

**Cultivating our Appetite for God: Praying**  
**Philippians 4:2-7, 1:3-11, 2 Corinthians 12:1-10**  
**Sermon Outline**

**Introduction:** Praying is hard, especially when it does not seem to accomplish much. Why should we do it?

**I) We pray because God wants us to**

**A) *Phil 4.4, 6: Rejoice in the Lord always...; in everything...let your requests be made known....***

**B) Meaning for us**

- 1) Praying as an act of obedience helps us forward.
- 2) Our Maker actually wants us to talk to him!

**II) We pray because prayer is not primarily about changing our circumstances now**

**A) Paul's prayer content: *Phil 1.9-11***

- 1) Paul's coaching on how/what to pray
  - He takes the long view: *v 10: ...for the day of Christ*
  - He prays for character
    - A bumper crop of love and goodness
    - Love sharpened by deep commitment to what is good
  - He prays for the honor of God and his Messiah

2) One of the reasons we give up praying...

**B) Paul's prayer experience: *2 Corinthians 12.7-10***

- 1) What Paul experienced
- 2) Meaning/expectation for us
  - Happy circumstances are not what we need the most
  - The reason God's peace *passes understanding (Phil 4.7)*

Take away

### Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) How often do your prayers get answered? How do you deal with unanswered prayer?
- 2) Phil 4:4 commands us to “rejoice in the Lord *always*”—not just when we feel like it, or when it is convenient. Phil 4:6 commands us to “make our requests known” “in *everything*”—not just in some things. Do you find the “always” and the “everything” helpful or not helpful? Why?
- 3) According to Phil 4.5, our rejoicing, gentleness, and turning from anxiety should take place because the Lord is “at hand”. What is meant by “at hand” and how does believing this help us in our praying?
- 4) Paul’s prayer in Phil 1:9-11 gives us some helpful coaching on how to pray. What does Paul pray for? How do the various parts relate to each other? What regular components in your usual praying are left out of Paul’s prayer? Why do you think he leaves them out? How does Paul’s prayer challenge your own?
- 5) Commit yourself to praying Paul’s prayer in Phil 1:9-11 for one particular person every day for two weeks. At the end of that period journal about how praying this way has affected you.
- 6) Paraphrase Paul’s experience in 2 Corinthians 12.1-10. What do you think of the Lord’s answer to Paul’s prayer for healing? Have you had a similar experience? Why did Paul answer this way? What does it tell you about God? What does your reaction to God’s answer to Paul tell you about yourself?
- 7) Use something that troubles or angers you as an invitation to discover Christ’s sufficiency as you pray through it. Plan to share your discoveries with someone.