



Intercessory Prayer for Church Growth

Part A: The Prayer Focus

Part B: Organising Prayer Coverage

Part A: The Prayer Focus

James 5:16b NKJV: The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man (person) avails much.

Webster's Dictionary definitions for the words **effective, fervent, prayer, righteous, and avail** are:

Effective:

That which is produced by an agent of cause, a result or consequence; to bring about a condition to produce desired or intended results; efficient, powerful, successful as to bring to pass and to achieve for practical purpose.

Fervent:

Glowing, ardent, zealous, enthusiastic, intensity of devotion, burning, vehement, (to act with great force), intense, enthusiasm, heat, passion, and to boil.

Pray:

To ask earnestly, to entreat, to petition, to make a request or confession, esp. to God: to commune with God.

Righteous:

Upright in accordance with truth, duty and justice, honest, reasonable, fair, doing what is just, upright, godly and wise.

Avail:

To profit by. to take advantage of or to benefit. Capable of being used to advantage and to make obtainable or available to us.

To sum this up we could say that the prayers and petitions of the person who is upright in accordance with the truth of God's Word, creates a great force that will produce the desired and intended results.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 NKJV - *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.*

In the Christian walk we realize our weapons are not of the worldly nature, but of a Heavenly nature. Now that we are a part of Heaven's supernatural army, we must learn to fight an enemy our natural eyes cannot

see. To do this we must know the Word of God and how to apply it to our lives. We must also be familiar to His voice and be sensitive to His leading.

By just looking around us we see the effect of what sin has done and continues to do. The pain of disease, poverty, immorality and corruption are all around us. As Christians we are not exempt to the reality of our fallen world.

Jesus said, we are in the world, but we are not a part of the world. Once we received Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, He became the Master Ruler, the King of our lives.

No matter which native country we are from or what language we may speak, we have two citizenships. One is of this world and one of heaven. We now have a heavenly cause in an earthly world.

The difference for us is that we believe and have faith in Jesus, the Christ of the Word of God. Through accepting Him as our Saviour we have an eternal hope in His redemption.

In John 1:1, the Bible tells us Jesus was the Word made flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus' strategy against Satan and His forces was using the Word of God. We too must know and learn how to use and apply the Word of God in our lives.

When you are training for service in the armed forces you must go by their rules and do things their way. You are taught how to stand, march, eat, sleep, hold, fire, and clean your weapons. For your safety and the safety of the force you must act as a unit. Together, forward, march! It is the same when in the Army of God.

In God's army His Word becomes our guide book. If you want to stay alive and help others come to know Jesus as their personal Saviour, you have to learn to do it God's way.

The Bible is our instruction book. It is also our ammunition against the demonic forces of hell that come to steel, kill and destroy our lives and the lives of all those around us.

God's words created the universe. According to Genesis 1:26, God said: Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness: let them have **dominion**. The word dominion here is in relation to supreme authority to rule or to tread down.

According to this scripture we have the power in our words to build up or to tear down our life and the lives of others with our words.

Proverbs 18:19-20a NKJV says that a man's stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth; from the produce (words) of his lips he shall be filled. Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

In these verses we find that words are very powerful. How we think and what we say can shape us and everything around us whether they be positive words or negative ones.

In the first chapter of Genesis we see that God said and God saw. According to our level of faith we can do the same. Jesus said, If you believe when you pray, nothing is impossible to you.

Everyone is called of God to pray. It is not if you pray or how you pray, but simply that you must pray. God wants a relationship with you and He wants you to want one with Him.

Jesus talked to God continually. He consulted God on everything. He said that the things He saw His father do, He did. The only way Jesus could have known what His father did is to spend proper time with Him. Spending time with God through reading and studying His Word and through prayer is the way we get to know him.

Through prayer and study we develop a relationship with the One in whom we have given our life to.

We are commanded to fight the good fight of Faith and to be **obedient** to the teachings of the Word of God. Our weapons of warfare will only be strong as our obedience is to walk in humility, love and knowledge of God and His Word.

Ephesians 6:10-18 tells us that we must put on the whole armour of God.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

Before going into prayer and intercession I find it beneficial to mentally see and verbally say this statement of faith:

I receive and put upon me the whole 'Armour of God' that I may stand against the strategies of the enemies of my life.

I place the Helmet of Salvation on my head to protect my thoughts. I have the mind of Christ Jesus and my thoughts are pure and fixed on Him.

I put on the Breast Plate of Righteousness that the emotions of my heart would be and remain constant and in tact.

I put on the Belt of Truth. The truth of God's Word gives balance to my spirit, soul, and mind.

I put on the Gospel Shoes of peace that I would walk in the peace of God. I walk in His Shalom. My feet are stable and sure. I will walk in step with God's plans and purposes for my life.

In confidence I hold the Shield of Faith that quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one knowing that God is my Shield and Buckler, My High Tower and Refuge. I run to Him. He hides me in His shadow.

I take up the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. I will skilfully use the knowledge of the Word of God to build up the Kingdom of Heaven and fight against the enemy who would bring destruction to my life.

I receive forgiveness of my sins by the Blood of Jesus. I am robed in His Robes of Righteousness. I cast off of me the spirit of heaviness and receive the Garment of Praise.

I am anointed with the Oil of Gladness therefore I am filled with joy. The joy of the Lord is my strength. I will not be afraid. I am steadfast in His love for me.

As children of God we have been entrusted with His power. Through the name of Jesus, the power of His blood, and the word of our testimony, we are over comers. In this life we reign victorious.

Worship, Praise and Thanksgiving

Worshipping God is an act of reverence toward Him. We are to give Him divine honour and place in our lives.

Everyone loves to hear others praise them. It makes us feel good and builds our esteem when we feel we are well thought of. God enjoys adoration and praise as well. He loves to hear us tell Him we love Him.

We must come to God with a thankful heart for all that He has done for us and for all He does for us daily. David came before God's presence with thanksgiving. He loved to dance and make a joyful noise with singing and musical instruments.

When he prayed he did not just tell God about his troubles, he made remembrance of all the good and wonderful things God had done for him. He thanked him for seeing him through the other challenges of his past. He thanked Him for keeping him safe in the midst of his enemies trying to kill him. He declared his mighty acts and looked forward to his future with hope knowing God would see him through once again.

We worship, praise and give thanksgiving to God through prayer and song. We sing of His wondrous works. We declare His Glory and testify of His mighty acts by living our lives according to His Word.

Petitioning and Interceding

Through talking to God in prayer we petition God for our personal needs to be met. For example, we may ask for protection, blessings, and provision in our lives.

Interceding is the act of petitioning God or praying on behalf of others. When you pray for them you are standing in their place before God petitioning Him on their behalf.

God may ask you to pray for one person, a group, or a situation. He may ask you to stand in the gap to pray and petition Him for cities, nations and governments.

He may call you into a 'season of prayer'. This is where He will ask you to pray for a need or situation for a period of time and when that time is over He releases you from carrying that need in prayer and He will move you on to pray for a different situation or need.

Declaration or proclamation

To declare or to proclaim means to make known formally, officially or explicitly, to make clear, to make evident, to state emphatically.

In Psalms David passionately declares the majesty of God. Others through out the Word of God spoke with authority by proclaiming and declaring His will and purposes. We are to do the same.

Through the authority of the name and the blood of Jesus we have power to speak into a situation and it must change. In Genesis God spoke and then He saw. He called things that were not into being. That is the creative power of God.

We are made in the image and likeness of God. All things are possible to those who believe. When we received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit we receive the same resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead. That's power!

Through the name of Jesus we have authority to call things that are not as though they are. When we seek the wisdom of God, know His will in a matter, know our authority through Him, we too will see the results we are looking for. Those things that have already been supplied for us are there waiting for us to call them into place.

Life and death are in the power of the tongue. Our words will either build up or tear down. A wise person builds their house.

What we say negatively or positively has an effect on and in every situation of our life. What we speak forth in faith will bring forth life or condemn to death the people and situations we encounter.

Praying in the Spirit:

Acts 2:2-4 tells us, And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

God has given the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues as a gift to us. He knew that we would need it. Receiving this precious gift Jesus sent to us enables us to be a bolder witness for him.

One of the evidences of it being in our lives is that we speak in tongues. This is a supernatural gift. The Holy Spirit enables us to speak in different languages, both of the earth and angelic languages.

The Bible talks of the Apostle Paul praying in tongues of men and of angels. He prayed in his Heavenly tongue often.

Here are two reasons to pray in your Heavenly language.

In Jude 1:20-21, we read: But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Your foundation of faith is a holy faith. When you pray in your Heavenly language you are building up the strength of your faith in God's ability.

The personal practice of praying in the Spirit is to edify your own spirit. To edify means to build up in character and faith.

When praying in the Spirit it may seem a mystery to you. But to God who receives your prayers, He will hear prayers of praise and adoration, prayers of warfare and intercession, or personal pleas to Him on behalf of yourself and others.

Romans 8:26-28 says: Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Jesus prayed this way in the Garden of Gethsemane. What we cannot utter in words, God understands and answers accordingly.

In this type of prayer travail goes up before God. Sometimes we may be so burdened words do not seem to come together for us in our native or our Heavenly tongue. This is when our spirit may call out to God in groans or moans and with many tears.

If God's presence should move upon you this way, do not grieve the Holy Spirit, but move along with His presence as this type of prayer moves the soul to a place of submission to God's plan as well as helps to birth that plan into place.

Our Covenant:

God has always abided by a covenant agreement with His people. In the Old Testament blood of animals was shed to make that agreement binding. In the New Testament blood was also shed. But it was not the blood of animals that could only cover up sin; it was the precious Blood of Jesus the Christ that washes away our sin.

Jesus being part God and man was able to offer up His life's Blood once and for all for the entire human race. His Blood was acceptable to God on our behalf. He died, rose, and lives so that we could live in victory here and live forever with Him

God hears everyone's prayer for He sees and knows all things. He has only obligated Himself to answering the prayers of those who have accepted His Son as their Saviour.

When he looks at us who have accepted Jesus into our lives, He sees His own Blood. God has obligated Himself to us. By receiving Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, we have obligated ourselves to Him. God is the initiator and administrator of His covenant.

Because of the eternal covenant between us and God we have rights and privileges that sinners do not. We can come before God in confidence knowing that He will hear and answer our prayers when they are prayed according to His Word and His will.

In Isaiah 1: 19, we read: **If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.** We can claim and receive His promises when we are walking in **obedience** to His Word.

Let us have the heart of Jesus and humble ourselves willingly and walk in the obedience to the Word of God.

Prayer and Fasting:

Through out the Old and New Testaments we find fasting was a regular part of the lives of men and woman who lived consecrated lives to God.

When fasting we are voluntary abstaining from food and activities, setting ourselves aside to devote special time with God in reading the Word, prayer, meditation, and worship.

The Bible speaks of various fasts and gives the reasons why we are to practise fasting.

The different types of fast in the Bible are:

1. A complete fast abstaining from all foods and liquids.
2. Fasting with liquids.....teas, juices, water.
3. A partial fast limiting your food and water intake.

Reasons for fasting would be:

1. Fasting shows earnestness before God.
2. To submit and humble our souls, which is our mind, will, and emotions, to God, that He would sustain us with His power.

3. To overcome unbelief in ourselves and/or God's ability to do the impossible.

Faith needs prayer for its development and full growth, and prayer needs fasting for the same reason. Fasting coupled with prayer brings results that just praying does not. God sees your sacrifice and commitment and honours it accordingly.

The Word of God speaks of 40 day fast, 21 day fast, and 3 day fast, and 1 meal fast. It is not how long you fast...it is that you do fast.

Fast according to how God leads you and He will honour your fast.

In Matthew 17:14 -21 the disciples asked the Lord why they could not heal a lunatic boy. Jesus said, "Because of your unbelief....However, this kind does not go out, but by prayer and by fasting."

Be wise in your fasting. If you have a medical condition, consult your physician before going on a fast.

Jesus new and understood the benefits of fasting. He is our example so let us do the same. When you fast it will benefit you as well. A closer communion comes between you and the Lord when you dedicate yourself unto Him in this way.

Let know one judge you in your fasting. It is between you and God. Jesus did not come to condemn us but to love us and to set us free.

Positions and Ways of Prayer:

In the Word we see different positions of prayer as well as different ways of praying and petitioning God. One way does not supersede another. Some may kneel, stand or lay prostrate on the floor.

There are various ways of praying, partitioning God, or worshiping him. The Bible speaks of these ways: praying silently to yourself, praying out loud, praying with tears, prayers of thanksgiving, and petitioning Him with groanings and loud cries, which we call travailing in the Spirit.

Personally, at times I have found that when I am travailing in the Spirit my soul is in anguish and my words do not know how to express in words of my native tongue or my heavenly language what my spirit can only express in heart felt groans and cries.

Other times while used in travailing I know that I am helping to birth forth from the spiritual to the natural world the things that God wants to do and is doing in situations, the lives of others, the body of Christ, as well as our world.

David speaks of praying to God while lying on his bed. Some pray with their hands extended, others with their hands folded. Some people stand, others prefer to sit, walk or lay prostrate before the Lord and pray. God has made you an individual and most generally you will do what is most comfortable for you or as God is prompting you to do.

The position, place or how you pray in is all secondary to prayer. The important thing is to pray and talk to God. He delights in His children. We are the apple of His eye.

After praying be sure to listen to hear Him speak back to you. Sometimes He may show you a picture, called a vision, give you a dream, or you may have a feeling and a knowing that you discern in your spirit. And of course God can and does speak audibly to people as well.

Your relationship with Jesus is a love relationship.

Just as you would want to be in the presence of the one you profess to love in the natural, you will also want to spend time loving on God and letting Him love on you. He loves communing with his children and He wants us all to come be with Him when our lives on this earth are through.

Prayer:

Lord I humble myself before you. With a sincere heart I repent and ask forgiveness for my sins...those known to me and those unknown. Help me to be willing to walk in obedience to your Word so that I, my family, my church, my community, and my nation can receive and walk in Your will.

I believe in and accept the covenant agreement you and I have between us. I receive your peace, (Shalom) love and will for my life.

Your Word says that when I pray according to your plan and purpose, my prayers will be heard and answered according to your will.

I receive the answers to my prayers because you have already done the finished work upon the cross when you died for me.

You lived, died, and rose again and are now standing at the right hand of God the Father interceding for me that my faith would not fail.

I have faith in your Word and choose to walk according to Your teachings.

In Jesus Name....Amen.

[Teaching by LaVonne Bardell - September, 2005]

Now go to Part B: Organising Prayer Coverage