**Devoted to Prayer**

Acts 2:42 Devoted to prayer *proskartareo*  to join constantly, to adhere to, to give attention to. To be **given over to**, committed to.

The Jerusalem church was given over to prayer.

Q: What do you think that looked like? Is Luke talking about individual prayer or congregational prayer?

If you have been a disciple for a few years, how many of you have had a lesson on the need for prayer?

More than ten lessons on the topic?

So… Why do we need a lesson on prayer?

Illustration: A skeptic: Why are you always listening to Bible lessons after 30 years? Aren’t they repetitive? Can you remember even remember the topic from a sermon five years ago or even five months ago?

Response of the believer: Do you know what you ate for dinner on the second Wed. in January eight years ago? What if you had gone three months without eating?

On the one hand: We need continual feeding and encouragement from the scriptures. I know I need it!

On the other hand, ideally, we should not need a reminder of the need for prayer, right? But we do.

About 7-8 years ago I had a major repentance on the amount of daily prayer. I had been praying spottily—sometimes just a couple of minutes, and other times 10-15 minutes at most. For several years, I did much better, but, to my shame, I have fallen back a little bit.

Our text tonight: Coll 4:2-6

**I. Coll 4:2 Be watchful.** Devote yourself to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Watchful for what?

a. For opportunities to see God’s will done. (Matthew 6:10 Your kingdom come, your will be done).

Note: Had the apostles ever prayed before? Sure, but they understood that they had a lot to learn from Jesus.

1 John 5:14-15 If we pray acc to God’s will, we can be confident it will happen!

Q: What will is that? 1 Tim 2:3-4

I think God almost always answers prayers from us about helping people to be saved.

But how do I know God’s will in any matter?

Romans 12:1-2 To the extent we present ourselves to God as useful instruments, to that extent he will help us to know his will.

Or you can pray to discern his will.

Example from my life when I am traveling…. Like when I was going to Kansas City a few years ago. Getting visa to Congo a couple of years ago.

Malcolm coming to Merced a couple of weeks ago.

Q: Can anyone share an example of a specific prayer that God answered right away?

b. Coll 4:3 For an open door to evangelism.

We need to anticipate open doors. Ex: I prayed last week for people to just “show up” at the retreat.

Then we need to be prepared to walk through that door we prayed to be opened.

Pray before you enter a class, get into a line, pump your gas, walk through your neighborhood. That is being watchful.

**II. Be Thankful Coll 4:2**

Prayer should always include thankfulness.

As a parent, when I give something to my children, if they are not grateful, what is my response? The same with God.

1 Thess 5:17-18 Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances…

1 Cor 4:7 For what do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

**III. Be listening to the Holy Spirit**

Romans 8:26-27 Sometimes we need to stop talking when we pray. We need to let the Holy Spirit speak for us.

We need to also be in step with the Spirit

Gal 5:16 Walk by the Spirit

Gal 5:18 Be led by the Spirit

Gal 5:25 Keep in step with the Spirit

All of these imply prayer

When praying, acknowledge the Holy Spirit’s presence.

**IV. Be expectant**

Let’s use Daniel’s prayer as an example (compare to another model prayer Matthew 6:9-13)

Daniel 9:1-3 Daniel got really serious about prayer.

Daniel 9:4-19

Daniel gives glory, praise and honor to God. v. 4 Always a good start

Daniel confesses his and his people’s sins v. 5-8

Daniel recalls to mind God’s promises v. 17-18

Daniel asks God to act. v. 19 Look at the boldness!

Daniel 9:20-21 Notice how quickly God answered the prayer in a positive way.

Notice, his will was not exactly what Daniel had prayed about (his own release, and the Jews from Babylon), but God’s will (to send Jesus to save sinners)

I am expecting great things in 2024 I am praying for 15 baptisms in our church and growth to forty.

Practical: Let us continue to do all night or late night prayers as a church, including a week from Friday.

Set up an all night or a late night prayer for your Bible group sometime soon.

Be watchful

Be thankful

Be listening to the Holy Spirit

Be expectant