

The Gift of Intercession (10)

A gifted story: David had decided he needed to spend more time in prayer, and he began to devote daily quiet time for that activity, not being sure what might happen. As he prayed his eyes drifted to a newspaper picture of a gang youth in New York City in trouble for drugs and he began to cry. Taking this as a sign from God, he decided to travel to the city and try and find the boy and do what he could to help him. It was a correct interpretation, and his faith and willingness to intercede on behalf of the boy in trouble led David on a lifelong adventure in drug rehabilitation. Oh yes, and he did find the boy. You can read about it in *The Cross and the Switchblade* by David Wilkerson.

Biblical references:

Col. 1:9,10— *For this reason we have always prayed for you, ever since we heard about you. We ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will, with all the wisdom and understanding that his Spirit gives..*

John 17:20-22— *“I pray not only for them, but also for those who believe in me because of their message. I pray that they may be one. Father! May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world will believe that you sent me...”*

Matt. 6:6— *“But when you pray, go to your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you.”*

1 Tim. 2:1-2— *First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, requests, and thanksgivings be offered to God for all people; for kings and all others who are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceful life with all reverence toward God and with proper conduct..*

Definition and comment:

The gift of Intercession the special gift whereby the Spirit enables certain Christians to pray for extended periods of time with great positive effect for the building of the Kingdom. Prayer is given on a regular basis, and frequent and specific answers to the prayers are seen to a much greater degree than with most Christians. There is a certainty that the prayers are heard and that answers will come. The special ability empowers the Christian to pray faithfully for others and to identify specific responses to those prayers.

Intercession is one of those gifts that are not expressly identified as a spiritual gift in the New Testament. However, it is widely recognized as an activity that was used to great effect by the disciples of the early church. Paul interceded regularly in prayer on behalf of the churches he established, and Timothy taught the importance of intercessory prayer.

Prayer for others is considered a Christian vocation—we are all to do it. But some people are gifted in such a way that their “prayer channel” seems to be uniquely static free. These people have a kind of prayer ministry whereby they spend a great deal of time in prayer in the full knowledge that God is listening and he answers heartfelt prayer.

Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:

Are you sensitive to the prayer needs of others and desire to give them needed prayer support?

Are you conscious of ministering to others as you pray for them?

Can you pray for extended periods, in regular intervals, unceasingly?

Are you confident that when you pray for others, you will have tangible results?

Do you have some prayer stories to tell about answered prayers?

Areas for study and personal growth:

Understand all that you can about prayer from scripture. Review especially what Jesus has to say about praying in John 17:1-26. See also Eph. 1:15-19; Phil. 1:3-5; Col 1:9-12; James 5:13-16; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Eph. 6:18-20; James 5:16-18; Rom. 8:26-27.

Learn about prayer from people who have chronicled their experiences. It is helpful to read personal accounts of prayers being answered to build a sense of awe in the marvelous ways in which God answers prayer. Examples: *Prayers that are Answered* by Betty Malz; *How to Live Like a King's Kid* by Harold Hill.

Intercessory prayer requires faith to be effective. Indeed, after the prayer is made, belief carries the prayer in an unceasing manner until God's answer is known. Thus maintaining an attitude of faith finishes the job. Work in any way that you can to deepen your faith so that your belief will not falter after the prayer is sent up. Prayer is only the beginning in the intercessory process—it is the sustaining belief that the prayer will be answered that is essential.

Keep a log of prayers offered and prayers answered. This will help you to maintain your confidence that your prayers will be answered—to develop the sense of expectancy that is required. Too often prayers are simply offered and then forgotten. The log will help you be more accountable—you will be looking for results, and God will not disappoint you.

Think about where intercessory prayer is needed, and seek out those in need of your prayers. Your special ability is sorely needed by many that do not have your gift. You will find many people in need in newspaper articles and from word of mouth accounts. After a while, when your ministry is more evident, people will come to know that you should be told of the need.

General ways to use the gift of intercession:

Personally: faithfully intercede for friends, family and others; pray for persons with special needs.

Within the church: develop a prayer chain; lead in public prayer; be a prayer partner and pray with others in prayer (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet *Channels for Using the Gifts*).

Within the wider community: pray for those in authority; pray for missions, missionaries and public groups that are struggling with problems or conflict.

For reflection:

As you exercise the gift of Intercession, you will find yourself filled with awe. You are embarking on a great adventure that will be filled with much joy. At times you will feel that you have uncovered a treasure of riches, that you are privileged to be a conduit to heaven.

There is a song of praise that asks, "Lord, make me an instrument, an instrument of glory." You will be that instrument as you help others receive grace from God through your prayers.

Intercessory prayer was used by Moses to intercede on behalf of his people for their sinning (remember the golden calf). Moses called upon God's merciful and compassionate nature over a period of forty days, and God turned away his wrath in the end. In World War I, General Allenby, in charge of the British Forces in Egypt, was ordered to take Jerusalem. He did not want to bomb the Holy City, but he had his orders. So he asked his officers to join him in prayer to ask the Lord to intervene. They dropped to their knees and asked God to show his hand so that the city could be spared. As morning dawned a man came forward waving a white flag, and the city was taken without a shot being fired.

The ministry of intercession gives us the ability to cast off the powers of darkness if it is exercised boldly and in a sustained manner. It is a case of the goodness of prayer simply starving out all traces of evil. Victory is assured in these battles. Through your prayers you will witness God's outpouring of love, healing, cleansing, and rebirth. It is a remarkable gift that you have. Rejoice in the power of the Lord!