

HOW TO PRAY FOR OTHERS

Prayer makes us strong as believers. We need to pray! Unfortunately, we don’t always know how to pray and our confidence in prayer is often weak.

Jesus set the example for His disciples and taught them the way to pray in “The Lord’s Prayer” (Matthew 6:9-13). An important part of what we learn from Jesus is the importance of praying for others. In fact, Hebrews 7:25 tells us that Jesus is praying now for us—that He “always lives to intercede” for those who belong to Him!

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians as believers “who help us by your prayers” (see 2 Corinthians 1:8-11). We need to be engaged in this kind of “intercessory prayer” as well. Let’s look at how we can grow in effectively praying for others.

# Love the people you’re praying for.

Compassion is a key to intercessory prayer. You can’t pray effectively for someone you hate, resent or are offended with. The most powerful prayers are motivated by God’s love (see Luke 13:34)!

# Believe that your prayers will positively impact others.

Faith is the foundation for prayer. When we believe and trust God to answer, He will work powerfully through our intercession in the lives of those we pray for (see Mark 11:24; Acts 12:12-16; Colossians 1:9, 10).

# Expect others to be strengthened by your prayers.

The people we pray for need God’s strength in their lives. Isaiah 40:29 tells us that the Lord “gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak” and we can be part of this as we pray for others who are weary and weak.

# Let the Holy Spirit lead you as you pray for others.

The Holy Spirit helps us to know how to pray for others, as the Apostle Paul explains:

*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* ***(Romans 8:26-28)***

# Guard against judgment, self-righteousness and spiritual pride as you pray for others.

This is a subtle trap for us as we intercede. Stay broken. Be humble. Stay grounded. Avoid gossip.

*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. (Galatians 6:1)*

# Fight for others in prayer.

Intercession rescues others from the enemy, but this only happens as we fight for them in prayer.

*Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. (Colossians 4:12)*

# Pray for people God places in your world.

See yourself as a “Kingdom advancer” through prayer, wherever you are. Believe that you can make a difference in your work, neighborhood, school, when you come upon a tragedy or accident, etc. Take an assignment to pray for your world and the people in your circumstances. Serve God through prayer!

*Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; (Romans 12:12)*

*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; (Colossians 4:2)*

# Remember to pray for people in authority, leadership and influence.

Leaders are targeted by the enemy. Be part of their protection through prayer. Know that you are part of the spiritual shield that helps protect them. Understand the “strike the shepherd” principle. Don’t let the devil soil you toward those who need your prayers. Watch your attitudes and resentment towards leaders.

*Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith. (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2)*

*I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; (1 Timothy 2:1-3)*

# Discussion questions

* 1. In what ways is “compassion a key to intercessory prayer”? How should this impact your prayers for others?
  2. Read Romans 8:26-28. What do you learn from these verses about the Holy Spirit’s role in helping you pray for others?
  3. Read Colossians 4:12. How can you fight for others in prayer like Epaphras, who was “always wrestling in prayer” for believers?