

Intercession

(Prayers which ask God for things or to do things)

'God is in control. He can do anything. Why do I need to pray for things?'

Why Intercede?

- 1) Jesus did. There are many examples of this in the Gospels. Perhaps the most notable is when He intercedes for us in JOHN 17 (verses 6 - 26). Here He is praying His heart's desires for His disciples and those who believe because of them (and that means us!). If He knew intercession was necessary then it must be!
- 2) The Bible demands it. 1 TIMOTHY 2 verses 1 - 4. We are to pray and make petitions and requests for ALL PEOPLE - including 'Kings and all who are in authority'. These verses also give us another reason - it pleases God that we should intercede!
- 3) As we are commanded by God to intercede, so it is therefore a sin not to. 1 SAMUEL 12 v 23 tells us that Samuel recognised that it would be sinful if he as priest failed to pray for Israel. We are all priests of God, and it is our duty as priests to pray for those around us. It is the duty of priests to pray for the people they represent, and priests represent people before God. Jesus is the HIGH PRIEST, but as 1 PETER 2 v 9 reveals, we are all priests. It is our duty to represent men before God in prayer, and also God before men in witness.
- 4) It builds up our faith. As we pray, so God answers and encourages us to pray even more boldly. There are many Bible verses on this! See for example MATTHEW 7 v 7 and JOHN 15 v 7.
- 5) God does not have to involve us, but the Bible tells us clearly that God CHOOSES not only to involve Himself with mankind but also to involve man with His work. Isaiah tells us that God is looking for people ready to be involved (ISAIAH 6 v 8). He is ready to answer (DANIEL 9 v 23) and we must not give up praying (DANIEL 10 v 2 and vv 12-14; EPHESIANS 6 v 18)

What is Intercession?

Not all prayer is intercession. Confession, praise and thanksgiving are other forms of prayer. As already pointed out, intercession is the making of requests to God and representing other people before God - acting as a go-between (or Priest).

Jesus Intercedes For Us. Whether we pray or not, Jesus is continually representing us Christians before God. Satan (the Devil) is continually accusing us before God (ZECHARIAH 3 v 1; JOB 1 vv 9 - 11) but Jesus is rebuking him (HEBREWS 7 v 25). But God wants us involved too!

Our intercession is inspired by the Holy Spirit. He lives in all Christians. He will show us what to pray for and how to pray it (ROMANS 8 vv 26,27)

How do we know? The Holy Spirit will lay matters on our heart that we should pray for. Things that concern us, people we love, situations we are in. God has put you where you are so that's a good place to start praying!

Intercession

What do we do when we intercede?

We take part in Spiritual warfare. A Christian is a Soldier in God's Army, and we are not fighting humans (EPHESIANS 6 v 12). Everytime you pray for God's work to be done in a situation, in your life, in someone else's, you are praying for the DESTRUCTION OF SATAN'S KINGDOM in that situation. And Satan won't be very happy about that! - so we must be ready for counter attacks (see later).

An idea of the effects of this warfare and our part in it can be gained by considering the meaning of the Hebrew word translated as 'Intercession'. The word is 'PAGA'. Sometimes it is not translated as 'intercession' because the meaning in English would not be clear.

'PAGA'

In Genesis 23.8 this word is used when Abraham requests the Hittites to 'ask for him' of Ephron if he can bury his wife. The Hittites were to 'intercede' for Abraham.

In 1 Kings 2.25 and 2 Samuel 1.15 the word PAGA is translated as 'fall upon'. David commanded (in 2 Samuel 1 .15) that one of his soldiers 'fall upon' the Amelekite with a sword, thus killing him. This was intercession! David's officer was DOING THE KING'S BIDDING. Our Commander in Chief wants us to 'fall upon' Satan's works in a way that will bring them to an end. We do this through intercessory prayer.

In Isaiah 53.6 we read that our sins have been 'laid upon' Jesus. So taking others burdens, in prayer, is part of intercession.

Finally - 2 Samuel 23.12 gives us another rendering of 'PAGA'. Shammah 'stood his ground in the midst of the plot'. All about him were running, panic stricken. Shammah did not flee - he stood his ground. He declared that that territory was Israel's, and that it was not going to be allowed to fall to Philistia. When everything seems to go wrong, we too are to 'stand firm' in prayer, denying Satan access into territory already won for God. It may seem impossible - but with God's help Shammah slew the Philistines single handed!!

A big task - how do we do it?

How to Intercede.

There are lots of things that God commands us to do that our only honest reply is 'I can't': 'Be Perfect' 'Love Everyone' 'Pray at all times'
I CAN'T!!

But God knows that, and gives us the Holy Spirit: '... we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us...' (Romans 8.26,27)

When Jesus intercedes for us He does so away from us, when the Holy Spirit intercedes for us He does it THROUGH us, showing us what to pray for and giving us the words to pray with.

Sometimes the Spirit may cause us to intercede without words (Romans 8.23) even with a language we do not understand (1 Corinthians 14.2) but we are unaware that He is guiding our thoughts.

Intercession

But if we are to pray effectively then we are going to be winning battles against Satan, so he is going to fight back. Before we pray attackingly we must therefore protect ourselves:

Satan is cunning. If he can stop you praying he will. 'The Devil trembles when he sees, any saint upon his knees'. The easiest way to stop you is to accuse you of sinfulness, to trouble your conscience.

So, before you start, confess your sins to God. Ask for His cleansing and then BELIEVE that He keeps His Word, which says clearly that you are cleansed and made righteous (perfect) in God's sight (1 John 1.7-9). Then you can tell Satan that his accusations are false and rebuke him (James 4.7). He will have to stop! (Romans 8.33).

Make sure, too, that you are protected from Satan's attacks. Read Ephesians 6.10-18. Notice the armour is on FIRST, then comes the intercession.

Finally - do not be discouraged. Satan cannot defeat God. SATAN IS NO MATCH FOR GOD. So if we stick close to God we have NOTHING to fear! (2 Kings 6.16, 1 Corinthians 16.13,14).

Romans 8.31: 'In view of all this, what can we say?
If God is for us, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?'