



LESSON 7 // HOW TO PRAY FOR OTHERS

Prayer makes us strong as believers. We need to pray! Unfortunately, we don't always know how to pray and our confidence in prayer is often weak.

Jesus set the example for His disciples and taught them the way to pray in "The Lord's Prayer" (Matthew 6:9-13). An important part of what we learn from Jesus is the importance of praying for others. In fact, Hebrews 7:25 tells us that Jesus is praying now for us—that He "always lives to intercede" for those who belong to Him!

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians as believers "who help us by your prayers" (see 2 Corinthians 1:8-11). We need to be engaged in this kind of "intercessory prayer" as well. Let's look at how we can grow in effectively praying for others.

1. Love the people you're praying for.

Compassion is a key to intercessory prayer. You can't pray effectively for someone you hate, resent or are offended with. The most powerful prayers are motivated by God's love (see Luke 13:34)!

2. Believe that your prayers will positively impact others.

Faith is the foundation for prayer. When we believe and trust God to answer, He will work powerfully through our intercession in the lives of those we pray for (see Mark 11:24; Acts 12:12-16; Colossians 1:9, 10).

3. Expect others to be strengthened by your prayers.

The people we pray for need God's strength in their lives. Isaiah 40:29 tells us that the Lord "gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak" and we can be part of this as we pray for others who are weary and weak.

4. Let the Holy Spirit lead you as you pray for others.

The Holy Spirit helps us to know how to pray for others, as the Apostle Paul explains:

Romans 8:26-28 (NIV) *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. ²⁷ And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. ²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.*

5. Guard against judgment, self-righteousness and spiritual pride as you pray for others.

This is a subtle trap for us as we intercede. Stay broken. Be humble. Stay grounded. Avoid gossip.

Galatians 6:1 (NIV) *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.*

6. Fight for others in prayer.

Intercession rescues others from the enemy, but this only happens as we fight for them in prayer.

Colossians 4:12 (NIV) *Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.*

7. Pray for people God places in your world.

See yourself as a “Kingdom advancer” through prayer, wherever you are. Believe that you can make a difference in your work, neighborhood, school, when you come upon a tragedy or accident, etc. Take an assignment to pray for your world and the people in your circumstances. Serve God through prayer!

Romans 12:12 (NIV) *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

Colossians 4:2 (NIV) *Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*

8. Remember to pray for people in authority, leadership and influence.

Leaders are targeted by the enemy. Be part of their protection through prayer. Know that you are part of the spiritual shield that helps protect them. Understand the “strike the shepherd” principle. Don’t let the devil soil you toward those who need your prayers. Watch your attitudes and resentment towards leaders.

2 Thessalonians 3:1, 2 (NIV) *Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. ² And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith.*

1 Timothy 2:1-3 (NIV) *I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone — ² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. ³ This is good, and pleases God our Savior.*

Discussion questions

1. In what ways is “compassion a key to intercessory prayer”? How should this impact your prayers for others?
2. Read Romans 8:26-28. What do you learn from these verses about the Holy Spirit’s role in helping you pray for others?
3. Read Colossians 4:12. How can you fight for others in prayer like Epaphras, who was “always wrestling in prayer” for believers?