

Not just in the event of an EMERGENCY

I remember the first time I flew on an airplane. It was right after graduating from seminary and flying to a pastors' conference. The flight attendant gave the emergency instructions and modeled how to place the oxygen mask on in the event of the loss of cabin pressure. I gave her my full attention! Having flown many times since then, I don't pay the pre-flight instructions much attention anymore.

Many people view PRAYER as an 'emergency oxygen mask.' However, prayer is not an oxygen mask just to be used in times of emergency or crisis. Prayer is more like breathing itself. Prayer is essential. Even though I have been a follower of Jesus for more than forty years, I still need to pay attention to the biblical instruction regarding prayer.

The Apostle Paul prayed often and encouraged believers to pray. He was a person of prayer and called on churches to be people and places of prayer. In his first letter to the Thessalonians, he ends with simply asking them, "Brothers pray for us."

Paul was a leader who believed in prayer. He exhorted, "I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. May the God of peace be with you all. Amen" (Romans 15:30–33).

Throughout his epistles, Paul reassured others of his prayers. He wrote the Colossians, "And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (Colossians 1:9). Paul's praying was ongoing and persistent, characteristic of his praying as a leader (Romans 1:9–10; 1 Corinthians 1:4; Ephesians 1:16; Philippians 1:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Timothy 1:3; and Psalms 1:4).



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Paul prayed for various needs and issues in the lives of others. In Romans 15:5–6, Paul prayed for their unity, and in Romans 15:13, he prayed for God to fill them with joy and peace. In Philippians 1:9–11, Paul prayed for their love to abound. His requests varied from meeting needs and discipleship issues to their relationships.

While Paul prayed for the churches, he also asked them to pray for him. He was not an aloof leader who did not believe he needed prayer but recognized his need for God's help, too (2 Thessalonians 3:1–2).

The bottom line is that prayer is not just for emergency use. Praying is as essential as breathing.

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian Autry".

Brian Autry