

TOOL: Introduction to Lift Others in Prayer

Lift others in prayer • Daily



"I'll pray for you." If we've been around the Church any amount of time, we've heard this phrase. We might have said this phrase. Sometimes it becomes a way to respond to someone's pain - a way to make ourselves feel less helpless. We watch as our world is in pain, and we say we'll offer prayers. But what does that really mean?

In the book of Ephesians, Paul lays out the tools that we have to survive and endure in this world. He calls them the "armor of God" and the grand finale, the tool he ends with is **prayer**. And not just prayer for ourselves, prayer for one another. He tells us to pray in the Spirit on *all* occasions with *all* kinds of prayers for *all* the Lord's people. Paul presents prayer for one another as if it is a powerful and effective gift that we can use in all kinds of situations.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book *Life Together*, says, "A Christian fellowship lives and exists by the intercession of its members for one another, or it collapses."

Intercession is powerful. At some point in our faith, we've all gotten confused about prayer. We pray for things and we don't see them happen, and so often, the conclusion our mind draws is that prayer doesn't do anything. But, Jesus makes some bold statements about prayer. He claims that God hears us, and that our prayers have real impact inside of time and are somehow effective in the world around us. Prayer is powerful.

Intercession connects us to one another. Bearing each other's burdens is a physical, relational and spiritual reality. It takes action, emotion, and prayer. When we spend time interceding for someone, we begin to see things from a new perspective. We begin to feel more connected to the weight of what they're walking through, and we find ourselves caring for and carrying their burdens in a new way.

Intercession connects us to God. God is writing complicated and glorious stories all around us. The more we open ourselves to praying for our kids, our partners, our friends, our neighbors, the person next to us in the grocery store line – the more we begin to notice the incredible way God weaves stories together. We begin to see the invitation to participate in God’s storytelling through prayer. And when we practice this habit, our hearts soon learn to pay attention to the patterns of God’s love all around us.

Practicals of lifting others in prayer

Here are some tips as you begin to practice this habit.

- 1. Explore the tool box.** We have created an entire tool box for you to explore intercessory prayer on a daily basis.
- 2. Pray then and there.** When you find the words “I’ll pray for you” wanting to slip out of your mouth, or when you see a text message with a quick prayer request, instead of waiting, take 15 seconds and pray then and there for that person’s request.
- 3. Pay attention.** You’ll notice a theme in these tools. Intercessory prayer is an invitation to participate in God’s story, and the more we pay attention the more involved we tend to feel. Pay attention to the world around you. Notice the people beside you on the road or in line at Starbucks and consider your observations an invitation into intercession. Pay attention to what you pray for in your small group. Write it down if you need to. And pay attention to what God does. Look for God’s work in the world around you and look for ways to get involved through intercession.

What's next?

Dive into the tools provided! For each practice, you'll find a series of tools to help you explore and go deeper. Each tool will unpack a specific method or practical way to engage with that habit.

Within each tool you'll find three sections: (1) an introduction to the tool, (2) instructions on how to practice utilizing the tool, (3) a few questions to debrief your experience with your Praxis Group.

We encourage you to practice using a tool for at least one week before you debrief your experience. Remember, practicing isn't the same as accomplishing or perfecting! Practicing can be messy, imperfect, and a learning experience!