

Discovery Hour

The Importance of Prayer

Week #8 - February 28, 2010 "Interceding for Others" (Connie Wilcox)

Intercessory Prayer

What is it? In normal English usage, intercession is the act of interceding (intervening or mediating) between two parties. In our Christian framework it is prayer to God on behalf of another person or persons.

Intercessory prayer invites us into God's care and concern for us, our families and friends, and the entire world. No concern is too trivial for God to receive with loving attention. The importance of intercessory prayer can be measured by the prominence given to it in the Scriptures. So, let's examine:

The Bible Basis for Intercessory Prayer.

I. The Reason or Necessity for Intercessory Prayer.

1. Because it is right. Luke 18:1
2. Because it is commanded by God. Col. 4:2
3. Because it is sinful to neglect it. I Sam. 12:23
4. Because neglect of it grieves God. Isa. 43:21-22
5. Because it is a medium through which God gives blessing. Matt. 7:11
6. Because it is essential to victory over the forces of evil. Eph. 6:12-18
7. Because of the obligation imposed by Christ's example. Heb. 5:7
8. Because of the emphasis given to it in the early Church. Acts 6:4

II. Requirements and Qualifications for Intercessory Prayer.

1. Regarding iniquity in the heart, a disqualification. Psalms 66:18
2. Refusal to heed God's Word, a disqualification. Proverbs 28:9
3. Disregarding the cry of the needy, a disqualification. Proverbs 21:13
4. True penitence. Luke 18:13-14
5. Faith in Christ. I John 5:13-15
6. Righteousness and Godliness. Psalms 34:15
7. Obedience. I John 3:22
8. Abiding in Christ. John 15:7
9. Humility. Psalms 10:17
10. Joyful trust. Psalms 37:4-5

III. The Subjects of Intercessory Prayer.

1. Ourselves. John 17:1
 - a. As lacking wisdom. James 1:5
 - b. As in destitute circumstances. Psalms 102:17
 - c. As under oppression. Exodus 22:22-23
 - d. As suffering. James 5:13
2. Other Christians. James 5:16

3. Christian leaders and workers. Eph. 6:18-20
4. Young converts. I Thess. 3:9, 13
5. The sick. James 5:14-16
6. Children. I Chron. 28:18-19
7. Rulers and government officials. I Tim. 2:1-3
8. Israel. Rom. 10:1
9. Those who mistreat us. Luke 6:28
10. All people. I Tim. 2:1

IV. Methods of Intercessory Prayer.

1. Time
 - a. At stated intervals. Psa. 55:16-17
 - b. At meals. I Tim. 4:4-5
 - c. In great extremities. Psa. 50:15
 - d. At all seasons. Eph. 6:18
2. Place
 - a. In private. Matt. 6:6
 - b. In public. Acts 27
 - c. Everywhere. I Tim. 2:8
3. Manner
 - a. Attitude of body. Not important or commanded.
 - i. Standing. Mark 11:25
 - ii. Kneeling. I Kings 8:54
 - iii. Prostrate. Matt. 26:39
 - b. Attitude of heart. All important and obligatory.
 - i. Sincerity. Psa. 145:18
 - ii. Simplicity. Matt. 6:7
 - iii. Earnestness. Heb. 5:7
 - iv. Persistence. Col. 4:2
 - v. Definiteness. Psa. 27:4
 - vi. Truthfulness. Matt. 21:22

V. Results of Intercessory Prayer.

1. Great achievements. James 5:16
2. Definite answers. John 14:13-14
3. Accomplishment of God's purpose. I John 5:14-15
4. Glorification of God. John. 14:13

Seven Ideas for Using Intercessory Prayer at Riverside Covenant Church.

1. Use the new Church Pictorial Directory to provide a systematic way to pray for our church family including staff, leadership team, members and friends. Jot down current requests by each name.
2. Obtain from the Missions Committee an up-to-date list of our Church missionaries with weekly updates on their current needs for specific prayer.
3. Order from Covenant headquarters "The Covenant Missionary Prayer Calendar" and pray using the suggested monthly sequence.
4. Cut out the "Prayer Needs and Praises" section from each Sunday Bulletin and compile into a notebook for use in an ongoing way.

5. Seriously examine the church bulletin board and Newsletters as a resource for specific Church concerns and requests.
6. Come with pen and pad to every service, class, small group, men's and women's meeting, retreat, etc. and write down every specific concern and request that is mentioned. Do not trust your memory, it is that important. Likewise before and after services and over coffee fellowship, in every conversation be attentive to others needs and jot them down.
7. Be very attentive to prayer needs that God puts on your mind anytime during the day or night. Always pray when God prompts you to pray for something or someone.

Inner Healing Prayer

What is it? A special kind of Intercessory Prayer that is specifically for the emotionally wounded and broken in bringing them the healing that only God can give.

Inner Healing Prayer may include:

1. Inviting Jesus into past injuries, memories and wounds and bringing them into the healing light of God.
2. Listening with others to discern false and true guilt seeking God for forgiveness and freedom in Christ.
3. Laying on of hands and anointing with oil.
4. Identifying areas where one is cut off from God, prayerfully and lovingly opening those places to God.
5. Praying consistently over a period of time for healing and renewal of another.

Since Inner Healing Prayer focuses attention on emotional wounds, needs, lies, vows and dysfunctions, some of the following issues may surface for attention:

1. Self hatred
2. Fear
3. Addiction
4. Depression
5. Inability to give or receive forgiveness
6. Bitterness
7. The need to perform
8. Defensiveness
9. Feeling unaccepted and insecure
10. Obsessive-compulsive traits

Questions for Reflection:

1. When our prayer for inner healing doesn't "work", is something wrong with us?
2. How can we stay in the middle ground between desiring healing and demanding healing?
3. Have you ever felt that God has asked you to live like Paul, with a thorn in the flesh?
4. Have you ever had the experience of serving as a healing prayer partner with another person?
5. What emotions surface in you when you pray for healing for others?
6. How can you begin a plan of "prayer plus action" for your own emotional well being or in helping another with the process?
7. Can you name some appropriate Bible passages that would help you or another person know that you are accepted, secure and significant in the eyes of God?