

Speaking to the soul



Prayer

God knows how often I pray for you. Day and night I bring you and your needs in prayer to God, whom I serve with all my heart by spreading the Good News about his Son. Romans 1:9

Prayer is a blessing in every way. It is how we communicate with God and so it needs to be at the beating heart of a Christian's life. Prayerlessness is the surest path to spiritual weakness and discouragement. By contrast, the person who takes prayer seriously will find every aspect of their life blessed. However, the blessings of prayer don't end there.

They also strengthen our relationships with our Christian brothers and sisters. One of the greatest privileges of my life is the knowledge that, every day, people pray for me. I couldn't demand or deserve it, but I receive it with enormous gratitude.

In today's verses, we are given an insight into Paul's life as we hear that he was persistent in his prayers for the Christians in Rome. He prayed for them night and day - which shows the intensity of his commitment to them. These were not formal prayers that he offered as a matter of dull religious duty, but prayers which sprang from his passionate desire to see them stand strong in the faith in their strategically important city.

Paul probably wrote this letter whilst he was in Corinth, about 20 years after the end of Jesus' earthly ministry. He declared that he was longing to see them and so he would, but probably not in the way that any of them expected. Approximately five years later, he would arrive in Rome as a prisoner, having been arrested in Jerusalem.

I have no doubt that, throughout the intervening years, he continued to pray faithfully for the church in Rome - and one can only imagine the joy he felt when he was finally able to spend time with them. It's clear that this relationship was, and always had been, underpinned by prayer. Prayer is vital to our Christian life. It not only strengthens our relationship with God but also with our Christian brothers and sisters.

QUESTION

In what ways have you seen your prayers strengthen your relationships with others?

PRAYER

Loving God, I thank you for the privilege of prayer and for the way in which it strengthens every part of my life. Amen

Photograph - St Colman's Church, Dunmurry Parish

