

Don't Say It Unless You Mean It

A few years ago, a sister in Christ asked me if I would pray for her. I can't remember exactly what was happening in her life, but I said I would. A few weeks later as we were walking into the building for worship services, she came to me and said, "Did you pray for me?" Sadly, I responded by saying, "No. I forgot to pray." Have you ever found yourself in a situation like that?

"I will be praying for you."

Prayer is powerful because we serve a powerful God. Prayer is essential. I think the mere idea of knowing others are praying for you is comforting and encouraging. Which is why it's important that when we say we are going to pray, we actually pray. We find throughout the scriptures where the apostle Paul petitioned the brethren to pray for him. In Colossians 4:2-5, Paul said, "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; mean while praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak." Paul desired prayers from his brethren. In Ephesians 6:18-20, Paul said, "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints- and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

I'm sure the disciples followed through on those prayers. When it comes to praying for one another, we should strive to do the same. I'm learning I need to ensure I follow through with what I say I'm going to do. Below are some simple things we can do to ensure we follow through with what it is we say we're going to do with respect to praying for one another.

1. ***Recognize who we're praying to.*** When we truly grasp the God of heaven hears our prayers, is attentive to our cries, and will move on our behalf, then

we will have a desire to pray like never before. Nehemiah recognized this, Nehemiah 1:1-11. Understanding this will help us to follow through when it comes to prayer.

2. ***Pray immediately.*** When the sister asked me to pray for her, I should have stopped everything at that very moment and prayed. Whether it was a silent prayer or a verbal prayer, hitting the pause button and praying immediately is a great thing to do. If you can do it with the person making the request, that's even better.
3. ***Have a prayer list.*** I know some Christians have something like this where they will write down what it is they need to pray about. I think that's great. It's a way not to overlook those requests people are making.
4. ***Carve out time to pray.*** Like anything else, we need to be intentional when it comes to prayer. It needs to be a part of our daily routine. It needs to be something we expect to do daily. Maybe it's first thing in the morning, Mark 1:35. Maybe it's a set time in the middle of the day, Luke 5:16. Whenever it is, try to be consistent when it comes to praying.

Someone is going to ask you to pray for them. Be careful with what you say. Be sure to follow through.

- Benjamin Lee