

The One Factor That Moved This Woman From Self-Righteous Judgment to Heartfelt Prayer

My dear friend Audrey is a prayer warrior—the *War Room*, prayer-closet battle-type of warrior. She spends time every day in prayer for her family, for her friends, for the afflicted and broken, for the desperate and hopeless and whatever else is on her heart. We were talking about how to pray for someone going through something difficult. When someone tells you something that leaves you flabbergasted and you are at a loss for words, or for when you're praying for someone who has made terrible decisions, it can be hard to express your prayers and petitions.

I shared with her that I was finding it difficult to find the right words to pray for someone in my life because I was intensely discouraged. She told me that in those times she thinks of the person at the moment they accept and surrender to Christ. She talked about how it helps her attitude and her heart to envision that glorious revelation in their lives. Soon, I got the chance to act on this advice.

This past year, someone close to me was in a situation I didn't agree with or approve of. I found myself trying to balance *what* I should say and *how* I should say it. I tend to be harsh with people I expect more from, and I didn't want anything I did to damage my relationship with this person.

I began praying for her in the way Audrey advised me, and immediately, I felt the Lord telling me, "Kandi, your love for them must outweigh your judgment of them." This profoundly affected me because I can tend to get on my soapbox, which can

be perceived as holier-than-thou—the exact opposite of what I want to do. It is so easy to be overzealous and judgmental, especially when you see others going through the same things you have gone through yourself. If you're anything like me in this, our intention is to protect them, but it can also become a pride issue, which affects our prayer life. It is not always about being right or wrong. It's about reaching others, which only comes from us truly loving others.

Once I made the switch, I felt my attitude changing. It altered the way I talked about praying for the situation when I was asking for others to help me intercede. It changed the way I saw *myself*. Having a healthy attitude toward prayer dramatically changes it.

When you have a group of people you are going through the Bible with, you have a marvelous platform for prayer. It's one of the most important parts of your meetings. Each week, you should be talking about any requests that need to be prayed for. Don't spend your entire time taking prayer requests, but make an effort to ask about pressing needs and then pray for them *right then*. Then, follow up with each other throughout the week to encourage one another and get updates. If additional requests come up during the week, text or email the group and ask for prayer.

As you meet over the course of a year, you will encounter and cover so many requests with each other: anything from sickness to death, travel, work, family, children, church, divorce, drugs, sin, loss and the list goes on. You will also celebrate praises together when God answers.

I recently realized something in my quiet time, and it involves prayer. You can be doing all the right things and still suffer in life. You can be in a discipleship group, praying, memorizing Scripture and reading God's Word every day, and that doesn't exclude you from pain or mean that God will answer your requests in the way you want. Reading in Job,

I journaled on Job 1:5 (CSB), which says, “Whenever a round of banqueting was over, Job would send for his children and purify them, rising early in the morning to offer burnt offerings for all of them. For Job thought, ‘Perhaps my children have sinned, having cursed God in their hearts.’ This was *Job’s regular practice*” (emphasis mine).

Job was a man of integrity who feared God and turned away from evil. He prayed to God regularly and interceded for his children, yet none of that excluded him from experiencing some of life’s worst tragedies. He had a regular practice and an inner resolve to follow God. His faith was remarkable, and in all he endured he didn’t blame God or sin.

Just because we are making disciples and doing everything we can to know God more and more and to obey Him, we will still go through hard and difficult situations. God may not answer our prayers in the way we want. However, we can praise Him through it. We, along with the women in our groups, can journey together and be there for each other. It’s much better to journey together through the joyous times and through the difficult ones.

Bathe your friends and your meetings in prayer, and do so with the understanding that God is the one in control. A healthy attitude and approach toward prayer is one of the foundational things to prioritize as you launch discipleship groups of your own. {eo}

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