TOPIC: GUIDEBOOK FOR INTERCESSORS

I will join the company of intercessors God is raising up in these last days before His return.

KEY POINTS

- The word "intercede" came into English usage in the 16th century to describe the action of a person who comes between two parties in dispute (whether individuals or corporate entities). They would advocate on behalf of one of the parties, seek to mediate a dispute, or solicit help for someone in need.
- We meet several powerful and effective intercessors in the pages of scripture:
  - Abraham—interceded for Lot, Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:17-33);
  - Moses—interceded for Israel (Exodus 32:11-13; 33:12-16);
  - Jeremiah—interceded for Israel (Jeremiah 14:7-9) and for himself (12:1-6);
  - Ezra—interceded for Israel as they began to marry pagan wives (Ezra 9);
  - Paul—interceded for churches he had established (Philippians 1:3-4,9; Colossians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:2);
  - Jesus—interceded for His disciples and, indeed, the whole world (John 17).
- Intercession is prompted by a heart of love for those in need and a deep desire to help them. It demands a true understanding of the issue or problem at hand and the knowledge of who can fix the problem. It would be senseless to pray to your cat for the down payment for your new house. We need to appeal to the One (and only One) who has the power to do all things!
- There are several crucial elements to effective intercession and Daniel exemplifies these for us (Daniel 9:1-21).

1. Intercessors have a good knowledge of the word of God and pray appropriately in response to it. Daniel had read Jeremiah's prophecy and knew that the 70 years of their captivity were about to expire (v2).
   > In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.
2. Intercessors know the certainty of God's word coming to pass, whether or not we have prepared ourselves for its fulfillment. God will always do what He says He will do, whether we believe it, receive it, accept it or reject it.
3. Intercessors know how to properly respond to the word of God (v3).
   > Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

   Daniel analyzed his situation and realized that prayer, fasting, humility and mourning were the appropriate responses. Intercessors understand how best to respond to the spiritual situations they encounter.
4. Intercessors begin by acknowledging the facts of their situations, and acknowledging God's righteousness in dealing with them as He has (v5-6, 14).
5. Intercessors offer prayers of repentance for themselves and whoever else is included in their prayer. They are neither separate from nor above those they pray for. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, so all need to repent and ask God's forgiveness for their sins.

KEY SCRIPTURE:
Daniel 9:1-6

6. Intercessors pray for God's honour, glory and divine will to be upheld, despite the failings of His people. When those in need are unable or unwilling to pray because of guilt, shame, disinterest or rebellion, the intercessor steps into the gap and petitions God on behalf on those people. An intercessor's request is never based upon the worthiness of those in need, but upon the grace, mercy, character and covenants of our great God (v17-19). Even in His anger and disappointment over our sins and shortcomings, God will act upon the prayer of an intercessor who prays for the honour of His name to be upheld.

- God desires to employ a company of intercessors similar to Daniel in these last days. The needs around us are obvious, and without prayer they are totally overwhelming.
- Immorality in our society, violence and gang warfare, corruption in high places, family breakdowns and breakups, overt and covert racism, blatant unfairness in the workplace and unsaved family members are just a few of the pressing issues that burden our hearts.
- They will not be solved by higher levels of education, political action, more money in the bank, or better connections to people in power. God is our only hope, and we access His help and divine resources through intercessory prayer.
- Therefore, we must commit ourselves to joining the ranks of the intercessors.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Briefly and in your own words, define "intercessory prayer".
2. Do you know (or have you known) anyone who you would consider to be an "intercessor"? Why do you consider them intercessors?
3. Can you identify a time (or times) when you have prayed an intercessory prayer? Is it something you feel you do regularly?
4. When you pray intercessory prayers, do you plan to do so beforehand? Do you begin to pray and then enter into intercession because of a pressing need (known or impressed on your spirit during prayer)? Share your experience(s).
5. How often should we pray intercessory prayers? Is it something we should expect to do every day? Once a week/month/year? Discuss.

Prayer Time

Lord, help me to have a spirit similar to that of Daniel's, help me to commit myself to becoming an intercessor in these last days, to stand in the gap. In Jesus' name, Amen.

L.G. ice-Breaker: When you buy a product that requires assembly, do you read the instructions or try to figure it out yourself? How successful are you?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 2017

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

✔ (Reminds me/Confirms) (New idea) (Think about)

⊗ (Do this) (Speaks to my heart) (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS