

# UNITED

## Pray for One Another

**Reading:** James 5:16, Matthew 6:5-13, 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12

### **Reflection:**

During Paul's second missionary journey he arrived in the city of Thessalonica (modern day Salonica, Greece) where he preached the Gospel for three Sabbaths (see Acts 17:1-9). While there, a few Jews and "a great number" of Greeks and "leading women" came to faith in Jesus and a church was planted. Soon after the church began, Paul was thrown out of the local synagogue and was forced to leave the city. Many months later, after Paul had arrived Corinth, he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to check in with the church and encourage the believers. Timothy reported back that in spite of harsh persecution and false teachers, the church was growing in their faith, love and perseverance. Based on this report, Paul begins to write letters to the church to encourage the believers to stay strong in their faith and trust in Jesus.

Paul, in the first chapter of his second letter to the Thessalonians, gives us a framework to use when praying for other believers. Additionally, he documents some specific prayers he prayed for the Thessalonian church. In our city groups this week we will look further into this framework as well as examine some instruction from Jesus about prayer in the gospel of Matthew.

### **Questions:**

1. How would you describe your prayer life? Why does prayer tend to be a difficult pursuit for most Christians?
2. What do you think was Jesus' purpose in giving the "Lords Prayer" to his disciples in Matthew 6:9-13? How should this prayer influence our prayer life today?
3. 1 Thess. 5:17 tells us to, "pray without ceasing." How is the possible?
4. In the message on Sunday the Puritan advice of, "pray until you pray" was discussed. How can we apply this advice in our prayer lives?
5. In 2 Thess. 1:11 Paul starts his prayer by saying, "With this in mind, we constantly pray for you." Looking back to vs. 3&4 we read as Paul first gives thanks that the churches, "faith is growing," that their love "for one another is increasing" and that they are persevering under trial. What is Paul's purpose in praying for the church with these things in mind?
6. How would our prayers for one another change were we to give thanks for the "Evidences of Grace" in each other's lives as Paul has done in vs. 3&4? Do you tend look for these "evidences" the lives of those you are praying for? Why/why not?
7. Go through the prayers of Paul in 2 Thess. 1:11&12. How can we take these prayers and apply them to our prayers for one another.
8. What can we conclude about praying for one another from this study? How is this different from your current prayer model?