

Basic guidelines for personal intercessors

Dangers and pitfalls regarding personal intercessors

Along with the advantages of personal intercession come the dangers and pitfalls as well, a fact we dare not ignore. We are human and liable to error (fallible) and therefore we should heed the following:

- Sometimes an intercessor uses the information he gets to slander the spiritual worker. Gossip is always negative and always has negative consequences.
- Potential sexual danger. The spiritual worker has to be very careful of any relationship with female intercessors. Don't pray with a female intercessor when the two of you are alone. If you feel drawn to a female intercessor take radical steps. One thing you must never do is tell her how you feel!
- Beware of an Absalom attitude in prayer. When Absalom returned to Jerusalem after his brother's murder his father David did not go out to greet him. He became bitter because he was given no credit. He stood at the city gate and said to the people: "If I were king I would have done this and that and the other thing". This attitude is sometimes found in intercessors. One might feel that one is not given enough credit and then try to force the spiritual worker through prayer in the wrong direction through prayer.
- Prayers like these kill spiritually and destroy. Intercessors should pray for protection for the spiritual worker and ask the Lord for unclouded guidance for the spiritual worker. The intercessor should not take over the task of the spiritual worker by trying to manipulate him by soul stirring prayers.
- From the above it becomes clear that it is possible for a power struggle to develop between the intercessor/s and the spiritual worker. The power, leadership and authority to make decisions and lead is given by God to the spiritual worker. The intercessor has missed the mark concerning his calling and commission.
- Along with the Absalom attitude comes "witchcraft" praying. Magic is used to get a person to do what you want him to do. The same can happen to intercessors. For instance: They want the spiritual worker to teach or do something specific in the congregation. To reach their goal they force him into a certain direction through "prayer". Such prayers are done in the flesh and usually do much harm.
- Some intercessors begin to boast that they interceded for this or that person and the person became haughty or lost their power or missed their goal.
- To some it is merely a sentimental thing to pray for the minister or missionary. They don't really pray but it is such an honour to have been asked to do so and is such a respectable thing to do. These intercessors are merely a burden and their prayers have little effect.
- Others want to manipulate the spiritual worker with their prayers. "If you don't do as we say we won't pray for you".

- Beware of mutual emotional dependency. Be careful not to become so involved with the intercessor or spiritual worker that you cannot live independently or have your own personal relationship with the Lord. This type of intercession is a spiritual task and care must be taken that it does not develop into something else.

GUIDE-LINES FOR PERSONAL INTERCESSORS

- Don't unconditionally accept visions, dreams, Scripture or "a word from the Lord" passed on by your intercessors. Always put it to the test no matter who the intercessor is. It also holds good for the most reliable and mature intercessors. This is an unyielding spiritual law. Intercessors should be mature enough not to expect the spiritual worker to accept everything unconditionally. It is the responsibility and duty of the spiritual worker to test everything. This right may never be taken away from him.
- Remember: Take care not to choose intercessors unwisely. Think twice before asking someone - once you have asked and it turns out to be an unwise choice it may be difficult to reverse the situation.

Communicating with your intercessors

Communicating with your intercessors is very important. Intercession for spiritual workers is often unsuccessful because they do not take the trouble to keep their intercessors informed.

The intercessor obviously wants to know what the outcome of his prayers were. He also needs to be given credit for what he does. Of course they do it for the Lord but a thank you and encouragement makes it easier to persevere in prayer.

Here are some useful suggestions

- Keep intercessors informed by writing a personal letter to them every month. They won't mind if you send everyone the same letter, replacing the name every time. It makes it much easier to pray when one has specific information about a matter. This applies specifically to category 2 intercessors.
- It is also equally important that the intercessors inform the spiritual worker when they have received a word from the Lord. It sometimes happens that the intercessors fail to inform the spiritual worker what the Lord told them. The spiritual worker needs this information. The intercessor should however not say anything if he is uncertain that his message came from the Lord.
- Intercessors should also take care not to tell the spiritual worker everything the Lord says to them. The Holy Spirit sometimes reveals things to the intercessor meant only for himself and must not be relayed to the spiritual workers. Stand in the gap and pray for it / against the matter. This might sometimes be the kind of information that the spiritual worker just does not need at that stage!
- The spiritual worker has to be approachable to his intercessors. They should be able to pass on messages from the Lord without feeling like a disturbance or a nuisance.

What does it take to be a personal intercessor?

In reality, what does it mean to be a personal intercessor for a spiritual worker? Because this is unfamiliar ground to many I will list a few points regarding this. These remarks are to the benefit of the intercessor the prayer partner or the spiritual leader.

- Intercession demands sacrifice. This is not a "I'll do it when I feel like it or have the time".
- It demands literally standing in the gap for the spiritual worker. The intercessor is the spiritual shock absorber. Attacks and onslaughts meant for the spiritual worker must be sustained by the intercessor. Intercessors often suffer intense assaults, while the spiritual worker can carry on without hindrance. This is the purpose of personal intercession. People who become involved should know that there is a spiritual price to pay.
- Don't just jump in and pray. Be sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Be ready to pray at any time - day or night. Be alert. If the Holy Spirit prompts you to pray do so immediately.
- Take responsibility in prayer for the spiritual worker's ministry. The fruits of his ministry are intrinsically dependant on our intercession. When his ministry bears fruit you also reap in the fruits and blessings.

GUIDE-LINES FOR PERSONAL INTERCESSORS

- Pray for the total being of the spiritual worker. It also means praying for his relationship with his wife and children.
- You won't be applauded for interceding. It helps to keep us, the intercessors, humble. You must not expect any credit for interceding. Do it for the Lord and leave it with Him.
- To pray for your spiritual worker is a long term investment. Pray until you are released by the Holy Spirit. When this happens it is your responsibility to tell the spiritual worker that you feel the Lord exempts you from this responsibility. There is nothing wrong with this and the intercessor must not feel that he is dodging responsibility in doing so.

How to be an effective intercessor

- Be a servant. Don't make demands. The spiritual worker normally has to give all the time. Let him discover what it feels like to receive for a change.
- By persevering in daily prayer you lift the pressure and burden from the spiritual worker thus enabling him to do his work.
- When you pass on information to him personally or have to ask for information, keep it short. Few things are more tiring than an untimely long-winded phone call.
- Where appropriate be sure to give feedback of what God reveals to you during intercession.
- Do not expect the spiritual worker to have equally intensive contact with all his personal intercessors. It is just not possible.
- Dreams and visions demand extreme caution. It is your responsibility to ask the Lord for an interpretation. Don't ask the spiritual worker what it means. The vision was given to you - you have to interpret it. Just a word of warning: beware of visions and dreams! God does give dreams and visions - but the devil can also do that.
- You may not experience immediate results to your prayers. It does not mean that you

have to stop or give it up as a lost cause. (Research shows that 89% of spiritual workers who have personal intercessors testify after a year that it has made a difference to their ministry.)

- Maintain utmost confidentiality.
- Do not abuse your position as personal intercessor to manipulate or take advantage of the spiritual worker.
- Be sure to pray for his family and marriage. This is of utmost importance.
- The Lord could lead you to pray more intensely for one area than another. One intercessor may have a burden to pray for the children for example and another for his marriage, another for his preaching etc. Be sensitive as to what the Lord lays on your heart to pray for.
- The day before and after the spiritual leader makes a public appearance or leads special services it is vitally important for intercession. This is when Satan is extremely busy. Pray for protection. In the case of big rallies etc. it is advisable to pray extensively for a week or two afterwards. Pray specifically for strength, protection, protection from despondency, criticism, physical onslaughts (health) and assaults in the financial area. Continue to pray until you sense that the Holy Spirit releases you from this specific prayer assignment and the burden thereof is lifted from you.
- Pray for your own protection. Remember he who stands in the gap will be attacked. You are the shock-absorber and shock-absorbers have to take the knocks. That is why intercession for a spiritual worker is not always such a privilege, the cost is high.
- Make use of Psalm 91 for yourself as well as the person you are interceding for. Often read it aloud praying each verse.
- Steady intercession is important. One missionary remarked that in his ministry all goes well for 7-10 days during the month then it lapses into an uphill struggle with resistance and onslaughts. In good times he realized that the prosperous times co-incided with the times that his intercessors received their news letters and started praying. A week later the news letter and the missionary had become "yesterday's news" and not priority for intercession anymore.