



Your Best Ministry Yet

LifeCare Memos® Messages of Compassion

Power in Prayer

“More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of,” wrote Alfred Lord Tennyson. We’ve seen that famous quotation crocheted on pillows and wall hangings and give tacit approval to it. “Prayer is important,” we agree. But do you know how the quotation continues? “Therefore let thy voice rise like a fountain for me day and night.” Tennyson links the great power and importance of prayer with the need to pray for others, specifically him! The Apostle Paul does the same thing when he shares what he prays for the church to which he is writing and then says,

“Pray also for me” (Ephesians 6:19).

Paul clearly recognizes the great power of prayer and how necessary it is to have others praying for him and his ministry.

Prayer Improves with Age

As we age, our abilities to do many ministries diminish. Not too many people in Skilled Nursing Facilities are going on mission trips, working with the youth group or teaching Sunday School as they may have done when they were younger. However, there is a vital ministry which can improve with age, a ministry which we may now have more time for than at any other time in our lives. It is a ministry that unleashes the power of **GOD** to transform lives—the ministry of praying for others. It is our best ministry yet. James encourages believers with the following words,

“The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective” (James 5:16).

The early church

“All joined together constantly in prayer” (Act 1:14)

Paul instructs,

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints”
(Ephesians 6:18).

Prayer for Others

Prayer for others, which theologians call “intercessory prayer,” can be done in many different ways. Some like to pray spontaneously when they are prompted by the Holy Spirit. There are exciting answers to prayer from the battle field or a far off land as the Spirit awakens believers who cry out to **GOD** on behalf of those in danger. Throughout the day as these intercessors are in tune with the Spirit, they shoot up “arrow prayers” for those who come to mind.

How to Pray

But most of us are not gifted like that. Yet all of us are instructed to pray for others. So how do we do it? It is very helpful to make lists of those on your heart for whom **GOD** is directing you to intercede. Your family, friends, your church and your church’s ministry are good places to start. You may want to divide your lists into days, praying for your family on Monday, your church on Saturday, etc. With the turmoil in the world today, you may get further ideas about which to pray from the news, or as you also pray for our president, legislators, governor and all in authority over us.

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (I Timothy 2:1-2).

The Holy Spirit will help you know how to pray for each person.

*“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. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with **GOD’s will**” (Roman 8:26-27).*

As you read your Bible, note Spirit-inspired prayers as models for your requests for others. For example, in Paul says,

“I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ” (Philemon 6).

That is a great, Spirit-inspired request you can pray directly for your family and those in your church. One pastor began praying regularly for each person in his congregation, using Paul’s prayers as a model. A few years later, a friend with whom he had never discussed this, said to him, “You pray a lot for the people of

your church, don't you?" "How did you know?" the pastor asked in amazement. "I can sense it each time I come to church here," he replied.

Prayer Teams

Much intercession is done one on one with the **LORD**. But it is very encouraging to form a prayer team and pray together for others. As you see **GOD** answer your prayers, everyone is energized to keep on praying as you,

"Sing for joy at the works of Your hands" (Psalm 92:4).

One Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living Facility has begun a prayer team ministry for the Residents, staff and their families. They hope to go to various churches in their community and ask the people of the churches to call or send in their prayer requests for which the prayer team will pray for 30 days. In this way they desire to impact their entire community. As the team was sharing how **GOD** was answering their prayers, one person responded, "At least we're still good for something!" In fact, it may be your best ministry yet!

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When experiencing the stresses of life, people need support. The Psalmist needed that support and found it when he turned to **GOD**. He said, *"Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. I cry to you, O **LORD**; I say, 'You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living'" (Psalm 142:4-5).*

LifeCare Memos are designed as messages of compassion that integrate biblical guidelines for emotional and spiritual well-being. Topics focus on various life-care issues and address them from the perspective of Scripture.