we do for one another. No matter how we minister to each other, prayer must be behind it. I want to look at two scriptures that command us to pray for one another the first is...

James 5:16 NASU

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and *pray for one another* so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

The second scripture is ...

Eph 6:18(NIV)

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always *keep on praying for all the saints*.

I. Pray *For* One Another

These references clearly state that we must pray for one another and for all believers.

I want to go back and read the context of James 5 because as I do we will see that James is commanding us to pray for the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of one another:

James 5:13-18 NLT

13 Are any among you suffering? They should keep on praying about it. And those who have reason to be thankful should continually sing praises to the Lord.

14 Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And their prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make them well. And anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.

16 Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results. 17 Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for the next three and a half years! 18 Then he prayed for rain, and down it poured. The grass turned green, and the crops began to grow again.

In James 5 we are told to pray for one another to be healed. That healing is for physical ailments, James says, for example, in verse 14, if any are sick we should pray over them.

James also implies prayer for mental or emotional stress. In verse 13 he mentions those who are suffering or afflicted. The word means undergoing hardship, suffering troubles, being treated badly or suffering evil. And in verses 15 and 16 prayer for spiritual needs are mentioned.

James 5:16 AMP

Confess to one another therefore your faults (your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins) and pray [also] for one another, that you may be healed and restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].

Confess to one another speaks again of our need to be committed to move beyond the surface stuff and know one another well enough to confess faults, sins. Then James says to also pray for one another to be healed and restored in mind and heart. James covers prayers for physical healing, emotional healing and for spiritual restoration. We pray for one another's needs. We pray for someone's family, marriage, finances, illness, or spiritual needs.

Eph 6 is where Paul mentions the armor of God. Prayer is essential in the ongoing spiritual warfare we are all engaged in. Let me read the context of Eph 6:18 by reading:

Eph 6:11-18 NLT

11 Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil. 12 For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms.

13 Use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy in the time of evil, so that after the battle you will still be standing firm. 14 Stand your ground, putting on the sturdy belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. 15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News, so that you will be fully prepared. 16 In every battle you

will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan. 17 Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere.

After mentioning the warfare we are all engaged in against the spiritual forces of the devil, Paul tells us to put on our armor: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of Salvation and the sword of the Spirit. Then he mentions the need for us to pray for one another and for all Christians everywhere, because as Eph 6:12 THE MESSAGE states: “This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels.”

We are all in a spiritual battle, we need each other and we must pray for one another! Prayer is like the glue that holds this armor together (I don't think glue holds armor together! But our spiritual armor is held together with our prayers for one another).

Let me read Eph 6:18 (THE MESSAGE): In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.

God meant for prayer to be a priority in our relationship with Him and in our relationship with one another. Col 4:2 NLT “*Devote yourselves to prayer* with an alert mind and a thankful heart.”

II. Pray *With* One Another

We not only pray *for* one another, we also need to pray *with* one another. We must have and need our private times of prayer, but we also need to pray together. [Could I put a plug in here for our prayer meeting this Tuesday? We meet in the sanctuary on the last Tuesday of the month to pray with one another and for one another].

Now, let's be honest, being devoted to prayer and learning to pray together is not easy. It's interesting that even the disciples had to ask Jesus to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1 NLT "Lord, teach us to pray...")

Someone once said, “prayer is like the singing of the national anthem at a sporting event: we wouldn't think of starting without it, but it has little relevance to the main event.” Acts 1:14 NLT says that the believers, “They all met together continually for prayer...” They had regular times of coming together for the sole purpose of praying together.

In the early church when there was a problem they prayed. For example in Acts 4 Peter and John were arrested and jailed overnight for claiming, on the authority of Jesus, that there is a resurrection of the dead.

The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met, they brought in the two disciples and questioned them. Peter boldly told them there was

salvation in no one else but Jesus! "There is no other name in all of heaven for people to call on to save them."

The council members warned them never again to speak or teach about Jesus.

But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard."

The council then threatened them further, but they finally let them go.

As soon as they were freed, Peter and John found the other believers and told them what the leaders had said. And what do you think they did? They didn't call for a protest, a march in front of the temple. They didn't start a letter-writing campaign. They didn't contact the politicians. No, instead they called a prayer meeting. And soon the building where they were meeting shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And they preached God's message with boldness. Corporate prayer was a part of the life of the early church and it needs to be a part of it's life today.

We pray on Sunday and at our monthly prayer meeting, but we need prayer in small group settings. On Sunday during the service we can't really share our personal needs for prayer. We may or may not be able to do that in a prayer meeting either. However, in a close circle of friends who love us, we are more open to sharing our true needs. Only as we share specific needs can people pray specifically and help us to see God's answers specifically. We have small groups that meet during the week who know what I'm talking about. For those who receive my daily email, "Good Morning!" that has been a place to share prayer needs and answers. But it is so much better to physically be with other believers, share needs and pray together. Prayer invites the presence of God into the circumstances of our life and into our church/group life as well. There is power in praying *for* each other but also in praying *with* each other.

Let me also mention that we should also get use to praying "in the moment." When we are with someone and they share a need with us, or a crisis they are facing or they share a good thing that's happened, and are grateful to God for, get in the habit of stopping what you are doing and pray together.

Praying is a privilege and praying together is one of the greatest privileges we have as members of Christ's Body, Christ's community, the church. We can boldly come to God knowing that He cares about our needs. Heb 4:16 NLT "So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it."

Let's take full advantage of that privilege. As we pray for one another our faith will be strengthened and we will see God's power unleashed (to allow something, especially something previously held in check, to have its full effect). Let's get in the habit of praying for one another and with one another.