

Prayer as Intercession

God's will – Right Motives – Holy Spirit led

What is intercession? –

Entynchano (Greek) Palal + related (Hebrew)

To advocate, petition, plead, even contend on behalf of others

There are many examples in the Old and New Testaments

1 Timothy - Kings and those in authority – Government, local council

Job – For people who have sinned

Genesis - For towns (Historical sins)

Matt – For those facing temptation

John – For unity among believers

2Cor – For those facing persecution

Ephesians – For all the saints (Church)

Hebrews – for those at risk of falling away

We need to start with God's will

1 John 5: 14 & 15

“We know the confidence we have in approaching God that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - we know that whatever we ask – we have what we asked of him”

We need to ask with right motives

James: 4:3

“When you ask you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives that you may spend what you get on your pleasures”

We need the Holy Spirit

Rom 8:26

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express”

Note how these work together

Rom 8:27

And He who searches our hearts (motives) knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with Gods will

The mechanics

Letting the Spirit search us - so we ask with right motives, and through the Holy Spirit's help we know what to ask according to God's will

1. God's will

Think Spiritually – Let the Spirit lead

We have already seen that God's will is central to prayer

How to know God's will? –

Thinking spiritually

Roman 12 :2 “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind then you will be able to test what God's will is His good pleasing and perfect will”

God speaks then we believe - **not** we demand (having convinced ourselves) and then wait for God to deliver

Rom 4: 3 “Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness”

Rom 4:24 “But also for us to whom God will credit righteousness – to us who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead”

We need to understand that what God wills is best – His thoughts are not our thoughts – that as we pray in obedience we grow in belief and so we grow in righteousness

Isaiah 55:8 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts neither are my ways your ways declares the Lord”

James 5:16b “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” – Why Because it is based in obedience and belief

Let the Holy Spirit lead

Rom 8:26

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express”

Exercise:

Let's take some time to let God's Holy Spirit tell us what to pray

2. Right Motives

Love is the motive

1st Cor 13:3 “.....but have not love I gain nothing”

1st Cor 16: 13, 14

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.
Do everything in love”

We need to have compassion for those we pray for – Love them however hard

Their need - Your want

What people need is to be in God’s will - because God is good

What God’s will for that person may not be what we want – we need to trust God

Why do we want what we want – for their benefit or ours? Our faith etc.

Say what you want

Having said all this it is helpful and relevant to tell God what you want

Psalms are full of telling God what David and others wanted

- No matter how harsh and unreasonable!
- Jesus said he wanted his cup to pass from him
- Paul wanted his thorn removed – and Galatian false teachers castrated!

But pray for what is needed -

Paul prays the Ephesians will have insight –

And that the Corinthians would get it right -

The Jerusalem Church prayed for boldness for the Apostles

Daniel prayed for forgiveness for Israel

We need to feel compassion for those we pray for but we need to hear from God about what to pray

Exercise:

Let’s ask God to speak to us about our compassion and our motives

3. Holy Spirit Led

Gal 5:25

“Since we live by the Spirit let us keep in step with the Spirit”

Ephesians 6:18

“Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests”

Gal 5:16

“So I say live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature”

This is a spiritual activity - we need to embark on it in a spiritual manner

We need to be prepared to

Submit – James 4: 7 “Submit yourselves then to God”

Contend – Eph 6:12 “for our struggle is not against flesh and blood”

Persevere – Luke 18:7

“And will God not bring about justice for his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night”

3: Reasons why perseverance is effective

1. Obedience – We are called to do it
2. Evidence – We can see that it is effective
3. Don't know – it's a mystery – sometimes right away sometimes after years

So we need to be strong in love when we pray by the Holy Spirit according to God's will

Let's take time now to seek the Spirit's leading about our prayer priorities