

Praying Disciples

Praying for Our Partners

Today, while reading Luke 11, I was struck by the disciples' request: *"Teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."*

It stood out to me that John the Baptist not only prayed but also taught his disciples how to pray—and it made such an impact on them that Jesus' disciples wanted the same instruction.

Prayer is something we learn. Just as we develop ways to communicate and connect with friends, spouses, or colleagues, we also grow in our ability to connect with God through prayer.

Intercession: Praying on Behalf of Others

One key form of prayer is intercession—praying on behalf of someone else. This is what Jesus does for us (Hebrews 7:25). Paul not only interceded for other Christians but also asked them to intercede for him.

But what does it mean to intercede? The Cambridge Dictionary defines it as: *"To use your influence to persuade someone in authority."*

Essentially, Paul was asking fellow believers to use their authority in Christ to appeal to God on his behalf. What he asked for varied greatly, but here are a few examples:

- *"...I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me."* – Romans 15:30
- *"Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel."* – Ephesians 6:19
- *"...for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance."* – Philippians 1:19
- *"And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains."* – Colossians 4:3
- *"Brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured, just as it was with you."* – 2 Thessalonians 3:1

Reflection Questions

- What do you notice about Paul's requests for intercession?
- What does this teach us about our identity in Christ? How does this challenge or reshape your perspective on prayer?
- If we take Paul's example to heart, how would it change the way we pray?

What Happens When We Intercede?

Listen to this remarkable story from Tony Campolo about intercession.

Just before he was due to speak at a Pentecostal college chapel service, eight men took him to a back room to pray for him. They had him kneel, laid hands on his head, and began to intercede.

This was a good thing—except they prayed for a long time. The longer they prayed, the more tired they became, and the more they leaned on Tony's head! To make matters worse, one of the men wasn't even praying for Tony. Instead, he passionately interceded for a man named Charlie Stolfus:

"Dear Lord, you know Charlie Stolfus. He lives in that silver trailer down the road a mile. You know the trailer, Lord—just down the road on the right-hand side. Charlie told me this morning he's going to leave his wife and three kids. Step in and do something, God. Bring that family back together."

After the prayer meeting, Tony delivered his message and set off on his drive home. As he drove, he saw a hitchhiker and picked him up.

"Hi, my name's Tony Campolo. What's yours?" he asked.

"My name is Charlie Stolfus," the hitchhiker replied.

Tony couldn't believe it! He immediately took the next exit and turned the car around.

After a few minutes, Charlie grew uneasy and asked, *"Hey, mister, where are you taking me?"*

"I'm taking you home," Tony said.

Charlie narrowed his eyes. *"Why?"*

"Because you just left your wife and three kids, right?"

Charlie was stunned. *"Yeah... that's right."* His face turned pale as he pressed himself against the car door. When Tony pulled up in front of Charlie's silver trailer, his eyes widened in shock.

"How did you know I lived here?" he asked.

"God told me," Tony replied. *(I believe God told me.)*

When Charlie stepped inside, his wife ran to him, exclaiming, *"You're back! You're back!"*

Charlie whispered something in her ear, and her eyes grew even wider.

Then Tony said with authority, *"The two of you sit down. I'm going to talk, and you're going to listen."*

That afternoon, Tony led both Charlie and his wife to Jesus.

Coincidence or Answered Prayer?

Some might call this an extraordinary coincidence. But as Bishop William Temple once said: *"When I pray, coincidences happen. When I don't, they don't."*

I'd love to hear more stories like this. If that's going to happen, we need to pray more!

Praying for Our Mission Partners

As a church, one of our three core values is prayer. We also support nine mission partners who are working to spread the gospel in the places where the Holy Spirit has placed them. We support them financially, but we can also support them in prayer.

Here are some ways we can do this:

- **Personal Commitment** – Choose one partner to pray for regularly.
- **Life Groups** – Each group could adopt a partner and commit to praying for them once a month. Could one person in your group stay in touch with them and provide updates on their prayer needs?
- **Corporate Prayer** – On the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month, from 6–7 pm, Jo Chandra hosts an hour of prayer for our mission partners and global issues. She would love for more people to join.

Below is a list of our mission partners. Why not take some time in your life group to choose one and commit to praying for them? You can find their latest prayer requests at the link provided. If you have a sense as a life group who you would like to regularly pray for then please let Pete Chandra know (peterchandra01@gmail.com)

Let's be a church that intercedes, believing that our prayers can make an impact for the Kingdom.

Partner	Contact details	Brief overview
1. Jenga, Uganda	contact@jengauganda.org	Community development in Eastern Uganda
2. David Barnett, Indigenous Bible Translation, Bible Society	david.barnett@biblesociety.org.au	The first whole bible translation of an indigenous language in Australia
3. Zularoo surf house. Corey & Sarah Boltons, Celebrate Messiah	cisebolton@gmail.com https://www.celebratemessiah.com.au/zularoo/	Providing accommodation for Israeli backpackers seeking to connect to the 40,000 young Israelis who travel the world following their mandatory army service

4. Brendan & Virginia Shorts, Niger, Africa, SIM	brendan.short@sim.org https://sim.org.au/brendan/	Training, deploying and supporting cross cultural mission work in central Africa.
5. Empart, Training, Asia	empart.org	Community development and church planting in Northern India
6. New Life Fellowship, Cambodia	https://www.nlfcambodia.org/project/church-planting/	Community development and church planting in Cambodia
7. Open Doors, Worldwide	https://www.opendoors.org.au/	Supporting the persecuted church
8. Bushikori Christian Centre, Uganda.	https://bushikori.org.au	Runs a school and health centre in Eastern Mblae
9. Duk, Central/North Vietnam.	See Dave.	Church planting on the border between Vietnam and Laos, with the Hill tribe peoples.