

Interceding with a “Blanket Prayer”

Are you ever puzzled about how to intercede for people you don't really know?
Or, for that matter, for those you *do* know?

Praying for others is a great privilege -- and often an awesome responsibility. How do you approach it?

Many of us are asked to intercede on behalf of others. We're given names of strangers, and most of us maintain our own lists of more familiar names. Either way, we may not know the people personally or well, and even when we do, how do we know what to pray? Here are some suggestions to make it work better for you:

Begin with a "blanket" prayer for everyone on your list

Personal confession--

If any prayer is to be effective, we must be sure we have confessed every known sin, so that our fellowship with our Lord is uninterrupted and He will hear our prayers. [*Isaiah 59:2, Psalm 66:18*]

For salvation--

We know first and foremost, it is God's desire that all come to repentance, that none should perish [*2 Peter 3:9*]; that He wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth [*1 Timothy 2:4*].

It is appropriate to pray for everyone on your prayer list, including their immediate and extended families, that those who are lost will be saved.

For sanctification--

For those who are children of God, offer a general prayer for the spiritual growth and maturity of all. We might use some of Paul's prayers as our examples. For instance: "Lord, I pray that their love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that they may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ--to the glory and praise of God." [*Philippians 1:9-11*]

In a general way, we can pray that no matter what the circumstances they are facing, the Lord will use this time to draw them closer to Him than they have ever been, that His grace will be sufficient and that in the midst of these trials, they will glorify Him.

For protection--

We bind Satan and every evil spirit away from the lost and the saved [*Mark 3:23-27*] on our prayer request list: in the name of Jesus [*Philippians 2:9-11*], with the blood of the Lamb and the truth of the Word [*Revelation 12:11*], that Satan is a defeated foe and we have been given authority over him [*Luke 19:10*].

Continue with prayer for individual needs--

After we have prayed a general prayer for those on our list, we can then move through the list, pausing briefly as we name each one to the Lord to see if His Spirit will give us a Scripture or an impression of something specific to request. We present each specific request quickly and succinctly, and move on to the next request.

To make best use of your limited prayer time--

Pray as you have time, a little each day, or once or twice a week. Give yourself the freedom not to have to pray for everyone every time you pray; divide your list in a way that makes sense for your schedule.

Allow yourself to set limits on the number of times you will pray for a request. Begin with praying for each one once; if you have time, you can always expand it. Don't feel guilty if you drop someone from the list, or drop the whole list after you have prayed for everyone one time. Your one prayer may be the very one God was waiting to hear.