

PRAYING WITH ALL PRAYER

By

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There are two characteristics that are inseparable in a Christian's life. They are prayer and spiritual power. You cannot have one without the other. If you pray, you will have power. If you have power, you must pray.

In Ephesians 6:10-18 the Bible calls upon Christians to *"be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might"* and then proceeds to explain how: "Put on the gospel armor; each piece put on with prayer." Those words from a familiar hymn summarize the passage in Ephesians.

Note the "alls" in Ephesians 6:18: *"Praying ALWAYS with ALL prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with ALL perseverance and supplication for ALL saints."*

"Praying . . . with all prayer" is the focus of this study by E. Harold Henderson. A variety of prayer forms and styles is available to the Christian. Application of this study of five different kinds of prayer will deliver the believer from "vain repetitions" (Matthew 6:7) in his prayer life.

THE PRAYER OF ADORATION

Praise God for the privilege of prayer! What melody is to music, what numerals are to math, what breath is to life, prayer is to the Christian. One of God's greatest blessings to the Christian is the privilege to pray.

The Bible encourages us to pray. Jesus said, "*Men ought always to pray, and not to faint,*" Luke 18:1. The apostle Paul advised a young preacher named Timothy, "*I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting,*" I Timothy 2:8. Prayer is a part of the Christian's armor, as described in Ephesians 6:10-19. He who serves God best is involved in a life of prayer: "*Praying always with all prayer and supplication for all saints,*" Ephesians 6:18. He who lives by Bible principles will live a life of prayer.

What does the Bible mean when it says we are to pray "*with all prayer,*" Ephesians 6:18? Goodspeed translates the phrase, "Use every kind of prayer." That seems to be what the apostle meant. But that raises another question: "Are there different kinds of prayer?" The answer is yes. Some believe that a person is praying only when he is asking. That is not quite correct. There are many kinds of prayer. That is why the Bible admonishes us to "use every kind of prayer" in our communion with God.

What kinds of prayer are there? I want to spend five visits with you in an investigation of the different kinds of prayer. We will investigate the prayer of adoration, the prayer of thanksgiving, the prayer of confession, the prayer of petition and the prayer of intercession. Please share these studies with me. An understanding of these themes will enable us each to follow the Biblical injunction to "use every kind of prayer."

The highest and finest form of prayer is the prayer of adoration. Such a prayer does not ask; it adores. It does not petition; it praises. It does not beg; it blesses. It does not bear burdens; it bears blessings.

Have you had the experience of praying when you asked for nothing, either for yourself or for others? Have you spent a whole period of prayer just expressing worship, reverence, homage and fellowship with God? If not, you have not yet entered one of the truly blessed experiences of prayer.

Adoration is worship

The prayer of adoration is a prayer of worship. It does not seek to know the will of God. It has in it no burden for human need. It is not motivated by anxiety. In fact, it is not a prayer concerned with man. It is concerned solely with God. It beholds His majesty, glory and power and worships Him.

The model prayer Jesus gave for us to pray shows the place of adoration. It begins, as you remember, "*Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name,*" Matthew 6:9. "*Hallowed be thy name*" means "May thy name be held holy; thy name be revered; may your name be honored." It is an expression of worship. It recognizes the uniqueness of the name of God. It recognizes the logic of His name's being above every name in the heart of every person. It worships Him with the petition that His name be held in highest honor and sanctified to His glory. Yes, Jesus taught us to adore Him when we pray.

Try to pray through an entire devotional period with no words but worship and praise and adoration to God. Notice how it will bless and inspire your inmost spirit. You may have problems with such a prayer at first. If so, take the words of Holy Scripture and offer them as

your prayer. The Bible is filled with praises to God, which can well be your words in the prayer of adoration.

Use these praise passages

Here are some typical scriptures which you might use in prayer. Make note of them:

Psalm 8:1, *“O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who has set thy glory above the heavens.”*

Psalm 29:1, 2, *“Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.”*

II Kings 19:15, *“O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.”*

II Chronicles 20:6, *“O Lord God of our fathers, are not thou God in heaven? And rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?”*

Psalm 86:15, *“But thou, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.”*

I Timothy 1:17, *“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever.”*

Jude 24, 25, *“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”*

It would be difficult to find more appropriate words with which to adore and praise God than the words of inspired Scripture.

Let scripture express your true feelings

Do not be artificial in praying the words of Scripture. Read a passage over and over until you get its spirit in you heart. Then express the spirit to God in adoring prayer, not worrying whether the wording is exactly correct. Let your spirit be caught up in the majesty of God and your desire committed to the praise of God. Then your prayer of adoration will be pleasing to God.

The prayer life, which is preeminently petition or intercession, is incomplete. God does answer when His children ask of Him, but they need to do more than ask. Think in terms of your own family. Suppose your child never spoke to you except to ask you to do something for him. Suppose he was not interested in your fellowship except to get a favor from you. What a terrible relationship that would be. You enjoy meeting the needs of your children, but you want their fellowship and expressions of love, also. God is a Father who delights in the fellowship and worship of His children. That is why the prayer life, which is preeminently petition, is incomplete.

Harold Lindsell has written an excellent book entitled *“When You Pray”*. In a discussion of the prayer of adoration, he wrote, “It is an act of self-surrender and emptying in which the child of God finds himself in the arms of God, not grabbing to get things from Him but finding in His presence the fulfillment of every unsatisfied spiritual longing and a rest and peace that can be found nowhere else in the universe. It is the story of the restless heart which finds its rest in

God” (page 34).

Learn to pray the prayer of adoration. Do it to the delight of your own spirit and the glory of God.

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs and don’t forget to thank him for his answers.” Those are words Kenneth Taylor chose to paraphrase Philippians 4:6. It is more familiarly expressed in this way in the King James Version of the Bible: *“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”*

Each version places emphasis on a very important truth concerning prayer. Thanksgiving is an important part of prayer. So in our investigation of the ways to pray, I have chosen to talk with you about “The Prayer of Thanksgiving.”

Thanksgiving is the act of expressing gratitude to God for the good things we have received from him. It is formal expression of grateful acknowledgement for his bounty. Thanks may be expressed by mental attitude or by verbal act. It is the natural outflow of the heart filled with appreciation for the good received from God.

Thanksgiving for things received and withheld

Gratitude expressed through thanksgiving may deal with two areas. There is an act of positive thanksgiving by which we thank God for blessings received. It is that spirit which recognizes that He *“forgiveth all thine iniquities . . . healeth all thy diseases . . . redeemeth thy life from destruction . . . crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies . . . satisfieth thy mouth with good things,”* Psalm 103:3-5. It looks upon every good thing as coming from God, regardless of the agent who might have delivered it (James 1:17). It is the overflowing heart which cries out, *“Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation,”* Psalm 68:19.

On the other hand, there is an act of negative thanksgiving by which we thank God for the things we did not receive. It is the recognition that our blessings come in the form of good received and evil withheld. Thank God for what we do not receive! I remember a pastor who served God in our church when I was a lad. Often he would pray and thank God for protecting us from “dangers seen and unseen.” That made a profound impression on me. How many times God has said “No” to a petition for things which were not best for us. How many times He has protected us from harm or danger which we did not know was near. Yes, proper thanksgiving must include what we did not receive (whether seeming good or evil) as well as what we did receive.

Thanksgiving for trials and hardships

The maturing Christian must learn to thank God for things which seem unpleasant for him. That is an indication of our trust in his sovereign care. Could that be what the Bible means when it speaks of “the sacrifice of thanksgiving,” Psalm 116:17? Have you thanked God for things which you would rather not face but had to in his sovereign will?

Thanks for the trials as well as the blessings is commanded in the Bible. Ephesians 5:20

speaks of our “*giving thanks for all things.*” Did you catch it? “*Giving thanks always for ALL things,*” the seeming bad as well as the seeming good. Philippians 4: stresses the same point, “*Be careful for nothing; but IN EVERY THING by prayer and supplication WITH THANKSGIVING let your requests be made known unto God.*” Colossians 4:2 admonishes us to “*continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.*” Burdens as well as blessings are a proper subject for thanks.

It is the maturing Christian who can sincerely pray, “Father, I thank you for the trials I face. I do not know what possible good can come from them, but I know you have a purpose in their working out good in my life. So because I trust you, I thank you for my thorn.” That is involved in the prayer of thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving for specific blessing

For what things should thanks be given? (1) There are the spiritual blessings of salvation, assurance, Bible, indwelling Holy Spirit, sufficiency of Christ, a Gospel-preaching church, faithful ministers of the Word, opportunity of prayer and a thousand more. (2) There are the benefits of nature such as the beauty of the world, harvests of food, flowers, rain, bright blue sky, etc. (3) There are creature comforts of food, shelter, clothing, home, work, rest, etc. (4) There are political privileges of a free government, national peace, law enforcement, an ordered society and many more. (5) There are family blessings of a partner in marriage, children, happy happenings, parents, brothers and sisters, etc. We have no problem finding things for which to thank God.

The thoughtful Christian will respond, “*What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?*” Psalm 116:12. “*Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered,*” Psalm 40:5. No wonder the Bible says God “*inhabitest the praises of Israel,*” Psalm 22:3. How can anyone know Him without thanking and praising Him?

Thanksgiving focused on God

Yet, a word of warning is in order here. Thanks are always to be directed toward God for who He is and what He has done, never to the person offering thanks. Do you remember the Pharisee who went in to the temple to pray, of whom Jesus spoke in Luke 18:9-14? He began with the words, “*God, I thank thee . . .*” But that is the last reference to God. He used the name of God one time and the personal pronoun “I” five times in his brief prayer of thirty-four words. He thanked God for himself and his human goodness, not for God and the divine goodness. Be careful that the prayer of thanksgiving is not only addressed to God but also centered in God.

Jesus set the example of prayer which every Christian could emulate. Thanksgiving was common in the prayers of Jesus. He thanked God for revelation of spiritual truth (Luke 10:21). He thanked God for answered prayer (John 11:41). He thanked God for food to eat (Luke 22:17; Mark 8:6,7). Jesus gave thanks for all things. “*The disciple is not above his master, not the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.*” Matthew 10:24,25.

Thanksgiving is normal in the Christian life. Absence of thanksgiving is abnormal. I

suggest you take time regularly to spend time in the presence of God, praying a prayer of thanksgiving-giving attention to no other subject than to thank Him and praise Him for who He is and what He does.

THE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow . . . Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me,” Psalm 51:1-10.

Those words, which poured forth from the broken heart of a convicted man, express another kind of prayer. I have read in your hearing the prayer of confession of sin. Confession must be listed along with adoration and thanksgiving as a kind of prayer which we should pray.

Definition of confession

What does it mean to “confess”? To confess means to bear witness to a truth, particularly when it involves admission or acknowledge of a fault. Acknowledge is a synonym of confess. In religious usage, we consider confession to be the formal statement of personal guilt for sin.

The Bible has a very expressive word which it uses to convey the idea of confession. The Greek word *homologeō* used in the original text of the New Testament means “to speak the same thing, to assent, accord, agree with.” It has the idea of admitting oneself guilty of what one is accused of, the result of deep inward conviction. That is the term always used in the New Testament when reference is made to confession of sin.

The Holy Spirit is in the world for the purpose of convicting *people “of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment,”* John 16:8. He comes to the heart of a person and reveals to him a personal guilt of sin, a lack of righteousness and the certainty of divine judgment upon that sin. The person may respond by denying his sin, justifying or confessing his sin. If he confesses, he will be agreeing with the Holy Spirit. He will be speaking the same judgment on his sin that the Spirit speaks. That is why the Bible uses the term which means “to agree with, to speak the same thing” when reference is made to confession of sin.

Necessity of confession

Confession of sin is necessary because we humans are an imperfect people. We could each say with Isaiah, *“Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips,”* Isaiah 6:5. God views the human race and declares, *“There is none righteous, no not one . . . there is none that doeth good, no, not one . . . for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,”* Romans 3:10, 12, 23. Man is weak and

warped by nature (we call that total inherent depravity) and willful sin when he comes to the place of spiritual accountability.

Salvation does not make a Christian above sin. Justification (which means right standing with God) is forever settled when one is saved. Sanctification (which means practical righteousness in attitude and conduct) is incomplete. An eternally-valid relationship with God is established in salvation: God becomes the believer's Father, and the believer becomes His child. Nothing can disturb that relationship. But fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ and the blessed indwelling Holy Spirit can be affected by sin in the believer's life. That is why the Christian must confess and receive cleansing once and again. As Jesus said, "Ye are clean, but not all," John 13:10.

Sin in the life of a person grieves the Holy Spirit and mars fellowship with God. That is why confession of sin is imperative to peace with God.

Companions of confession

Repentance and faith must accompany confession for it to be valid. Repentance means one's attitude is changed so that he desires to be done with sin and cleansed of its defilement, one's emotion is changed so that the love of sin dies in the heart and one's will is changed so that he resolves to be done with sin and be right with God. Faith means a person transfers confidence from every other person and thing, centering it in Jesus Christ alone. He confesses his sin to God, asks for forgiveness and confidently accepts it through Jesus Christ. Yes, both repentance and faith are essential companions to confession if one receives forgiveness of sin.

Let us see repentance, faith and confession at work. The Holy Spirit makes you aware of sin in your life. You are truly sorry you have sinned against God and resolve to turn from that wrong and seek peace with God. You agree with the Holy Spirit by telling God that you have sinned and by asking for His forgiveness and cleansing. You trust God alone to remove the sin because of what Jesus did for you in His death and resurrection. You have thus repented, trusted and confessed. "*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,*" I John 1:7.

Scope of confession

What kind of sins should be confessed to God? Sin may be classified into two great categories: sins of commission and sins of omission. Sins of commission include all error which is the result of wrongdoing, including attitude, words, deeds, etc. Sins of omission include all error which is the result of non-doing, including the neglect of obedience to the will and Word of God. Both kinds of sin should be confessed to God.

We can easily see why sins of commission need forgiveness. He who lies, blasphemes, commits adultery, embezzles, murders, etc, is deserving of condemnation. But is neglect so serious as to be called sin? God answers in words recorded in James 4:17, "*To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*" The sin of neglect is so serious that a simple omission of the exercise of personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior will condemn a person (John 3:18). Every sin-whether of omission or commission-should be confessed and forgiven.

"But wait," someone will object, "I cannot remember every sin I have ever committed. How can I confess them all?"

It is not necessary to name every sin to have it forgiven. Name those sins which the Holy Spirit impresses you to name, but otherwise do not try to make a list. Jesus told of a guilty sinner

whose prayer was, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” and who went home justified (Luke 18:13). To pray with an acknowledgement of personal guilt, a sorrow for sin, and a confident request for cleansing is all that God requires.

To whom should confession be made? Confess your sins to God because God alone can forgive sin. David’s sin of adultery with Bathsheba and the death of her husband was confessed to God and forgiveness sought directly from Him. Here is the rule to follow: (1) Confess all sin to God and receive His forgiveness. (2) Sins that are secret should be confessed to no other. (3) Sins against a brother should be confessed to that brother, after they are settled with God. (4) Sins of a public nature should be repented of and confessed publicly, after they are settled with God. But all sin is against God and must be confessed directly to Him, without human mediator, to receive forgiveness.

THE PRAYER OF PETITION

Petition is a valid and vital part of prayer. Jesus said, *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, be evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”* Mathew 7:7-11.

“Petition belongs unmistakably to the people of God. It is theirs for continued use. They are not to neglect it. It promises the highest rewards . . . No one has fully understood its vast potential; no one has exhausted its immeasurable resources; no one has ever been limited in his proper use of it. It beckons all who would employ it and promises the ‘exceeding abundantly above all’ that comes from the heart of a loving Father in heaven.” –Harold Lindsell, *When You Pray* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), p. 49.

The poet wrote, “I know not by what methods rare, but this I know: God answers prayer.” There are two phases to prayer: we ask, and God acts. Jesus promised it, and Christians through the ages testify to it. Yes, God answers prayer.

Who?

Whose prayer does God promise to answer? Who can present petitions before Him and expect to receive that which they need? (1) God answers the prayer of one in need, one in poverty, one who is destitute. Psalm 72:12 reads, *“He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.”* Answered prayer is not based on the importance of the one requesting but on the all-sufficiency and grace of God. Therefore, He will help the helpless. (2) God answers the prayers of good people. Psalm 3:17 testifies, *“The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.”* But again, He does not answer prayer because they are good but because they are needy and He is gracious. (3) God answers the prayer of sinners. Luke 18:13, 14, reports Jesus’ testimony of a wicked man who went into the house of God and with repentant spirit cried out, *“God be merciful to me a sinner.”* God heard his prayer, and he went home justified. Wicked men say, *“We know that God heareth not sinners,”* John 9:31, but they are wrong. God hears the prayer of the sinner who seeks forgiveness and cleansing.

Read Mathew 7:7,8 emphasizing the pronouns: *“Ask, and it shall be given YOU; seek and YE shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto YOU: for EVERY ONE that asketh receiveth; and HE that seeketh findeth; and to HIM that knocketh it shall be opened.”*

Be confident. The God who hears the prayer of the needy, the poor, the destitute, the sinner and the righteous will hear your prayer.

What?

What things are the proper subjects for petition? Some people are persuaded we should pray only about “religious” things but are on our own in the “secular” affairs of day-by-day life. Not so! God wants us to pray about every concern, and He promises to answer such prayers. (1) The Bible teaches us to pray about every aspect of life. Consider the wide subjects of prayer suggested in these Scripture passages: *“If two of you shall agree on earth as touching ANY THING THAT THEY SHALL ASK, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven,”* Matthew 18:19.

Jesus said, *“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask WHAT YE WILL, and it shall be done unto you,”* John 15:7.

Again the words of Jesus, *“And WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask ANYTHING in my name, I will do it,”* John 14:13,14.

What amazing promises! What a wide scope of subjects for prayer! God will answer prayer for *“any thing that they shall ask . . . what ye will . . . whatsoever ye shall ask . . . if ye shall ask any thing.”* His promises are true and faithful. Pray about every aspect and concern of your life. (2) The Bible records God’s answer to prayers asking for all kinds of things. God answered prayer for supplies of food and water when Israel was in the wilderness (Exodus 15:14-15). God answered prayer for intervention in nature when Joshua prayed for a day to be lengthened, and the sun seemed to stand still (Joshua 10:14). God answered prayer for tangible indication of His will as Gideon laid out the fleece (Judges 6:39, 40). God answered prayer for the manifestation of His personal presence when Solomon dedicated the temple in Jerusalem (I Kings 9:3). God answered prayer for physical protection as Ezra led returnees from the Babylonian Captivity (Ezra 8:23). God answered prayer for a child to be born even after Zachariah and Elizabeth were aged (Luke 1:13). God answered prayer for the power of the Holy Spirit as early disciples were challenged in their witness for Christ (Acts 4:31). God answered prayer for deliverance from prison as Peter was jailed for preaching the gospel (Acts 12). Do you see how many different subjects are dealt with in prayer? *“For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?”* Deuteronomy 4:7.

When?

God promises immediate answer to prayer in most instances. Isaiah 65:24 reads, *“And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.”* Mark 11:24 suggests the idea of reaching out the hand to receive as you are in the act of asking, so certain is God to respond in giving.

However, experience has taught that God does not answer every petition immediately. Zechariah and Elizabeth waited and prayed for years before they received the son

for whom they petitioned (Luke 1). Paul prayed for a thorn to be removed from his flesh and never received what he sought (II Corinthians 12:7-10). Here is the key to delayed answer to prayer: When God delays in answer to a proper petition, it is only because He has something better in mind!

When the petition is not right, God says, "No." When the time is not right, God says "Slow." When the heart is not right, God says, "Grow."

Jesus said, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you . . . Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full,*" John 16:23,24.

THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Intercession! What a world of grace is involved in that word! It refers to that kind of prayer by which a person approaches God with petitions in behalf of another.

The prayer of intercession and the prayer of petition are alike in that each asks for specific things. They are different in that petition asks in one's own behalf and intercession asks in behalf of others.

The prayer of intercession is experienced primarily by Christians who are more mature spiritually. That is because intercession is so unselfish, so devoted to the welfare of others, that a lesser spirit will find it difficult to persist in it. Passionate importunity is necessary in an intercessory prayer life and is found only in those more spiritually mature.

Basis

How can we be confident in a ministry of intercessory prayer? What principles undergird such a blessed work as that of praying for others?

Intercessory prayer springs from the inability of the intercessor to meet the need he sees. The distance may be too great. The problem may be too severe. The person may be too unwilling. The solution may be too complicated. Whatever the reason, a person sees a problem which he cannot meet and beseeches God to intervene and minister to human good and divine glory.

Intercessory prayer is based on the fact that God hears and answers prayer. If God does not answer specific petitions by giving specific things, there is no benefit in intercession. But, as our last study revealed, God does answer prayer for specific and tangible things. Petition and intercession are valid, and the believer is admonished to exercise himself in both.

Intercessory prayer is dependent on the willingness of God to hear and respond to the petition of one person in behalf of another. It is confident that He will hear and work in the life of a person who does not pray upon the request of one of His children who does pray.

The faithful Christian may ask anything in behalf of any person. God has committed Himself to hear and answer when the petition is offered aright. That is the basis of intercessory prayer.

Advantages

There are many advantages to the ministry of intercessory prayer. There is no limitation of distance. You can pray for a friend in the local hospital, a relative in the next room or a missionary half way around the globe. Like the “direct distance dialing” on your telephone, you can be present in any place of need through your intercessory prayer.

There is no problem of language or culture or prejudice of race. I have been on some mission fields where a person of Caucasian heritage was looked on with suspicion and fear. I have been on some mission fields where the language was so strange I could communicate with the people only through an interpreter. I have been on some mission fields where the level of the culture presented a problem in ministry. But none of those problems is met in the prayer of intercession.

There is no problem of time involved in the intercessory prayer. You can be all over the world every day. You can reach across your city or community in a flash. You can move from one place to another as you deal with differing persons and needs with no delay in travel.

Even the person confined to the home or to the bed can engage in the blessed ministry of praying for others. Thus, the aged and infirm can have a vital part in the work of God around the world.

Examples

The Bible is replete with instances in which God’s people interceded in behalf of others. Genesis 18 records Abraham’s prayer for the city of Sodom. Exodus 32 records Moses’ prayer in behalf of Israel after the people had sinned by worshiping the golden calf at Mount Sinai. Jesus prayed for the disciples who followed Him that the Father would keep them from evil (John 17:15), and that the Father would sanctify them through the truth (John 17:17). On another occasion Jesus said to Peter “*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not*” Luke 22:31,32.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Christian believers in Colossae, “*We . . . do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,*” Colossians 1:9.

The scope of intercessory prayer is indicated by the words of Paul in I Timothy 2:1, “*I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.*” Yes, the Bible is full of examples and admonitions that believers might exercise a ministry of intercessory prayer.

Resistance

The Christian must be diligent to persevere in the prayer of intercession. Satan knows the power of such praying. He will make it the specific object of his attack. Those who intercede are engaged in a real warfare. But the benefit is worth the battle! In the matter of intercessory prayer let us learn to “*pray without ceasing.*” I Thessalonians 5:17.

Now we have come to the end of this series of studies on prayer. So much more remains

to be said. But this is sufficient to stir up your pure minds and to call you to a meaningful prayer life. Give diligence to practice the prayer of adoration, the prayer of thanksgiving, the prayer of confession, the prayer of petition and the prayer of intercession. The healthy prayer life must include each one of these. Each may be included in times of prayer, but each is so important as to occupy its own time in your prayer life. Each must be learned (for each has its own rules, problems and blessings) exercised and enjoyed for the Christian life to be whole.