

**40 Days of Prayer**  
**Three Lakes Evangelical Free Church**  
**Day 39**

***Praying for Those in Ministry***  
**Romans 15:30-33**

People engaged in Christian ministry, especially leadership, often feel alone. The truth is, it is very difficult for people not in Christian ministry to understand the pressure of the responsibility of leadership, especially the loneliness that accompanies it. As Paul recounts all the difficulties and suffering that he experienced while on his missionary journeys (2 Corinthians 11:16-27), he adds a struggle that cannot be measured by physical pain.

*Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.*  
(2 Cor. 11:28 NIV)

Paul knew that he was commissioned by God to plant the churches that would be the foundation for the promotion of the Christian Gospel throughout the ages until Jesus returned. While he understood the sovereignty of God, there was the realization that God was asking him to faithfully represent him in this world. It was very important, then, to build a support team that would “have his back” through prayer while he was out on the front lines. The Romans were that team. Chapter 16 is well known for the number of brothers and sisters in the Lord that Paul mentions by name. Beginning with Phoebe, the host of the church in her home, Paul mentions over a dozen other fellow workers and supporters. Then he asks them all to join him in his ministry by praying for him.

*<sup>30</sup> I urge you brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. <sup>31</sup> Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord's people there, <sup>32</sup> so that I may come to you with joy, by God's will, and in your company be refreshed. <sup>33</sup> The God of peace be with you all. Amen*  
(Rom. 15:30-33 NIV)

In this passage, Paul asks the Romans to pray for him with specific petitions, all of which relate to specific current ministry projects. He is collecting a freewill offering for the church in Judea and he asks for prayers for protection as he travels with it. He also asked that when he delivers this offering that the churches will receive it with gratitude. Then he asks for prayer that he might have the opportunity to visit with them and be refreshed by their fellowship. Here is a wonderful example of someone in Christian ministry who has organized a *prayer team*, a group of supporters who are ready to stand in the gap and pray for his ministry.

May I encourage all of you who are in ministry leadership to recruit a prayer team. I believe that every ministry leader needs to have a team of supporters who will be committed to pray for the needs of his/her ministry. Then share your specific requests with them and develop a partnership in your ministry. A while back I contacted several

brothers and sisters from several states across the U.S., whom I knew I could trust, and asked them to be on my personal prayer team. I must confess that I have not been very faithful in sending them my list of prayer concerns (confession is good for the soul!), but as I write this meditation, I am renewing my commitment to re-engage this team. How arrogant to believe that I can flourish in ministry without the prayer support of people who care about me and will stand with me in prayer!! If Paul needed that team support, certainly we need it, and even more!

Our ministry pressures may not be of the same intensity that Paul experienced, but the pressure is nonetheless a very real pressure. Let's not carry the burden alone.

Read Philippians 1:3-8. What from these verses indicates that the Philippians may be another prayer team for Paul?