

INTERCESSORS FOR THE WORLD

Introduction

1. Our calling as God's people is to intercede. This is an integral part of our ministry and the ministry of God anywhere, NOT what we do in order to make sure our ministry is successful. Arthur Matthews: "Prayer is the work..." (Born for Battle), NOT like the rocket that gets the space-ship of work into orbit.

2. All probably accept this fact in principle, but struggle to know how to put it into practice. Our main concern today is: HOW?

3. Some basic questions and clear answers:

a) Whose responsibility is it?

Praying in/by the Spirit is the responsibility of all believers.

Application: In OM & IT and after we leave OM or IT.

b) For whom are we God's people to intercede?

All the saints everywhere are the prayer focus of the prayers of God's people.

Application:

i) Our primary responsibility is to intercede for our brothers and sisters in the faith. cf. John 17:9. The only clear references I've found in Paul's epistles to praying for the unsaved are: Rom.10:1; I Tim.2:1-2; Acts 26:29. cf. Matt.5:44. We are definitely to pray for the unsaved but God's word teaches us that we reach them by praying for the people of God who are sent out to reach and teach them.

ii) Prayer for all the saints includes all God's people everywhere -- both E & W, nationals & missionaries, Christian workers and ordinary believers.

- iii) Who else need the intercession of God's people according to verses 19-20? God's workers planting churches and taking the Gospel to all the nations.
- c) How can we pray specifically for God's workers? What can we learn from the example of the apostle Paul?
- i) He acknowledged his/their need for intercession. From Eph.6:19-20, we note that Paul this great apostle knew his personal need for the intercession of fellow-believers if his ministry was going to glorify God and be fruitful. cf. I Thess.5:25.

Application: What does this say to us about encouraging people to pray and about writing prayer letters to those who are truly committed to praying for us?

- ii) He asked for prayer, not for personal things (i.e. that God would make his life easier), but for those things that had to do with the advancement of the kingdom all over the world.
- iii) He was honest & specific in what he asked prayer for.

Application: These prayer requests were relevant for him then. They are what we need prayer for today, and they are also what we ourselves can be praying for all the time as we pray for God's workers (nationals & missionaries) all over the world.

NOTE: All these points for intercession relate to the growth of God's kingdom among those without Christ.

- (1) The right message -- Eph.6:19.
- (2) Fearlessness & boldness in sharing the Gospel -- Eph.6:20.
- (3) Open doors for the message -- Col.4:3.
- (4) A clear proclamation or witness -- Col.4:4.
- (5) The rapid spread of the Gospel -- II Thess.3:1.
- (6) Protection from the hands of evil men -- II Thess.3:2; Rom.15:30-32. cf. II Cor.1:10-11; Phil.1:18b-19.

- d) What else did Paul teach God's people to pray for? There are other passages which we can use as we intercede for God's people, eg. I Tim.2:1-2; Col.4:12-13. Plus Paul's own prayers for the churches, eg. bearing fruit, eg. love & unity (Phil.1:9-11), growing in spiritual understanding of our calling and in a living experience of God's power (Eph.1:15ff), and in a true knowledge of God's love (Eph.3:14ff).

Application: ALL God's Word as truth can guide us to pray Biblically for God's people -- God's will.

- e) What was Paul's motive in having others pray for him and his fellow-workers?
See II Cor.1:9-11.

Application: Our interceding for others is for the same purpose -- not primarily that our work will grow, or that in any way we get a name for ourselves, but rather that all the glory go to God -- that people know Him, and that He have a people around His throne who worship Him forever and ever from all the ends of the earth. See Rev.7:9-10.

Guidelines for Global Intercessors

1. What is a "global intercessor"?

A world intercessor is a follower of Jesus who commits himself/herself to pray regularly, consistently, systematically and personally for the various spiritual and human needs of people and nations around the world.

A world intercessor sees himself/herself as called by God to share in God's task of taking His Good News to all the nations of the world through continual intercession for the world's needs.

2. Why should we become a "global intercessor"?

Because God commands us in His Word to pray for the needs of others whether they are close to us or far away, whether we know them personally or not.

See Ephesians 6:18; I Tim.2:1-4.

We should, therefore, see this ministry of intercession for the world as a part of the work God calls us to become involved in (both during our time with OM as well as any other time). He wills that through our prayers and intercessions, He will accomplish His purposes and plans speedily and effectively around the world.

3. How do we practise this ministry of global intercession?

a) Decide what time and place each day we will pray for the needs of the world.

b) Determine how long you can give yourself to this ministry of intercession.

c) Develop a small file of prayer letters, personal letters, other notes, etc. which you can refer to easily. Operation World and a world map are very helpful tools and should also be used.

d) Commit yourself to exercise this ministry for a certain period of time, eg. initially for three months.

e) Establish a workable and simple "plan of action".

1. Pray by world regions.

Example:

Sundays:	UK & Europe
Mondays:	Africa
Tuesdays:	Middle East
Wednesdays:	Indian sub-continent
Thursdays:	Far East
Fridays:	Australasia & Oceania
Saturdays:	Nth & Sth America & West Indies

Pray for national leaders, national Christians, leaders of churches, missionaries (especially those whom you have a special relationship with), unbelievers, urgent needs (eg. national crises heard about through news such as famines, poverty, earthquakes etc.).

Pray for your home country in a particular way when praying for that particular region of the world. Remember the national government leaders, church leaders and any problems your nation may be facing.

Pray for all OM leaders & workers working in various countries included in the regions prayed for.

2. Pray daily / regularly for OM workers and work.

3. Pray for your Home Church needs.

Pray for pastor(s), elders, other ministry leaders, youth, missions & evangelism/outreach programs, and different members and their needs (eg. needs we hear about through news from home, church bulletins etc.).

Pray for the various preparations for the Sunday services, eg. preparations by the preacher and the worship leaders, especially towards the end of the week and also on Sundays.

4. Pray DAILY for people of special significance in your life.

Pray for family, special close friends and beloved fellow-workers for whom you have committed yourself to pray for DAILY.

Pray also consistently for those unbelievers very close to your heart.

Graham Roberts

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