

“Why Prayer Support is Essential”

While I was leading a Bible Storying session on spiritual warfare, one woman spoke up and said, “I don’t have to worry about spiritual warfare. *I don’t witness, so Satan leaves me alone.*”

What blessings this lady was missing in seeing others have a personal relationship with Jesus! To their credit, those who were in the Bible study stifled their shock and expressed their concern.

For the past 15 years, I have had a dozen prayer warriors who have committed to pray for me at least one time every week. Some are in my immediate family, a couple of ladies are national prayer coordinators for the International Orality Network, and a few are close work colleagues who continue to want to be prayer warriors as part of their ministry. And, yes, they pray every week for my family because the first day of each month, I send out an email to them asking them to pray for Mary Leigh, my wife, and me. I’m detailed and specific. Sometimes I give them the exact date prayer cover is needed. They are partners in God’s mission in my life.



What did the early church do when it faced persecution? They prayed! And they prayed not for delivery or to have it easier, but specifically for boldness and then acted on it:

“And now, Lord, consider their threats, and grant that Your slaves may speak Your message with complete boldness, while You stretch out Your hand for healing, signs, and wonders to be performed through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak God’s message with boldness (Acts 4:29-31).

The Apostle Paul solicited prayer support on a regular basis; Ephesians 6:20 for one. Paul knew that prayer was essential to his ministry because of spiritual warfare. When Paul wrote the church at Ephesus, he reminded them that our battle is not one of flesh and blood, but against Satan and his demons. We need to stand firm against those attacks by wearing God’s spiritual armor (Ephesians 6:10-17). Paul knew that soldiers of the Roman Empire wore nothing on their backs. If soldiers turned to run, they would be more vulnerable than facing the enemy head-on.

When we have all that armor on, what do we do? Paul advised that we are to pray for boldness (Ephesians 6:18-20). Sound familiar?

A prayer leader at the IMB once said, “Prayer doesn’t get you ready for missions. Prayer IS missions.” I agree. Prayer doesn’t force God to do anything and prayer is not a Santa wish-list. It is a supernatural way of connecting with God and aligning with His will and His purposes.

Involving others—at least one dozen—in what God has called you to do blesses you and them, too! How do you mobilize effective prayer? Here are two ideas:

- ① **Paint a word picture by telling your story.** When we say, “Pray for the XX number of Navajo who are lost,” that’s one thing—generic and cold. It’s another to say, “Pray for my wife and I working with Sally. Sally is 14 and being pressured into sex trafficking. Pray that she will hear the good news of Jesus.” It’s specific, urgent, and still warm.
- ② And don’t forget that **sharing answers to specific prayer requests encourages more praying** as the focus increasingly brings glory God. It’s not bragging, but allowing prayer warriors to celebrate with you!

Recruit prayer supporters who will engage in spiritual warfare alongside you. The Orality Movement has been undergirded by prayer. As you join in, bring prayer support along with you!