

# 1 Timothy Chapter 2 (vv.1-8)

Following the apostle's personal appeal and charge to Timothy, Paul turns his attention to the substance of 'sound doctrine' and, in particular, fitting behaviour for males and females in the 'house of God' (3.15). Chapter two describes the local assembly as a place of *spiritual exercise*. The *first* section of the chapter (vv.1-8) focuses on *supplication*, especially in relation to the **males** (v.8). The *second* section (vv.9-15) contemplates *sobriety*, *silence* and *subjection* in relation to the **females** (v.9).

## The Entreaty to Prayer [v.1a]

**v.1a:** Prayer has ever been an outstanding feature of God's house (cf. Isaiah 56.7; Mark 11.17). In the present age, the house of God is not the Jerusalem temple where *all nations* are summoned to pray, but local companies of Christians in 'house of God' character who take the place of prayer with *all men* in view. Therefore, as a *development* of the charge (1.18), the apostle 'exhorts' or 'urges' the saints to prayer. This is not a command so much as an appeal to conscience. Public prayer in the assembly is not optional, but obligatory. 'First of all' (*protos*) can denote that which is first *chronologically*, but here means *priority* in importance, not time. Prayer is of vital, even primary importance to the life of the local church. Indeed, the implication is that the local assembly (house of God) cannot function *properly* or *effectively* without prayer. And the context is not private, personal prayer, but collective, assembly prayer. *Spurgeon: Prayer meetings are the throbbing machinery of the church.* Paul then delineates 'every kind of spiritual prayer' (cf. Ephesians 6.18):

- **Supplication** [*deesis*]. The *second* most used word in the NT for prayer. *deesis* means to present specific, urgent petitions to God in recognition of one's own weakness and inability. Can be used of requests made to men as well as God. Offered because God is *sufficient* (and *gracious*).
- **Prayer** [*proseuche*]. The most common word for prayer in the NT. From *two* Greek words meaning 'face to face' and 'a wish' or 'desire'. Prayer is the privilege of speaking 'face to face' with God. The word is *only* used of approach to God. Offered because God is *sacred* (and *glorious*).
- **Intercession** [*enteuxis*]. Contains the idea of boldness and freedom in approach to God, the basic idea of the word being 'a meeting' or 'intimate conversation with' another, even a King. Indicates an exercise to seek the presence of God, sometimes, but not necessarily, *on behalf of others*. Offered because God is *sovereign* (and *great*).
- **Giving of thanks** [*eucharistia*]. The grateful acknowledgement of God's mercies. From *two* Greek words meaning 'good grace'. A response of the heart overwhelmed by the *grace* and *goodness* of God. An essential accompaniment of prayer (Philippians 4.6; Colossians 4.2). Offered because God *satisfies* (and is *good*).

## The Extent of Prayer [vv.1b-7]

**v.1b:** These prayers are to be offered 'for' (*huper*, in the interests of) 'all men'. The theme of *universality* is emphasised *four* times in this short section (cf. v.2, 4, 6). The scope of God's grace and salvation is universal, and thus our prayers should embrace all humanity. No racial, political, economic, or social class is excluded (Gromacki). **v.2:** Though Christians take no part in the politics or government of this world, Paul certainly believed in the power of prayer to make a definite difference in national affairs (Hiebert)! Thus, prayer should be made for 'kings', or the possessor of the highest office in any political realm (Ezra 6.10). Any supreme ruler or national leader is in view (hence the absence of the article), even when the reigning Caesar at the time was Nero! 'All that are in authority' describes those below the king who hold 'high authority' – perhaps lesser government officials of various ranks. We pray for these individuals in order that we might lead 'quiet' (tranquil, free from *external* disturbance) and 'peaceable' lives (well-ordered, free from *internal* strife). There is no thought of praying for an *easy* life, but rather a life free from political turmoil and international conflict thus producing circumstances conducive to the spread of the gospel (v.4). Christian lives should be characterised by a fulness of 'godliness' (Godward) and 'honesty' (manward). Godliness (*eusebeia*) is one of the great themes of the Pastoral Epistles (see 'An Introduction to 1 Timothy' notes). It is the NT equivalent of 'the fear of the Lord' and comprises an inner attitude of heart that gives God His proper place in one's life. 'Honesty' describes sobriety; *decent* (not arrogant) or *dignified* behaviour which commands the respect of others.

**v.3:** The *repeated* practice of collective prayer (v.1) and godly Christian living (v.2) is 'good', i.e. excellent, attractive and in accordance with the will of 'God our Saviour' being 'warmly welcomed' (acceptable) in His sight. **v.4:** Indeed, God has *planned* and *provided* salvation with 'all' of mankind in view – hence the necessity to pray for *all*. It is God's present and active desire (*thelo*) that all should be saved. *Thelo* indicates an inclination or longing arising from the emotions, i.e. the love of God (cp. 2 Peter 3.9). This describes the *disposition* (rather than *sovereign determination*) of God towards all and does not mean that all of humanity will be saved. Whilst there must be an individual response to the grace of God revealed in salvation, the verb 'saved' is *passive* thus declaring that man cannot save Himself for 'salvation is of the Lord'

(Jonah 2.9). 'All men' is *emphatic* and cannot be restricted to all 'classes' of men. Prayer can be made for *all* and *every* individual without exception; no-one is beyond the reach of prayer (v.1). Likewise, salvation is freely offered to *all* without exception. *Hiebert: That some men are not saved is not due to any inefficacy or deliberate limitation in the divine will but is due to man's rejection of God's appointed means of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* And this salvation comes through an active appropriation of the truth of the gospel by faith (4.3; 2 Timothy 2.25). Conversion is a rational decision to embrace the truth of God's revelation as represented in the gospel. (Towner).

**v.5:** 'For' explains *how* the disposition of God in salvation can be towards *all*. The Revised Version reads: 'For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus'. *JN Darby* shows that this statement entirely removes the distinction between Jew and Gentile. Judaism had been the revelation and testimony in the world of 'one God'. He says: "*This remains eternally true but did not suffice to bring men into relationship with God. With regard to men He abode within the veil in the darkness which shrouded His majesty.*" But Christianity, whilst affirming the truth of 'one God', has fully revealed the 'one mediator'. Since there is only 'one God', He alone determines the *means* and *way* of salvation for *all* men – and there is but one Person who is able to 'stand between' (from *mesos*, 'middle-man') God and men and bring them *together* into eternal relationship – Himself man, Christ Jesus! Any intermediary must be able to represent both sides equally (cf. Job 9.32-33). He must therefore "*possess the nature and attributes of Him toward whom He acts and should likewise participate in the nature of those for whom He acts (sin apart)*", WE Vine. Only Christ Jesus can fulfil this role as one who is both God and man in one glorious person. No article is employed thus it is not 'a man' or 'the man', but 'man' (*anthropos* not *aner*, a male individual) – Christ is the *representative* of *all* mankind. **v.6:** Only Christ can act as universal mediator, for only He could give Himself as a ransom for all. He 'gave Himself' (the whole person) indicating a *deliberate* and *voluntary* sacrifice (cp. Matthew 20.28; Luke 22.19; John 6.51; Galatians 1.4; Titus 2.14). A 'ransom' is the payment given to effect redemption (cf. Revelation 5.9), i.e. deliverance from the slave market of sin. Such a ransom was substitutionary (*anti*) on behalf of (*hyper*) *all*, therefore "no one of all humanity excluded from the scope of that work, its value is universal" (Allen). But note the difference in Matthew 20.28 and Mark 10.45. He gave His life 'a ransom for (*anti*) *many*' – the substitutionary ransom was given on behalf of *all*, but it only becomes effective (i.e. substitutionary) to those who believe (the *many*). The witness to the work of Christ is now being borne in 'due time', i.e. the unique period of time which is the day of grace (cf. Titus 1.3). This age is the divinely appointed and suitable time for the proclamation of the gospel message. **v.7:** The preaching of the gospel was the special function to which Paul was 'ordained' (appointed) of God (*passive*). A 'preacher' (*kerux*) furnishes the picture of an imperial herald, as the spokesman of the emperor, proclaiming a message with great authority, formality and dignity. Paul was also appointed an 'apostle' or ambassador sent with an authoritative commission (see notes on 1.1). His special commission, to be a 'teacher of the Gentiles' (Acts 9.15; Romans 11.13), would bring much derision and thus Paul's strong assertion of 'speaking the truth'. This distinctive feature of his ministry further emphasises the universality of the gospel. All was done in 'faith' and 'verity' which either describes the *way* in which Paul preached, i.e. faithfully and honestly (free from false motive) or the *content* of his preaching, i.e. matters pertaining to *faith* and *truth* (in contrast to the message of *works* and *error* of the false teachers).

#### The Essentials of Prayer [v.8]

**v.8:** This verse draws out the implications of vv.1-7 for those gathering in 'house of God' character. Paul's *reasoned* and *authoritative* desire (*boulomai*, cp. v.4) is that the 'males' pray in 'every place' (RV) where believers gather. Paul does not use the general word for 'mankind' but *aner* signifying 'the males'. Thus, it is the responsibility of the males to lead the assembly in public prayer. Prayer was not restricted to church leaders, neither was it permitted for females. The *present tense* indicates this must be a habitual, on-going practice, whereas the *middle voice* places responsibility upon the males to choose to obey the injunction. However, the males must not pray indiscriminately – there are *moral* conditions to be considered. **Selfward**, the males must pray 'lifting-up holy hands' which describes the bodily posture *and* character of the person praying. It was considered reverent among the Jews to pray with upraised hands as a sign of dependence and faith (cf. 1 Kings 8.22; Psalm 28.2; 63.4; 134.2; 141.2; Isaiah 1.15). Posture in prayer is hugely varied in Scripture, ranging from *kneeling* (Daniel 6.10) to *sitting* (2 Samuel 7.18) and even *lying* prostrate (Genesis 17.3). The publican *stood* (Luke 18.13) and the Lord Jesus 'lifted up His eyes' toward heaven (John 17.1). Such postures were not planned or ritualistic but a spontaneous impulse. Paul's emphasis here, though, is not posture but character. I do not have the moral right to lead God's people in prayer if there is unconfessed sin in my life (Psalm 66.18). **Manward**, the males must pray 'without wrath', that is, a personal attitude of resentment swelling up towards another – even our enemies and persecutors (cf. Acts 7.60). Forgiveness is clearly a prerequisite to effective prayer (Matthew 21.22; Mark 11.25). Prayer must never be *horizontal*, being used to make thinly veiled attacks on others. Finally, **Godward**, we should pray 'without doubting' (an *inward* reasoning) for one moment that He *hears* and is ready to *answer* our prayers (James 1.6). The word can also signify an *outward* disputing or argument in which case quarrels with others is in view.