

# Why We Do It - Prayer & Intercession

Prayer is an important part of the Christian life. It's something we constantly encourage believers to do. When people do pray, they usually have no problem praying for themselves.....and that's ok. We SHOULD pray for ourselves. I pray to be a better husband, father, friend, pastor, etc. I pray for God to help me with my struggles and to reassure me when I have doubts. I highly encourage praying for yourself!

I even believe in praying for God to bless you....do it..... pray for God's blessings! Just a warning, God's blessings don't always come in the form of what YOU might call a blessing. Sometimes blessing is the removal of something that shouldn't be in your life. Sometimes a blessing is CHANGE in your life. And sometimes blessing is increase. That could be money but it could be more responsibility, or a larger family, or opportunities to minister to people.....even when it's inconvenient for you.

So almost everyone prays for themselves. But it can't end there....what about praying for your family, or other people in your life, even strangers.....what about praying for your church including church leaders and the people to your left and right, what about praying for your country.....and praying for the world!

Today's message is part 5 of Why We Do It - Prayer & Intercession.

There are spiritual battles taking place all around you. Some that you see, some that you don't see. If you look around you might see people making poor choices, we see hate, we see ignorance, sometimes we even see hopelessness....

So why pray? Do people actually believe that prayer makes a difference? And even more so does it make a difference if we get more people to pray? Does that make God hear us more or better?

Where do we see this in the bible? Why is prayer so important in church?

First, Jesus said so....that's why.

## **Matthew 21:13 (NKJV)**

13 And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

He was speaking of the temple, a place reserved for sacrifice, offering, and worship toward God. Jesus repeats the words that God spoke through Isaiah and Jeremiah.... "My house shall

be called a house of prayer”....it’s not a new thing, that’s what God always intended for His house!

Jesus brought this correction at this time because they were using the temple for personal gain. Selling merchandise and ripping people off. It was supposed to be a place to worship God.....a house devoted to prayer!

THIS is a house of God. This is Jesus’ church....not mine, not yours.....it belongs to Jesus! And just as He did a couple thousand years ago, Jesus wants His house to be a house of prayer.

What He means by His house is His dwelling place.....certainly this applies to our church but it also applies to us as individuals. The Spirit of God dwells in us. We....God’s people.... are His dwelling place and we ought to be prayerful people....devoted to prayer!

We have prayer meetings for a reason. We meet Tuesday nights at 9:00 not because we don’t have anything else to do but because we are sacrificing our time and what we might want to do so that we can seek the Lord together and then intercede for our church and people in need across the globe. Come, join us! The sanctuary is also open Sunday before service for you to come and pray!

### **1 Timothy 2:1 (AMP)**

1 First of all, then, I urge that petitions (specific requests), prayers, intercessions (prayers for others) and thanksgivings be offered on behalf of all people,

We MUST pray for others.....this is the encouragement that Paul gives. This is what we do on Sunday morning typically between praise and worship and offering.

We lift up petitions or supplications...these are specific requests in prayer. We need to be thoughtful in prayer. We need to be vocal in our attacks against the enemy. We need spiritual targets to aim toward. I don’t want to just blindly be firing arrows and hope I hit the target.

This is why I ask for specifics when someone asks for prayer. Yes, God knows your needs. Yes God knows your secret sin. But if you are asking me to go to battle for you, I need to know what the target is. We are in a spiritual battle....pray intentional, specific prayers!

Paul also mentions intercessions....prayers for others....this is what I will mostly focus on today.

Intercession is more than just praying to God on behalf of another. It involves an individual positioning themselves between two parties, one with a need and one with the answer, and seeks to bring the two parties together.

When we intercede we are acting as a mediator or advocate. You know, sometimes people are in need and they don't know it...others may know it but they don't know how or maybe they are too tired or worn down to ask!

Church it is up to US to stand in the gap! We need intercessors in the church, those who will pray on behalf of those who cannot! There are people who are weak in spirit and they can't do it without your help.

You probably know someone's situation and think "Well, if they'd just pray about it..." How about YOU pray FOR them!

We've got to remember...

**Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV)**

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

That is who we battle and war against.....darkness, wickedness, it's satan! Paul goes on to tell us to put on the whole armor of God: truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, the Spirit of God.....but then PRAY!

**Ephesians 6:18 (NKJV)**

18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints

We are in a spiritual battle and prayer is our weapon! We should pray always and keep on praying.....for all matters!

No matter what we see with our natural eyes....keep praying, keep believing!

Here Paul specifically says to pray always for all of the saints. Who are the saints? God's people. Those who have given their life to Jesus.....THE CHURCH!

In 1 Timothy 2, Paul said to pray this way for all people....and we should. But here in Ephesians 6, Paul says pray for believers! Why?

Do you realize how pivotal the church is in this spiritual battle? If we are going to help people out there, then WE need to be strong in here! We want to be a hospital for the broken, but guess what? We are broken too! We need repair, we need strengthening, we need healing, we need the Spirit of God.

On the airplane they tell you to put on your air mask first before you help others, otherwise you might die trying to get it on them and then you both die. We need God working in our lives before we can help others, we need Him to work in us before we can share that with others.

Does that mean you have to be all fixed up and perfect to minister to others? NO, certainly not! But we MUST be focused on eternity, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, purified (getting rid of sin)!

Pray for your church, pray for your pastor, pray for your elders, deacons, ministry leaders. Pray for your prayer team, pray for those who serve. Pray for those who attend our services!

We can't just be praying for the salvation of sinners....who's gonna care for them when they get here if we are all worn out and weak in spirit?

**Matthew 9:37 (NKJV)**

37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

The people that need Jesus are plentiful.....there are lots of them. The people to help lead them to Him are few! But not only are they few in number.....the Greek word for few is oligos meaning little, small, few in number but it also means having little intensity or energy!

We must be intercessors for the people of God! Pray not only for YOUR church but THE church....all of God's people!

We see in the early church how the church rallied in prayer around their leadership.

**Acts 12:1-2 (NIV)**

1 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.

The church's response is amazing, it's unlike what you'd see in most churches today. Today I believe you'd see fear, worry, protesting, people posting about it on Facebook.....

**Acts 12:5 (NKJV)**

5 Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.

The early church not only knew the power of intercessory prayer.....they believed in it. They knew that if there was any way for Peter to be freed, it was going to be by the miraculous work of God!

While Peter was being kept in jail, the church never stopped praying to God for him.

The night before Peter was to be put on trial, he was asleep and bound by two chains. A soldier was guarding him on each side, and two other soldiers were guarding the entrance to the jail.

But SUDDENLY God shows-up!

Is there anybody here who's ever been in trouble and it looked like you were going down, but "suddenly" God showed -up ...

"Suddenly," an angel from the Lord appeared, and light flashed around in the cell.

It was dark, but God shed light on Peter's situation!

The angel poked Peter in the side and woke him up.

He woke Peter up, but he made the guards fall into a deeper sleep.

Then he said, "Peter... quick! Get up!"

The chains fell off his hands, and the angel said,

"Get dressed and put on your sandals and your coat."

Don't read over that part too fast, because the reason the angel told Peter to put on his shoes and coat was to let Peter know that;

"God has all time in His hands!"

"Get-up Peter!"

I hear God saying to someone who feels trapped...

He's saying "Get-up!" "Get up and look up!" ". . .

God will provide a way when you can't see your way!

Peter and the angel walked right past the two groups of soldiers, and when they came to the iron-gate to the city, it opened by itself.

How many know today that God will open a door for you that no man can close and He'll close doors that no man can open? GOD IS GOOD!

I'm sure that Peter was praying.....but we KNOW that the church was praying, we are told they were.

It is important to pray in numbers.

**Matthew 18:19-20 (NKJV)**

19 “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

When we intercede we are to pray for God’s will to be done. See before this verse Jesus talks about binding and loosing. I don’t want to get too much into that because it’s a whole sermon in itself. But basically we are given authority from heaven and that authority is to be used on earth....It’s God’s authority, it’s HIS will.

When we gather together and pray for God’s will to be done in people’s lives, IT WILL BE DONE!

But this doesn’t mean we will see the results that we wish to see when we want to see them....remember the spiritual battle? There are angels fighting on our behalf. Our prayers can move angels into battle (we don’t pray to angels, we pray to Jesus....He orders the angels into position....HE is Lord over all)

We must pray! Even if we haven’t seen the results....

**Matthew 7:7 (NKJV)**

7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

- there are some blessings that God will not give us unless we ask Him
- there are other blessings God will not give us unless our hearts are right
- there are some trials that God will not deliver us from until we have learned the lesson He was trying to teach us.

We see God move all throughout the bible as a response to prayer!

Moses prayed and God spared Israel from judgment.

Joshua prayed and God caused the sun to stand still.

Hannah prayed and God gave her a baby boy.

Solomon prayed and God gave him wisdom.

Hezekiah prayed and God added 15 years to his life.

Elijah prayed and God sent fire down from Heaven.

Jonah prayed and God brought him out of the belly of the whale.

Even Jesus on the cross asked the Father to forgive His accusers and abusers, because they don’t know what they are doing....

Through Prayer:

There is no problem that cannot be solved.

There is no sickness that cannot be healed.  
There is no burden that cannot be lifted.  
There is no storm that cannot be calmed.

Through Prayer:

There is no sorrow that cannot be comforted.  
There is no sinner that cannot be saved.  
There is no hurt that cannot be mended.  
There is no fallen that cannot be lifted.

Through Prayer:

There is no backslider that cannot be restored.  
There is no broken relationship that cannot be restored.  
There is no difference that cannot be resolved.  
There is no sin that cannot be forgiven.

Through Prayer:

There is no heaviness that can't be covered with the garment of praise.  
There is no thirst that can't be quenched.  
There is no hunger that can't be filled.  
There is no dry ground that can't be flooded.

Through Prayer:

There are no ashes that cannot be turned into beauty.  
There is no congregation that can't be revived.  
There are no church pews that He can't fill.  
There is no mess that can't be turned into a miracle!

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV)**

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.