

LOVING YOUR FAMILY INTO THE KINGDOM: HOW TO PRAY FOR YOUR LOVED ONES

Family Series

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May 28, 2023

Thank you for giving to our building fund this past month! We are still accepting pledges up until our 30th Anniversary in April 2024. Share about my trip to Cuba.

TEXT: 1 Timothy 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

INTRODUCTION:

1. I just celebrated my 50th spiritual birthday. One of the main things I am learning is the priority of intercession in the life of a follower of Jesus.
2. As lovers of Jesus, we know the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) is not an option. We also know that we only have this one lifetime to reach the lost and disciple the nations. By discipling the nations, we are talking about transforming the nations. We also know that we all will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10) and give an account of how we participated in the Great Commission.
3. You may not be an effective evangelist, but we can all pray effectively for the lost.
4. **Mark 11:17 Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘*My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations*’?”**
5. God gives us power to transform our city. And from there we need more power to transform our state, our nation, and the rest of the world. **Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”**
6. Praying for revival, we are asking God for more power to reach our city. Based on Acts 1:8, the primary reason why the Holy Spirit’s power is given to us is to help us transform our city in the context of Matthew 28:18-20.

7. The fact is when we seek *first* the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33)—which means to bring God’s rule and reign to the lost, beginning in our city—then God will meet our needs.
8. The good news is that the Holy Spirit helps us to pray (Romans 8:26-27).
9. Our text emphasizes the priority of prayer and persevering in prayer. This text talks about praying for our leaders, but I want to focus on prayer for our loved ones, our family.

I. THE PRIORITY OF INTERCESSION

- A. **1 Timothy 3:1 “First of all”** – The priority of prayer, the priority of praying for the lost. “Requests, prayers and intercession.” All three are mentioned for emphasis.
 1. Paul's passion for prayer and the lost: v.1 **"I urge you"** that intercession be made **“for all people.”**
 2. **1 Timothy 2:4 who desires *all people* to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.**
 3. **2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**
 1. One of the most powerful quotes on praying for the lost is by J.O. Sanders in his book, *Spiritual Leadership*: **“It is doubtful that any soul is saved apart from the believing prayer of some saint.” J.O. Sanders**
- B. **WHAT IS INTERCESSION?**
 1. Intercession is simply praying for others. Petition is praying for your needs. Intercession is praying for the needs and interests of others.
 2. Abraham interceding on behalf of Sodom (Genesis 18). Moses interceding on behalf of Israel (Exodus 32). Esther interceding for her nation (Esther 4:14ff).
 3. **E.M. Bounds said, “Talking to people for God is a great thing (*evangelism*), but talking to God for others is greater still.”**
 4. **“Intercession is a way of loving people. If we truly love people... this will lead us to prayer.” Richard Foster**
 4. Intercession is a priestly ministry. In the Apostolic Community, we are all priests unto Jesus (Revelation 1:6). The priest’s primary function was to intercede for the people of God. The 12 tribes were inscribed on the High Priest’s breastplate and on his shoulder pads—to carry the burden of intercession on his shoulders and on his heart.
5. **John Wesley: “Everything by prayer and nothing without it.”**

6. Harvest Rock Church was founded on prayer. We started in 1994 with a prayer meeting at our home on 2020 Woodlyn Rd. We started early morning prayer meetings at 6 a.m. five days a week.
7. **“There has never been a historic revival without first being united prayer.” A.T. Pierson.** Pierson took over Charles Spurgeon’s church when it was the largest local church in the world. It grew in the Second Great Awakening. He knew that prayer was the key to the harvest.
8. Before I talk about praying for our family, I want to talk about praying for our governmental leaders. It is right in our text.

C. PRAYING FOR GOVERNMENT LEADERS

1. **1 Timothy 2:1 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.**
2. It is interesting that God wants us to pray for kings, or in our case the President, and other government leaders. Specifically, during the writing of this letter to Timothy, Nero was the emperor of the Roman Empire. Who was Nero? Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus. He reigned from 54 A.D. to 68 A.D. He was a mad man at best and demon possessed at worst. He was a tyrant, a debauched and immoral man. He murdered his mother and murdered his wife so he could marry another woman. He blamed the Christians for the great Roman fire and murdered countless hundreds of Christians and burned them alive as human torches. He committed suicide at the age of 30.
3. **By praying for governmental leaders, it somehow brings the Kingdom of heaven down, of “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17). This verse is about transforming the earth with “righteousness or justice (in all godliness and holiness), peace, and joy.”**
4. **“Peace includes religious freedom because it implies the absence of persecution.” Papa Ché**
5. Mama Sue and I pray for President Biden and Governor Newsom on a regular basis. Pray that God will save them or remove them.
6. By the way, we are to pray for all who are in authority, including pastors and other Ephesians 4:11 ministers. I want to thank you for praying for me and our pastors. It is the greatest act of love and service that you can give to us. Thank you for praying for me this week in Cuba.

D. SEE YOURSELF AS A PASTOR OVER YOUR SPHERE OF MINISTRY



1. **1 Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen people, a royal *priesthood*, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
2. We are all ministers (Ephesians 4:11, Revelation 1:6, Revelation 5:10).
3. The first thing a priest does is to love his people and pray for them. Don't curse the lost but bless them.
4. We are asking Jesus to save them or remove them based on Daniel 2:20: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. 21 He changes times and seasons; He removes kings and sets up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding."
5. The priest's second responsibility is to pray for the people they are overseeing.

E. PRAYING FOR YOUR FAMILY (OIKOS)

1. *Oikos* is defined as a family member, close relatives, and friends that you have regular contact with.
2. *Oikos* in the Bible: Cornelius (Acts 10:2, 24, 27, 44-48); Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:25-31).
3. Church growth studies show that 80-90% of all people come to know Christ through a friend or a relative.
4. The fact is that your loved ones are going to hell if they don't know Jesus. Charles Finney's prescription for a burden: See with your mind's eyes what hell is like. Then see your loved ones there. Then see what heaven is going to be like. And see your loved ones up there.
5. I really believe that God has saved you so that you can be the catalyst of seeing your family members come to Christ.

F. PRAYING PROPHETICALLY FOR THE HARVEST: It seems that the Holy Spirit is touching certain people in our communities who are especially opened to the gospel. We know that simple door-to-door or what we call "cold turkey" evangelism is far less productive than developing an intentional outreach to people that the Holy Spirit is moving over. One of the first steps in seeing the harvest come in is to discover the people who will be especially responsive to the gospel in this revival. This is doing what the Father is doing (John 5:19).

1. **YOUTH UNDER 25** — 80% of people who give their lives to Jesus do so before the age of 21. In their twenties and thirties, they are still historically receptive to the gospel. This includes children!
2. **THE POOR** — **Luke 4:18** "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor." — **The harvest is among the poor. Transformation takes place through kings.** — **Acts 9:15** But the

Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.”

3. **HISPANICS AND LATINOS** — Demographically, the Hispanic communities are the poorest among the large blocks of people groups in California. 1) Asians, 2) Whites, 3) African Americans, 4) Hispanics.
4. **PEOPLE WHO ARE SUFFERING** — Crisis: critical illness, death of a dear one, divorce, other marriage problems, etc. Change and adjustment: relocation, new job, birth of a baby, etc. Stress: financial debt, boss trouble, work responsibility, etc. Note: The more challenges people are in, the more open they are to the gospel.
5. **PEOPLE IN TRANSITION** — A period of transition is a span of time in which an individual’s or family’s normal, everyday behavior patterns are disrupted by some irregular event that requires a response.
6. **DIVINE APPOINTMENTS** — People that God brings into your life that you may not have any relationship with. Bri at Nordstrom.

II. PERSEVERANCE OF INTERCESSION

- A. Be persevering — “with thanksgiving.”
 1. Thanksgiving is the language of faith and perseverance.
 2. When we intercede, we will at times be discouraged by the lack of results. That is why Paul admonishes that we rejoice.
 3. We say with Samuel of old, “God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you” (1 Samuel 12:23 KJV).
 4. George Mueller: Prayed for his five friends. After five years, one received Christ. After 10 years, two more found God. After 25 years, the fourth person received the Lord. The last one, he prayed for almost 52 years. Mueller died, and a few months later, his friend came to Christ.
 5. My uncle Mark’s salvation took 25 years.
 6. You need to P.U.S.H.: “Pray Until Something Happens.”

III. PUBLIC INTERCESSIONS

- A. God wants us to pray for people in corporate prayer meetings.
 1. Matthew 10:1ff, Luke 9:1ff, Luke 10:1ff, Acts 3:1-10, 4:4. Life Groups and various prayer meetings.
 2. Share the story of Jim Cymbala’s daughter, from the Brooklyn Tabernacle Church. The daughter had a child when she was 16. She ran off with her boyfriend and refused to talk with her parents or even see her parents. Several years go by, and at their weekly prayer meeting, one intercessor is led by the Lord to pray for



her corporately. The daughter has a dream that night that she died and went to hell. The next morning, she comes to her parents' home and repents.

CONCLUSION:

1. Make a prayer list and write it in your Bible.
2. Ask those of your family members to share their prayer needs.
3. Daily pray for your family and their needs. Prayer is a spiritual discipline.
4. Pray for your family in your Life Group. There is power in agreement (Matthew 18:19).
5. Have a weekly time of prayer and fasting for your family. Tuesday is my day of prayer and fasting for the lost.
6. Sue's mother's memorial service on Mother's Day, May 14. When we married in 1979, there were 28 relatives that Sue and I prayed for in a period of 25 years, and all of them came to know the Lord. Now we have a new list of 25 people who are the children and grandchildren of both our siblings that are not yet born again. God has given us a new assignment. This is one of the ways you can love your family.