



THE PRAYER CLOSET

*Transforming Lives Through Intercessory
Prayer And Fasting*

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ISSUE 1

PRAYING FOR HEALING

An industry executive went to the plant clinic for a routine checkup and was horrified to discover a dark mass on one lung. He and his wife entered the hospital for a biopsy, feeling like anyone would in their situation. While at the hospital, his wife called the members of the church, and within five hours, an all night prayer chain had gone into action. That night, as the man lay awake trying to pray, he suddenly felt an unmistakable presence in the room. Peace invaded his soul, and he slept. When X-rays were taken the next day, the spot was gone. The two X-rays were compared; the first had a dark mass, the second was clear. "Have you ever known this to happen, doctor?" asked the man. After a long, thoughtful look, the doctor replied, "More often than anyone has any idea of." (*Power Through Prayer Groups*, Helen Smith Shoemaker, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1958).

This doctor's response stands in agreement with the Word of God. The Bible reveals that God is a God of healing (**Exodus 15:26**). He is a God who desires to heal and make whole. His healing power removes diseases, restores broken bodies, and mends wounded emotions. Nothing is impossible for Him. No disease, injury, or trauma can withstand His gracious and compassionate healing. His glory shines as He heals and blesses the sick and wounded.

God's healing power is released through prayer. God has ordained to heal people through the intercession of His people. Praying for healing

is not a futile or empty discipline. It is not hocus-pocus emotionalism. It is seeking God for the release of His healing power in the lives of sick and hurting people. Christians can pray for the sick and be channels of blessing and hope for those who are in need.

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on praying for healing. This month's newsletter will cover some basic points of praying for healing. Let me say at the outset that there is no way that one can cover all the aspects of healing in one newsletter. In future issues of the newsletter, we will examine the different aspects of healing and seeking God for the release of healing power. The purpose of this issue is to encourage you and give you some basic insights on how to pray for healing in the lives of the hurting and the needy.

Why Should I Pray For Healing?

You can pray with faith and confidence for sick and hurting people. The Bible offers numerous motivations for praying for healing. *The first motivation is God's name.* In **Exodus 15:26**, God is revealed as "the Lord our Healer." God's names reveal His character. It shows us what God is like and how He acts. This name teaches us that God is a healing God. He created people; He can in turn provide the cure that is needed when something goes wrong in people. He is concerned with the whole person—body and spirit. He desires to heal

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spiritually, emotionally, and physically. This name of God is connected to His covenant name, "Yahweh" or "Lord". This shows us that He is the unchanging Healer. He has healed, He is healing, and He will heal. God's name provides stirring motivation to pray for healing. God is showing you that He desires to heal and has the power to heal. God's name declares His willingness to heal. Because of this, you can pray to Him for healing in the lives of hurting and sick people.

God's nature can give you confidence to pray for healing. God is in the compassion business. He is full of mercy and compassion (**2 Corinthians 1:3; Lamentations 3:22-23**). He heals people because of this mercy and compassion. God is not in the business of gratifying our desires nor making life easy for us. He doesn't heal people so that we can see something exciting or supernatural. He is a God who has compassion for the sick and hurting. His healing flows out of His great compassion for people in need.

You can see this in the ministry of Jesus. The Word of God says in **Matthew 14:14**, "And when Jesus went out, He saw a great multitude: and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick." Do you see the connection? He had compassion and then healed their sick. Compassion motivated Him to heal lepers (**Mark 1:41-42**), a demon-possessed youth (**Mark 9:22**), the blind (**Matthew 20:34**), and even to raise the dead (**Luke 7:11-17**). Jesus healed the blind (**Matthew 9:27-31, 20:29-34**), the demon-possessed (**Matthew 15:22-28, 17:14-21**), and the lepers (**Luke 17:13-14**) in response to their cries for mercy. The healing of the most severely demon-possessed man in the New Testament resulted ultimately from God's mercy (**Mark 5:19**). From this, you can see that God has compassion for the sick and the hurting. Healing is a concrete expression of God's compassion for people. He is concerned for the sick and the hurting. It is His nature to be sensitive to their pain. You can pray to God for His healing because of His nature.

You can pray for healing because it glorifies God. It reveals the greatness of God. It magnifies His mercy, compassion, and power. The purpose of Lazarus' being raised from the dead was to bring glory to God and His Son. The Word of God says in **John 11:4**, "When Jesus heard that, He said: 'This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through

it." When explaining the healing of the lame man to the crowds, Peter says, "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, *glorified His servant Jesus (Acts 3:12-13, emphasis mine)*." This healing is attributed to Jesus Christ and not Peter or John (**Acts 3:6**). The lame man experienced healing so that God would be glorified. This healing achieved the intended affect because Luke tells us all the people "glorified God for what had been done" (**Acts 4:21**). This healing exalted God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

The normal response of people who observed the miraculous ministry of Jesus Christ was to glorify God. They responded to His healing by glorifying and praising God, "Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. So the multitude marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel" (**Matthew 15:30-31**).

When people are healed, it brings glory to God. People praise Him when He touches lives with His healing power. This is a major theme in Luke's gospel. The people glorified God when they saw Jesus heal the paralytic lowered through the roof (**Luke 5:24-26**), when Jesus raised the widow from Nain's son (**Luke 7:16**), when He healed a woman bent over double by a spirit (**Luke 13:13, 17**), and when He healed a blind man (**Luke 18:42-43**). Luke sums up this theme by writing, "Then as He was drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen" (**Luke 19:37**).

You can plead with God for healing because it will glorify Him. God is always concerned about bringing glory to Himself and His Son. This should fire your passion to pray for the sick and the hurting.

You can pray with confidence because God honors our asking for healing. There are times when the Bible gives no other reason for the healings of Jesus than simply that He was asked to heal. One example is the healing of a man from the region of Decapolis. This man was deaf and could

barely speak. This man was brought to Jesus, "Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hands on Him . . . Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly" (**Mark 7:32, 35**). Jesus healed this man's deafness and speech impediment because He was asked. There is no other reason given in the text of Scripture.

Another example of this is the healing of a blind man at Bethsaida. The Bible says, "Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch Him" (**Mark 8:22**). How did Jesus respond to this simple request? The Bible goes on to say, "Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly" (**Mark 8:25**). No reason is given in the context except that Jesus was asked to heal this man.

These texts teach that God honors our asking for healing. This is in agreement with Jesus teaching in **Matthew 7:7**, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." This truth can encourage you to be freer with your requests for God to heal and transform lives. It can create faith and confidence in your heart to pray for healing.

You can pray for healing because God can use healing to bring people to Jesus Christ. God's power to heal can bring people to Jesus Christ. His miracles can focus peoples' attention on the reality of Jesus Christ and His claims. Miracles do not save anyone. A person is saved only by turning from his or her sin to Jesus Christ in personal faith (**John 3:16; Luke 13:1-3; Acts 4:12**). A person must hear the Word of God and respond with faith and repentance (**Romans 10:17**). Yet, the miraculous power of God can gain peoples' attention. It can focus them on their need for Jesus Christ and His life-transforming power.

There are some that will say that healing or miracles in general have no value in bringing people to Jesus Christ. This view is often based on **Matthew 12:39**, "But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.'" Yet, this is not the case. Healing can be used of God to focus attention on His Son and the need of people for Him. This text condemns hardened hypocrites for seeking a sign from God.

First, you need to notice who is asking for the sign. The Pharisees and Sadducees demand that Jesus give them a sign to prove that He is the Messiah, the Son of God (**Matthew 12:38, 16:4**). This fact alone is enough to tell you that their request was not sincere. They did not believe in Jesus and would not believe in Him regardless of what miracles He performed (**John 5:40**). Jesus' statement in **Matthew 12:39** is directed at them.

Second, Jesus had already performed a powerful miracle in their presence. **Matthew 12:22** tells us that Jesus healed a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. These hypocrites saw the miraculous power of Jesus. Yet, the Pharisees and Sadducees wanted another sign. They had no intention of believing in Christ; they only wanted to discredit Him (**Luke 11:16**). They wanted a sign from heaven because they believed Jesus was incapable of producing it. They could then discredit Him. Their asking for a sign came from an evil heart of hardened unbelief.

Praying for healing is not evil nor is it an act of unbelief. You can pray for God to heal people as a sign to others of the miraculous power of God. You can plead with Him for healing because it can get the attention of people and create within them an openness to hear the gospel. This is a way of preparing people to hear the claims of Jesus Christ.

You can pray for healing with faith and confidence because of God's promise. In **James 5:14-16**, God has commissioned His church to pray for healing. The Word of God says there, "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man avails much." The church is to be a vessel of healing through intercessory prayer. God promises to heal if the church will pray.

Notice that it is not only the elders who are to pray for healing. In **James 5:16**, the Word of God says, "Confess your trespasses to one another, and **pray for one another that you may be healed.** The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (emphasis mine)." James says that believers are to pray for one another so that they can be healed. Every believer can seek God for the

release of His healing power. The whole church is to be involved in praying for healing. You can pray with faith and confidence because God has promised to heal through the praying of believers.

You can pray for healing so that hindrances to ministry can be removed. After Jesus came out of the synagogue at Capernaum, He went to Peter's house. He found Peter's mother-in-law sick with a fever, "But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once" (**Mark 1:30**). Jesus responded by healing her. Once she was healed, she began to serve them, "So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them" (**Mark 1:31**). In this case, the sickness hindered her from serving the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this, Jesus healed her. If illness is hindering a believer from serving the Lord, praying for healing is legitimate. You can pray with confidence and faith because God is sometimes pleased to remove hindrances from service through healing.

A final reason that you can pray for healing is because God heals in response to faith. God responds to our faith in Him and His healing power. It was the faith of a Canaanite woman that moved Jesus to heal her demon-possessed daughter (**Matthew 15:28**). Jesus healed a paralytic because of faith in Him to heal (**Matthew 9:2**). The principle of God's healing in response to faith is found also in the ministry of the apostles. The Word of God says, "And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, 'Stand up straight on your feet!' And he leaped and walked. (**Acts 14:8-10**)."
You can pray for healing because of God's ability to heal and His willingness to heal. He releases His healing power when you pray in faith, believing that He has the ability and the willingness to heal.

These are some biblical reasons why you can pray for healing. Don't be afraid or intimidated to pray for the release of God's healing power in the lives of sick and hurting people. These reasons are offered as a motivation for your praying and as a way to strengthen your faith to pray for healing.

Scripture Prayers For Healing

The following are Scripture prayers that you can use to plead with God for healing. These prayers are not magical formulas. They are prayers based on the Word of God that you can use to seek the release of God's healing power in the lives of sick and hurting people. You can use these or develop your own from them.

Father, You created _____. You formed him/her. You knit his/her inward parts in the womb. You alone know how to make what is right in _____'s body. You alone know how to heal _____. As his/her Creator, I pray that You would grant healing to _____. Let Your power envelop him/her and bring the healing that is needed (**Genesis 1:26; Psalm 139**).

You are the God of healing. Your name declares that You are the Healer. Your nature is to heal. I plead with You to be true to Your name and Your nature. I ask You to release healing into _____'s life. Reveal Yourself to be the God of healing by touching and transforming _____ (**Exodus 15:26**).

I praise You, O God that one of Your first revelations about Yourself is that You are a God who heals and makes whole. The essence of who You are is to heal and make whole. I plead in the name of Jesus that You would heal and make _____ whole (**Exodus 15:26**).

Father, Your Word says that You heal all our diseases. I plead in the name of Jesus that You will heal _____ of _____. Drive this completely out of his/her body (**Psalm 103:1-4**).

Father, I plead that You will heal _____ because of Jesus' work on the cross. By His death and the merits of His blood, I pray that You would grant healing to _____ (**Isaiah 53:4-5**).

Lord Jesus, You said "according to your faith, let it be to you." I pray that You would grant _____

_____ the faith in order to believe Your Word for his/her healing (**Matthew 9:29**).

Lord Jesus, like the woman in the crowd who touched the hem of Your garment and was healed, I pray that _____ would reach out to You. Your healing virtue is available to those who reach out to You. I ask that _____ would experience this healing power when he/she reaches out to You (**Mark 5:24-34**).

Father, when doubt or unbelief starts to fill _____'s mind and heart concerning healing, I pray that he/she will focus on the words of Jesus, "Do not fear, only believe" (**Mark 5:36**).

Lord Jesus, You have been exalted as Lord over all. This includes all sickness and disease. In Your name and through Your power, I pray that You would remove _____ from _____'s life (**Philippians 2:9-11**).

Father, in Jesus' name and because of His blood, I plead that You would bind any evil spirits that are involved in _____'s condition. Bind the spirit of fear that says he/she will only get worse (**Matthew 16:19**).

Father, I plead that You would remove any obstacle in _____'s that would prevent him/her from receiving healing (**James 5:16**).

Father, I pray that You would pour out Your mercy and grace on _____ during this time of sickness. Let Your power sustain him/her until healing comes to his/her life (**2 Corinthians 12:9**).

Father, in the midst of the pain with no outward improvements, enable _____ to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in love and obedience for You. I plead that _____ will keep his/her eyes fixed on You, his/her Healer and Sustainer (**1 Corinthians 15:58**).

Father, You are full of mercy and compassion for _____. He/She is suffering and needs Your healing. Because of Your unfailing mercy and compassion, I plead that You will release Your healing power in _____'s life. I ask that You would heal _____ as a

concrete expression of Your mercy and compassion (**2 Corinthians 1:3; Lamentations 3:22-23**).

Father, the Lord Jesus Christ has taught me to ask, seek, and knock. I ask You to grant healing to _____. I seek You for the release of Your power into his/her life. I am knocking for the blessing of physical and spiritual wholeness in _____'s life (**Matthew 7:7**).

Father, I ask in the name of Jesus for You to heal _____ so that You might be glorified. Grant healing to _____ so that people might praise You and honor You for Your love, compassion, and power (**John 11:4; Acts 4:21**).

Just as the people who brought the blind man of Bethsaida, I bring _____ to You. I lift him/her up to You in prayer. I beg You to touch him/her. I plead with You to grant healing in his/her life (**Mark 8:22-25**).

Father, I believe that You are willing to heal. I believe that You have the power to heal. Because of this, I pray that You would heal _____. In faith, I plead for the release of Your healing power in his/her life (**Matthew 9:2, 15:28**).

O Lord my God, I plead that _____ would cry out to You and that You would heal _____ in response to his/her cries to You (**Psalms 30:2**).

Father, I plead in the name of Jesus that You would send Your Word and heal _____. Deliver him/her from _____ (**Psalms 107:20**).

Father, I ask in the name of Jesus that You would strengthen _____ on his/her bed of illness. I plead with You to sustain him/her on his sickbed. I pray that You would grant Your healing in Your time and way in his/her life (**Psalms 41:3**).

Father, I pray that You would heal _____ of _____ so that he/she can declare Your mighty works to others (**Psalms 118:17**).

Father, You are the God who has the power to take sickness away from _____. I plead in the name of Jesus that You would remove

_____ from _____'s
life (**Exodus 23:25**).

Father, I pray that _____ would not be wise in his/her own eyes and that he/she would shun and avoid evil.' Let this bring health to _____'s body and nourishment to his/her bones (**Proverbs 3:7-8**).

Father, You give power to the faint and You give strength to those who have no strength. Father, _____ has no strength and is faint because of his/her illness. I plead that You would grant power and strength to _____ (**Isaiah 40:29**).

Father, _____'s body has been bought with a price, the precious blood of Jesus. _____'s body belongs to You. This disease/trauma is trespassing on Your property. I plead in the name of Jesus that You would evict this disease or trauma from _____'s body (**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**).

Practical Guidelines For Healing Prayer

The following are some practical suggestions on praying for healing. These guidelines can assist you in your intercession for those who are sick.

- ◆ *Pray in faith that God will heal the person.* When you pray for healing, be bold in your asking. Believe God for the healing in the person's life. God's name and nature reveal that He is a God who is willing and able to heal. This is a powerful motivation for praying for healing. Don't be intimidated or afraid to pray for healing. It is in God's hands. He is the One who heals. Your responsibility is to pray to Him for the release of His healing power. Cry out to Him in faith for healing in the life of the person.
 - ◆ *Be submissive to the Holy Spirit's leadership when praying for healing.* As you pray in faith for healing, be sensitive to the Spirit's leadership. He can and will grant you insights that you will need to intercede for this person.
- He can reveal areas that you need to cover in your praying for the sick person. Ask Him to make you sensitive to His leadership as you pray for healing.
- ◆ *Pray for the removal of any hindrances to healing in the person's life.* Just as there are hindrances to prayer, there are hindrances to healing. I am well aware of the horror stories that circulate concerning this subject. You have probably heard of ministers or evangelists telling people that they did not have enough faith to be healed. These ministers and evangelists place the blame on the person for a lack of healing in his or her life. This adds even more pain to the sick person. This is unfortunate and regrettable. The sick person needs ministry and encouragement, not accusation and ridicule. Yet, at the same time, it must be stated that there are hindrances to healing. We must develop a balance between ministry and encouragement and lovingly confronting any hindrances to healing. There are certain things that hinder a person from receiving God's healing power. We cannot ignore the fact that certain factors can hinder a person from receiving healing. An example is unforgiveness. As you pray for healing, plead that God will enable the person to remove any hindrances to healing. Pray for the removal of these things so that the person can receive healing.
 - ◆ *Persist in praying for healing.* Do not become discouraged if healing does not take place immediately. Do not give up praying for the person. Sometimes God is pleased to heal instantaneously. Yet, there are times when His healing is a process—it happens over a period of time. Continue to plead in faith for the person.
 - ◆ *Pray that grace and strength would be given to the person until healing does come.* While the person is sick, plead that God would sustain the person. Ask Him to work in the person's life through this time until healing does take place. Pray that His work of sanctification will be advanced and deepened in the person's life.
 - ◆ *Remember that God's healing is sometimes heaven.* There are times when God is pleased to heal in this life. Yet, God sometimes heals by taking the person into heaven. He then gives the ultimate and eternal healing.

- ◆ *Keep your faith fixed on the Healer and not on the healing.* God is more important than the healing. An individual's relationship to God is a priority over the healing. Both the sick person and those praying for him or her must seek the Healer first and foremost.
- ◆ *Immerse yourself in the Word of God.* Praying for healing must be based on the Word of God. Dig into God's truth for His claims, His commands, and His promises. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to texts or verses that will give you insight on how to pray in this particular situation.
- ◆ *Praise God as you pray for healing.* Praise releases God's power. God declares that He will be enthroned in the praises of His people (**Psalm 22:3**). He will reveal His power as His people praise Him. When the praise goes up, the power comes down. This is a crucial element in praying for healing. The power of praise was introduced to Dick Eastman during his daughter's illness. She was in bed with a temperature of 104 and it was rising rapidly. "Recalling the victory of Judah in **2 Chronicles 20:22**, I began to sing a song of praise over Ginger. Instantly the fever broke and sweat actually began to pour down her forehead into my hands." Eastman shared this experience at a later date on television. A young woman saw it and recalled it at a crucial point in her own life. She was in the hospital about to be operated on for a potentially life-threatening situation. Her fever started to rise and her vital signs were rising sharply. She asked the nurse for permission to have her family come in and sing songs of victory. It was quickly granted, and as the family began to sing, blending their voices in a song of victory, her vital signs began to drop, as did her fever. As the song ended, her temperature was 98.6. God had met them in their song (*Love On Its Knees*, Dick Eastman, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1989). When you pray for healing, praise God for victory. Glorify Him for what He will do in the person's life.

The Best Valentine's Gift

What is the best gift that you can give your spouse this Valentine's Day? It is a commitment to pray fervently and faithfully for your relationship. At *The Prayer Closet*, we have developed two prayer products to help you make and fulfill this commitment. The **Growing Our Marriage Through Prayer Key Ring** offers you Scripture prayers that you can use to plead for God's blessing on your marriage. The **Growing Our Marriage Through Prayer Manual** provides you with a variety of prayer strategies to cover your marriage in prayer. Join your hands and hearts through prayer. Make this Valentine's Day the beginning of a new day in your marriage—a new beginning because of a commitment to prayer. Contact us today at *The Prayer Closet* for your key ring and manual!

Don't Give Up!!

George Muller, an Englishman of the last century known for his prayer and his concern for orphans, recognized that a delay in answered prayer is not a denial from God. He had to pray for more than 60 years for the conversion of a friend: "The great point is never to give up until the answer comes," said Muller. "I have been praying for sixty-three years and eight months for one man's conversion. He is not converted yet, but he will be! How can it be otherwise? There is the unchanging promise of Jehovah, and on that I rest." No matter how you feel today, don't give up. No matter how long you've prayed, don't quit. No matter how hard the struggle gets, don't stop praying. Press through and cling to God. His answer will come!



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