

Prayer

Part Three: Intercession

In the last two studies we looked at prayer in two basic types: *worship* and *petition*. The third and final type of prayer we will study is - *intercession*.

The first form of prayer we looked at (worship) is an act of prayer that reflects reverence, patience, seeking God's will, submitting to His will in trust, and admitting our surrender to Him. Psalm 95 "Come, let us *bow down* in worship, *let us kneel* before the LORD our Maker, for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, *the flock under his care*."

- Worshiping God isn't work – that's awesome! We can come before Him in beautiful communion, and rest in His presence (Hebrews 4:3). We can simply stand in wonder of who He is, and just fellowship with our Maker.

The second form of prayer (petition) reflects our pleading, our imploring our needs before God. Petitioning may manifest in our seeking God to act or move in the situations and circumstances of our lives. It also reflects our diligence, and us bringing our continual appeals before the Lord, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

- Petitioning God for our needs, in general, isn't too much work because we are so involved in our needs that we can become interested in them very easily! Talking about *us* isn't too hard.

Finally, the third form of prayer we will look at is – *intercession*. This form of prayer may take worship and petition in combination as we come before God *worshipfully* and plead or *intercede* on someone else's behalf.

- Interceding requires labor. Paul in his letter Colosse mentions one of his fellow laborers: "Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." *Here prayer is described as work*.

It seems each form of prayer requires the other. We can't really petition the Lord about something without coming to Him in worship and trust, with a humble reverent heart. And we can't really intercede on someone else's behalf without the former two as well. This is why Jesus in the model prayer combined all three (worship, petition, and intercession). The difference lies in the motivation of the prayer.

All Prayer begins with relationship; relationship between us and God, relationship between us and others.

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What does intercession mean?

The word intercession translated today literally means: **prayer, petition, or entreaty in favor of another.** (Intercession: 2009. In *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*). We can sort of see in this definition the combination of the three types.

When mentioned in the Old Testament -

Translated in Hebrew: paga` paw-gah' a primitive root; to impinge, by accident or violence, or (figuratively) by importunity:--come (betwixt), cause to entreat, fall (upon), make intercession, intercessor, intreat, lay, light (upon), meet (together), pray, reach, run.

Examples: (Jeremiah 7:16, Jeremiah 27:18)

When Mentioned in the New Testament -

Translated in the Greek: enteuxis ent'-yook-sis from 1793; an interview, i.e. (specially) supplication:--intercession, prayer.

Examples: (Romans 8:26, 8:34, Hebrews 7:25)

When the Holy Spirit Intercedes the word in Heb. is: nekach nay'-kakh from an unused root meaning to be straightforward; properly, the fore part; used adverbially, opposite:--before, over against.

nokach no'-kakh from the same as 5226; properly, the front part; used adverbially (especially with preposition), opposite, in front of, forward, in behalf of:--(over) against, before, direct(-ly), for, right (on).

nakoach naw-ko'-akh from the same as 5226; straightforward, i.e. (figuratively), equitable, correct, or (abstractly), integrity:--plain, right, uprightness.

It is interesting this word used in **Romans 8:26** is different from the other words, and it implies a direct relationship between the *hearer* and the *interceder*. It's like GOD Himself is praying for us, helping us pray (The Relationship, keep this thought in mind).

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When was intercession first mentioned in the Bible?

Isaiah 53:12 (New King James Version)

“Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made *intercession for the transgressors*.” Jesus interceded for us with His sacrifice and lives to intercede for us!

This is an Old Testament prophecy fulfilled by Jesus. He intercedes for us – that’s a heavy thought! Jesus lives to intercede for us! (Hebrews 7:20-28).

So in essence, what is intercessory prayer?

Intercession in prayer is when we reach out beyond our own lives and pray, not for our own needs but for the needs of those around us. We pray for the needs of family, friends, and neighbors who don’t yet know Jesus Christ. We intercede for the needs of those within the Body of Christ. When we intercede we bring before God the various needs that have come to our attention.

Why should we intercede?

First, we are shifting the focus from ‘us’ to ‘them’. Paul said in **Philippians 2:4** “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” We can look out for the interests of others through *intercessory prayer*.

Second, when we intercede we are becoming aware of what prayer actually is: a spiritual battle. (**Ephesians 6:12**) Once we have taken up God’s armor what are we supposed to do? Just stand there? No! Get in the fight! “*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit.*” (**Ephesians 6:18**).

How do we intercede?

First, we have to take our eyes off of us. Intercession is a selfless act of prayer, that’s why it takes work! It’s hard for us sometimes to put others before ourselves, even in prayer. So - first step, *become aware of the needs*. Before we can intercede we have to know the needs of others. **This again requires us to become unselfish, and find out what the needs are by asking and logging time with others.**

Second, pray in the Spirit. Isn’t it interesting that we are told to do something by the power and guidance of another (The Holy Spirit). It is God telling me to do it – pray, yet telling me that it is a work of the Holy Spirit when I do it! (Remember, ‘The Relationship’).

It is just like other things in the Christian life: Galatians 5:16, “Walk by the Spirit.” Romans 8:13, “Put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 12:3, “Say Jesus is Lord by the Spirit.” Philippians 3:3, “Worship by the Spirit.” In all these things we are supposed to do something. But we are to do them in a way that it is the Spirit who is doing them through us. **Therefore we must: Have The Relationship, Trust God to Give His Spirit, Let Our Prayers Be Shaped by God’s Word, Keep Ourselves in the Love of God.**

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