

## **Intercessory Prayer**

Have you ever had a friend or family member fall into a crisis, and it seemed that there was nothing that you could do to affect their situation? It's a terribly helpless feeling. For those who don't put their faith in God, there sincerely may be nothing they can do. However, those who trust in God know that God invites us to come to Him in prayer to seek His intervention in the desperate circumstances of others. This is intercessory prayer.

Though we feel most compelled to pray for others in their moments of dire need, there is truly no concern that is too trivial for God to receive with loving attention. The truth is, God already knows the needs we bring to Him and so intercessory prayer is a way to agree with God; to join our hearts with God's heart for the well-being of others.

Intercessory prayers may also be offered to God in collaboration with others. As we participate in prayer times with a small group or if we join a prayer group, we can intercede together on behalf of others.

The Bible provides us with several examples of the types of situations where we are to offer intercessory prayers:

- For those in authority (1 Timothy 2:2)
- For the sick (James 5:14)
- For enemies (Jeremiah 29:7)
- For friends (Job 42:8)
- For those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44)
- For your fellow believers (Ephesians 6:18)

There are several approaches to intercessory prayer. Here are a few worth exploring:

- Keep an intercessory prayer journal. This is an excellent way to track the work of God in response to the prayers you offer on behalf of others.
- Pray the newspaper. More specifically, as you read through the newspaper, lift the situations up to God in prayer.
- Pray through the categories that the Bible instructs us to pray over (see the list above). Begin by personalizing the list and then take time to pray down your list, line-by-line.
- Become quiet before God and simply ask Him to bring to mind people that you need to pray over. This is a great way to grow sensitive to God speaking to you about the needs of others.

God has called all Christians to the privilege of intercessory prayer. In fact, it is a privilege that we can bring the needs of others before God and trust that God will hear us and respond in whatever way God deems best.