

Pray Them to Jesus

When Those Closest to You Need Christ

By Ebony S. Small

I didn't know I was an intercessor. But I knew I loved talking to God. After I recommitted my life as a disciple of Christ, I underwent a radical transformation. The world around me started to change because the "inner me" was changing. Jesus became the source of my strength. He gave me a new paradigm through prayer and the study of His Word.

During a Sunday morning worship service, my pastor called upon me to pray for those who were responding to an altar call for salvation. Although I was a new believer and a recent member of the church, my pastor saw something in me I could not yet see in myself. He told the congregation that I was someone who had an anointing for prayer.

That was the first I'd heard anyone say this about me. But it was the first of many times I would sense the burdens of people and cry out to God on their behalf.

Intercessory prayer has been a great gift. I count it a privilege to sense and empathize with others' needs—to bear a burden for someone's life or spiritual condition and talk directly to God on his or her behalf.

Reasons for Confident Prayer

I believe James 5:16 with my whole heart: "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results" (nlt).

When we pray, we possess power and our prayers will yield results!

Because I believe in transformational prayer, I approach God's throne with boldness and confidence, knowing that no principality, power, stronghold, or demonic force can withstand the power of God's Word.

Do you have family members or friends who need Christ? You're not alone. We all do! Here's how we can pray:

1. Believe God (Hebrews 11:6)

First, settle the question in your heart of whether or not you believe God exists and will answer when you seek Him. Confess your faith—without doubt—when you pray.

2. Pray the Word (2 Timothy 3:16–17, 2:26; 2 Peter 3:9)

God's inspired Word is powerful and brings correction. I pray the Word over a person by inserting his or her name into the Scriptures. For example, I pray something like this: "Jesus, please allow Johnny to 'escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken [him] captive to do his will.' God, You say that it's not Your will that Johnny would perish, but that he might come into the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Lord, please empower him to do this by Your Spirit!"

3. Pray Fervently (Daniel 10; 2 Corinthians 10:4–5)

Sometimes, because of the spiritual forces at work to keep a person in bondage, we must persevere in prayer for that person's soul to be freed. Don't tire of praying for your loved ones. Your prayers actually become a buffer and a covering for them. View your prayers as weapons in a spiritual battle, and view your fervor as your declaration to those forces that you will not relent until you see victory.

4. Renew Your Strength (Isaiah 40:31; Psalm 18)

As you await God's victory, you may get tired, discouraged, even weary. It happens to us all! This is when we need to encourage ourselves in the Lord as David did in the Psalms. Read or quote from memory your favorite Scripture to grant you a daily source of renewed strength. Recall verses that remind you who you are and to whom you belong. And remind yourself that the God of heaven's armies is fighting for you and your loved ones.

These simple steps have yielded fruit among my friends and family—repaired relationships, salvation testimonies, discoveries of God's calling on loved ones' lives, and surrender of those once-religious to a devoted relationship with Jesus.

Rewards for Secret Prayers

I don't often announce to someone, "I am praying for you!" If I do, I intend it as a demonstration of my love for him or her.

But one day, I received encouragement that will fuel me for years to come. Every day for quite some time, I had fervently prayed for a certain friend. I prayed that he would find salvation, peace, healing, and direction for his life. In God's time, He answered those prayers. Unprompted, my friend said, "Ebony, I know that I have attained all that I have in this season of my life because you pray for me." He continued, "I can feel your prayers."

Tears welled in my eyes. Those were the sweetest words I'd ever heard. In that moment, the agonizing prayers and tears I had cried for him in secret yielded a very public reward. Our God truly is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him!

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