

Rom 8:26 (NIV), In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

Rom 8:27 (NIV), And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

45-08-03-Empowered for Prayer
Holy Spirit, prayer, illumination, tongues
Rom 8:26-27

Prayer is so important that God gives all the help we need to do it.

INTRODUCTION:

–“How many think prayer is important?” “How many think it’s not only important, but essential?” “How many feel they always know what to pray for and the best way to pray?”

–**Text**– **Rom 8:26-27**, In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.

– There’s a gap between our human weakness and our divine calling, which can only be filled by the Holy Spirit: “How big is your gap?”

Are you willing to let the gap be filled?” **HOM.idea. Title.**

– How does God help us? In a variety of ways. One way is...

I. Through Groaning Prayer (“the Spirit ...intercedes for us with groans”)

- A. The intercession comes from the Spirit, the groaning comes from us.
- B. [In **Born to Reproduce**, Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators, says that new birth isn’t the end point; labor pains continue.] **Paul understood this**– **Gal 4:19**, My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.... (He groaned for their growth in Christ.)
- C. What is this groaning?
 1. A sub-rational expression [**AHD**: 1. To voice a deep, inarticulate sound, as of pain, grief, or displeasure. 2. To make a sound expressive of stress or strain.] (We have spiritual grief and pain that we can’t always put into words, but “the Spirit helps us in our weakness”
 2. God didn’t create us for a world of pain and death—we long spiritually for freedom from mortality. Our groaning is a proper response to these mortal conditions– **Rom 8:23**, Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

TRANS: [As **L&D nurses**, we hear lots of “maternal moaning”—we don’t try to stop it; we just medicate it or close the door. But it’s sad when laboring mothers come in alone with no one to groan with. / A **doula** (*servant*) is a coach who accompanies a mother through labor, helping her stay focused and relaxed through contractions.]

The Holy Spirit also does this for us and more; He *enables* our *groans*, directing them into the ears of *God the Father*. The Spirit can empower prayer in another way, similar to this way of *groaning*, and that's...

II. Through a Prayer-Language (1 Corinthians 14)

A. Sadly, *speaking in tongues* is controversial [Some churches fanatically overemphasize it and others blaspheme by calling it a work of the devil] . But Paul says in 1 Cor 14:39b, ...do not forbid speaking in tongues.

1. It's Spirit-generated prayer like "groaning" prayer— Acts 2:4, All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Note: they spoke, and the Spirit enabled.)
2. It's very succinct and on target— 1 Cor 14:2, For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. (This makes it a little *mysterious*...)
3. It comes from our spiritual subconscious, like the *groaning*, and bypasses our own thought, so that it's not subject to our mistaken ideas— 1 Cor 14:14, For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. (Yet Paul doesn't say it's the best way to pray— 1 Cor 14:15, So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.)
4. It edifies [*builds, strengthens*] the human spirit of the person praying —1 Cor 14:4, He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

B. Paul thought this was a good way to pray— 1 Cor 14:5a, I would like every one of you to speak in tongues.... (BUT he knew seeking personal growth must be balanced with blessing others— 1 Cor 14:5b, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.)

TRANS: Not all Christians get this gift— 1 Cor 12:30, Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues?... (But, if you'd like it, ask for it. I did at age 17, and it's been a blessing in my prayer life.) But the Holy Spirit can also bless our prayer life....

III. Through Putting Intelligible Words in Our Mouth

A. The Holy Spirit is our Internal Teacher— John 14:26, But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things... (*Everything? Yes, everything we need to know!*)

B. He can instruct our lips— Luke 12:11-12, "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."— (If this is true for us before *hostile dignitaries*, or even before *demonic principalities and powers*, how much more before the Supreme Dignitary Who invites our prayers!)

TRANS: The Holy Spirit can put words in your mouth for prayer! But there's a difference between, "*Let me give you what to say...*" and "*Let me show you how...*" [Glenn Clark's concept of *prayer laboratories* at CFO camps....] The Spirit wants to take us into the laboratory of Kingdom praying to show us how to pray. And He empowers us in another way:

IV. Through Renewed Minds (illumination)

- A. We need a new thought pattern— Eph 4:17, So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. v.22-23, You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be **made new in the attitude of your minds**; (renewed thinking patterns).
- B. The Holy Spirit helps align our thinking to God's will— Rom 12:2, Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.
 1. Our job is to surrender our bodies— Rom 12:1, Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. (our activity [what we do], our location [where we go], our time [how long we stay])
 2. By **not conforming** to the pattern of this world, we can resist praying worldly prayers: "*God help our team to win.*" "*Lord, give me a new house.*" But instead: "*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.*"

CONCLUSION:

—Prayer is an adventure to last a lifetime. But adventurers in unfamiliar territory need a good Guide... That's why we need the Holy Spirit's help—we need His **empowerment for prayer**. Prayer is our essential lifeline with our Father in Heaven. [Some may need to *establish* that lifeline by accepting Christ as Lord and Savior.] But, **this lifeline of prayer is so important that God gives us His Holy Spirit, so that we have all the help we need**. So, let's pray for that help...