

## Intercession

### Portraits of Prayer Series

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#### Did You Know?

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While the Bible records the regular patterns of prayer for Jesus during His ministry, there are only a few times in which Jesus actually prays to the Father, including meal times, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the prayer for His disciples in John 17. Studying how Jesus prayed helps us to pray more effectively. If Jesus needed a daily and regular connection to the Father through prayer and communion, how much more do we need that in our everyday lives? Let us endeavor to pray more, and have a more constant connection to God!

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Monday, February 11, 2013

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**Read:** John 17:1-5

**Discuss:** Jesus starts out the high priestly prayer for His disciples with the context of His own relationship to the Father. They glorified one another, Jesus on earth by speaking the Father's truths, and the Father by lifting Him up as His only Son, the ultimate sacrifice that removes sin and grants eternal life. What other scriptures from John do you think of as you read these verses?

**Act:** Our own relationship with Jesus and God is just a short-lived relationship compared to the eternity of unity that God enjoyed within the Trinity. The glory that we can give to Christ through our obedience is part of a chain of glory that God has been giving to Jesus. The greatest thing that we can do is know God. How are you doing on accomplishing that great goal?

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Tuesday, February 12, 2013

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**Read:** John 17:6-19

**Discuss:** Pastor shared on Sunday three petitions or requests that Jesus had in His prayer for us, His disciples. Can you see other requests in this section? Explain in your own words the requests and their depth that Christ intended. How does Jesus describe these requests or bring clarity to them?

**Act:** You are the subject of Jesus' prayer in John 17. Is His prayer effective? Are you living out the goals that He asked God to grant for His people? Is God keeping you in protection and preservation? Is God uniting you with other believers so that you might serve Him in greater ways? Are you allowing God to set you apart for His purposes in your life, or are

you holding back? Determine today to be a more willing vessel for God to use you in your daily life, to show you how He can accomplish His Kingdom through you in what He has already given you.

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Wednesday, February 13, 2013  
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**Read:** John 17:20-26

**Discuss:** Jesus concludes His prayer for the saints by talking about a unity with God and with one another. This is a unity that the world will recognize. “Oh, you’re one of them!” Has anyone ever noticed your Christianity without you having to tell them explicitly? Jesus is glorified by God in His death, but He is also glorified in the way that we interact with other believers. Part of our evangelism comes from how we interact as believers!

**Act:** How do you interact with other Christians? Do you keep your distance, or do you share common bonds and a kinship, as fellow travelers on the same path? While completely agreeing with every little doctrine might not be beneficial, there is a great need for us to unite as the body to reach this world and serve Christ better. What could God do with a more united body? How can you personally make that begin to happen?

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Thursday, February 14, 2013  
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**Read:** Ephesians 1:15-23

**Discuss:** As we focus on intercessory prayer, that is, praying for the needs of others and ourselves, we see that Paul often made it a practice to pray for the churches that he founded when he could not be regularly with them, and we have some of these recorded in his letters. As you read his prayer for the Ephesians, what are Paul’s requests? How are these different from the kinds of requests we usually hear people bringing before God?

**Act:** What can you personally learn from Paul about how to pray for other’s needs and your own needs every day? What kinds of things do we pray for that are already covered? Do we waste our petitions before God? What one petition from Paul for the Ephesians is something you need in your own life? Ask God for that need right now, and look to see how He is granting your request this week! Make note of it when He does answer it!

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Friday, February 15, 2013  
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**Read:** Exodus 32:7-14

**Discuss:** There are examples of intercessory prayer all over the Scriptures, and today, we see Moses being an intercessor for Israel. While God was giving Moses the Law, the people

were already violating the First Commandment! God wanted to destroy them, but Moses intercedes for the people. What is amazing is that God relents from destroying them, all because of Moses' prayer. How do our prayers affect God's plans? Do they change His will or give Him permission, as some teach, or do they simply allow us to interact with God and His sovereign will? What other examples of God relenting because of prayer can be found in the Bible?

**Act:** Moses' prayer is humble and selfless. God wanted to start over with him with a whole new people, a whole new nation! How would that make you feel if God wanted to destroy all human beings, but build on your strengths! We'd all feel quite privileged if God did that. But Moses instead seeks God for their preservation. What are ways you can be like Moses, humble in your approach before God, and selfless in your prayers for others?

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Saturday, February 16, 2013  
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**Read:** 2 Kings 20:1-6

**Discuss:** Hezekiah was one of the more righteous kings of Israel, and yet he made some grave errors when he ruled, like boasting about Israel's riches to a nation that would become Israel's enemy. In today's text, Hezekiah is found to be terminally ill and is going to die. But Hezekiah does something we take for granted today. He prays for himself. He is the one in need of intercession, and so he asks God to change His mind about the illness, and God does! God gives him a certain amount of time. What would you do if God told you exactly how long you have left on this earth?

**Act:** Hezekiah teaches us a very important spiritual lesson. Many feel selfish when asking for their own needs before God. But when you are in need, there is nothing selfish about asking God to take care of your needs! Many teach to pray for others first, and then yourself, and that is a very good practice. But you never need to be afraid to approach God for your needs, great or small. He wants to minister to you just like He ministers to others! Many times, it also helps to ask others to intercede with you in your request. What do you need to pray for in your own life today?

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Sunday, February 17, 2013  
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**Read:** Ephesians 5:21-33

**Discuss:** This is our text for Pastor's message this morning about the roles of husbands and wives in marriage. As you read through the text, think of two questions that puzzle you concerning prayer and persistence.

**Act:** If Pastor does not answer these questions, ask him after service to help you understand better this parable.