

Why Your Prayers Don't Come With an Expiration Date

One of the most difficult and also most rewarding parts of being a rabbi is officiating over funerals. We always want to be encouraging to the family and friends who are attending while at the same time being biblical and truthful in what we say.

Recently, I was sharing at the service for a dear friend who had been a long-time member of our congregational family. I looked out at her family and wanted to say something meaningful to them while, at the same time, knowing that not all of them were walking in right relationship with G-D.

As I stood there sharing about the amazing faith of the woman who passed from this world to the world to come, I reminded those in attendance of the powerful prayer life his woman had. She was always one of those people who, no matter what problem or crisis arose, responded with Spirit-led prayers that would rattle the heavens.

When I started to remind her family and friends of her great prayer life and how often she prayed for them, I was reminded that every one of those prayers for her family and friends was very much in effect. Each word of those prayers was eternal, and even though she was no longer living in this world, her prayers were very much alive.

Prayers do not have a shelf life. Prayers do not have an expiration date. So I looked out to the people sitting in the front row and reminded them that one by one, they had been prayed for, and those prayers are still active and working in their lives.

I shared that their loved one had full expectation that each prayer she ever prayed for those she loved would be brought to

fullness. I asked them to think about all of the times she had prayed for each of them and with absolute confidence, I told them that I would be watching to see the seeds of prayer that were planted in them become beautiful fruit in each of their lives.

What was amazing to me was that as I spoke those words, the cloud of sadness that I had felt ever since the passing of my dear friend lifted as if a cool breeze swept through the service. My immediate response was to wonder if the words of comfort and encouragement about the prayers spoken by our loved one were an answer to one of her prayers directed at me—if my friend had prayed for me, knowing my heart would be broken by her passing, and that prayer reached me at that very moment. {eoa}

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