

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Awesome God, As We Pray, Not for a Moment, 10,000 Reasons

WELCOME

I Pray. Briefly share to the group the importance of prayer and how it impacts your spiritual life.

WORD

COLOSSIANS 4:12–13

¹²Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

As followers of Christ, we need to understand the need for the gospel across the world. Two thirds of the world's population are clueless about Jesus and the gospel. In the Philippines, for every one professing Christian, there are nine who do not know Christ.

We need to realize that we are in a battle everyday, and no other place is the spiritual battle taking place most fiercely than in the family. The enemy's tactic is to disable the original design of the family, so that passing on godly values will cease to take place.

We also need to realize the reality of our own weakness as Christians i.e. many are lukewarm, shallow, and conformist to the world. They are unable to explain why we believe what we believe.

The conclusion, therefore is, we must fight our battle with prayer, because apart from the strength and sovereignty of God we cannot win this warfare.

What can we learn from Epaphras who is known in the Bible as a man devoted to prayer?

PRAY STEADFASTLY

Epaphras always prayed. His example reminds us to pray steadfastly, persistently and consistently. Praying is meant to be a lifestyle for every follower of Christ.

Have you ever given up praying especially when what you are praying for seems to be taking so long or maybe the situation even getting worse?

Jesus encourages us in the Parable of the Persistent Widow to pray at all times and not to lose heart (**Luke 18:1–5**). The parable reminds us that we should keep praying. Like the helpless widow, have nothing to prove, so it allows us to be humble to ask for help.

We should also keep praying because of who God is. If the judge who does not fear God nor respect man, would give in to the widow because she was persistent, how much more our God would answer our prayers.

The Bible also tells us about Bartimaeus who cried out to Jesus for mercy to heal him. He kept crying out all the more when people sternly yelled at him to keep quiet. Wherever you are in your life, learn from these stories in the Bible so that you can pray steadfastly.

PRAY STRENUOUSLY

Epaphras was always **laboring earnestly**, agonizing in prayer. Sometimes our prayer life is mechanical, anemic, or shallow. When we work, we work; but when we pray, God works. This does not mean that we should not work, but ultimately we should humbly depend on God for everything, remembering that our next breath and heartbeat are all in God's hands.

To wrestle with God does not mean to pin Him down to agree with our prayer. Wrestling in prayer is not imposing our will on God, instead it is when we surrender to God, we win. We read this example in **Genesis 32:4–36** wherein Jacob wrestled with God and would not let Him go unless He blesses him.

When we wrestle with God we admit that we are so desperate for Him, so helpless without Him and we cannot do anything on our own strength.

PRAY SELFLESSLY

Epaphras always prayed for the Colossians, composed of diverse people from different walks of life.

WORD (cont'd)

Nothing is wrong about praying for ourselves but we must also pray for others (**Philippians 2:4**).

If everybody is praying for one another, we may not need to pray for ourselves because we are sure that others are already praying for us.

PRAY STRATEGICALLY

Epaphras prays for his fellow believers that they may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God – being mature, understanding, discerning and submitting to the sovereign loving will of God.

Some may find that God's will is a mystery, but the fundamental will of God is so clearly written in the pages of the Bible and we just have to read it.

Praying for the will of God for anyone is probably the best prayer we could ever pray for other people even for ourselves. It means we understand God's will, what is important to Him, what gives Him pleasure, what honors and glorifies Him.

Praying is willingly allowing God to reveal and lead us to His will which is always superior to what we want for an answer (**1 John 5:14–15**). The way we pray strategically is to know God's Word and the more we know God's Word, the more we know the will of His heart.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. **Devoted to Prayer.** Who is Epaphras and what is the hallmark of his profile according to **Colossians 4:12–13**?
2. **Answered Prayer.** Share your topmost prayer which God answered recently. What was God's answer?
3. **Unanswered Prayer.** What have you learned today which you will apply regarding your prayers that are yet to be answered?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

List down the people you will pray to know Jesus Christ as Lord and personal Savior in 2018. Pray steadfastly, strenuously, selflessly and strategically for the people in your name list.

After 6 months, read your pray-care-share list and check the names of the people who eventually accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Then at the end of 2018, check your name list again and update your list. Keep praying for the salvation of other people at least within your reach.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants and a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends