

Intro: Garrison. Pastor. John 17. **Pray.**

Recap. I think it is going to be fun. We've got some immediate application. We don't want to just be hearers of the word but doers. So I'm only going to preach for like 10-15 minutes. I just want to show us this practice really quickly, then we're going to spend most of our time today actually doing it. Because here's my experience when it comes to this practice.

Will you pray for me? We've all experienced it. You're at coffee, or talking to a friend or family member on the phone, or maybe it's at your CG, and someone asks you this question, "Will you be praying for me?" Without thinking you say 'Yes!' Of course. But if we're honest the answer would be much different. It would probably go more like 'Well, it's really early in the morning still, and I actually skipped my quiet time to even be here at coffee, so not off to a good start with my disciplines. And I've got a long drive to work where there will be traffic that I'm going to be too frustrated about to really think about God or people at all. Then I'll be staring at a computer screen for most of the day, sort of working but I'll probably kill a lot of time on Facebook and Instagram. Maybe get in a Tik Tok or two.. And I also have a phone that has access to every bit of information to have ever existed within seconds. So that is unfortunately gonna take up most of my thoughts and time. And then I'll drive home and cook dinner, watch some tv and pass out. So if you come to mind, definitely! But honestly, probably not. Sorry!'

Just me? If you're anything like me, all too often that's how it goes. I do it sometimes. But I usually forget about it. Or just find reasons to not do it. Or mutter something rushed and half hearted and then forget. Yeah I'm terrible.

So how is your prayer life? Let's do a quick prayer audit.

- How many times in the past week have you prayed for yourself?
- How many times have you prayed for others?
- If God answered every single one of your prayers for your CG, what would be different?
- What about our church?
- What about in the world?

I think if we're honest, we could all admit to some degree that we don't pray like we should. We don't pray for others and the world like we should.

What we're invited into tonight is the practice of **Intercessory Prayer. To intercede for someone in prayer.**

You could simply call it 'praying for others'.

To intercede is to ask for something on behalf of someone else. You see this all the time in kids or even teenagers with their friends. Me and my friends did this all the time growing up. It's an uncommunicated rule. Maybe you did this too. You always send a friend to talk to your parents. Like at a sleepover. I want pizza. Go ask my mom. She'll say no if I ask. You talk to her. That's a microcosm of intercession. Asking on the behalf of another. But instead of asking for pizza, we're asking for God to move and help.

The word 'intercession' is only used twice in the NT. The word is enteuksis. It's the idea of petitioning before a king. That you come into the king's court to plead before the sovereign. So when we pray for others, we're coming before the throne of God interceding on the behalf of others.

Let me show you where we see this in Jesus' life. John 17.

This is at the tail end of what's known as the Last Supper Discourse, where Jesus is giving a farewell speech to His disciples before He goes to the cross. He's preparing them for what's to come, pulling back the curtain further

into the truth about who He is (ie you hear Him say 'I am the way the truth and the life'), teaching them about what abiding in Him, promising the Holy Spirit. And then He ends with a prayer.

20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

We're hopping in mid way here. He's prayed for the disciples, that they'd be one and prepared for what's to come. And now look who He's praying for. Not just them, but for those who will believe in Him through their word. Jesus in other words, prayed for you and me personally. We're those who will believe through their word. The testimony of the first disciples. Pretty cool huh? And what does He pray for?

That we'd be one. That we would be one with one another. That there would be unity in the church. And He says why. So that they may be in us (meaning union with God) and that the world may believe. He keeps harping on this:

22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

There's a direct correlation between our relationships with one another and our witness to the world. When there's disunity and strife in the church, our testimony loses power to the onlooking world. Jesus knows this and prays against it for us.

He continues to pray for us, that those whom have been given to Jesus, meaning Christians, those who believe, will be with Him where He is. What an amazing prayer. In Jesus words, He's going to prepare a place for us and He longs for us to be there with Him. He longs for eternal relationships with His people and prays that God would protect and sustain His people that we might be with Jesus in eternity.

Jesus prays for 2 things. 1. Unity. That His people would be one. And 2. He's praying for strength and endurance for His people that we would be with Him forever.

Very simply, Jesus sees a need and He prays for God to meet that need. He asks God to step in.

As we know, this is Jesus' last night with the disciples. After supper, He's betrayed, goes to His death on the cross and three days later rises from the dead. Now He is ascended and sits at the right hand of the Father. So that when we come to the throne, interceding on the behalf of others, not only are we seen clothed in Jesus' righteousness, we also have an advocate in Christ, who intercedes on our behalf in all things, but also as we intercede for others.

In the words of Romans 8:34

34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.[

Or In Hebrews 7

23 The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, 24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. 25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Jesus is the perfect intercessor, both then in His time on earth, and now. He lives to intercede for us. So we go to Him, asking for Him to change things. Asking Him for the Kingdom to break through more in our city and in the lives of those around us.

Conclusion

Practice: D.L. Moody. He was a late 1800s traveling preacher who ended up being one of the most influential evangelists in the modern church era. Many consider him to be the greatest evangelist of the 1800s, preaching to crowds upwards of 30000 people. However Moody would say his ministry strategy was just prayer.

Moody famously carried a list of hundred names in his pocket every day of his adult life. 100 friends who didn't know Jesus. He prayed for them everyday throughout the day. For his whole life. When he died, 96 of the names were answered prayers. Solid success rate. 96%. Even better. At his funeral, the last 4 were so moved that they came to faith at his funeral.

Our practice for the week is to do just what Moody did. To have names of friends and family to carry around and pray for them. Can be non believers. Can be those suffering. Can those you're praying would be healed or their faith strengthened. So our practice this week is to create prayer cards to carry with us.

But for now we're going to get a head start by praying. Like I said, tonight is simple. Jesus interceded for us. Jesus intercedes for us now. We follow Him by doing what He did. So what we're going to do for the rest of our time tonight, is pray. Pray for others.

Go back to those original questions. If God answered every single one of your prayers what would be different? Jesus says we should ask continually, to keep seeking. Have you given up? Tonights invitation is to ask, ask boldly and ask continually.

Here's how we'll start. Chances are you know something someone in your CG or in our church is going through, go pray for them right now.- If you don't know anything, go ask someone, and then pray.

Prayer team is in the back, if you need someone to intercede for you, go on back there. And after they do, go pray for someone else. After you pray for them, go grab someone else.

Let's ask God to step in where people need Him.

15-20 minutes of prayer.

1. Pray for your group.
2. Pray for our church.
 - a. Unity. Lets be JCFoM. We'd love Jesus. We'd be family. Not just friends. Mission.
3. Pray for city.
 - a. Homelessness. Income disparity. Hustle culture. Money idolization. Mental health crisis.
4. Pray for non believers you know.

