

## How To Pray For Others

January 15, 2023

- Prayer leader—Kelly Jones
- Scripture Reader— Paul Passerell (Matthew 15:22-31)

Good morning and welcome to Lake Erie Church. To our LEC Online Church, welcome and so happy you have joined us—you notice that beginning next week we are moving from Facebook to Church Online (a new platform for us). We are still on YouTube but with the instability of Facebook we are now offering our online through these two venues and including our church website...if you have any problems, text this number...

### **Water Baptism**

Let me take a minute to talk about water baptism.

One of the best things you can do in your commitment to Jesus Christ is be baptized in water. You may say well I was baptized years ago so do I need to be rebaptized—I'll answer by asking this question—have you made a fresh and new commitment to follow Jesus Christ? If so, the answer is YES—you should be rebaptized. Jesus told the church in Revelation—“go back and do your first works over”—meaning restart your relationship with God and one of those is to repent of sin and be rebaptized. Water baptism does not save you—it does signify that you are seriously committed to Jesus and it is a public testimony of what God has done in your heart. You need to sign up in the lobby or see Pastor Leah...Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup>.

This month we are focused on **Prayer**, **Scripture Reading** and **Devotion to God**. We have one more week in our fasting campaign and if you have not yet joined, consider joining this week to fast as you pray and read the Scripture. Included in your packet today we have put some resources to help you in pursuing God.

- A **Prayer Wheel** that contains 12 topics for prayer that you can use to organize your prayer time
- A **14 Day Fasting Guide** if you are choosing to join the church in a time of dedicated fasting for spiritual devotion.

- A **31 day Bible Reading Challenge** with selected Scriptures to read each day in January.
- The **sermon notes** for today.

\*Write down everything God is saying to you—if He is not saying anything to you today—then you are probably not focused on listening to him!

This is week 3 of our How To Pray series...

Let's start with a question...

### **How much do we really believe in prayer?**

The story is told of a businessman who wanted to build a bar on a plot of land that was next door to a church. Once word got out, the church was distressed at the thought of a bar next door to their church and so they rallied everybody they knew and prayed persistently against the business opportunity. They wrote their leaders, they opposed the zoning ordinance and in every situation rallied intercessors to pray and yet the license was approved and the building was constructed. The night before the establishment was set to open, lightning struck the building and it caught fire and burned to the ground. The church people were ecstatic and rejoiced that God had answered prayer—it was a significant moment of spiritual pride—UNTIL...the owner of the proposed bar sued the church claiming they were “*ultimately responsible for the material demise of his livelihood either through direct or indirect actions or means.*” Well, this changed everything and the church denied any involvement in the outcome. The judge reportedly said “I’m not sure what we are to do—on the one hand we have a business owner who completely believes in the prayers of the church and on the other hand we have a church who don’t believe in the own prayers!”

**(Matthew 15:22-38)**

Then Jesus left Galilee and went north to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Gentile woman who lived there came to him, pleading, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! For my daughter is possessed by a demon that torments her severely.” But Jesus gave her no reply, not even a word. Then his disciples urged him to send her away. “Tell her to go away,” they said. “She is bothering us with all her begging.” Then Jesus said to the woman, “I was sent only to

help God's lost sheep—the people of Israel." But she came and worshiped him, pleading again, "Lord, help me!" Jesus responded, "It isn't right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs." She replied, "That's true, Lord, but even dogs are allowed to eat the scraps that fall beneath their masters' table." "Dear woman," Jesus said to her, "your faith is great. Your request is granted." And her daughter was instantly healed.

This very interesting story has a **tragic** beginning.

Here are 3 reasons...

1. You have a child possessed by the devil
2. You have a mother overwhelmed by concern for her daughter
3. Both women represent so many broken and abused people in the world
  - Young people blighted by the powers of evil
  - Mothers fearing for their children

But the story has a **triumphant** ending doesn't it?

### **Her Daughter Was Made Whole The Same Hour!**

(v.28 CEV) Dear woman, you really do have a lot of faith, and **you will be given what you want**. At that moment her daughter was healed.

Jesus wrote her a **SPIRITUAL BLANK CHECK**.

Here's the thing that got the attention of Jesus...

### **SHE WAS BURDENED FOR SOMEONE ELSE**

(v.22) "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! For **my daughter** is possessed by a demon that torments her severely."

**Something happens** in our prayer life when we move away from just praying for ourselves and we get SERIOUS as intercessors for other people.

Today we are looking at our prayer life in behalf of others—another word for this is **INTERCESSION**.

**Have you ever been scrolling a social media feed** and you see someone you know has cancer or someone was in a car accident or has a sick child...?

Most of the time, we rather quickly will post something like ...praying!

Sadly, many of us don't actually follow that up with a prayer.

Maybe this happens because **we feel powerless** to alter the circumstances that surround us.

- **People still NEED us to pray for them.**
- **More than you know, people BELIEVE in our prayers.**

How do we prepare to be the intercessors for those who need us to pray for them?

You can start by realizing ....

### **Your Prayers Are Partnership With God**

1. Intercession requires my center of gravity to shift away from my own personal needs toward those of others.
  - Why would God, the creator of the universe, need us to "advocate" or ask for things on behalf of other people?
  - If God is in control of everything why does He invite us to pray over things/people?
2. **God does not need our prayers to operate.**
  - He's not waiting for the correct tally of prayers to move. Instead out of love God created rational, free-thinking beings to participate as partners in the story of humanity with him.

"We are not merely passive set pieces in a prearranged cosmic drama, but we are **active participants** with God in the writing, directing, design, and action that unfolds. Prayer, therefore, is much more than asking God for this or that outcome. It is drawing into **communion** with him and there taking up our

privileged role as his people. In prayer, we are invited to join him in directing the course of his world." (Skye Jethani)

3. The key is **COMMUNION**...our relationship to God through prayer makes us partners with God.

**"Intercessory prayer is spiritual defiance of what is in the way of what God has promised.** Intercession visualizes an alternative future to the one apparently fated by the momentum of current forces," (Walter Wink)

- It is a mother refusing to give up on a rebellious child
- It is the husband refusing to accept the end of his marriage
- It is the student who puts their parents name on a prayer card believing that somehow God will save her parents!

4. **Prayer is NOT the persuasion or coercing of an indecisive Creator,** but rather a deep connection to the heart of God, who cares deeply about our pain and wants to reveal his glory in us.

5. **Prayer IS a Battle of Wills.** If every human being has a choice and ability to exercise their free will, it follows that there will be both unity and contradiction at play.

"Some wills are bent in the direction of God the Father, and towards all that is good and beautiful and true. Other of those wills are bent in flat out rebellion against God, and towards death and mayhem and destruction." (John Mark Comer)

- If some people are inflating a mattress and others are jabbing holes in it, the mattress isn't going to fully inflate.
  - There are competing forces at play when we engage in intercessory prayer.
  - It isn't a "tally" of good votes vs. bad votes, and God is not the president of a democracy.

God has the final say and has defeated death, hell, and the grave. By allowing freedom, God has enabled us to employ choices that either coincide with or contradict His desires and character.

- To be in Christ is to be drawn up into his intercession for the world.
- To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with an interceding spirit.

So how do become partners with God in praying for others?

### Get Informed About What Is Going On

- This is a prayer I pray often...*“Lord, help me be sensitive to what is going on around me”*
  - Once you recognize a need, learn as much as you can so that you can pray appropriately
- Here are questions that are coming up on my prayers for Lake County that I’m trying to get answers for...
  - How many homeless people are in Lake County?
    - Project Hope (Erica/Billy)
  - How many cancer patients in Lake county need prayer blankets from Lake Erie church?
    - Stella Llamas--
  - How many unwed teen moms are there in Lake County?
    - Hannah’s House
  - What strategies do we need to get the saving message of Jesus to 150,000 lost people in Lake County?

### Get Excited By The Possibilities

- What happens when a whole church, a whole community decides to pray for God’s purposes?
- What happens in your home when prayer becomes the centerpiece of how we function as a family?
- What happens in your life when you get serious about your prayer life and start really talking and listening to God?
  - **(Charlotte, Wilkinson Blvd parlors)**

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

and My people who are called by My name humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

### **Get Engaged With Your Heart**

- There's a strange thing that can happen when you really lay hold of God's promises and begin to see his intended future for a contested person or place.
- You start feeling indignant about the ways in which his purposes are currently being undermined and resisted.
  - What about a world where sin is celebrated and holy living is discounted?
  - What about a world where children are exploited for sex?
  - What about a world where babies are aborted in the interest of personal convenience?
- You move beyond the practice of polite, well spoken prayers and move into a place of spiritual contention.
- Spiritual warfare (resistance)

### **Get Into Agreement With Other Saints**

- One of the keys to successful asking in prayer, according to Jesus, is agreement with other people.
  - We say Amen—"So be it"—when we pray: It's a way of expressing our agreement.
- It's why church prayer meetings and prayer rooms are so important.
- If everyone just prays on their own privately at home, it's not the same thing at all.

**There is a unique power vested in the united intercession of God's people.**

#### Conclusion

As we conclude, I'm asking you to look at the signs on the wall—these represent areas of need that are part of our vision and partnership with God in the world. I'm asking you to stand and move to one of these areas and begin to pray prayers of intercession (these are prayers that are not about you) and don't leave until you have prayed at all 6 stations.

As you pray ask how can we make a difference? What do you want me personally to do in response to this need?

Ask God to help you be the answer to your own prayers?

Lost family/friends

Homelessness

Teen pregnancy/single moms

Drug and alcohol addiction

Missionaries

Sick needing healing