

Why Prayer Matters: What It Means to Pray for One Another

Prayer is one of the most powerful tools a believer has, yet it is often the most neglected. If you have ever wondered why your prayer life feels weak, or why you struggle to see God moving in your circumstances, this message is for you. The call to pray for one another is not optional for followers of Jesus. It is a command with real, life-changing consequences.

What Does It Mean to "Pray for One Another"?

In James chapter 5, the apostle James writes directly to believers who are suffering, sick, and struggling. His instruction is clear and practical.

"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." - James 5:13-16 English Standard Version (ESV)

That phrase, "great power as it is working," is not a suggestion. It is a promise. When God's people pray, something happens.

Why Don't We Pray More? The Root Problem Is Unbelief

One of the most honest questions we can ask ourselves is this: why don't we pray as much as we should? There are plenty of surface-level answers. We are busy. We are distracted. Life moves fast.

But underneath all of those excuses is something deeper. We simply do not believe prayer will make a difference.

Consider this: the average adult in America spends over two hours a day on social media and nearly five hours a day watching television. The average Christian in America spends roughly one minute a day in prayer. One minute.

That gap tells us something important about where we have placed our trust. And it explains why so many believers feel distant from God and disconnected from His power.

What Happens When We Stop Praying?

The story of Moses and the Amalekites in Exodus 17 gives us one of the clearest pictures in all of Scripture of what prayer actually does.

Joshua led the Israelite army into battle while Moses went up on the hill to pray. The result was striking. As long as Moses held up his hands in prayer, Israel was winning. When his arms grew tired and he lowered them, they started losing. Aaron and Hur had to come alongside Moses and hold his arms up until the battle was won.

"So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword. Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.'" - Exodus 17:13-14 English Standard Version (ESV)

Moses then built an altar and called it "The Lord is my banner." The victory was not won by the sword alone. It was won because someone was praying.

That is a picture of the church. You are in a battle. Your family is in a battle. And one of the primary weapons God has given us is prayer.

The Spiritual Battle Behind Your Everyday Life

Paul makes this unmistakably clear in Ephesians 6.

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." - Ephesians 6:10-12 English Standard Version (ESV)

The enemy is scheming. He is working to take out your marriage, your witness, your faith, and your peace. And the armor Paul describes in Ephesians 6 is not complete without this final piece.

"Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints." - Ephesians 6:18 English Standard Version (ESV)

Pray at all times. For all the saints. That is the command. That is the call.

How Should We Pray for One Another?

The Holy Spirit will lead your prayers when you commit to this practice. But here are some specific areas to bring before God when praying for your church family and those around you.

- Pray for their faith to be strengthened and rooted in Christ alone.
- Pray for boldness in their witness to share the gospel with those around them.
- Pray for the lost people in their lives by name.
- Pray for marriages to be protected and strengthened.
- Pray for children and students to be formed in their faith.
- Pray for your church's ministries, leaders, and missionaries.

- Pray for revival and for the Holy Spirit to move with power in your congregation.
- Pray for your pastor to preach with boldness and anointing.

Paul himself asked for this kind of prayer. He wrote, "Pray also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel." - Ephesians 6:19 English Standard Version (ESV)

Practical Ways to Build a Consistent Prayer Life

Intentionality matters. Here are a few practical approaches that can help you move from occasional prayer to a consistent, Spirit-led prayer life.

Consider keeping a prayer journal organized by the days of the week. Assign specific people and needs to specific days so that nothing and no one gets forgotten. On Mondays, pray for your family. On Tuesdays, pray for missionaries. On Wednesdays, pray for the sick in your congregation.

Use your surroundings as prayer prompts. When you drive past a neighbor's house, pray for them. When something reminds you of a friend, stop and lift them up. When you see a group of strangers, ask God to move in their lives.

Begin each morning in the Word and in prayer before the noise of the day takes over. Worship music, Scripture reading, and quiet time with God before anything else sets the tone for everything that follows.

And when you pray, do not spend all of your time praying only for yourself. Pray for others. Something shifts in your Spirit when you do. Peace, joy, and a deeper sense of God's presence begin to fill the space where worry and discouragement once lived.

What Would Happen If the Church Actually Prayed?

It is worth pausing to ask this question seriously. What would God do if His people took the command to pray for one another to heart? What would change in your family, your church, your neighborhood, and your city if believers committed to consistent, bold, faith-filled prayer?

The answer is that it would likely exceed our greatest expectations. Because when we pray, God moves. That is not wishful thinking. That is the testimony of Scripture from Moses on the hill to Paul in chains to James writing to scattered believers who needed to know that the prayer of a righteous person has great power.

The church that prays together is the church that sees God work together.

Life Application

This week, draw a line in the sand. Choose one specific, intentional step to increase your prayer life and your commitment to praying for others. It might mean starting a prayer journal, setting a daily alarm as a reminder to pray, or writing the names of three people you will commit to praying for every single day this week. Whatever it looks like for you, make it concrete and make it consistent.

Ask yourself these questions as you move forward.

- If I am honest, how much time do I actually spend in prayer each day, and what does that reveal about where I have placed my trust?
- Who in my life, believer or unbeliever, needs me to be holding up their arms in prayer the way Aaron and Hur held up Moses?
- What would change in my church, my family, and my own heart if I committed to praying for others before I prayed for myself?
- Am I willing to confess my prayerlessness to God and repent, choosing to live differently starting today?

The prayer of a righteous person has great power. That power is available to you. The question is whether you will use it.