

Doctrine of Intercessory Prayer

1. The concept of intercessory prayer is well established in *Scripture*.
 - There is the priesthood of the Old Testament.
 - There is the practice of the prophets.
 - ❖ The prayer of Samuel. *1 Samuel 12:23 Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:*
 - ❖ The prayer of Elijah. *Romans 11:2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.*
 - ❖ The prayer of Jeremiah. *Jeremiah 42:1 Then all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least even unto the greatest, came near, 2 And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the Lord thy God, even for all this remnant; (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:) 3 That the Lord thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do. 4 Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard you; behold, I will pray unto the Lord your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, that whatsoever thing the Lord shall answer you, I will declare it unto you; I will keep nothing back from you.*
 - There is the example of Christ. *Romans 8:34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*
 - There is the practice of the apostle Paul. *Colossians 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;*
 - There is the priesthood of every *New Testament* believer. *1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*
 - There are the direct commandments of *Scripture*.
 - ❖ *Psalms 122:6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.*
 - ❖ *Hebrews 13:18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.*

- ❖ *James 5:14 Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*
- There is the personal pastoral appeal of Paul. *1 Thessalonians 5:25 Brethren, pray for us. And more specifically: 2 Thessalonians 3:1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: 2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.*
2. Christ is the Great High Priest of the Believer and provides the example for the intercessory work of the believer.
 - *Isaiah 53:12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*
 - *John 17:9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.*
 3. Sometimes God's people are specifically commanded not to make intercession on behalf of others.
 - *Jeremiah 7:16 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.*
 4. When the *New Testament* Christian acts as a believer-priest and prays, the Holy Spirit will guide the prayer.
 - *Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*
 5. The basis for the priesthood of the believer is that of Christ Himself.
 - *Hebrews 7:24 But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He [Christ] ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;*
 6. Every believer priest has not only the right and privilege of interceding on behalf of others but the responsibility as well. Surely the Baptist are not wrong to take prayer requests in their meetings and pray for others.

7. For centuries the Catholic Church has argued that the departed dead can make intercession on behalf of those here on earth. It has been maintained that since the departed are alive in heaven and closer to the Lord their intercessory prayers are more effective. There is no Scriptural foundation for this. Indeed, the *Bible* forbids communication with the dead.

- *Leviticus 19:31* Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.
- *Leviticus 20:6* And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.
- *Leviticus 20:27* A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.
- *Deuteronomy 18:11* Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

Question. “*Why should man seek the dead when God has provided “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3) in His Word. For a Christian to seek contact with the dead for counsel is to call God a liar. Either the Bible is true that “it is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27) or else there are deceased people coming from the earth or astral plane waiting to guide man. Not only has God forbidden the practice of trying to contact the dead, but also it is an undermining of true biblical faith” (Merrill Unger, Demonology, p. 149).*