

## **PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER**

Every Christian in our modern world is under constant satanic pressure and attack. We must bear one another's burdens as we see these pressures escalating. We can and must do it by regular, specific prayer. So much of our praying is limited to just, "Lord, bless ...," or, "Lord, meet the need of ..." We are admonished in Galatians 6:2 to bear one another's burdens. Some burdens are too heavy to be borne alone because of a sudden flood of problems, lack of adequate Bible teaching or spiritual immaturity.

On the other hand, Galatians 6:5 tells us there are burdens for which each one must take responsibility. He must seek God's help and do what he can for himself. In 2 Corinthians 1:8-11, Paul writes of the extreme pressures that can be handled only through the prayers of others. To be guilty of the sin of prayerlessness is to be guilty of the worst form of practical atheism. It is actually saying we can get along without his help while the evidence is very clear on every hand that we cannot. Could it be that the sin of prayerlessness stems from our unbelief that he is a living God who exercises direct influence on the affairs of men? Instead of waiting until crisis problems develop which result in panic praying for others, we need to trust God to protect them as we pray Spirit-led, thoughtful, caring prayers before the problems overwhelm them, and they are unable to cope. We need to engage in major battles, not just minor skirmishes, moving from surface praying to in-depth praying. We need to pray both defensively and offensively.

Praying for others is vital to our own spiritual growth. If we pray for them at all we often get bogged down with the material or the trivial and do not move on to the spiritual and the eternal. Where are our priorities? Often they are so clouded by humanistic and materialistic philosophies on the one hand and the pressures of the day on the other that we ignore the spiritual almost entirely. Needless to say, we do not cease to intercede for material needs as we learn to pray protectively for spiritual needs and growth. We need to progress beyond, "Lord, bless John and Mary," and be specific, thus moving from crisis praying to protective praying. For example: Fred or Jane is unemployed. We pray for a job, as we should, but what is God saying in this circumstance? What are the spiritual lessons to be learned? What are the attitudes, the frustrations, the mental depressions, the fears? How about the interpersonal relationships within and outside the family? Is God glorified in this time of stress by their actions and reactions? Many times in our very limited intercession for others we pray for deliverance from difficult circumstance, sickness, or accident. We forget to ask that Fred or Jane will take God's more than ample provision and learn the lessons God has for both in this trial. Our concern is not necessarily for the removal of the problem but for victory in it and God's glory. Daniel was not kept out of the lion's den. He was kept in it!

Another example: After six years of seeing the happy marriage of a fine young couple who have been leading the young people's group, we find that they have filed for divorce on grounds of incompatibility. They say, "We no longer love each other." We petition God with deep concern for them in this crisis, but have we been praying for them protectively, strategically, specifically and with discernment during their years of married life? As we recognize the absolute necessity of praying protectively for one another and

bearing one another's burdens, we must not excuse ourselves by saying, "How can I pray for them when they do not tell me their needs?" Others' needs are often similar to our own. As we think of their needs, his word and his Spirit will lead us in prayer.

### **PRAY THAT THE PERSON FOR WHOM WE ARE INTERCEDING:**

#### **... will realize his present exalted position in Christ.**

Paul places the utmost importance on the child of God entering into a mature partnership with the Father partially achieved by realizing his present exalted position before God in heaven now through the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross. It is only as we acknowledge who we really are in Christ that we can live that new identity. Many believers seem to be ignorant of this. Pray that others will get their true identity and self-worth from who they are in Christ and not from success, failure or what others say or think about them.

#### **... will present himself as a living sacrifice.**

In Romans 12:1, 2 Paul presents the ultimate and totally necessary step of Christian dedication. This is presenting our bodies and all we have and are as a living sacrifice to God. This commitment is not essential to salvation, but no progress will be made in the Christian life without it. Pray that others, like Paul, will cry out, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" and then do it.

#### **... will be filled with the Holy Spirit.**

The Lord commands us to be filled (Ephesians 5:18). The filling of the Holy Spirit is not optional equipment for the Christian. Nothing in the spiritual life is accomplished without his power and in-filling. In the measure that we are not Spirit-filled we are self-centered, selfish and carnal. Pray that the believer will allow the Holy Spirit to work daily in his life.

#### **... will be regular and systematic in the study of God's Word.**

It is essential for us to pray specifically that the one we are praying for will take the word of God as his food, guide, companion, only source of information about God and the spiritual life, only authority, and the ultimate fountain of joy in this life (Psalm 119). Pray, too, that as he is in the word he will appropriate it and obey it, let God's word guide him, show him his blind spots, and keep him balanced.

#### **... will have the mind of Christ.**

In 1 Corinthians 2:11-16 the spiritual man is seen as having both the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. Thus we pray for the believer, that having supernatural life in Christ through the indwelling Holy Spirit, he may appropriate the mind of Christ in all matters of life. Pray that he will choose to make Christlike decisions in regard to priorities, goals, and guidance, with sharpened insights so as not to waste time on good things and miss God's best. Pray that he will constantly live with eternity's values in view, an attitude impossible to attain without the realization that the Christian life is a miracle life from beginning to end (Galatians 3:1-3).

**... will grow daily in Christian maturity.**

Nothing is more tragic than a 20-year-old infant! Many today are in that spiritual condition after having been saved for a number of years. Pray that the believer will see that after the crisis experience of being born again there is the lifelong process of daily growth in Christ that takes patience, time, discipline, and the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:10; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12 and 13). The mature Christian must have a spirit of forgiveness with no root of bitterness because of any treatment of himself or others. He must learn to handle stress, frustrations, and unfulfilled expectations in a Christlike manner.

**... will appropriate the full armor of God.**

Pray that the believer will have his eyes opened to the dangers of certain satanic attacks and will put on the full armor of God. The armor plus the skillful use of the authority he has in the victorious Christ insures full protection (Ephesians 6:10-18; Colossians 2:1-15). Pray that the one for whom we are praying will fulfill his responsibility as one born for battle, resist temptation and repent promptly of any sin in his life.

**... will be alert to Satan's strategy.**

Pray that the believer will not only be kept from sin but also that he will be aware of the threefold satanic temptations: the lust of the flesh, (fulfilling any of our desires outside the will of God) is Satan's effort to get us out of the will of God; the lust of the eyes (coveting that which God does not allow at a particular time or place) is Satan's effort to get us to distrust God; the pride of life (self effort or independence from God) is Satan's effort to destroy our confidence in God (1 John 2:16). Also he must realize that he is incapable of meeting Satan in his own strength. Victory comes only as he takes the victory of Calvary as his own (1 Corinthians 15:57, 58). Pray that he will discern between satanic pressure and Godly chastening, and remain keenly alert to all satanic deception.

**... will not love the world system.**

Pray that the child of God will have mental, emotional, doctrinal and moral stability in a day in which the pressures from peer groups, the media, and the world are increasing in their opposition to biblical standards. The believer must know that love of the world is not consistent with loving God (1 John 2:15-17). Pray that he will realize that his love for God is expressed through obedience. (John 14:15, 21, 23)

**... will have a spirit of brokenness and humility.**

Pray that the believer's pride will be broken and that he will deal with his sins through repentance and seeking forgiveness. Psalm 51:17 says: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Pray for willingness to give and take, willingness to change, and willingness to see another's viewpoint. Pray that the believer will have an understanding spirit in place of a judgmental one. Pray that instead of looking for someone to blame in various situations he will be willing to say, "I am sorry," or "I was wrong."

**... will have a servant's heart.**

Pray this believer will be convinced of the Lord's desire for him: that he be a servant of God and of his brothers in Christ. (Mk. 10:44-45)

**... will build a Scriptural family.**

Pray that the one for whom you are praying will look neither to the world nor to carnal Christians but to the word of God, and that he will fulfill his God-ordained place as head and spiritual leader of his home. Pray that his wife will be submissive and seek the Lord's approval as did Sarah when she called Abraham, "Master" (1 Peter 3:6). Pray that as parents they will be firm, yet loving, realizing the absolute necessity of being godly models for their children. Pray that the husband and wife will maintain a balance among family, ministry, and job responsibilities (Ephesians 5:14 to 6:4), that all in the family will love each other with agape love, seeking the highest good for each other, rather than demanding their rights. Pray for those who are single that they will look to the Lord for his choice of a life partner; or pray that their lives will glorify God as singles.

**... will become an effective prayer warrior.**

Pray that the believer will have a vital and effective prayer life from a clean heart. It is absolutely necessary to keep short accounts with God. "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). See also 1 John 1:9. Pray that his praying will be Biblically based, specific, consistent, steadfast in the Spirit, in faith, and with understanding.

**... will know God's hand on him in physical and material things.**

Pray that the one you are praying for will have the measure of health that will best glorify God. Pray that when set aside by ill health he will learn the lessons God has for him and draw upon divine resources. Pray also for safety in travel, financial provision in keeping with God's plan for him, and proper use of the time and money God entrusts to him.

**... will engage in prayerful worship.**

To truly worship is to truly serve. Pray that the believer will not be on a treadmill of activity, substituting it for time with the Lord in true worship. Pray, too, that he will learn to praise the Lord, that he will give thanks for who he is in Christ, for spiritual growth, and for the fact that "God is a living God, he has spoken in the Bible; he means what he says, and will do all he has promised." (J.H. Taylor)

**... will be involved in an accountability team.**

Pray that he will not be deceived into thinking that he can stand alone and grow spiritually. Pray that he will select a group, or at least one person who is spiritually mature and committed to walking with God, to whom he will be especially accountable and faithful in all areas of his life. Pray that this commitment will be characterized by openness, honesty and teach ability. Pray that above all he will recognize his accountability to God: "So then, everyone shall give an account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12)

**... will reach out to the unsaved.**

Pray that others will love the lost as the Lord Jesus does and will reach out to a lost and dying world with the message of salvation. The Lord loved the unlovely and the destitute; his disciples should do no less. This love will best be communicated to the lost by a sacrificial sharing of the good news of Christ, sharing of themselves, and at times sharing materially with the hungry and needy. Pray that as God reveals his will as to the type and place of service at home or abroad, those who are his own will respond without hesitation.

**SO THEN, HOW DO WE PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER?**

- Confess sin and let the blood of Jesus cleanse. Prayer must flow from a cleansed vessel. Psalm 66:18, “If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me.”
- Be tied to the mind of Christ so thoroughly that you think his thoughts about his embattled saints.
- Be motivated by love for God and a desire to help others (Hebrews 6:10, NIV).
- Pray fervently to be led by the Holy Spirit to the exact needs of the one for whom you ARE praying.
- Be specific, systematic, and steadfast in praying for others.
- Agree in prayer with others, the “two or three” of Matthew 18:19-20.
- Learn to saturate a situation or problem with prayer.
- Pray with the authority you have in Christ to bind the power of Satan (Matthew 18:18, Mark 3:27).
- Pray the prayer of faith and claim the victory (1 Corinthians 15:57-58).
- Pray for others as you pray for yourself. Any problem you have others probably have, even if in a slightly different form.
- Use a passage of scripture as you pray for others. Here are some suggestions: Ephesians 1:15-23; Colossians 1:9-12; Ephesians 3:14-21. (Use scripture also in praying for yourself.)

**ACCEPT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**

May you accept your responsibility of interceding for others by getting down to the real business of praying for them. “O God, awaken us all to our responsibility to pray for one another so that all Christians may glorify you and fulfill the purpose for which we have been saved!”