

MON.
February
25

Philippians
1:1-11

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy (Phil. 1:4).

OTHERS BRING JOY

L. M. A.

Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians while he was imprisoned. Although biblical scholars debate the exact location of his imprisonment, the location is not as important as the fact that he was incarcerated for his faith in Jesus Christ.

I imagine prisons in Paul's time are not so different from prisons in much of Africa today: dirty, poor sanitation, and overcrowded. The prison systems that I am aware of in Africa do not provide food or water for the prisoners and only very basic shelter.

I have known ministers of the gospel that have been imprisoned for their faith. I would venture to say that their imprisonment was not characterized by joy. They were faithful, trusting, and hopeful, but joy would be challenging.

And yet Paul, during his imprisonment, writes that his prayers for the Philippians bring him joy. Who are the people in our lives that bring us joy to pray for no matter the circumstances around us? May we continue to lift them up to the Father and find joy in our relationships despite any hardship that might surround us!

*Thou our Father,
Christ our Brother,
All who live in love
are Thine;
Teach us how to love
each other,
Lift us to the joy
divine.*

"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore
Thee" by Henry van Dyke

**But let all who take
refuge in you be
glad; let them ever
sing for joy. Spread
your protection
over them, that
those who love your
name may rejoice in
you (Psalm 5:11).**

Please pray:

That many people in
American Samoa will come
to know Christ and receive
the fullness of the Holy
Spirit.

TUES.
February
26

Philippians
4:14-20

I am amply supplied, now that I have received the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God (Phil. 4:18b).

GIVING TO OTHERS IS ALSO WORSHIP

L. M. A.

We often think of giving to God as worship. We give our tithes. We give our offerings. We give monetarily for missions around the globe. We give our time to teach Sunday School or small groups. We give of our talents in leading worship in the local church or in helping with church meal preparations. In this passage, however, Paul is suggesting that giving, not only to God but also to others, is an act of worship.

Paul knows that God could have supplied his need in another way, but is rejoicing that God was able to supply his need through the faithfulness of His people, the church in Philippi. Their generosity to Paul was compared with the incense burned in the temple. There is no denying that in Paul's mind, the Philippians, gifts to him were an act of worship to God.

In our acts of worship, do we include giving of our time, money, and talents for the benefits of others? With this way of thinking, it makes it so much easier to live our daily lives as worship onto the Lord!

*To serve the present
age, my calling to
fulfill; O may it all my
pow'rs engage to do
my Master's will!*
"A Charge to Keep I Have"
by Charles Wesley

**Ascribe to the LORD
the glory due his
name; worship
the LORD in the
splendor of his
holiness
(Psalm 29:2).**

Please pray:
For the development
of Christian leaders in
American Samoa.

WED.
February
27

Acts 12:1-11

So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him (Acts 12:5).

PARTNERS IN PRAYER

L. M. A.

Imprisonment is not an uncommon aspect of ministry in my area of the world. Over and over again we hear from those who have been imprisoned for their faith that it was the prayers of God's people that helped them through; strengthening and encouraging them during their imprisonments.

Although I personally have never been imprisoned, I know that there have been hard times in ministry and life where knowing that God's people were daily lifting my family and I to the Father was the motivation to keep on going. I've often prayed, "Lord, this is really hard, but I thank you that 'so and so' is praying with me now."

Never underestimate the power each believer holds with the phrase "I will pray for you." As we partner in prayer for each other, we have great power to encourage and lift those who are experiencing illness, depression, difficult times financially or otherwise, and yes, even those imprisoned.

One of the most powerful aspects of partnering in prayer is that it is a work of the Church that doesn't exclude anyone. Any believer from the youngest to the oldest can partner in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged; Take it to the Lord in prayer.

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus" by Joseph M. Scriven

**God, whom I
serve in my spirit
in preaching the
gospel of his Son,
is my witness
how constantly I
remember you in
my prayers at all
times
(Romans 1:9-10a).**

Please pray:

That many people in Australia will come to know Christ and receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit

THURS.
February
28

Acts 12:12-24

When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!" (Acts 12:14).

REJOICE IN GOD'S ANSWERS

L. M. A.

This is one of my favorite passages of Scripture. I love when we get snippets of daily life in biblical times and find that people are the same today. Have you ever been so overjoyed with good news that you lost a sense of yourself? That is what happened with Rhoda. She was so overjoyed that she ran back to report to the others gathered in prayer for Peter and forgot to open the gate for him!

This servant girl, arguably the lowest member in the household, was the first one to have the joy of knowing God's answer to their prayers. As a servant in a Christian household, she would have witnessed and likely participated in the prayers for Peter's release. They were still gathered in the night, praying earnestly for Peter's release, and the answer to their prayers was just outside the gate!

There is also a warning: others, even other believers, will often think we are "out of our minds" when we rejoice in God's answers to prayers that have not yet been seen (v.15). God may reveal His answer to the one sent to open the gate and not those busy in prayer. Let's not stop rejoicing!

*Praise to the Lord,
who doth prosper thy
work and defend thee;
Surely His goodness
and mercy here daily
attend thee.*

"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" by Joachim Neander

**Devote yourselves
to prayer,
being watchful
and thankful
(Colossians 4:2).**

Please pray:
For the development
of Christian leaders in
Australia.

FRI.
March
1

2 Corinthians
8:16-24

[Titus] is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative (2 Cor. 8:17b).

PARTNERS WITH GOD

L. M. A.

Have you ever been around those who are so enthusiastic to be a part of God's work that they take their own initiative to partner with God in ministry? There is man in a creative access area known as "the Librarian" who has taken the initiative to establish a Christian library in a country where it is illegal to own a Bible. The Librarian's desire to see believers have access to God's Word and other Christian materials caused him to take the initiative. He didn't wait for permission or a salary, but out of his own resources and time established a library that is available to believers and leaders serious about studying God's Word.

In another area, a pastor felt a passion for various groups of people living in extremely remote mountains. There are no roads or even paths, but this pastor took the initiative to walk into those remote villages and share the gospel with those isolated people groups. He did not wait for a committee or the funds to support him, but went where God was calling him.

May we all be enthusiastic and take initiative to see God's work done here as in heaven!

*Your love compels me,
Lord,
To see as You would
see,
To serve as You would
serve,
To be what You would
be.*

"Your Love Compels Me" by
Doug Holck

**Never be lacking in
zeal, but keep your
spiritual fervor,
serving the Lord.
Be joyful in hope,
patient in affliction,
faithful in prayer
(Romans 12:11-12).**

Please pray:

For the faculty and students
as they prepare for Christian
ministry in Australia.

SAT.
March
2

Colossians
1:21—2:5

Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you,
. . . for the sake of his body, which is the
church (Col. 1:24).

CHRIST'S BODY

L. M. A.

Growing up as a child in a large missionary community, I can remember missionaries joking about how we “suffered for Jesus.” It was a joke because most of the missionaries I knew growing up felt that their lives were much better and easier than those called to serve the Lord in their home countries.

Now as an adult, I often have had people in churches from my home country comment about how our family is “suffering for Jesus.” While I don’t deny that there are times of hardship, overall most missionaries today don’t suffer in the ways that Paul suffered. We may be inconvenienced. We may be uncomfortable, but to truly suffer for Christ’s body is unfamiliar to most believers.

Paul rejoiced that he was able to suffer for the sake of Christ’s body, the Church. We must not forget that there are those throughout the world who are truly physically suffering. It should humble us to know that they do it willingly and rejoice at the opportunity to suffer for Christ’s body, the Church.

*Till, with the vision
glorious, her longing
eyes are blest, and
the great Church
victorious shall be the
Church at rest.*

“The Church’s One
Foundation” by Samuel J.
Stone

**Have mercy on
me, my God, have
mercy on me, for in
you I take refuge.
I will take refuge
in the shadow of
your wings until the
disaster has passed
(Psalm 57:1).**

Please pray:

That many people in Tonga
will come to know Christ
and be filled with the Holy
Spirit.

SUN.
March
3

Philemon
1:12-20

So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me (Philem. 1:17).

IN IT TOGETHER

L. M. A.

When I was a teenager, our family was traveling throughout the United States sharing with churches what God was doing through us on the mission field. I can remember having car problems near a small town in Kansas on our way to visit family in Oklahoma. We didn't know anyone and this was before the days of cell phones and internet searches. My parents had the idea of limping along to a church in that small Kansas town. I can still remember feeling so embarrassed and awkward about my parents just showing up and asking for help at a local church, but the pastor there welcomed us as "partners" in the work of the Lord. He called a mechanic to help us and we were soon on our way again.

Now as an adult, I've joked with my husband that we don't have to worry as long as we can find one of our churches. While this might not always be true, we have found grace and comfort and care over and over as people have welcomed us as "partners" in God's work. What a blessing!

Does the place you're called to labor seem so small and little known? It is great if God is in it, and He'll not forget His own.

"Little Is Much When God Is in It" by Kittie L. Suffield

Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:3-4).

Please pray:

For the development of Christian leaders in Tonga.