

When Others Prayed for Me

By David R. Whiting

It's a common scenario: The bishop begins a meeting, announces the hymn and prayer—but before sitting down, he explains that someone in the ward is struggling and requests the ward members' prayers in his or her behalf.

I have heard requests like these many times, and as a leader, I have been the one to make that request. Sometimes a bishop or Relief Society president asks that we pray for an individual or family in the ward. Sometimes we are asked to pray for the prophet and his counselors, that the Lord may strengthen them. Sometimes we are counseled to pray for our government leaders, that they may be guided to make righteous decisions.

Although I usually complied by remembering these people in my prayers, I never gave much thought as to how the prayers were being received by the person for whom we prayed.

That changed when my ward was asked to pray for *me*. One evening, I became violently ill. My wife called the paramedics and I was transported to the hospital. I passed in and out of consciousness and eventually awoke in the intensive care unit with a team of doctors and nurses working around the clock to monitor and treat me. During that time, many prayers were offered up in my behalf, thanks to loving friends, relatives, and ward members.

On my first day in the hospital, I was very disoriented

because of my illness and the side effects of the medicine I was taking. By the end of my second day in the hospital, however, my mind was much more functional, and I offered a heartfelt prayer.

I regretted that I had not been able to pray sooner. Then I realized that during the time I could not pray myself, others had been praying for me. Praying for me—the idea took on a whole new meaning. I realized that these wonderful people were doing something that, at the time, I could not do for myself. They knelt before the Lord and spoke for me; they used their strength when mine had failed. I felt a great sense of gratitude.

Certainly our prayers for others cannot supplant their own faith or undermine their agency, nor can our requests supersede the will of God. But as we unite in prayer for those in need, we can bring about much good. In Mosiah 27, for example, we learn that Alma the Younger was led to repentance in part because of the fervent prayers of his father and the members of the Church (see Mosiah 27:14). I know that there are many who can benefit from our prayers.

I am so grateful for the strength I received from the prayers of others; I will never again take lightly the request to pray for someone. It is a sweet blessing and a great responsibility to kneel in someone's behalf. ■

The author lives in Arizona, USA.



I realized that during the time I could not pray for myself, others had been praying for me.



PRAYING FOR OTHERS

“Petitioning Heavenly Father for the blessings we desire in our personal lives is good and proper. However, praying earnestly for others . . . is also an important element of meaningful prayer. Just as expressing gratitude more often in our prayers enlarges the conduit for revelation, so praying for others with all of the energy of our souls increases our capacity to hear and to heed the voice of the Lord.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Pray Always,” Ensign, Nov. 2008, 43.