

How to find personal intercessors

It is firstly important to go to the Father and ask Him to set aside persons for intercession. Take note when people say "I'm praying for you". Write it down. Pray about it and ask the Lord for wisdom. Don't just write down some names and ask every person on the list. This process of selecting and choosing personal intercessors is to a large extent the nucleus of success. If you ask the wrong people to pray for you it might lead to disaster instead of a blessing. Beware of being falsely accused of being judgmental if you do not ask certain persons to pray for you. That is not true. God allocates different tasks to different people. It is not true that all members in a congregation have to be involved in intercession for spiritual workers. Once you have the names, write them a letter, visit them personally or telephone the people whom you want to ask to intercede for you and your family. Ensure that they understand that this is more than general prayer. It demands a commitment and has elements of a calling. He or she must consider the matter prayerfully before the Lord and then come back to you with a clear answer. Do not pressurize the person. The Lord might want to use this person elsewhere or He might already have a prayer responsibility somewhere else or to someone else.

The qualities of personal intercessors

What qualities should a person have who acts as a personal intercessor?

- Although it is not a pre-requisite, ideally one needs people with the gift of intercession.
- Look for mature people. This is not a task for the babes in faith.
- Personal intercessors should be able to submit to authority. They must not tell you every second day how you must deliver your message, what you may or may not do. It often happens that these intercessors appoint themselves master of the spiritual worker and try to manipulate and control him.
- Look for disciplined people. Intercession demands discipline and perseverance and is not something one can do only when one feels like it.
- Look for people who are open to the Holy Spirit and who are prepared to listen to God.
- A personal intercessor should be able to maintain confidentiality. Someone with a wagging tongue is certainly not suitable for this kind of work. This stands to reason.
- He/she must receive their calling to intercede for you from the Lord. It must be their calling to pray for you.

Types of intercessors

There are roughly three types of intercessors. This is not an unconditional classification, rather a realistic differentiation to explain the matter.

Category 1 - First the category of general intercessors. Omar Cabrera, leader of one of the largest churches in Latin America asks his congregation to pray for him every time they say grace. This is general prayer. But just think what happens when 145 000 people present you to the throne of God three times a day! Information passed on to the congregation by the minister

in a news-letter is another way of generating prayer. General matters that can be common knowledge can be announced weekly on Sundays. You can request intercession at venues where you are a speaker. A missionary asks for general prayer by means of a monthly news-letter with specific requests to a few hundred people. This type of intercession is more like general prayer.

Category 2 - This category mostly deals with the second tier of intercession, the more personal intercessors or prayer partners that the spiritual worker needs - a select group of 10-100 intercessors. Determining numbers is not easy. I have already mentioned John Maxwell who has 100 personal intercessors. Peter Wagner, a professor at Fuller Institute for Church Growth says that he has an average of 18 personal intercessors. I think one should work on a number between 10-40. We must be careful of the idea of "more intercessors more fruit". Before you know it numbers have become important and we become important again. The point is not how many intercessors there are, the question is, is their intercession effective and faithful?

Category 3 - The third tier, of intercessors, is one or at most two or three people to whom you can entrust extremely personal and confidential information. The choice of intercessor is once again extremely important. The wrong choice can ruin your whole ministry. I dare to say that the gift of intercession is a pre-requisite at this tier. Interceding for the spiritual worker should be an important priority in the intercessor's life.

In this book Prayer Shield, C Peter Wagner talks about the enormous impact these types of intercessors can have in one's life. He takes an example from his own life. The incident may seem strange to some but it does not diminish its authenticity and reflects somewhat the impact and power of personal intercession. He and his wife had a personal intercessor who was in close contact with them and who interceded for them almost permanently. One evening he fell of a ladder and injured himself very badly. According to the way and instance that he fell, he could have been killed or very severely injured. Their personal intercessor was attending a concert at the time of his fall. Suddenly she experienced severe pain in her neck and other parts of her body. It was so intense that she had to go home. She knew that it was not her pain but that it had something to do with Peter Wagner and she subsequently started interceding for him. After quite a few hours the pain subsided and she experienced victory in the spiritual realm. Peter Wagner recovered miraculously and suffered very little pain. This he attributes to the fact that his intercessor was on duty when the Holy Spirit gave her this prayer burden.