

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

There Are Different Ministries

By Steve Hudgins

Paul wrote the Corinthians as follows: *“And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord”* (1 Cor. 12:5). The marginal note on *“administrations”* is *ministries*. Surely Paul did not have in mind some of the “ministries” that are becoming common among liberal brethren today. There are now “ministries” that entertain and amuse. Some time ago a Baptist church in Orlando, Florida featured a champion weight lifter at their morning service to attract the crowds. Billy Graham has long had his “entertaining celebrities” to help draw crowds. How far behind are some of the liberal brethren?

We hear and read of the “puppet ministry” that entertains the children. Then there is the “Bus Ministry” to get the children to ride the “Joy Bus” to the place where they can be “ministered to” by the puppets. The “Bus Ministry” must be a very important one considering the attention and time given it, the articles and books written about it and the award programs, etc. The “Gateway Soulwinning Workshop” which was advertised for St. Louis in July for two and one half days has published their “Program Schedule” which lists 13 time periods devoted to the subject of the “Bus Ministry.” There must be more to this than some of us think. During these two and one half days, four hours are given to open forum panel discussions of the “Bus Ministry.” In addition to this, one brother is to speak on how to sell the church on the “Bus Ministry.” One is to discuss recruiting and training “Bus Workers.” A sister is to speak on “Women in the Bus Ministry.” Other phases of this “ministry” to be discussed by different ones are: “Ways to operate a Bus Ministry,” “Problems in the Bus Ministry,” “Visuals in the Bus Ministry,” “Converting Bus Riders and their Parents,” “Discipline problems and the Bus Ministry,” and “Maintaining high morals in the Bus Ministry.” You see there is quite a bit involved in this “ministry.”

Another “ministry” - one brother at ACU has his own unique “ministry” - the “ministry of gymnastics.” He calls it “Gymnastics to the Glory of God.” His “ministry” carries him to appearance at churches, youth camps, youth rallies and workshops where he demonstrates his gymnastic talents. He will do a gymnastic trick and explain that as you have to know how to do such a trick you have to know the “trick” of being a Christian. He also rides a motorcycle, dresses in white and is known as the “White Knight.” If he fails at some trick he makes an object lesson of that, too, explaining that sin sometimes causes us to fail, He believes that through this “ministry” the Lord is having an effect on people’s lives and finds this “tremendously exciting.” Though this “ministry” takes him from home quite a bit, his wife is understanding and supports him in it believing he is “doing God’s work.”

One may wonder when and, what skilled Skateboarder will start a “Skateboard Ministry”. What about a talented tennis player or golfer starting a “Tennis” or “Golf ministry”? And what about a “Skydiving Ministry”? Surely object lessons could be given from these and many other things. It seems the possibilities are unlimited.

Seriously, is it so that the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4) and of the gospel of the grace of God (the ministry Paul was engaged in - Acts 20:24) has lost so much of its power (Rom. 1:16) and appeal (Acts 2:41) that we must turn to the wild imaginations and inventions of weak, fallible men to get the job done? Perhaps some of the liberal brethren wonder how the apostles got along so well and did such a good job without all the present “ministries” to help them. Well, they did have the word of God and they had faith in God and in His way (Isa. 55:8, 9; Mk. 16:15-16). —*Truth Magazine, February 22, 1979.* ■

Editor’s Note: Acts 6:4 says, *“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”* This “*ministry*” of the apostles of Christ, was not a “Puppet Ministry,” “Joy Bus Ministry,” “Dorcas Ministry,” “Jumping for Jesus Basketball Ministry,” “Teen Ministry,” “Ladies Ministry,” “Visitation Ministry” or “Gymnastics Ministry.” This “*ministry*” was the service of preaching the word of God to a lost and dying world and the edification of the saints in Christ in the “*most holy faith*” (Jude 20; Eph. 4:11-16). Our liberal brethren and other denominationalists abuse and misuse the word “*ministry*,” just like they abuse and misuse the word “*fellowship*” by applying it to *social* matters when it pertains to *spiritual* matters. Shame on them! Open your Bibles and study God’s word (2 Tim. 2:15)!

Personal Prayer

By Bob Dodson

Many new Christians feel that they do not know how to pray, there is much to be learned about prayer and you will grow in your knowledge and practice of prayer, but you can and should pray from the very beginning of your Christian life. Read Matthew 7:7-11. God wants you to pray. He wants you to seek His help as a loving Father.

Read James 5:16-19. This shows that prayer is a powerful force. Sometimes people think God cannot answer prayers without a miracle; but He ***“is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”*** (Eph. 3:20).

Read 1 John 5:14-15. You can be confident that God will hear you. Remember, however, that God’s answer will be ***“according to his will.”*** You should always pray with the attitude that God’s wisdom and goodness are to be trusted more than your own desires. Sometimes the best answer we can receive is for God to refuse what we request. We may not always understand why, but we know that God knows best. See also 1 John 3:22.

Here are some things which should be included in prayers:

- Confession of sins - 1 John 1:9
- Thanksgiving for God’s goodness - Colossians 4:2
- When you are troubled - Philippians 4:6-7
- To overcome temptations - Matthew 26:41
- For daily needs - Matthew 6:11
- For health - James 5:13
- For others - 1 Timothy 2:1

This, of course, is not a complete list. Simply stated, you should pray for anything that is in harmony with the will of God. This includes things that are both material and spiritual.

As you grow spiritually you will learn many wonderful things about prayer. And as you make prayer a regular part of your life you will find it to be a continual source of strength.

You may find it helpful to make a written list of the things and people for which you want to pray. A personal prayer diary may be helpful in reminding you of your particular prayer needs and especially the needs of others for whom you want to pray.— *Fifth Street East Church of Christ Bulletin*, September 15, 2002. ■

Confidence in Prayer

By Joe R. Price

14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.
15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him (1 Jn. 5:14-15).

Prayer is a great spiritual blessing given to Christians in Christ. Prayer is an action of bold, confident faith in our heavenly Father. He promises to give attention to prayers that are asked ***“according to His will”*** (v. 14). You see, prayer is not a selfish endeavor; it is the expression of faith in the Father’s will. This is all the more reason not to be ***“unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is,”*** so that we may pray in faith and not doubt (Eph. 5:17; Jas. 1:5). When a Christian prays like Jesus did in the garden (***“your will be done”***), his or her petition is answered in full measure by the Lord. Remember, prayer is about trusting that God knows better than we do what is best for us. So, whether His specific answer is “yes,” “no” or “not yet,” receive God’s answer with humble thanksgiving. He has heard you and answered you according to His will. — *Sword Tips # 472*, May 11, 2015. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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