



THE PRAYER CLOSET

*Transforming Lives Through Intercessory
Prayer And Fasting*

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PRAYING FOR BELIEVERS

In all of our praying, the most neglected group is often the believers that we know and serve with in the body of Christ. We rarely pray for the spiritual lives and needs of other believers. Our prayer times are often overloaded with a variety of needs. These variety of needs do require our consideration and intercession. However, we often forget to prayer for the body of believers with whom we belong and serve.

At the same time, when we have times or corporate prayer, these times of prayer focus on everything but interceding for each other. When believers join together to pray, it is a good thing for them to intercede for a variety of needs. This is one of the responsibilities of the church (1 Timothy 2:1-3). Yet, we should never forget the necessity of praying for one another.

The early church in the books of Acts presents a model for the churches of succeeding generations to follow. The Bible states in Acts 2:42 that these believers "continued steadfastly in prayer." These believers joined together to pray for each other (Acts 2:47). When they had a need, the believers would unite in prayer concerning the need (Acts 4:23-31, 12:5, 13:1-3). Their example of believers praying for one another provides a model for every church to follow.

This article will focus on believers praying for other believers. A believer needs to intercede for his or her brothers and sisters in Christ. This intercession can be done in either individual or corporate prayer. Believers need to pray for one another. In order to challenge you and motivate you

to do this, I want to show you the benefits of believers praying for other believers. As you see the benefits of doing this, the desire to intercede for other believers should burn in your heart. Following this, there will be suggested prayer requests that you can use in interceding for other believers. This will hopefully give you insight in how to intercede for your brothers and sisters in Christ. You can also use these prayer request to pray for your own spiritual life.

The prayer requests that will be suggested focus on the spiritual lives of believers. When we do pray for other believers, it is often an "organ" recital. We pray for the hearts, kidneys, lungs, and the various organs of other believers. What I mean by this is that we often focus on the physical, emotional, and financial needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is essential that we do pray concerning these types of needs. Intercession concerning these needs should certainly be a part of our prayers for other believers. However, we often do this at the expense of forgetting to pray about the spiritual lives of other believers.

We should not forget to pray concerning the spiritual lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ. This should be our main priority in praying for other believers. The reason for this is that too often our felt needs are not our deepest needs. To pray only concerning the physical, emotional, or financial needs could mean failing to pray for another believer's truest needs. Also, physical, emotional, and financial needs have spiritual ramifications. God may be testing the believer's

faith through this need. God could be chastising the believer through these needs. Through these needs, God is working to accomplish His purpose. While never ignoring these needs, our praying should focus on God's work in the person's life. The suggested prayer requests will enable you to focus on the spiritual lives of other believers and allow you the opportunity to be an instrument of God in ministering to these believers.

The Benefits of Praying For Other Believers

The first benefit of praying for other believers is that it is a sign that you are a genuine Christian. The book of 1 John reveals numerous signs that indicate if a person is a true Christian or not. One of these signs is love for other believers (1 John 3:11-15). It is not the only sign that a person is a true believer, but, it is one of the sure indicators that one has been born-again. The Bible explicitly states that believers will love other believers. This is a characteristic of the new birth.

The love of a Christian is not merely the absence of hostility. It is more than simply not hating a person who professes Jesus Christ. But, it is seeking the highest good of other believers. It is seeking to minister to other believers. Christian love is more than a feeling or a fondness. It is a commitment to minister to and support your brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

How can you seek the highest good for other believers? How can you most effectively minister to your brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ? It is by praying for them. By praying for other believers, you are showing your love for them. You are revealing your compassion and concern for them. You are acting on your commitment to love them. This is a sign that you are born-again. It is one of the proofs on which your assurance of salvation can be built.

Another benefit of praying for other believers is that it is one of the ways you can fulfill the second great commandment (Matthew 22:39). Jesus boldly states that God's great demand is that, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." It is your responsibility to love your neighbor. How much more then should you love those who have been born-again and are your brothers and sisters in the family of God? We are responsible to love those who are not in a personal relationship with God. However, loving your brothers and sisters in Christ is a part of the second great commandment. By striving to love other believers, you are seeking to live in obedience to the second great commandment.

Love is more than a sentimental feeling (1 Corinthians 13). It is a choice that moves you to act. Loving your brothers and sisters in Christ moves you to minister to them. The best way to minister to and care for them is to pray for them. This does not and should not exclude acts of mercy and service for them. ~~Prayer should be the~~ **foundation of your ministry to other believers.** Praying for them is one of the ways that you conform your life to God's demands.

A third benefit of praying for other believers is that it creates an atmosphere of burden-bearing (Galatians 6:1). The New Testament teaches that believers are to bear the burdens of other believers. It is our responsibility to help our brothers and sisters in Christ shoulder the struggles that they face. A crucial way to do this is by praying for one another. You may not always know what to say to your brothers and sisters in Christ when they are weighed down under heavy burdens. Yet, you can talk to God for them. You can carry their burdens to God and call on Him for the provision of their needs. As believers continue this practice, it creates an atmosphere of burden-bearing.

A major part of our Christian fellowship is enabling our brothers and sisters in the faith face and overcome the temptations and trials that they encounter (James 1:2). Prayer is crucial in this task. Prayer channels the love, grace, and power of God into a struggling believer's life. We need t

become disciplined in the practice of praying for our brothers and sisters in Christ. As believers grow in this discipline, they will begin experiencing a compassion for each other and a desire to shoulder the burdens of one another.

Praying for believers fosters unity in the church. Prayer will strengthen and protect the unity among believers. As believers intercede for one another, it deepens the bond of love and compassion that they have for each other. It can also melt away the anger and bitterness that believers might feel toward one another. It is difficult, if not impossible, to cling to bitterness and unforgiveness toward another believer while at the same time truly interceding for that believer. As you intercede for other believers, your heart will be flooded with love and compassion for them. **Laboring in prayer for a person will always increase the love that you have for that person.** God will increase your love for other believers and will deepen your commitment to them as you intercede for them before the throne of grace (**Hebrews 4:16**).

Praying for believers provides the benefit of maturing the believers. By praying for the spiritual growth of believers, they will begin grow spiritually and experience maturity in the faith. It is God's will for believers to grow spiritually and to mature in their faith. When you pray for believers to grow and mature spiritually, you are praying according to the will of God. When you pray according to the will of God, He will answer your prayers. Your prayers are exactly in line with what God desires and demands. You can expect to see God powerfully work in the lives of the believers for whom you intercede. Over a period of time, God will change them and cause them to grow and mature spiritually through your intercession. This, in turn, will strengthen and mature the body. This will enable the body of believers to do the will of God and accomplish God's purpose for that church.

Praying for believers is an essential element in experiencing revival. E.M. Bounds wrote, "Failure to pray has been the baneful, inevitable cause of backsliding and estrangement from God." When believers are not praying for one another and

with one another, the inevitable result will be backsliding. When believers pray for believers, it will bring about a change in their spiritual lives. It will bring about a renewal of their relationship to God. It will bring a greater awareness of sin and the need for repentance. It will create a hunger for the Word. What is revival? It is a fresh awareness of who God is and what He commands of the believer. It is acknowledging and dealing with sin. It is the Holy Spirit stirring the believer to hunger for the Word of God and be obedient to it. Prayer is the instrument that God uses to bring these changes about in the lives of believers. By praying for the spiritual lives of believers, it paves the way for the experience of true revival by those believers. Through prayer, believers can experience a genuine renewal of their relationship to God and of their obedience to Him.

Believers experience encouragement when their brothers and sisters in Christ pray for them. The Bible teaches that believers are to encourage one another and to provoke each other to faithfulness and good works (**Hebrews 10:24-25**). It is the responsibility of believers to encourage their fellow believers to stay faithful to Christ and to abound in love and good works. God has not called any believer to be a "Lone Ranger" in the body of Christ. Believers need the encouragement of other believers. Believers are like porcupines on a cold night. **We need each other even though we needle each other.**

When God called you into salvation in Jesus Christ, He also called you into fellowship with other believers. You cannot separate these two parts of the Christian life. They are joined together. Being called into the body of Christ brings the privilege of fellowship. However, it also brings the responsibility of encouraging other believers. It is our precious responsibility to encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The writer of Hebrews reveals why believers need to encourage one another. He declares that we are in need of endurance (**Hebrews 10:36**). The pressure of daily life, the busyness and the demands of schedules, and the battle with Satan, the world,

and the flesh make believers weary. It seems that it would be easy to slack off or quit. Every believer needs encouragement so that he or she can stay faithful to Jesus Christ regardless of what his or her circumstances are. In order to be faithful to Christ and to live a life worthy of Him, the believer needs the encouragement of other believers.

What is the greatest way that you can encourage other believers? It is by praying for them. This is not to say that you should not take other steps to encourage your brothers and sisters in the faith. There is incredible power in acts of encouragement that you can do toward other believers. Throughout my Christian life, God has used a variety of kind acts to encourage me--phone calls, letters, handshakes, hugs, the preparation of a meal. Acts of encouragement like this have been powerfully used of God in my life and I am sure in your life also.

Yet, nothing will encourage a believer like prayer will. There is no other action that you can take that will enable a believer to stay faithful to Christ like prayer will. This is because you are focusing God's power, grace, and mercy on this person. Your prayers are the channel through which God's power, grace, and mercy flow into the believer's life, giving him or her the strength and endurance that he or she desperately needs.

Praying for believers is a means of delivering them from their sins (1 John 5:16). Each believer has particular sins or sinful habits that he or she struggles with on a continual basis. By praying for a believer's sanctification and holiness, it will provide the motivation and power that the believer needs to confront the sin(s) and to root the sin(s) out of his or her life. Through prayer, you can help other believers deal with the sins that plague them.

Through prayer, you can also deliver a believer from the judgment of God. This is illustrated in the life of Abraham (**Genesis 18:16-33**). Lot was a true believer (**2 Peter 2:8**). Yet, this true believer was entangled in a web of worldliness and compromise. This true believer had backslidden and was facing the judgment of God. It was only through the prayers of Abraham that Lot

was delivered from the judgment of God. Abraham's intercession stood between Lot and God's judgment. You may be the only person who is praying for a straying believer (**James 5:19-20**). Your intercession can be used of God to deliver this believer from His judgment and from backsliding.

Praying for believers empowers the church. The Word of God declares in **Ephesians 4:30**, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed to the day of redemption." Unconfessed sin grieves the Holy Spirit. Yet, it is important to notice the context of this passage. Paul has been dealing with how believers are to treat believers. It is interesting to notice the sins that he lists that grieve the Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 4:31**). The sins that Paul lists are those that are committed in relationships. When these sins are present among believers, the Holy Spirit is grieved. When the Holy Spirit is grieved, He will not work in a powerful and life-transforming way among those believers. He will not release His almighty power among a people that tolerate the sins that grieve Him. It is only when believers are in a right relationship -- tenderhearted, kind, and forgiving -- that they can expect the powerful working of the Holy Spirit in their midst.

When believers pray for one another, it can enable them to overcome the sins that Paul lists in **Ephesians 4:31**. As they pray for one another, God will produce the qualities that Paul describes in **Ephesians 4:32**. Because of this, the Holy Spirit will be pleased rather than grieved. He will release His power and transform lives. This empowering can be traced back to believers praying for one another. It is an important step to receiving the power of God.

A final benefit of praying for believers is that assurance that you will always have someone praying for you (1 Thessalonians 5:17). If we do not pray for each other, who will pray for us? The Lord Jesus Christ declares that true believers will have tribulation in the world (**John 16:33**). If you are a Christian, you cannot find friendship and fellowship in the world (**James 4:4**). Believers must pray for one another; no one else will.

One of my favorite scenes in the life of Jesus is found in **John 6**. Jesus has preached a powerful and confrontational message to the crowd that has been following Him. The crowd begins to leave because they are offended by Him and His message. Jesus turns to His disciples and says, "Do you also want to go away? (**John 6:67**)" Peter, speaking for the disciples, declares, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life (**John 6:68**)." In other words, Peter says, "Where else can we go? You are our only hope!"

This illustrates my point. Where can the believer turn to other than to Christ and His body, the church? Where else can the believer find strength, comfort, and encouragement for his or her walk with God and witness in the world? The believer certainly cannot turn to the world for these things. A believer cannot expect anyone but other believers to pray for him or her. Believers must intercede for believers; we are all that we have.

Practical Suggestions For Praying For Believers

Praying for other believers may seem to be an overwhelming task for you. It might seem impossible for you to pray for other believers since you are associated with so many or know so many. This section is intended to help you think about some ways to manage this task. The following are some suggestions that you might want to consider in developing a system of praying for believers. It is my hope and prayer that these suggestions will give you some insight to help you develop your own system of intercession for believers. Don't be overwhelmed by the task! Ask God to give you the insight and wisdom to develop a method of praying for believers that will fit your prayer life. Then, pray!

(1) Pray for the members of your Sunday School class or small group. This would be a good

beginning in praying for believers. Pray for each member on a daily basis or at least on a regular basis. You might focus on different requests each day for all the members of your class or group.

(2) Pray for entire body of believers that you belong to on a regular basis. When I served in churches, I prayed through the entire membership on a regular basis. In the smaller churches, I would pray for all the members on a daily basis or at least every two or three days. In the larger churches that I served, I would pray for the entire membership every week or two. In this way, I would attempt to cover every member with prayer. You might want to consider getting a list of the membership of your church. When you get this list, divide the membership up into what are manageable units for you. Then pray through these groups of believers on a regular basis.

(3) You might want to consider "adopting" believers that you want to pray for over a period of time. You can choose a believers or a certain number of believers that you can pray for during a specified time period. Ask God to place on your heart and mind the believers for whom He wants you to intercede. Also, ask Him to guide you in how long He wants you to focus on interceding for these believers. During this time, pour yourself out in intercession for these believers.

(4) Pray for believers that you do not know very well. It is often very easy to pray for those believers that you are the closest to in your church or group. This may be an area that you need to get out of your comfort zone and develop. Pray for guidance and according to the Holy Spirit's leadership, choose a believer or believers that you will pray for on a regular basis or for a specified time. Intercede for them on the basis of the suggested prayer requests in this issue. Then, let them know about your concern and your intercession with a phone call, a note, or at worship service, or a class. By doing this, you are not only interceding for another believer, but you are also

seeking an opportunity for deeper fellowship with another brother or sister in Christ.

(5) You might want to develop a team of intercessors whose main priority is praying for believers. There may be believers in your church or your prayer ministry who may have a burden concerning this. You might have believers who feel that interceding for other believers is God's calling for their prayer life. You can even pray that God will develop and call people in your church or prayer ministry to focus specifically on interceding for believers. Once you develop a team, these intercessors can regularly and passionately pray for the believers that make up your church.

Prayer Requests For Other Believers

The following are some prayer requests that can guide you in praying for other believers. These prayer requests are based on the Word of God.. You can pray these requests with faith and power. When you pray concerning these requests, you are praying God's will. You are praying His desires for the believer or believers for whom you intercede. Over time, you can and will see changes in those for whom you are praying. As always be sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. There are some requests that you need to focus on more due to the need of the believer. The Holy Spirit may give you particular insight in what to pray for the believer. Pray according to His leading. You can even use these prayer requests to pray for your own spiritual life.

(1) Father, I plead that _____ will be diligent to confess his/her sins so that You will be faithful and just to forgive _____'s sins and to cleanse _____ of his/her unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

(2) God, I ask that _____ would not let sin reign in his/her mortal body. (Romans 6:12).

(3) Father, I pray that _____ would consider himself/herself dead to sin but alive to God in Jesus Christ (Romans 6:11).

(4) I plead that _____ would present his/her body as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to You, O God. This is his/her spiritual service of worship (Romans 12:1).

(5) I ask that _____ would not be conformed to this world, but that he/she would be transformed by the renewing of his/her mind so that _____ may prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2).

(6) Merciful God, I pray that _____ would discern his/her spiritual gift(s) and would use the spiritual gift(s) that You have given him/her through the power and working of the Holy Spirit. Enable _____ to use his/her spiritual gift(s) for the strengthening of the church (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11).

(7) As the deer pants for the water brooks, so cause _____'s soul to thirst and long for you, the living God (Psalm 42:1).

(8) I pray that the Holy Spirit would grant wisdom and insight to _____ so that he/she would have a deeper, more intimate knowledge of God (Ephesians 1:17).

(9) Father, I plead that _____ will desire you above all things on earth. _____'s heart and flesh may fail, but I ask that You will be the strength of _____'s heart and _____'s portion forever (Psalm 73:25-26).

(10) I plead that _____ will understand the sure and secure hope of his/her calling in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:18).

(In the New Testament, "hope" is a confidence that what God has promised will be ours. Those whom God has called to faith in Jesus Christ have an assured future. By praying for this, you are asking God to give the believer the understanding and assurance of his/her personal and complete transformation.)

(11) Father, I ask that You will grant _____ understanding about the glorious inheritance that You have given to him/her through Jesus Christ (**Ephesians 1:18**).

(12) Father, I plead that You will give _____ understanding in the exceeding greatness of Your power toward _____. Cause _____ to understand that the power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is available to him/her (**Ephesians 1:18**).

(13) God, I ask that _____ would be encouraged through and through by the Holy Spirit. Remove any discouragement from _____'s life (**Ephesians 3:16**).

(14) I pray that _____ would be more and more surrendered to Jesus Christ. Enable _____ to bring every area of his/her life under the lordship of Jesus Christ (**Ephesians 3:17**).

(15) Lord God, I pray that _____ would be rooted and grounded in your love. I plead that _____ will be able to comprehend what is the width and length and depth and height of Christ's love for him/her. I call on You to cause _____ to know and experience Christ's love which passes understanding (**Ephesians 3:18-19**).

(16) Father, I ask that _____ would be filled with the fullness of God. Cause _____ to reflect Christ in what he/she says thinks, and does (**Ephesians 3:19**).

(17) I plead that _____'s love would overflow with knowledge and discernment. Cause _____'s love to overflow with knowledge and discernment so that he/she can make the best possible choices in his/her life, stay morally pure, not cause anyone else to stumble, and that his/her life will be filled with righteous words and deeds (**Philippians 1:9-11**).

(18) Lord, I pray that You would grant that _____ would be filled with the knowledge of Your will. Grant _____ insight into Your Word and the wisdom to know how to apply this to his/her life so that he/she can life a life worthy of You (**Colossians 1:9**).

(19) I ask that _____ would stand mature and complete in all of the will of God as revealed in His Word (**Colossians 4:12**).

(20) I plead that _____ would live a life worthy of his/her calling in Jesus Christ (**2 Thess. 1:11**).

(21) I pray that You would work powerfully in _____'s life so that You call fulfill all the good pleasure of Your goodness and the work of faith with power. Do this in _____'s life so that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in him/her and then _____ in Christ (**2 Thessalonians 1:12**).

(22) Father, do not allow _____ to be anxious for nothing. Cause _____ to bring all his/her requests to You along with thanks for Your blessings (**Philippians 4:6-7**).

(23) I pray that _____ will continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving (**Colossians 4:2**).

(24) Lord God, I ask that _____ will love You with all his/her heart, soul, mind, and strength. I also ask that _____ will love his/her neighbor as himself/herself (**Matthew 22:37-39**).

(25) Father, I plead that all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking would be put away from _____'s life. I pray that _____ would be kind to others, tenderhearted, forgiving just as God for Christ's sake has forgiven him/her (**Ephesians 4:31-32**).

(26) Lord, I pray that _____ would be filled with the Holy Spirit on a daily basis and that he/she would not quench or grieve the Holy Spirit who lives inside of him/her (**Ephesians 5:18**).

(27) I ask that _____ would exercise a righteous influence in this world. Cause _____ to be salt and light in this world (**Matthew 5:13-16**).

(28) Enable _____ to persuade the lost to turn from their sin and to trust in Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:20**).

(29) Create the mind of Christ in _____ (**Philippians 2:5-11**).

(30) I pray that You will continue and complete the good work that You have begun in _____ . I am confident in Your power and willingness to do this. Remove any obstacle that would oppose Your work in _____'s life (**Philippians 1:6**).

Discerning The Difference Between Satan's Work and The Spirit's Work

In the last issue of *The Prayer Closet*, we examined the believer's armor. As a believer, you are in a spiritual war. You must learn to put on this armor and use it. At the same time, you should not be ignorant about Satan's schemes. You need to grow in your discernment of Satan's attacks. One of his main ways of attacking the believer is to produce guilt and fear in the life of a believer. He is a master at producing guilt and fear in the lives of believers. He wants you to live in self-condemnation and fear. At times, believers can have trouble knowing the difference between the conviction of the Spirit and the condemnation of Satan. In order to help you discern the difference, the following are some basic guidelines to help you know the difference between the conviction of the Spirit and the condemnation Satan.

(1) *The Holy Spirit is going to point you to Jesus Christ and the cleansing power of His blood. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and His work. He will point you to the truth that the blood of Jesus Christ is sufficient to cleanse you from every sin. His goal is to cause you to look away from yourself and to Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. Satan is going to work to focus your attention on yourself and your sin. He wants you to dwell on what you have done and how terrible and horrible it is. Satan's goal is to get you focused on*

yourself and your sin so that you will be overwhelmed with guilt and despair.

(2) *The Holy Spirit will reveal your position in Christ to you. He will show you that you are a loved, secure, and forgiven child of God. He teaches you that God loves you and that He wants to have fellowship with you. His goal is to draw you into deeper fellowship with God. Satan works to convince you that you are so wicked that God cannot possibly love you or use you. He wants you to believe that you are unworthy of God's love and forgiveness, and help. His goal is to drive you away from God.*

(3) *The Holy Spirit works to help you realize that there is forgiveness and restoration available to you, no matter how horrible you believe what your sin is. The Holy Spirit convicts you so that you will confess your sin and repent of it. He also works to give you the assurance that you are forgiven and cleansed of your sin. His goal is to bring you to confession and repentance along with the assurance of forgiveness. Satan works to convince you that there is no forgiveness and restoration available to you. He wants you to feel as if what you have done is unpardonable. His goal is for you to stay in a condition of self-condemnation and despair.*

(4) *The Holy Spirit will focus your attention on the Word of God. He will bring Scriptures to your mind, offering encouragement and hope to you. His goal is to give you the solid assurance and hope of God's forgiveness based on God's unchanging, absolute Word. Satan will hurl doubts about God's Word into your mind. He will attempt to convince you that **you** cannot claim the promises of God--that God's promises cannot be for you. His goal is to rob you of hope.*

(5) *The Holy Spirit works to strengthen your faith, increase your love for the Lord and others, and to create more hope in your life. His goal is to increase your confidence in the truth and to firmly establish you in the truth. Satan is determined to*

plant in your heart and mind feelings of doubt, fear, despair, and resentment toward God. He does not want you to trust God and His Word. He will hurl blasphemous thoughts like "I hate God" or "I love the devil" into your mind and heart. His goal is to make you feel that no one as evil as you could be forgiven, changed, or used by the Lord.

(6) *The Holy Spirit's conviction is powerful and insistent. He works to bring you to confession and repentance. His goal is to see you mature in the Lord and be involved in fellowship and service with other believers. Satan is nagging, forceful, and demanding in hurling his fiery arrows. He works to cause you to despair and to give up hope. His goal is to deceive you and destroy your faith, to keep you isolated from other believers, and to influence you by those who indulge in sinful behavior.*

(7) *The Holy Spirit works to show you what you can be and will be through His grace and power. He points you to the future and the hope for change and complete transformation. He does not point you to past failures, but, motivates you to press on to the goal of Christlikeness. His goal is for you to experience hope and to know that change is possible in your life. Satan is like an archaeologist--he loves to dig things up! He loves to remind you of past failures and sins. He will remind you of these things and try to convince you that you cannot change. He wants you to believe that you are a hopeless case. His goal is to focus you on the past failures and sins and to convince you that you can never change.*

Prayer For Discernment: *"Lord Jesus, make me sensitive to the working of the Holy Spirit in my life. Do not let me be deceived by the schemes of the devil. Cause me to know when the Spirit is convicting me and when Satan is attempting to condemn me. Enable me to grow in grace and not be snared by the traps of the enemy. Amen."*

Prayer Busters

In the upcoming issues of *The Prayer Closet*, we are going to examine the "prayer busters" that hinder a believer's prayers. "Prayer busters" are attitudes or habits that keep our prayers from being answered or even heard by God. Confronting these prayer busters is not enjoyable or comfortable. Yet, it must be done. When God doesn't answer or we do not get the answer we are looking for from God, it is not time to blame God and abandon our faith. It is time to examine our life and prayers to see if there is something that we are doing or are not doing to hinder our effectiveness in prayer.

Prayer Buster No. 1: Prayerlessness

This is the most common reason for unanswered prayer. Of the things that keep you from receiving an answer from God, simply forgetting to pray is the most frequent. James is pretty clear about this, "You have not because you ask not (**James 4:2**). He declares that you must ask God if you are going to receive from God. Good intentions are not enough. Desiring an answer from God is only a beginning. You must pray regularly earnestly, and persistently. Too many times we do not receive answers from God because we have not prayed faithfully for an extended period of time. **Could it be that you are not hearing from God because He has not heard from you?**

It is true that some prayers receive an immediate answer from God. We also have prayers that we need to pray on the spur of the moment. This could be in a time of great danger or need. I refer to these kinds of prayers as "arrow" prayers. They are short, sharp, and urgent petitions that we offer to God. They are very powerful and urgent.

Yet, the majority of our prayer requests will call for earnest, regular and persistent prayer.

How can you overcome prayerlessness? The following are some practical suggestions that I hope will enable you to deal with prayerlessness.

(1) *You must remember that God does hear and answer prayer (2 Kings 19:14-35; 2 Chronicles 20; Daniel 6:10-22; Matthew 7:7-11)* God calls on you to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). He commands you to be devoted to prayer and thanksgiving (Colossians 4:2).

(2) *You must realize that prayerlessness is a sin (1 Samuel 12:23)*. Prayerlessness results from a spirit of self-sufficiency and pride. When you do not pray, you are saying to God, "I don't need you. I can make it on my own." God hates this attitude and sees it as sin.

(3) *The Bible teaches that the believer is to be persistent in prayer*. The apostle Paul sets the example for the modern believer. Notice how his praying is described: "unceasingly" (Romans 1:9); "always" (Philippians 1:9); "night and day" (1 Thessalonians 3:10). He declared to Timothy that he prayed for Timothy day and night without ceasing (2 Timothy 1:3). The Lord Jesus Christ also teaches us the need for persistence (Matthew 7:7-11). The prayer life of a believer is to be characterized by an unyielding persistence.

(4) *Ask the Holy Spirit to create a spirit of persistence in your prayer life*. Call on the Holy Spirit to give you the endurance to persist in prayer, especially when you are interceding for another person. The Holy Spirit is a persistent intercessor (Romans 8:26-27). The Lord Jesus Christ is also a persistent intercessor (Romans 8:34). He lives to make intercession for His people (Hebrews 7:25).

(5) *Keep a record of your prayer requests*. How can you know if God is answering your prayers if you are not keeping up with your prayer requests? You need to keep a record of your prayer requests.

You can do this in your spiritual journal. If you do not already have a system of recording your prayer requests, you might want to consider using the "Prayer Request and Answer Sheet" found on page 11 of this newsletter. This sheet allows you the opportunity to record your requests and the date that you began praying about this concern. It also gives you space to record the answer and the date that God answered the prayer or at least the date that you realized how God answered the prayer. I realize that this could be a burdensome task. Yet, you need to be discerning and follow the Spirit's leadership in this matter. You do need to develop the discipline of recording your prayer requests and checking the results of your praying. By recording the requests, it will keep the need before you and it will help to develop persistence in your prayer life. It can also become a record of God's faithfulness.

Prayer For Persistence: *"Father, grant me a spirit of persistence in my praying. Enable me to plead with you and wait on You. As I plead with You and wait on You, give me the strength to continue in these things before Your throne of grace. Cleanse me of the times that I did not pray, but blamed You for a lack of answers. Cause me to be still, wait on You, and to plead with You in my prayer life."*

TAX EXEMPT STATUS

The Prayer Closet Ministries, Inc. is now a tax exempt ministry. We are excited that now all gifts given to this ministry are tax deductible. Should you feel God leading you to give to this ministry, you will be mailed a receipt indicating your contribution. At the end of each fiscal year you will receive from us a statement of your annual contributions. Thank you so much for your gifts of monetary support and also for your prayer support of this ministry. It is only through these avenues that we are able to carry on this ministry that God has called us to do.

DATE	PRAYER REQUEST	DATE	ANSWER TO PRAYER

The Beloved Unbeliever Network is a network of intercessors who pray for believers who have spouses that are not Christians. This network of intercessors pray daily for believers who are in this situation. These intercessors have been trained and are committed to praying for believers who find themselves in this type of marriage. If you would like to be added to this prayer list or if you know of someone who is in this situation and would like to place them on this prayer list, please contact Dr. Kevin Meador. Please provide the following information:

Name of the family members
Church affiliation
Any special requests

Any information that is submitted will be kept in strict confidence and the privacy of the individuals will be protected. Name codes will be given to each name submitted. The person sending in the name and myself will be the only ones who know the real name of the person being submitted.



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