

Transforming Daily
“... continue earnestly in prayer ...”
Colossians 4:2

Paul addresses a most important matter for believers the matter of communicating with God. Paul says several things about prayer. One of the most important things he says about prayer is that it should be done with thanksgiving. Paul also says that it should be done continually, earnestly, and vigilantly. But what does all of that mean.

Prayer is one way, probably the most significant way, a believer communicates with God. The believer also communicates with God through praise in song. The believer also communicates with God through reading Scripture. The believer also communicates with God, or better, is communicated to by God through preaching, Bible study, and devotions. However, prayer is the mode through which the believer offers supplication, petition, and intercession on behalf of others as well as themselves.

Paul begins verse two with the assumption that prayer is already being made when he tells the church to “continue” earnestly in prayer. In another epistle, Paul commands the believers to “pray without ceasing.” One need not stop, drop to their knees, clasp their hands, and close their eyes (especially while driving) to pray to God. Nothing’s wrong with that, but it’s not necessary for God to hear the believer. However, Paul does encourage the believer to begin and continue a purposeful, disciplined, unending life of prayer.

Paul uses the word “earnestly” to modify the word “continue.” “Earnestly” underlines how to continue in prayer not how to pray, although praying earnestly is a good idea. Here Paul uses it to challenge the believer not to allow anything to get in the way of continual prayer. Problems, priorities, and persecution should not get in the way of one’s genuine, continued prayer life.

Paul also uses the word “vigilant.” What Paul is encouraging the believer to do is to be watchful and aware of what’s going on around them. Look for reasons to pray as well as for things that might get in the way of prayer. “Vigilant” is used in direct reference to the practice of prayer. Communication is vital to a growing relationship in general, how much more the believer’s communication with God?

Paul says that all of this is to be done in an attitude of thanksgiving. Thanks to God is to be the predisposition of the believer before prayer, during prayer, and after prayer, not necessarily just because of the positive outcome of prayer. Our trust is in the person of God not in what we expect from Him. As I often say, “God is not the genie of a bottle, but the God of the Bible.”

Are you accustomed to prayer? Do you practice prayer on a regular basis? Is it one of your spiritual disciplines to continue earnestly in prayer?