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# Prayer – Intercession

**Collect:** Let's start with a game that introduces the idea of communicating. The aim of the game is to talk for one minute on a given subject. You announce the topic and a member of the group is randomly selected to speak for one minute. Choose subjects to stimulate the imagination and which may be amusing. Put a stopwatch on each person to see how long they last before drying up! Subjects might include, my earliest memories, my favourite computer game, why beans are good for you, 10 things you can do with potatoes, Alligator wrestling…

**Context:** Prayers of intercession are to be offered on behalf of other people - your friends, family, co-workers, anyone. The Bible gives us several examples of intercessory prayer. One of the earliest examples of this type of prayer is found in Genesis 18 when Abraham pleaded with God for the well-being of the people of Sodom. Instead of being overcome with his own needs, Abraham prayed for those around him.

Moses is also known for interceding on behalf of others throughout his life. In fact, Pharaoh requested that Moses pray for him in Exodus 8:28, "Pharaoh said, 'I will let you go to offer sacrifices to the LORD your God in the desert, but you must not go very far. Now pray for me.'" Later in Exodus 15:25, Moses petitioned God on behalf of the Hebrew people: "Then Moses cried out to the LORD…" Moses prayed for others with urgency and boldness.

Several of Paul's prayers of intercession are recorded in the New Testament. In Philippians 1:9-11, Paul prayed for the believers: "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God."

The church prayed fervently for Peter while he was imprisoned. Acts 12:5 says, "So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him."

1 Timothy 2:1-5 exhorts us to pray for others: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

*Discuss: Is praying for people something all Christians should do? Look at 1 Samuel 12:23: "As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right." Does this passage strike you as encouraging or challenging?*

**Content:** Jesus is the greatest intercessor of all time! Here are some of His prayers:

- Jesus prayed for Peter - Luke 22:32 says, "But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."
- Jesus prayed for those who crucified him. Luke 23:34 says, "Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' And they divided up his clothes by casting lots."
- Jesus prayed for his disciples and for Believers throughout eternity in John 17.

Using each of these three examples, divide the group up to discuss:

1) How did Jesus pray in these occasions?

2) What motivated Jesus to pray?

3) What was the outcome of his prayer?

**Challenge:** Do you spend time praying for others? Prayers of intercession are powerful! The Bible records that weather changed, people were released from prison, enemies were defeated, and so much more - all as a result of intercessory prayer!

Spend some time asking God to lay on your heart an area for you to intercede that is in the world; in the UK; in your work; in your church; in your family.

**Connect:** In groups of 3 or 4, bring your list of intercessions and spend some time praying through any common themes that appear on each list.

**Note:** leave some time for this. Perhaps play some music in the background and do not be afraid of leaving room for silence.