

# Why Your Prayers Matter

I've just finished doing something that made me feel bad. Really, really bad. I immersed myself in a vat of scalding pain.

Someone else's pain. The shell-shocked parents who lost their beautiful 24-year-old daughter to suicide with no warning. No symptoms. No good-byes.

The mom who went in to wake up her 21-year-old son for work and found him not breathing.

The writer friend my age who, out of the blue, suffered a debilitating stroke that will alter her entire life.

I immersed myself in their pain and I did it intentionally. Yesterday, today, and I'll do it tomorrow too. Over and over again.

Why? Because I wholeheartedly believe in Jeremiah 29:12: "Then you shall call upon Me, and you shall come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you."

I have no idea how prayer works or even why. I just know that Papa God wants me to do it and do it a lot ("Pray continuously," says 1 Thessalonians 5:17). In fact, there are over 400 verses in the Bible encouraging us to pray, every day in every way.

Prayer is one of those exquisite mysteries of faith ... that the Creator of all things would actually *want* our input and for us to tell Him (even though He already knows) our desires and petitions blows my ever lovin' mind. Yet He does. And He listens, just like He promised. My own experience has taught me that, and the recent experience of my friend Cheryl even further brings the truth home.

Cheryl works nights at a laboratory. She also plays piano for

her church. Recently, Cheryl was asked to play for the funeral of a dear friend at her church at 11 AM on a weekday. She knew it would be tough, but she's not a complainer, so without saying anything to anyone about this sacrificial act of love occurring in the middle of her "night," Cheryl rushed home from work at 8 AM. and set her alarm to awaken her at 9:30 in order to make it to the funeral on time. She collapsed into bed and was asleep the moment her head hit the pillow.

But Cheryl was so wiped out that she slept right through her alarm. Oddly enough, she suddenly awoke for no apparent reason at 10:45 (the alarm had stopped ringing long ago), fully alert and ready to leap out of bed. She was able to throw on her clothes and apply make-up at red lights, making it to the church in the nick of time.

At the luncheon after the funeral, an acquaintance—not a close friend by any means—approached Cheryl. "I just wanted to tell you," the woman said, "that when I woke up this morning, I felt strongly led to pray for you. I don't know why, but I just kept praying that God would help you in some special way today."

Cheryl was amazed as she realized that the prayers of this woman she hardly knew had woken her up. Her prayers had served as the catalysis for allowing Cheryl to serve Papa God and her grieving friends.

Yep, prayer *always* matters. Whether we're praying for a casual friend for some reason we can't fully comprehend or for someone who is hurting so badly we must allow our hearts to break alongside theirs, prayer *always* matters.

When have the prayers of someone else made a difference in your life?

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