

THE POWER OF PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

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Galatians 6:2 tells us, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Praying for one another is a powerful way for us to bear one another's burdens.

Recently, I had a busy week and things were stressed. So many thoughts were swirling around my head. Days of working ahead to complete all my projects before a week-long trip out of state had taken their toll. I was exhausted. And, the needs of so many others weighed on my heart. I cycled through them in my mind:

- A teacher at my daughter's school in critical condition in the hospital.
- Friends who were laid off unexpectedly.
- My mom just home from having surgery and my dad trying to care for her.
- My husband trying to make difficult decisions for his company.
- My children facing choices outside my control.
- News stories that broke my heart for the pain and injustice in the world.

I prayed for all of these people as concern for them flooded my heart. A friend commented on how heavy my spirit felt. It was all that I could do not to cry. I was so worried about the pain that everyone else was experiencing and I was blind to my own. I was carrying around the burdens of so many, but the weight was getting much too heavy.

On a break from meetings, my friend laid her hand on me and prayed for me that God would lift my burden and give me peace. I had prayed for many things as I left that morning, but the person I did not remember to pray for was myself! I knew the importance of praying for others who were going through difficult challenges, but I had walked out into the world unprotected. It was such a blessing to have her care about my heart and to guide me in taking my heartache to God.

Praying for one another removes our isolation.

Her prayer did not change the situations that I was praying about, but it changed my perception of feeling alone in the situation. We all have struggles that cause us to feel isolated. When we share our pain it invites someone else into the sacred space of our heart. When we hear the emotions of the heart of someone we love, the reflex should be to take those concerns to God in prayer. When we pray for someone else it draws us closer in relationships. Praying for your spouse, child, or friend helps them to see how much you love them. Almost no one you meet will decline being prayed over.

Praying for one another is a powerful way for us to bear one another's burdens.

It is a loving act to pray for someone and join them in taking the pain of their heart to God. We may promise to pray for someone and then forget entirely when they are out of our sight. What a powerful gesture it is to seize the moment and pray over a friend. In doing so you have united with them before God's throne and demonstrated that you care enough to step into their struggle.

Prayer for a friend shows where to bring our burdens.

Praying for a friend reminds us that we were never meant to carry a heavy emotional load, but to take it to our Father in Heaven. He is a big God. We can forget the depth of His compassion when we feel overwhelmed with burdens and pain. In those moments, there is nothing so welcome as the prayer of a friend directing us back to our loving God who longs to carry the weight for us.

Praying for one another builds our spiritual muscles.

It may feel uncomfortable to pray out loud. It may be outside your comfort zone to stop pray over someone. Remember that God never instructed us to be comfortable, he instructed us to pray for one another and to bear one another's burdens. James 5 tells us, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." I would encourage you to take the risk, and in time you will become more comfortable with praying out loud. It will become a natural reflex within your community.

Prayer makes a difference.

God's power is seen when his people join together in prayer for one another. God hears the prayers of his people and he has the power to work mightily in any given situation. Ephesians 3:20-21 tells us, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

Choose to step outside your comfort zone and pray for the needs that you see before you, right there and then. Let prayer be the gift you give to a friend by helping bear their burden and directing them before God's throne!

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