

Intercessory Prayer

In both the Old and New Testament, the word translated “intercession” generally means to go to or meet a person, especially for the purpose of conversation, consultation, or supplication. Usually this word is used in the context of conversing to another for or on behalf of another. Therefore, we usually use the word “intercede” as a prayer to God for the sake of another. When you pray for your family, friends, neighbors and enemies, you have intentionally met with God in behalf of another. You have interceded.

Many have debated whether or not intercession does any good. Is it possible to affect God’s actions through prayer? Without delving in the philosophical aspects of that question, clearly intercession makes a difference, or else God would not have told us to intercede for each other. It’s my prayer that we will discover what it means to intercede to God on behalf of others.

Jesus is an Intercessor

It is important to know that as we pray for others, we are not alone. Our prayers are joining the prayers of the Ultimate Intercessor, Jesus, Himself. The Bible is clear that during both His earthly and heavenly ministry, Christ presented His people in prayer to the Father.

John 17:6-9 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them

me; and they have kept thy word. ⁷ Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. ⁸ For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. ⁹ I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

John 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

John 17:20-21 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; ²¹ That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Romans 8:34 Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Note: Because Jesus intercedes on behalf of His people, we should follow His example.

The Holy Spirit as Intercessor

Romans 8:26-27 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. ²⁷ 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*.

Note: Not only does Jesus help us in our time of need, but the Holy Spirit does as well.

Admonishments from the Bible

Below are just a few texts that express the idea of praying for others.

James 5:14-16 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. ¹⁶ Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; ² For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

Colossians 4:2-4 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; ³ Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: ⁴ That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Tips in Praying for Others

1. Before praying for others, make sure you confess your own sins, and that there is nothing between your soul and your Savior. Notice that the Bible says that it is the fervent prayer of a righteous man that avails much.
2. As you are praying, know that God has the best interests of the person you are praying for at heart.
3. Make a prayer journal for those you are praying for. As prayers are answered, be intentional about giving God all of the glory.

4. As you are praying for others, be discrete. Don't put the business of others in the streets. Keep it between you and the Lord, unless you have explicit permission from the one you are praying for.
5. Note that every problem you hear of is a call to pray.
6. As you pray, know that God is all powerful, and is well able to answer the prayer.
7. Realize that sometimes, as we pray, God calls us to action in being part of the solution we are praying about.

