

# Kindness through Prayer

(James 5:13-20)

Yearly Theme: “*Kindness is... Action*”

Series Title: “*Kindness is a Verb*”

January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023

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## Something to think about:

Tradition states that “early African converts to Christianity were earnest and regular in private devotions. Each one reportedly had a separate spot in the thicket where he would pour out his heart to God. Over time the paths to these places became well worn. As a result, if one of these believers began to neglect prayer, it was soon apparent to the others. They would kindly remind the negligent one, ‘Brother, the grass grows on your path.’”

Closing out his letter, James explains the importance of prayer and it’s place within the community of faith. Let’s take a closer look:

**James 5:13-20 (NLT),**

***<sup>13</sup> Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. <sup>14</sup> Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven.***

***<sup>16</sup> Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. <sup>17</sup> Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! <sup>18</sup> Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops.***

***<sup>19</sup> My dear brothers and sisters, if someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, <sup>20</sup> you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back from wandering will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.***

So, why should we pray?...

Here’s the takeaway this morning:

**Key Point: “Praying for someone is a kindness that can lead to healing and forgiveness.”**

Prayer is not some rite of passage that Christians do because it is expected of them. Rather, prayer is the means by which believers in Christ approach the throne-room of GOD in order to commune with Him, worship Him, and petition Him. In addition to changing the person who prays, as well as moving the heart of GOD, prayer draws the community of faith together into an intimate fellowship of people who look out for one another. According to this passage in James, prayer brings certain positive qualities and changes to the fellowship of believers, and they are as follows:

- **Prayer brings people together.**

*James 5:13-15 (NLT), <sup>13</sup> Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. <sup>14</sup> Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven.*

- **Prayer brings confession which brings freedom.**

*James 5:16 (NLT), Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.*

- **Prayer and pursuit can bring people back to GOD.**

*James 5:19-20 (NLT), <sup>19</sup> My dear brothers and sisters, if someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, <sup>20</sup> you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back from wandering will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.*

## Something to take home:

**James 5:16b (NLT), The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.**

Terms like, “When there’s nothing else to do, pray!” or “When all else fails, pray!” may sound nice, but they are wholly inaccurate and unbiblical. Prayer should be the first *and* last thing we do in any and every situation. Prayer is more than a lifeline to GOD, and it’s more than spiritual discipline. Prayer is communion with the Father in heaven. Prayer is connection with our Creator. Prayer is the beckoning for GOD’s kingdom to invade the kingdoms of this world. Prayer is life altering not only for the pray-er, but also for those being prayed for. Prayer can change the mind of GOD, it can heal the sick, it can bring deliverance from evil, it can bring forgiveness of sin, and it can restore what is broken. The kindest thing any of us can do is to pray.

**Key Point: “Praying for someone is a kindness that can lead to healing and forgiveness.”**