

LIVING THE CHRISTLIFE
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HILLTOP LAKES CHAPEL
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Colossians 4:2-11

² Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— ⁴ that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

⁵ Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

⁷ Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. ⁸ I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, ⁹ and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹ and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

—Colossians 4:2-11 (ESV)

v 2 – Continue steadfastly in prayer...

This to individuals and to the *church*

We don't have to be "gathered" to be praying together, i.e. about the same things, but the scriptures enjoin us to **gather together** and pray

Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."—Matthew 18:18-20

Jesus, disciples on Mt. of Olives ("watch and pray...")

Pentecost

Peter's deliverance from prison (Acts 18:6 ff)

Revival movements throughout history

All of Christian experience and teaching!

Prayer gatherings

Do not have to include every single member of a church; that has never been the norm.

Cannot be squeezed into the Sunday morning worship hour

We tend to "watch and pray" when we are on mission or have a specific, somewhat desperate need—not so much regarding internal ministries, although we may ask for blessing upon them.

To "watch and pray" is to pray for a specific answer—one that can be identified when it is received

To “watch and pray” is to be alert, to recognize dangers and opportunities and needs, and to then utilize prayer as a mighty spiritual weapon to address these things
To “watch and pray” results in growth in faith, in spiritual effectiveness, in spiritual understanding, and in love for one another
To “watch and pray” is to be fervent and committed—if we are not serious about asking, why should God be serious about intervening on our behalf? Especially when He has invited us and taught us to pray?

If we were to meet Jesus during the week, and He asked us “What things are your congregation praying for and watching for right now?”—what would we say?

Do we have a strong sense of mission, such that we are praying for results and watching for the answers?

How can and how should the Hilltop Lakes Chapel members continue together steadfastly in prayer?

How can we pray more with other Christians, whether we attend the same congregation or not?

Shouldn't ministers have more time for this than church members who have other occupations?

They should, yes indeed, if they are permitted to do so.

A minister's chief calling is to the ministry of prayer and the word

But Paul's injunction was to all the Christians in Colossae (and Laodicea)—not just to the ministers

vv 3-4 – At the same time...

Paul's prayer requests always referred to the furtherance of the Gospel

The mystery [*mustérion*] of Christ—something that cannot be merely discovered, it must be revealed

“that I may make it clear...”—Paul's specific prayer request for his preaching and teaching

As I ought [*dei*], or as I must, as behooves me

v 5 – Walk in wisdom toward outsiders...

Our witness—how we walk, not just what we say (or put on our car bumpers)

Seizing [*exagorazó*] the time—saving it from being wasted

More lit. “your speech always in grace, having been seasoned with salt, to know how it behooves [*dei*—see above] you to answer each one”

Our conversations with unbelievers should always be Spirit guided, Christlike, desiring their good

vv 7-9 – Tychicus will tell you...

In how many books of the NT is Tychicus mentioned? (Answer: five)

A member of Paul's team, beloved, trusted, faithful...and largely unknown—by us, but not by God

Onesimus—the slave of Philemon and the subject of Paul's letter to Philemon

There are always all kinds of people involved in God's work and purposes.

vv 10-11—Aristarchus my fellow prisoner...

Aristarchus was a Macedonian from Thessalonica

It was an honored Greek name, meaning “Master,” and perhaps reflected his character
He suffered in Ephesus was now imprisoned with Paul—a true, noble supporter through
“thick and thin”

Justus—we are not sure if this was 1) the Justus who was put forth to fill Judas’ place as
an apostle (Acts 1:23) or 2) the Titius Justus in Ephesus [this one gets my vote] who
lived next door to the synagogue (Acts 18:7) and was either a convert or a strong
supporter, or 3) someone else entirely. But Paul identifies him as “of the
circumcision,” even though Justus is a Latin name meaning Upright or Just. [My
theory, if he was the Ephesian convert, he could have taken on “Jesus” as his Jewish
name.]

Mark – this was John Mark, who left the team during the first missionary journey and
over whose re-inclusion Paul and Barnabas went separate ways prior to the second
(Paul being against it). We don’t know the “in-between” story, but he later became
dear to Paul. It is also possible that he was the author of the Gospel of Mark.

Jesus-Justus and Mark were the only Jewish supporters that were among Paul’s fellow-
workers at that time...something, at one time, that Paul himself could never have
anticipated.

Paul’s team was God-led and God-appointed—and Paul was God-appointed as the leader.

It was not a team that would ever have been put together through the planning and
insight of man.

God’s ways are not our ways, His plans are not our plans... and He does not need our
advice.