

Ephesians 6:18-24

A PRAYING CHURCH

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ In six brief chapters Paul has presented a balanced view of what it means to know and serve God – including setting guidelines for what that church, the body of Christ, should be. If you could develop “the perfect church” according to Paul’s description of the body of Christ, what items from the following list would you include? Why or Why Not?
 - ▶ A State-of-the-Art, multi-million dollar facility (debt-free)
 - ▶ A gifted, talented, unified staff
 - ▶ A congregation enthusiastic about and trained for evangelism and missions
 - ▶ A prayer ministry composed of faithful saints interceding at all times
 - ▶ A national TV/Radio/Online ministry featuring solid biblical exposition
 - ▶ A top-notch education program for children and youth
 - ▶ A premier pastor who has best-seller books
 - ▶ A vibrant inner-city outreach

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ Paul's letter to the Ephesians is concise in its language yet comprehensive in its scope; profound in its theology yet practical in its application. Ephesians begins by lifting us up to the heavens and ends by pulling us down to our knees. Paul focuses our attention fully on God and our continued need for His help. God's armor is neither mechanical nor magical. We cannot simply take hold of it on our own and expect to automatically perform supernatural feats. Our divine gifts – marvelous as they are – are impotent without the divine Giver. We need to offer corporate, continual, and fervent prayer. This is the note Paul ends on.

Ephesians 6:18-24

▶ Prayer

- ▶ The Greek word translated “prayer” is the most common New Testament word for prayer and refers to general requests. The word translated “supplication” refers to specific prayers. Paul’s use of both words suggests our necessary involvement in every form of prayer that is appropriate for the need of the moment. Another type of prayer is intercessory prayer, meaning “to intercede on behalf of another”; the word referred to bringing a petition to a king on behalf of someone else. Prayer is fitting at any time, in any posture, in any place, under any circumstance, and in any attire. It is to be a total way of life – an open and continual communion with God. After having embraced all the infinite resources that are yours in Christ, don’t ever think you’re no longer dependent on the moment-by-moment power of God.

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ 6:18 Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.
- ▶ 6:19 And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike.
- ▶ 6:20 I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should.

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ 6:21 To bring you up to date, Tychicus will give you a full report about what I am doing and how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper in the Lord's work.
- ▶ 6:22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you.
- ▶ 6:23 Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters, and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you love with faithfulness.
- ▶ 6:24 May God's grace be eternally upon all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ 6:18 Pray **in the Spirit** at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.
 - ▶ Prayer “in the Spirit,” INTERCESSION. Any prayer that is directed, energized, and sustained by the Holy Spirit is a prayer that is prayed in the Spirit. It falls into the same category as being in the Spirit, speaking by or in the Spirit, and singing in the Spirit. Praying in the Spirit:
 - ▶ 1) Will be according to God’s will (1John 5:14,15)
 - ▶ 2) Will glorify the Father through the Son (John 14:13)
 - ▶ 3) Is based upon God’s character, ways, and Word (John 15:7)
 - ▶ 4) Comes from a clean heart (James 5:16)
 - ▶ 5) Is prayed in full assurance of faith
 - ▶ 6) Is asked in Jesus’ name (John 14:14)
 - ▶ Such prayer will always find God’s answers.

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ Mirror 6:18 – Prevail in persistent prayer; praying in the spirit includes every form of prayer, whether it be a prayer of request or a prayer of thanksgiving and worship or interceding for the saints. Do not do all the talking. Always be attentive to the voice of the spirit.
 - ▶ Mirror Note: Prayer is so much more than a one-way conversation

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ 6:19 And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the **right words** so I can **boldly** explain God's **mysterious** plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike.
 - ▶ Right Words – Paul's request is not for prayers for his personal well-being or physical comfort but for boldness to continue proclaiming the gospel, regardless of the Cost.
 - ▶ Boldly – Outspokenness, unreserved, utterance, freedom of speech, with frankness, candor, cheerful courage, and the opposite of cowardice, timidity, or fear. Here it denotes a divine enablement that comes to ordinary and unprofessional people exhibiting spiritual power and authority. It also refers to a clear presentation of the gospel without being ambiguous or unintelligible. This is not a human quality but a result of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ 6:19 And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the **right words** so I can **boldly** explain God's **mysterious** plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike.
 - ▶ Mysterious – In the New Testament the word denotes something that people could never know by their own understanding and that demands a revelation from God. The secret thoughts, plans, and dispensations of God remain hidden from unregenerate mankind, but are revealed to all believers. In nonbiblical Greek this word is knowledge withheld, concealed, or silenced. In biblical Greek it is truth revealed.
- ▶ Mirror 6:19 – My most urgent request is for clarity of utterance every time I open my mouth to speak; that my words will be gifted with inspiration, boldly articulating the mystery of the gospel.

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ 6:20 I am **in chains** now, still preaching this message as God's **ambassador**. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should.
 - ▶ In Chains – Paul wrote this letter while under Roman imprisonment.
 - ▶ Ambassador – Literally “to be the elder,” and later “to be an ambassador,” a representative of a ruling authority. Ambassadors would be chosen from the ranks of mature, experienced men. To be an ambassador for Christ necessitates spiritual maturity.
- ▶ Mirror 6:20 – I am an ambassador in bonds, chained to this task of confidently communicating the revelation of the Gospel with the accuracy it deserves.

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ 6:21 To bring you up to date, Tychicus will give you a full report about what I am doing and how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper in the Lord's work.
 - ▶ Tychicus – Acts 20:4-6; 2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12
- ▶ Mirror 6:21 – I know this is not much of a newsletter. My urgency is not to talk about myself, but my dear friend and faithful helper, Tychicus, will fill you in on the detail.
 - ▶ Mirror Note: He is also the scribe of this letter.

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ 6:22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to **encourage you**.
 - ▶ Encourage You (Comfort your hearts) – literally “to call alongside” so as to bring encouragement
- ▶ Mirror 6:22 – That is really why I sent him to you, that you may be well informed about our affairs and see yourselves fully identified with us.

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ 6:23 Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters, and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you love with faithfulness.
 - ▶ Mirror 6:23 – My prayer for you is a brotherhood of happy harmony, and love-entwined faith flowing from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ 6:24 May God's grace be eternally upon all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Mirror 6:24 – Grace greetings to all of you who share our undivided passion for our Master, Jesus Christ. He is echoed in your amen.

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ Why does Paul choose not to use this occasion to solicit prayer for his own release from Prison? What does this tell us about Paul?

Ephesians 6:18-24

In the *Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan tells of Christian's weapon called prayer, which, when everything else failed, would enable him to defeat the fiends in the valley of the shadow. Prayer is the closing theme of Ephesians, and though closely related to God's armor, it is not mentioned as part of it because it is much more than that. Prayer is not merely another godly weapon, as important as those weapons are. All the while that we are fighting using the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, we are to be in prayer. Prayer is the very spiritual air that the soldier of Christ breathes. It is the all-pervasive strategy in which warfare is fought. Jesus urged His disciples to pray always and not to lose heart. He knows that when the battle gets hard, soldiers easily become tired, weak, and discouraged. In the struggle with Satan, it is either pray or faint.

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ Through the centuries, Christian leaders have realized how crucial prayer is:
 - ▶ “When God intends to bless His people, the first thing He does is to set them a praying.” –Matthew Henry
 - ▶ “When we work, we work, but when we pray, God works.” – Unknown
 - ▶ “A church without an intelligent, well-organized, and systematic prayer program is simply operating a religious treadmill.” –Paul Billheimer
 - ▶ “The less I pray, the harder it gets; the more I pray, the better it goes.” –Martin Luther
 - ▶ Satan laughs at our toiling, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray.” -Unknown

Ephesians 6:18-24

- ▶ Compare the contents of Paul's prayers to the content of most prayers that you hear today. What differences do you notice?
- ▶ As this study comes to its conclusion is there anything that you have learned or has stood out to you that you want to share with others?
- ▶ Luke 22:39-46 records the prayer vigil kept by our Savior in Gethsemane during his darkest hour. Consider how Jesus braced Himself for the onslaught of Satan.