

*Series:* Community and Diversity; *Sermon:* **Plans and Prayers**  
*Delivered by:* **Dr. Josh Moody**, senior pastor; *Date:* **January 22, 2017**

***Bible text explored: Romans 15:22–33***

<sup>22</sup>This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. <sup>23</sup>But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, <sup>24</sup>I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. <sup>25</sup>At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. <sup>26</sup>For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. <sup>27</sup>For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. <sup>28</sup>When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. <sup>29</sup>I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

<sup>30</sup>I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, <sup>31</sup>that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, <sup>32</sup>so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. <sup>33</sup>May the God of peace be with you all. Amen. [ESV]

***Review and application:***

*Paul's example provides insights about how our planning and praying should mesh.*

1. The plans Paul lays out here (vv. 23-24) are based on the strategy he has adopted, explained (*Rom. 15:20-21*) in the previous paragraph. What was that?  
Does this explain why his extensive ministry tours had not extended to the empire's capital, Rome?
2. Why does the worldview of someone who discounts God tend to be aimless?  
How does the Christian worldview move from a beginning to a consummation?
3. What about Christian strategic thinking rules out selfish aims? (See Matt. 6:33.)
4. How (vv. 25-27) did Paul's delivery of the monetary gift from Gentile churches to the church in Jerusalem fit into his overall strategy? (See also 2 Cor. 9:6-14.)
5. Pastor Moody said a Christian doesn't simply drift through life, but has a plan. Consider his question: "With the person you are, and the gifts God has given you, what can you do to most advance his kingdom?" How would you respond?  
But why must planning be conditional? (See Prov. 16:9 and James 4:15.)
6. Do we rely as much on the prayers of God's people for us (vv. 30-32) as we do on our own planning?  
If not, is this because we are embarrassed to openly share our spiritual and other needs?
7. How were the answers of prayer for Paul, although effective, different from what he or his prayer partners had in mind? (See Acts 25:10-12 and Phil. 1:12-14.)
8. What qualification always applies to our intense prayer efforts? (See Luke 22:42.)  
How would focusing on God's glory more than on personal relief change how we pray?
9. How (v. 33) is obtaining God's peace often the result of prayer? (See Phil 4:6-7.)