

How Do You Pray? (Part IV)
Intercession, The Call to a God Who Works
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Introduction: Why should a man pray?

- A. Sadly many do not believe that God answers prayer.
 - 1. The difference between a dead faith and a living faith is action. **(Jas 2:18)**
 - 2. When we see the need for something, we will act. But what if we do not believe? Jesus addressed this in His ministry. **(Luke 18:1-8)**
- B. In our previous studies we learned several important concepts of prayer.
 - 1. Prayer may be divided into four elements: Praise, Confession, Petition and Intercession.
 - 2. Some may view God as "a great vending machine". As a result they only have prayers filled with petition. This reflects a wrong concept of God.
 - 3. Our motive in prayer must be for the accomplishment of God's will rather than a self centered one. God wants us to make requests of Him.
- C. If there was to be an imbalance in the time spent in our four areas of prayer, it would be in intercession.
 - 1. Why did the apostles require a great amount of time in prayer? **(Acts 6:1-4)**
 - 2. If a faithful man regularly goes to God in prayer, does he then need others to pray for him? How would you answer this question?

I. Do we need God's help ?

- A. You may say: "That question is not necessary, of course we do!"
 - 1. Consider the power in the gifts bestowed by God upon an apostle. **(2 Cor 12:12)**
 - 2. Even with these gifts there was something that Paul needed that was beyond his power as an apostle, the intercession of other Christians!
 - a. **(2 Cor 1:8-11)** - Paul credited the prayers of *other* Christians for his deliverance.
 - b. **(Phil 1:19)** - Paul anticipated that the *future* prayers of other Christians would deliver him at a later time.
 - c. **(Col 4:2-4)** - Paul needed the prayers of other Christians to open a door for him to teach others.
 - d. **(1 Thess 5:25)** - Here is a broad appeal. Did he really need this?
 - e. **(2 Thess 3:1-2)** - Here both deliverance and the spread of the word are brought together. Will your prayer make such a difference?
 - f. **(Heb 13:18-19)** - Their prayer would make a reunion more likely!
 - 3. If an apostle needed Christians to pray for him, imagine the power within our grasp to mightily do good for the Lord's cause!
- B. It makes sense to ask for God's help in the overwhelming and uncertain work before us.
 - 1. Example: A neighbor who begins a impossible job when help was only a

- request away. **(Matt 7:7-8)**
2. Because some have lost their faith, they do not pray. Many of us are like that. If the results are not instantaneous, we give up. **(Jas 4:2)**
 3. Do you think of others regularly in your prayers? Do others need your prayers?

II. Intercession in the life of Paul.

- A. Consider the churches that Paul prayed for.
 1. **(Rom 1:9)** - He prayed for the Romans “**without ceasing**”.
 2. **(1 Cor 1:4)** - He prayed for the Corinthians “**always**”.
 3. **(Phil 1:3-4)** - He prayed for the Phillipians “**always in every prayer**”.
 4. **(Col 1:3, 9)** - He prayed for the Colossians “**always**” and later affirmed that those with Paul “**do not cease to pray for you**”.
 5. **(1 Thess 1:2)** - He prayed for the Thessalonians “**always**”.
 6. These were not just generic prayers: "Lord bless all Christians". He made mention of them!
 7. What other churches did Paul pray for by name not mentioned in the Bible?
 8. Have you ever prayed for other churches?
- B. Consider the individuals Paul prayed for.
 1. **(2 Tim 1:3)** - Paul prayed for Timothy “without ceasing”.
 2. **(Philemon 1:4)** - Paul prayed for Philemon “always”.
 3. How much time did Paul need for intercession on behalf of others?

III. What our Intercession can do.

- A. In areas like this the fruit is not easily seen.
 1. It may have been our prayer that made the difference, but we can not be sure in this life.
 2. God wants us to do this on the basis of His word alone! Do we have that kind of faith? **(Luke 5:5)**
 3. How much time out of your schedule will you take? Do you believe it will do good?
- B. What are the greatest needs in the Lord’s church today?
 1. Greater Evangelism. **(2 Thess 3:1-2)**
 2. Greater knowledge. **(Col 1:9-11)**
 3. More Love for one another. **(Phil 1:9)**
 4. A wise leadership that has come from strong, faithful Christians. **(Phil 1:10)**
 5. Strong homes.

Conclusion: Are we seeing the Christian life as we should?

- A. When you combine a belief in a living God with an unselfish service to others you find men and women who intercede on behalf of others. Are you one?
- B. We may never know the great work the Lord has accomplished through us until that day we see Him. **(Eph 3:20-21)**