

## THE SSHEPHERD'S MMINISTRY OF PPAYER

There should be no question that Biblical shepherding among God's flock involves three primary responsibilities:

- 1) The ministry of PRAYER—Acts 6:4
- 2) The ministry of the WORD—Acts 6:4
  - a) Teaching/preaching—Ephesians 4:11; Galatians 6:6; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:2; 5:17; 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:24; Titus 1:9
  - b) Discipling/counseling—Ephesians 4:11-12; Acts 20:31; Colossians 1:28; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 4:16; 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:12
- 3) The ministry of RULING—Acts 6:1-7; 20:28; 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:12; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:4; 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:2-3

Too often shepherds get distracted from their primary work, thus bringing spiritual harm to themselves and to God's flock (or at least not bringing the most good to them).

### ***The shepherds need to make much of the God to whom we pray***

- 1) People don't pray as they ought because they don't know God as they ought.
- 2) Behind every struggle in the Christian walk is a problem with one's theology proper
- 3) Make much of His... (study the attributes of God in the context of prayer)
  - a) Sovereignty—Acts 4:24, 27-28
  - b) Omniscience—Acts 1:24; Romans 8:27
  - c) Holiness—Acts 8:21-22; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:12
  - d) Wisdom—Romans 8:27; Colossians 4:2-4
  - e) Power—Acts 4:24; Ephesians 1:19; Colossians 1:11; Hebrews 5:7
  - f) Grace—2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 9:14; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 1:11-12
  - g) Loving-kindness—
  - h) Faithfulness—1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 3:1-3; 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9
  - i) Righteousness—1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9
  - j) Peace—Philippians 4:7, 9; Hebrews 13:20

### ***The shepherds need to define prayer***

...having viewed the particular situation from their limited perspective, believers humbly, yet confidently offer a petition to the Father, acknowledging His wise and loving sovereignty to address this particular situation in the way that will bring Him the most glory and us the most good.

...an offering up of our desires to God for things consistent with His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and grateful acknowledgment of His mercies.

Trench (*Synonyms of the New Testament*, pp. 199-202) lists 7 Greek words used for prayer: εὐχή euche (# 2171), προσευχή proseuche (# 4335), δέσις deesis (# 1162), ἔντευξις enteuxis (# 1783), εὐχαριστία eucharistia (# 2169), αἴτημα aitema (# 155), and ἰκετηρία hiketeria (# 2428). Paul uses 4 of them in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:1 alone.

### ***The shepherds are expected to pray***

- 1) The example of early Jerusalem church leaders—Acts 6:4
  - a) Don't allow the urgent to distract you from the important.
  - b) Determine that prayer is a priority for you and your shepherding team.
  
- 2) The exhortation for sick and/or discouraged people to call for the assembly's elders—James 5:14-15
  - a) Be sure to instruct the flock in these matters.
  
- 3) The examples of the N.T. writers' prayers for the assemblies to whom they ministered
  - For what did they pray, and why?
    - a) Romans 1:10
    - b) 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 13:7
    - c) 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 13:9
    - d) Ephesians 1:15-23
    - e) Philippians 1:9-11
    - f) Colossians 1:9-14
    - g) Colossians 4:12
    - h) 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:23
    - i) 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 1:11-12
    - j) Philemon 1:4-6
    - k) Hebrews 13:20-21
    - l) 3<sup>rd</sup> John 1:2

### ***The shepherds are expected to teach God's flock about prayer***

- 1) Teach them to devote themselves to prayer
  - a) Encourage them with the *example* of the early believers—Acts 2:42
  
  - b) Encourage them with the *command* of the early leaders—Colossians 4:2-3
  
- 2) Teach them to pray for their spiritual leaders
  - Note the focus in these prayer requests:
    - a) Romans 15:30

- b) Ephesians 6:18-20
  - c) 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:25
  - d) 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 3:1-2
  - e) Hebrews 13:18-19
- 3) Teach them to pray regularly
- a) *All* believers should be praying—Romans 12:12; Philippians 4:6; 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:13, 16-18; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:7; Jude 1:20
  - b) The men of the assembly in particular should pray—1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:1-8; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:7

### ***Practical implementation of what we have learned today***

- 1) We should re-evaluate our own ministry of prayer
  - a) What attributes/characteristics of God are foundational to Biblical prayer?
  - b) Who is our focus in our ministry of prayer?
  - c) Do we recognize the reality of Romans 8:26?
  - d) Are we defining prayer appropriately?
  - e) Are we making prayer a priority in our own life and ministry?
  - f) What is our goal in our ministry of prayer?
- 2) We should set aside definite times for focused prayer.
  - a) Daily
    - i) We should consistently be in an attitude of prayer throughout the day.
  - b) Weekly
    - i) We need to make much of our weekly prayer service(s).
    - ii) Spurgeon once complained about churches that were skimping on prayer services, by writing: “At the back of the doctrinal falsehood comes a natural decline of spiritual life, evidenced by a taste for questionable amusements, and a weariness of devotional meetings.... Are churches in a right condition when they have only one meeting for prayer in a week, and that a mere skeleton?” (C.H. Spurgeon, *The Sword and The Trowel*, August 1887, as quoted in Arnold Dallimore’s *Spurgeon*, p. 206)
  - c) Yearly
    - i) Plan to schedule days/afternoons/evenings of prayer a couple times per year.