



Prayers for Our Centennial

As we prepare for our centennial celebration in March 2022, perhaps we need to ask God *how* to pray now. We need to ask God how to prepare and how we can honor Him in our planning. Perhaps we need to ask God for a humble spirit so that we can seek His will effectively. We need to ask God for His wisdom so that we may know how to pray for the future of our church. We need a close communion with Christ. God's love, flowing through us, is a powerful force for good. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27)

Motivation to Pray

As a congregation we seem to be motivated to pray for our health or the health of loved ones and friends. We are sometimes motivated to pray for people we believe are experiencing personal danger or persecution. We may pray for people in poverty, etc., and we sometimes take actions in these regards. *But, what are the things that might motivate our congregation to pray for our church and its future?* Perhaps if we see that Satan may be influencing us in a detrimental way, we might turn to prayer as a remedy.

Prayer for a Loving Relationship with God

First, we should pray for our own healthy relationship with God.

- Do we love the Lord fully? (Deuteronomy 6:5)
- Do we actively love our Christian brothers and sisters so that we can come before God to be forgiven of our sins?
- Do we need to confess sins before presenting our offerings to the church or to God?

"We must lay before Him what is in us,
not what ought to be in us."

C.S. Lewis

Prayer for Loving Relationships with Other People

We should pray for our *active* loving relationships with fellow church members and other Christians. Absolutely, Stephen is correct when he says that whatever would divide us is not nearly as strong as that which unites us, and that is our faith in Jesus. Jesus Christ is Lord. However, Satan has tactics which might weaken our prayers and harm our congregation.

If we are *complacent*, thinking that our church is doing fine, we are in danger of yielding to Satan. We do well on the church development surveys and our finances are usually in good order. Yet, there is a danger that we could overlook important challenges that we should meet now and in the future.

If we succumb to political *divisions* or argue about the various ways of dealing with the pandemic, Satan could use these divisions to our detriment. If we let personal problems, evil influences, fear, hatefulness, or disappointments influence our relationships with each other and with God, we might succumb to Satan's designs.

Giving Thanks to God

We should give thanks to God for the faith of previous ESBC members who took the risk to begin our church. We should give thanks to God for the dedicated staff members and church members of the past and the present. Thanksgiving is due for the *sense of unity* that has been maintained over the years. We have had a mutual tolerance of *differing beliefs* within the congregation. We should give thanks for the blessings of the pastors of our church for these 99 years, and their ability to help make our church “a home to all who would enter.” We should give thanks for the wisdom and resources which have enabled our church to minister though out our area. We should ask God to *guide* us as we seek His direction in implementing the preparations for our centennial celebration and for all the future ministries of our church.

Renewing Our Love for God

We must renew our love for God. If we have not loved our brothers and sisters effectively, we have not loved God. (I John 4: 8) Do we need to ask forgiveness? Do we need to ask for “a new heart and a new spirit” (Ezekiel 36: 26)?

Truth is a person, Jesus Christ, and upon Him we must depend. His love needs to flow through us into the lives of others. We should pray for God’s strength to overcome our weakness. We should be guided by the Holy Spirit in all our endeavors to celebrate our centennial. Earnest prayer is needed throughout these endeavors.

The ESBC Prayer Team

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