

**Life aboard the Fellowship**  
**Strive Together with One Another**  
**Romans 15:30-33**

**November 1, 2009**

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**Introduction to Text:** We are in a series of messages entitled “Life aboard the Fellowship” in Romans 15. There are 8 imperatives (as I see it) that we are given in Romans 15—actions that we are to pursue in our relationships with one another (especially relationships in the context of the local church). The first action is given to us in verse 1. We are to “Bear with one Another when there is a difference of opinion over things not specifically covered in Scripture. The second action that we talked about is in verses 2-4 and deals with the idea of “Pleasing One Another.” We encounter the third action in verses 5 and 6, which is the idea of “Agreeing with one another.” The fourth action is that we “Accept one another.” The fifth action that we talked about is “Serving One Another.” Last time we talked about the difficult subject of “Admonishing One Another.” (I hope that went well for you this week if you felt called to do that.) Today, we consider the very practical fellowship idea of “Praying for one Another” or as the text describes it—“Striving together with one another.”

**Text:** <sup>30</sup> Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, <sup>31</sup> that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, <sup>32</sup> that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you. <sup>33</sup> Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

I saw a cartoon in a Christian magazine that depicted in the first frame a man walking down a church hall approaching another gentleman. The caption reads, “Oh no! There’s Bob. I told him I would pray for him this week. The second frame shows the man praying, “Dear God, bless Bob.” The third frame shows the man greeting Bob while saying, “Hi, Bob, I prayed for you this week.”

How often we say that we are going to pray for people. I want to challenge us this morning that one of the best ways to grow in relationship with others is to pray for and with one another. That’s Paul’s pattern. In almost every one of his letters, the letter begins and often ends with an indication about his prayer for the recipients of the letter.

Along with all of the other actions to pursue with one another, we are **to strive together in prayer with one another.**

**An Example of Striving in Prayer**

What does this mean exactly? There are a lot of places that we could go in Scripture to get an example, but let’s look at just one.

Luke 22:39-46

<sup>39</sup> Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. <sup>40</sup> When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." <sup>41</sup> And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup> saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." <sup>43</sup> Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. <sup>44</sup> And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. <sup>45</sup> When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. <sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

A lot of times people will remark after the service, "Preacher, you really stepped on my toes this morning." Well, can I simply tell you that this morning I must admit that reading this example from Jesus' life causes my own toes to hurt?

How do we get to this point of striving together in prayer?

### **The Motivation to Strive Together in Prayer**

- Relationship—The motivation to strive together in prayer comes from a pure, loving relationship with the other person. Notice the phrase, "through the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the Spirit."
- Urgency of the Request—The early church as described in Acts is such a good picture of this.
  - Acts 4—Peter and John were arrested for preaching. The church gathered to pray that they all would have more boldness. The Bible doesn't say for sure that they prayed "in a striving kind of way," but the place shook when they had finished praying.
  - Acts 12—Peter was arrested. The Bible says that the church was in constant prayer for him.
  - Acts 13—Before the first missionaries were sent, the church fasted, then gathered, and prayed for those being sent.
  - Acts 14—When Paul established churches, he gathered the church, the church fasted for the pastors being appointed in those churches.

The urgency of our need of the day ought to motivate us to strive together in prayer.

- The Goal of Rest—The goal of the praying is that they will all one day be together in rest. Think of it this way. Wrestling brings resting!

### **Your Prayer for the Pastor**

So that leads us to the specific request of this passage. Paul is urging them to pray for him. So, at the risk of sounding really selfish this morning, the thrust of this passage is a plea to pray for your pastor. How can you pray? What request should you make? There are a thousand ways that you can pray for me. There are a thousand reasons to pray for me. I will just give you one real general reason. From a purely human stand point, I have no idea how to be your pastor. If I spend too much time thinking about my responsibilities from solely a human standpoint, it just makes no sense. Consider this: More than 3,000 people call me pastor, not to mention those in the community, those associated with our

school, those who watch us weekly by television from all over the nation. Every week several people learn they have dreaded disease, every week marriages struggle, every week children rebel, every week people have financial crises. In addition, all of us gather every week and trust that I have heard a word from God that can be a word to all of us. Then there is the administration of dozens of staff members and a budget of 4.2 million dollars. Then, of course, is the most important matter of those around us and around the world who desperately need to have a relationship with Jesus.

Here's the point. As I see it, you really have two choices. You either ought to find another pastor, because of my extreme inadequacies or you better pray like mad.

How should you pray? Again there are so many things, but allowing this passage to guide us, we discover these things. Pray for your pastor's...

- **Safety**
- **Service**
- **Future—including His future spiritual condition**

*In 1810 there was a man born by the name of Gardener Spring. He died in 1872. He was the pastor of Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City. He wrote about this need to pray for those in spiritual leadership and to pray passionately. He said this, "We entreat the churches to regard with a more deliberate and devout mind the great work itself to which their ministers are devoted, to explain the doctrines and enforce the duties of genuine Christianity...this is our duty...to defend the truth against all the subtlety and the versatility of error, to sustain within their own minds that sense of God's presence and of those moral sanctions which are revealed in His Word, and to experience that deep and tender impression of the things that are unseen and eternal that are necessary to give earnestness to their preaching, as well as that consistent life and bearing that are necessary to give power to their preaching. And to do this in a way that shall adapt itself to different times, places, occasions and characters and without being disheartened by difficulties, overwhelmed by enemies and weary of the yoke which they have taken upon themselves is no ordinary work. If a people are looking for rich sermons from their minister, their prayers must supply him with the needed material. If they seek for faithful sermons, their prayers must urge him by a full and uncompromising manifestation of the truth to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. If God's people are going to expect powerful and successful sermons, their prayers must make him a blessing to the souls of men. Would they have him come to them in the fullness of the blessings of the gospel of peace with a pounding heart and a burning eye and a glowing tongue and with sermons bathed in tears and filled with prayer? If so, their prayers must urge him to pray and their tears inspire his thrilling heart with the strong yearnings of Christian affection. It is in their own closets that the people of God most effectively challenge their beloved ministers to take heed to the ministry they have received from the Lord Jesus." "O, it is at a fearful expense that ministers are ever allowed to enter the pulpit without being preceded, accompanied and followed by the earnest prayers of the church. (From a online sermon by John MacArthur)*

### **My Prayer for You**

This chapter concludes with Paul's prayer of peace for the Romans. We see in most of Paul's letters some type of prayer for the believers. Let me give you one of my favorite.

Colossians 4:12--<sup>12</sup> Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

That's my prayer for you. That you will be complete in God.

**How will you respond?**

- Commit to fast as an example of striving
- Commit to our church's prayer ministry in the 24 hour prayer room
- Pastoral Prayer Team
- Prioritize Prayer