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Reclaiming the Power of Intercessory Prayer



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Before I accepted my call to preach, I was a bit skeptical about the power of intercessory prayer. I would hear about children who lived in homeless shelters, and I would help them by providing them with tutoring so that they could pass their classes. Every year, I would hear that our church was serving food to people on Thanksgiving morning, and my cousin and I would help to serve food in order to demonstrate the love that God had and still has for them. If someone wanted to make a change in society, as a teenager, I would direct them to a voter-registration table so that they could participate in the forthcoming election. Indeed, if a community-service project involved the act of helping, informing or teaching someone in need, I was among the first to volunteer for the job. My family and the church had taught me about the importance of community service, and as a young adult, I neither had the

patience nor the wisdom to entertain a serious conversation about the power of prayer to make a difference in someone's life.

As I grew older, I began to understand and value the power, the significance and the necessity of prayer. I quickly figured out that I would probably not possess all of the intellectual, capital and financial resources to help every person in the world. Often times, we as Christians do not have the time to help everyone who requests help, the energy to listen to everyone who has a problem or the money to help everyone who has demonstrated a financial need. In fact, the person in need may also be a Christian, but he or she does not have the spiritual strength to bring his or her cares and concerns before the Lord in prayer. Over time, I have learned that we have an obligation, an opportunity and a privilege to bring the concerns

of others before the Lord in prayer.

Prayer is a great resource of the Church that has been used by Christians throughout the past two-thousand years. Intercessory prayer is the act of praying for someone who is unable or unwilling to ask God to make a change in his or her life. The power of intercessory prayer is found throughout the bible. For example, in Genesis 25:21, Isaac prayed to God on behalf of Rebecca and God blessed them with two sons, Jacob and Esau. In Luke 23:34, Jesus prayed on behalf of those who were crucifying him and said: "Father forgive them, they know not what they do."

God responds to prayer, and prayer changes things! Let us remember to bring the cares and concerns of others before God in prayer.