

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Four : A Proper Prayer Life for a Proper Church Life

I. Overview:

1 Timothy 2:1, "... that petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men; on behalf of kings and all who are in high position, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life." A proper church is a praying church; prayer is more important than work. The way to have a good church life is to pray. In order to be infused with the instruction of God to care for the church, the elders must have much and thorough prayer so that they can enter into the reality of "reading the saints," just as the high priest in the Old Testament read the stones on the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim in the presence of God. After the Urim and the Thummim were put into the breastplate, it became a breastplate of judgment. The reality of the Urim and the Thummim is the mingled spirit. God speaks through the breastplate, because the Lord's speaking by the breastplate of judgment is through negative situations. The leading ones, those who minister the word in the church, should take the lead to have a prayer life that we receive wisdom of the Lord concerning the situation, people, and the church. If all the saints in all the churches persevere in prayer, the recovery will be greatly enriched and uplifted; they will enjoy the smile of the Lord's face, and the living person of Christ will become their experience and enjoyment.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound if we would have a proper church life, we must first have a prayer life.

A prayer ministry is the prerequisite for the administration and shepherding of a local church. Thus, Paul exhorts Timothy that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men. This is the first word concerning the positive aspect of the church life that Paul gives after speaking of God's economy and after charging Timothy to war the good warfare for God's economy. Timothy had to take the lead to have a prayer life.

B. Explain that heading negative news about the church or saints, we should pray.

Whenever we hear some news, good or bad, concerning a particular church, we should pray. Do not discuss the situation, do not gossip about it, and do not criticize. Just pray! Should you hear that a saint is weak or backsliding, do not talk about that person, and do not criticize him. Moreover, do not immediately go to visit him. Instead, pray for him. Whether or not you should visit him depends on the Lord's leading.

Day 2 —

A. Explain the words in 1 Timothy 2:1.

In 1 Timothy 2:1 Paul mentions petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings. Prayer is general, having worship and fellowship as its essence. Petitions are special and are for particular needs. The Greek word rendered "intercessions" denotes an approaching of God in a personal and confiding manner, that is, an

intervening, an interfering, before God in others' affairs for their benefit. In addition, we must offer thanksgiving.

B. Expound that prayer is more important than work.

May we all learn the lesson that the way to have a good church life is to pray. This is crucial. If our talking is turned into praying, the church in our locality will be transformed. We should pray on behalf of all men because God our Savior desires all men to be saved and to know the truth. Our prayer is required for the carrying out of God's desire.

Day 3 —

A. Expound on the breastplate with the additional Thummim of the twenty-two Hebrew letters to spell out all words and sentences.

The twelve names on the breastplate included eighteen of the twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The remaining four letters were put on a piece called the Thummim. The Hebrew word Thummim means "perfecters" or "completers." Thus, on the breastplate with the additional piece called the Thummim all twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet could be found. And the Thummim could be used to spell out words and sentences.

B. Describe when the Urim and the Thummim were added to the breastplate, they caused it to become the breastplate of judgment.

Whenever Joshua needed guidance concerning the move of the people, he had to go to the high priest who then received guidance from God by means of the Urim and the Thummim. Thus, God spoke through the Urim and the Thummim. Both the Urim and the Thummim typify Christ...The breastplate typifies the church. Therefore, the Urim and the Thummim added to the breastplate typify Christ added to the church for God's leading.

Day 4 —

A. State the significance of the breastplate being called the breastplate of judgment.

The breastplate was called the breastplate of judgment. The judgment here is not mainly to determine what is right or wrong, what is just or unjust. Instead, this judgment is so that God's people could know His leading. Hence, the breastplate of judgment is actually the breastplate of leading. We must judge the things of the flesh and the mind set on the flesh.

This judgment clears the way for us to know God's leading.

B. Explain breastplate's building being a picture of the building of the Body of Christ.

The building of the breastplate is a picture of the building of the Body of Christ. If we want to know God's judgment, first of all we need the building of God's people. If we do not have this building, we simply do not have the breastplate. Second, we need Christ to be added as light and perfection, and third, we need to get into the presence of God. Fourth, there must be the fresh light for us to read the letters to determine God's will.

Day 5 —

A. Expound the application of the breastplate with the Urim and the Thummim.

Today's application of the breastplate with the Urim and the Thummim requires that the leading ones bear the saints and Christ on their hearts so that they may know the condition of the saints and the completion of Christ for God's leading. These leading ones need to see the Lord's shining and read the saints. Then they will be able to receive God's leading concerning the church in their locality.

B. Explain what the principle of Paul and the Lord's Epistles being written according to.

Paul's Epistles and also the seven epistles of the Lord Jesus to the seven churches in Asia were all written according to this principle. They were written not according to the positive things of the churches, but the negative situation of the churches. Take, for example, Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. Paul wrote this Epistle according to his reading of the negative situation at Corinth.

Day 6 —

A. Testify how to practice the persevering in prayer.

We need to be willing to make a deal with the Lord, even to make a vow to Him, that we will be a praying people. If all the saints in all the churches make such a deal with the Lord, the recovery will be greatly enriched and uplifted. Furthermore, the saints will enjoy the Lord, His presence, and His anointing. All day long, they will enjoy the smile of the Lord's face.

B. What is the one thing of that the church being living, fresh and enriched depends on?

Whether the church is living and fresh and enriched depends on this one thing, which is that we are being filled continuously with the Triune God. For this, we need first the willingness and second the emptiness. The third thing that we need is the instant, constant prayer. We must pray. Whatever the old man can do is condemned by God. We have to realize this. Then we will see our need of God and will pray constantly and instantly.

III. Conclusion:

When we come together, we should pray to bring our minds, our different views, into oneness. Indeed, we should pray ourselves into the Spirit. When we pray in our spirit, we have the same mind, then we are in the oneness. Even while shepherding and visiting the unsaved or the saints, we should always be in prayer. In this way, when we go, we don't say what we thought we were going to say. By praying without ceasing, our spirits are released, and we find ourselves speaking from the spirit. God treasures our willingness, which He initiates. But our capability and what we are able to do are no value in God's sight. God wants to use us, not ours. Therefore, we must empty ourselves and see that we need God, and we will pray without ceasing at all times.