

Prayers of Intercession #1

One of the major functions of the OT priest was to intercede for the people before God. This is seen in the garments of the high priest, where he bore the names of the twelve tribes on his shoulders engraved in onyx, uniting the front and back of the ephod, and also engraved on the twelve gemstones on the breastplate. Perhaps this shows that the priest was to bear the people of Israel in intercession, as one would bear a burden on his shoulders, and the breastplate gems to show that it would not be a mere burden but a matter close to the heart.

We in the NT are to be a holy and royal priesthood (2 P. 2:5 and 9), and so besides what we have previously covered, of making the spiritual sacrifices of righteousness, praise, thanksgiving, joy, obedience, etc. as priests, so we should also fulfil the priestly role of intercession.

1 Tim. 2:1 – “I exhort, that, first of all, **supplications**, prayers, **intercessions**, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

The following definitions are from www.dictionary.com, but have been modified slightly:

supplication – a humble prayer made as an earnest petition. That is, it is to ask for something specific. For example, 2 K. 8:5-6, the Shunammite woman coming back from the land of the Philistines to request of the king of Israel the return of her land.

Intercede –

1. to act or interpose in behalf of someone in difficulty or trouble, as by pleading or petition: *to intercede with the governor for a condemned man*. In scripture, Queen Esther on behalf of the Jews in Persia
2. to attempt to reconcile differences between two parties; to mediate. i.e., Christ interceding for us before the Father
3. to pray to God on behalf of another person or group. For example, we are to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, pray for family and loved ones, pastors, etc.

Who intercedes for us?

1. Jesus Christ while on earth
 - a. Prayed for the twelve disciples – Jn. 17:9 – “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.” And specifically for Peter - Lk. 22:32 – “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”
 - b. Prayed not only for the twelve, but for all them that through them would believe – Jn. 17:20-23
 - c. Prayed for his persecutors - Lk. 23:34 – “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”
 - d. Isa. 53:12 – “... because he poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”
 - e. He promised that the Comforter (Holy Spirit) would come - Jn. 14:16 – “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;”
2. Jesus Christ now, at the right hand of God

Heb. 7:25 – “Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

Rom. 8:34 – “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”
3. The Holy Spirit

Rom. 8:26-27 – “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

4. Other Christians

We are comforted when we know that other Christians are interceding for us in prayer.

Who should we intercede for?

1. Those who are in authority (1 Tim. 2:1-2)

2. Those who still need to hear the gospel and to be converted (1 Tim. 2:3-6)

3. Those who are taking the gospel to new places

Ac. 4:24-30 – "... And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus"

Eph. 6:18-19 – "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel."

2 Thess. 3:1 – "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:"

4. Those who are being persecuted

Christians in Moslem lands, or Communist countries. Even those here, facing spurious lawsuits.

5. Those who are under spiritual attack (pastors, churches, individuals)

6. The sick

All through the gospels we have examples of people bringing their sick loved ones to Jesus, and asking him to heal them. We should do the same, through intercessory prayer and also by specific prayers of healing. We are supposed to heal the sick (Mk. 16:15-18).

7. Those who are facing impending or even immediate judgment by God

1 Sam. 7:5 – Samuel for Israel, when threatened by the Philistines

1 Chr. 21:17 – David for Israel after the census

2 Chr. 30:18-20 – Hezekiah for those who ate the passover without proper cleansing

Job 42:10 – Job for his "friends"

Ps. 106:23 – Moses standing in the breach for Israel, lest God destroy them (see Ex. 32, after they made the golden calf)

8. Those who ask for it

1 Sam 7:8 – The children of Israel to Samuel, for prayer for deliverance from Philistines

1 Sam. 12:19 – The people to Samuel, for prayer after wrongfully asking for a king

1 K. 13:6 – Jeroboam to the man of God for healing, after being smitten by God in his hand

Rom. 15:30 – Paul to the Roman saints, "that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me"

9. Those who have offended someone else (we are to be peacemakers)

Phm. 10-19 – Paul to Philemon, on behalf of Onesimus

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