

# THE FIRST DUTY OF THE CHURCH: PRAY

## 1 TIMOTHY 02:01–08

### *Introduction*

This begins a significant section in the teaching of *1 Timothy*, a section that covers the duties and order of the church. The first duty of the church is basic: it is the duty of prayer.

- I. Pray for everyone (v. 1).
- II. Pray for civil authorities (v. 2).
- III. Pray for all men to be saved (v. 3-7).
- IV. Pray everywhere and pray in the right spirit (v. 8).

### *Another Outline: The First Duty of the Church: Prayer*

- I. The exhortation to pray for everyone (v. 1).
- II. The exhortation to pray for civil authorities (v. 2).
- III. The reasons why we are to pray for everyone (v. 3-6).
- IV. The place and spirit of prayer (v. 7-8).

### **I. *1 Timothy 02:01 Prayer***

Pray for everyone. Not a single person is to be omitted or left out. We are to pray for all persons:

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|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| => the high and the low.  | => the educated and the uneducated. |
| => the rich and the poor. | => the leader and the followers.    |
| => the old and the young. | => the friend and the enemy.        |

Pray for everyone. Do not neglect, ignore, or bypass any person. Every person needs prayer: every person needs God: His salvation, care, direction, approval and acceptance. Therefore, pray for everyone.

Note: this is an *exhortation* (“I urge,” *parakaleo*) to pray, which means that it is both an encouragement and a charge. The believer is both *encouraged and charged* to pray. He is given the encouragement and charge to pray just as a soldier is encouraged and charged to fight.

“First of all” stresses just how important prayer is. “First of all” — above all else, of supreme importance — put prayer first. “First of all” — before all else — pray for everyone.

Note that four kinds of prayer are mentioned. This also stresses the importance of praying for everyone.

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1. There are “requests” (deeseis). This refers to the prayers that focus upon special needs — deep and intense needs. When we see special needs in the lives of people — all people — we are to seek God for them. That is, we are to be carrying the need before God with a great sense of urgency and plead and beg for the person or persons. The idea is that of intense and deep brokenness before God in behalf of others — that God would help and save the person.

**Thought 1.** Just think what a different world this would be, what a different community we would have if we really took the names and needs of people before God and pleaded for them in an intense brokenness and in tears. Just think...

- how many more loved ones would be saved and helped.
- how many more within our community and state and country and world would be saved and helped.
- how fewer problems would exist within society.

Scripture emphatically declares: “You do not have, because you do not ask God” (Jas .4:2).

2. There are “prayers” (proseuchas). This refers to the special times of prayer that we set aside for devotion and worship. We are to have set times for prayer, times that we set aside to worship God and when we pray for all men.
3. There is “intercession” (enteuxeis). This refers to bold praying; to standing before God on behalf of another person. Christ is our Intercessor, the One who stands between God and us on our behalf. But we are to intercede for men, to carry their names and lives before God and to boldly pray for them, expecting God to hear and answer — all in the name of Christ. We are to intercede for all men — to stand in the gap between them and God, boldly praying and asking God to be merciful and gracious in salvation and in deliverance.
4. There is “thanksgiving” (eucharistias). This means that we thank God for hearing and answering — thank Him for what He has done and is going to do for all men.

**Mat 5:44** “But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

**Mat 7:7** “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

**Luke 18:1** Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

**Luke 23:34** Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

**Acts 7:60** Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

**Eph 6:18** *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.*

**Phil 4:6-7** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

**Col 4:2** *Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*

**1 Th 5:17** *Pray continually.*

**James 5:16-18** *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.*

## **II. 1 Timothy 02:02 Prayer for Civil Authorities**

Pray for civil authorities, for kings and for all who are in authority.

=> No matter how good or how bad they are, pray for them.

=> No matter how moral or immoral they are, pray for them.

=> No matter how just or unjust they are, pray for them.

The thought of praying for evil rulers is shocking to some people. Just think of the evil rulers in the world even today. But remember: Nero was on the throne in Rome when Paul charged believers to pray for the king or emperor. And Nero had already burned Rome and had blamed it on Christian believers. In fact, he was presently launching a violent persecution against the believers.

Donald Guthrie says, *“This Christian attitude towards the State is of utmost importance. Whether the civil authorities are perverted or not they must be made subjects for prayer, for Christian citizens may in this way influence the course of national affairs, a fact often forgotten except in times of special crisis”* (*The Pastoral Epistles*. “Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,” p. 70).

Matthew Henry says, *“Pray for Kings...though the kings at this time were heathens, enemies to Christianity, and persecutors of Christians...because it is for the public good that there should be civil government, and proper persons entrusted with the administration of it”* (*Matthew Henry’s Commentary*. Vol. 5, p. 811).

There are two reasons why we are to pray for rulers.

1. We pray for rulers so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives. The only way the citizens of a nation can live quiet and peaceful lives is for the ruler to be filled...

- with wisdom and knowledge.
- with morality and justice.
- with courage and boldness.
- with compassion and understanding.

Therefore, believers must pray for the rulers to be filled to the brim so that the rulers can bring about peace and security throughout the land. Then and only then can the citizens of a land live peaceful and quiet lives.

2. We must pray for rulers so that we can live godly and holy lives. Believers want freedom of worship for all citizens.

=> They want freedom of worship, and freedom of life and choice, the right to worship and live for God without being opposed and persecuted.

=> They want freedom of life and choice, the right to live *holy or purposeful lives*, the right to pursue their own lives and wills without being opposed by a ruler.

**Thought 1.** People desire, even crave freedom: freedom of life and choice and freedom of worship. This is the reason we must pray for rulers...

- for wise and knowledgeable rulers.
- for moral and just rulers.
- for courageous and bold rulers.
- for compassionate and understanding rulers.

**Prov 11:11** *Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed.*

**Prov 14:34** *Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.*

**Titus 3:1** *Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good.*

**1 Pet 2:17** *Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king.*

### **III. 1 Timothy 02:03–07 Prayer for the Salvation of All Men**

Pray for all men to be saved, both rulers and citizens, both high and low. There are five reasons given why we are to pray for the salvation of all men, including all rulers.

1. First, God is our Saviour and He wills all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. As pointed out earlier (1 Tim. 1:1), *God our Saviour* is one of the great titles for God. God is our Saviour, the source of our salvation. God is the first Person who has cared for and loved man. God loves us and He is not willing that any should perish; therefore, He has taken the initiative and provided the way for us to be saved.

Note: God wills all men to be saved, but not in the sense of a decree. God has not decreed that all men be saved. This is evident by the ungodly and unrighteous lives lived by so many. God wills all men to be saved in the sense that He loves and longs for them to be saved. If any man perishes, it is his own fault. God has done all He can. He has provided the way for man to be saved. If a man is now lost, it is his own choosing.

Note the words “a knowledge of the truth.” What truth is it that God wants man to know? The truth that is covered in the points that follow: that there is only one God, and there is only one Mediator who gave Himself a ransom for all — the truth that all can be saved from sin and death and judgment to come through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. God loves man so much that He has provided *the way* for man to be saved. *That way* is the truth, and *that truth* is the truth that God wants man to know.

**John 14:6** *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

This is the reason we should pray for all men, both rulers and citizens, high and low, educated and uneducated, moral and immoral, just and unjust, civilized and savage, saved and lost. God wants all men to be saved regardless of who they are and no matter how evil they may be.

**2 Pet 3:9** *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

**Ezek 33:11** *Say to them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?’*

2. Second, there is only one God, not the many gods of men. If there were many gods, then there would be many ways to reach the heavens of the gods. But there are not many gods. Logically, there could not be many gods. When we speak of God, we mean the Infinite and Supreme Majesty of the Universe. There can be only one Supreme Being, only one Infinite Being. If there should be many gods, then they would not be infinite or supreme; therefore, they would not be God.

The point is this: since there is only one God, there can be only one way to reach Him — only one way to be saved. Why? This is the discussion of the next point.

**1 Cor 8:4** *So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.*

**Eph 4:6** *One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

**2 Sam 7:22** *“How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.”*

*1 John 5:7 For there are three that testify:*

*Psa 86:10 For you are great and do marvellous deeds; you alone are God.*

*Isa 43:10-11 “You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no saviour.*

*Isa 44:6 “This is what the LORD says — Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.”*

*Isa 45:18 For this is what the LORD says — he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited — he says: “I am the LORD, and there is no other.”*

3. There is only one mediator between God and men. Man must have a mediator if he is to be saved, if he is to approach God and be acceptable to God. As asked above, why? Because there is only one perfect Person: God Himself. No man can stand before God, not in his own name or righteousness. Man is imperfect, and God is perfect. Man cannot make himself acceptable to God no matter what he does. *Imperfection is unacceptable to perfection.* If perfection accepted imperfection, it would no longer be perfection. Perfection has to be just and righteous, which means that it has to reject imperfection. God cannot accept imperfect man. God has to be just and righteous and reject man in all the imperfection of his thoughts and behaviour.

How, then, can man become acceptable to God? God has to make man acceptable. God Himself has to handle the sin, condemnation and death of men. But how? There was only one way: God, the Perfect Person, had to become Man. God had to come to earth in such a way that man could understand Him and understand what He was doing. This He did by partaking of flesh and blood and coming to earth in the person of His Son, the Man Christ Jesus.

- => God Himself had to conquer sin. He had to live a *perfect and sinless life* as a man in order to handle sin. By living a perfect and sinless life, He became the Ideal and Perfect Man, the Ideal and Perfect Righteousness that could cover and stand for all men (Heb. 2:14-15).

This is part of what is meant by Jesus Christ being our Mediator. He stands before God as the Perfect Man, and He also stands between God and men as the Perfect Man. He is the Ideal Pattern of all men, of just what a man should be. Therefore, when a man really believes in Jesus Christ...

- God takes that man’s belief and counts it as the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- God accepts the man’s faith and honour in His Son as righteousness.

- God lets the righteousness of His Son, Jesus Christ, cover the man.
- God accepts the man's faith as the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Very simply stated, the man is not righteous, but God takes the man's faith in His Son and credits his faith as righteousness. Jesus Christ stands as the Mediator between God and men; He stands as the Mediator of perfection and righteousness for man. The point is this: since there is only one Mediator, we must pray for men to come to know Him. And we must rush to proclaim Him to all men so that they can know about Him and have the opportunity to follow Him.

***John 1:14** The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

***John 14:6** Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

***John 14:9-11** Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves."*

***1 Tim 2:5** For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

***Heb 8:6** But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.*

***Heb 9:15** For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

***Heb 9:24** For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.*

***Heb 12:24-25** To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?*

***1 John 2:1** My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.*

4. The man Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all. The word “ransom” (*antilutron*) means to *exchange* something for something else. The man Christ Jesus exchanged His life for the life of man; He gave up His life for the life of man. How? By the cross. Jesus Christ took the sin and condemnation of men upon Himself and bore their judgment for them. Christ died for man: He bore the judgment of God against sin for man.

As the Ideal and Perfect Man, Christ could do this for man. Since He was the Ideal Man, His death was the ideal death. Therefore, His death can stand for and cover the death of all men. If a man really believes and trusts that the death of Jesus Christ is for him...

- God counts the death of Christ for the man.
- God actually *counts* the man as having already died in Christ.
- God accepts the man as free from the guilt and condemnation of sin because Christ has already paid the ransom price for sin and death.

This is the glorious gospel of God: man can now live forever in the presence of God. Jesus Christ gave Himself as a ransom for sin and death. When man receives Christ Jesus into his heart and begins to follow Christ...

- God gives him life now and forever, abundant life and eternal life. When the man finishes his task upon earth, God will transfer him right into His presence — quicker than a flash of lightning. The man never has to taste death.

The words “the testimony given in its proper time” mean that God sent His Son in the fullness of time, when the time had fully come. When it was time for Christ to come to earth, He came.

Now note: we must pray for men to believe that Christ died for them — pray that they might be saved. And we must rush to proclaim the glorious news that Christ Jesus has paid the ransom price for us: we can now be set free from sin, death and condemnation. We can now live with God eternally.

*Lev 17:11 For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.*

*Mat 20:28 “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

*Rom 3:24 And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

*1 Cor 6:20 You were bought [redeemed] at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.*

*1 Cor 7:23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.*

**Eph 1:7** *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

**Col 1:14** *In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

**1 Tim 2:5-6** *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.*

**Heb 9:15** *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

**1 Pet 1:18-19** *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

**Rev 5:9** *And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.*

5. Ministers are ordained or appointed to proclaim the salvation of God. Note: Paul said three things about himself.
  - a. God had appointed Paul to be a preacher, a herald (kerux): a preacher is a herald, an ambassador who was appointed by a king to go forth and proclaim the message of the king. The minister is a preacher, a herald who is sent forth by God to preach the truth about Jesus Christ...
    - that He is the Mediator between God and men.
    - that He has given Himself as a ransom for all.

**Mark 3:14** *He appointed twelve — designating them apostles — that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach.*

**Mark 16:15** *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."*

**Acts 5:20** *"Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."*

**2 Tim 4:2** *Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction.*

**1 Cor 1:17** *For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel — not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.*

*1 Cor 9:16* Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

- b. God had appointed Paul to be an apostle (apostolos): a person who had been sent as a very special witness and on a very special mission. The minister is sent forth on the special mission to bear witness that Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and men. Jesus Christ has paid the ransom price for man.

*John 15:16* “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”

*2 Cor 5:20-21* We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- c. God had appointed Paul as a teacher (didaskalos): a person who instructs people into the faith and truth of God’s Word. It is the gift to root and ground people in doctrine, reproof, correction, and righteousness.

Note Paul’s stress upon his call from God: “I am telling the truth, I am not lying.” God had called him to proclaim and teach the salvation in Christ Jesus. Apparently, there were some at Ephesus who questioned Paul’s call and ministry.

The point is this: God has called ministers to proclaim the faith and truth of the Mediator and the great ransom price that He paid for man’s salvation. Therefore, we must pray for *all men* — that they will receive the message of the minister and be saved.

*Acts 18:9-11* One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

*Acts 28:30-31* For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

*1 Cor 12:28* And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

*Eph 4:11* It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.

#### IV. *1 Timothy 02:08 Spirit of Prayer*

Pray everywhere and pray in the right spirit. A person should never stop praying. He should be praying all day long as he walks throughout the day. He should develop an unbroken communion and fellowship with the Lord, praying for all men — for both the ruler and the citizen, the high and the low, the lost and the saved — all over the world. He should pray for those of his...

- home
- church
- city
- community
- state
- country

He should pray for those in...

- North America
- South America
- Central America
- Africa
- India
- Russia

... and on and on.

The believer is to pray and to keep on praying. He is to pray everywhere — no matter where he is. But note: the believer is also told how to pray.

1. He is to pray and “lift up holy hands”; that is, he is not to come before God having touched or handled “the forbidden things” (William Barclay. *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p.74). He is not to come with sin in his life.

*Psa 66:18 If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.*

*Isa 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.*

*Isa 64:7 No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins.*

2. He is to pray without anger or feelings in his heart against someone else. Very simply...
  - God does not accept us unless we accept others.
  - God does not forgive us unless we forgive others.

*Mat 5:23-24 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”*

*Mat 6:15 “But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”*

*Mat 18:35 “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”*

3. He is to pray without doubting. There is no need to pray if we do not think God is going to hear us. If we ask Him doubting, we are not trusting His presence and power to meet our need. We are actually denying God's care and power. We are destroying the name of God among men. Therefore, we must believe God when we pray.

*Mat 21:23* Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?"

*Mark 11:24* "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

*Heb 11:6* And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

*James 1:6-7* But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord. ■