

“Faith Matters” # 11 Intercession – May 14

Previous “Faith Matters” dealt with prayers of adoration, confession and thanksgiving. Before we pray for ourselves, which is what we most often do, there are others out there who need our prayers. These prayers are called intercession. The Old Testament tells us that God was about to abandon his chosen people because they forgot how he saved them from slavery in Egypt and were disregarding his commandments. But the writer of the book of Psalms tells us that Moses “stood up against God and kept his anger from destroying them” (Ps. 106:23 TEV). That’s intercession.

Jesus predicted Peter’s denial, but said to him, “Simon... Satan has demanded to sift all of you but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail...” (Lk. 22:31f). That’s intercession. From the cross as he was dying, he prayed, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk. 23:34). That too, is intercession.

The author of the New Testament book of Hebrews writes, “[Jesus] is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). So our model for intercession is Jesus Christ who intercedes for us, especially when we hardly know how to pray for ourselves. Isn’t that encouraging: to think that not only is he with us, but that he prays for us!

As he intercedes for us, so we are to follow his example and pray for others. What we’re most aware of is relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbours who are ill, unemployed or depressed. So we ask God on their behalf for healing, for new starts, for hope, for their special needs. Scripture declares that “we have not because we ask not”. How distressing to think of the possibility that they have not because we do not ask on their behalf.

Intercession can go far beyond people we know and their needs; it can reach out to governments, to refugees, to enemies, to the future of Erskine; the list is endless. How wonderful that we can help change lives and even nations through intercession.

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