

Speaking to the soul



Prayer

We have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Colossians 1:9

Recently, I heard someone say that the situation they were facing was so desperate that all they could do was pray about it. They made it sound as if their circumstances were so hopeless that they were willing to grasp at any option, however daft. We need to be clear that the apostle Paul saw prayer in a completely different way. For him, prayer was not the last resort but the first. He prayed for the people in Colossae because, even though he didn't know them, he cared about them and longed that they would thrive as Christians in a tough environment.

Paul's prayer for the Colossian Christians was that they would know God's will. That always needs to be at the heart of our prayers. Prayer is never our opportunity to tell God what we think is best, or to ask him to implement the decisions we have made. Because God is all loving and all knowing, our prayers should always focus on seeking his will, because his will is bound to be best. God's will is for us to have both wisdom and understanding. You can know everything there is to know about God and the Bible, but if you don't apply it to your life, it is useless.

People often think of prayer as being remote from normal life. They see it as a way of escaping from reality. In this verse, Paul makes it clear that prayer is exactly the opposite. It is the most practical and down-to-earth way in which we can engage with other people. If we truly love them, we will be praying for them. Prayer is the language of love, and I urge you to turn all your thoughts about other people today into prayers that they will find and do God's perfect will.

QUESTION

How does this verse challenge the way in which you pray for other people?

PRAYER

Loving Father, thank you for the privilege of prayer. Help me to love other people so much that prayer will become increasingly central to my life. Amen

Photograph - St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin

