

## *Friendship in Intercession*

- A. One of God's corporate mandates for Encounter Church is to be a praying church who intercedes for our community, prays for revival, and sees a transformation of lives from discipleship all from a Biblically-based foundation of prayer/intercession. We have other desires but being a praying church is the core of our purpose.
- B. Review:
  - 1. 4 Eternal Functions/Values that characterize the priesthood of all believers: Friendship, Gazing, Partnership and Proclamation
  - 2. Ministry to God- Worship and Prayer is agreement with God, but it also deeply moves His heart.

### II. JESUS DESIRES FRIENDS IN INTERCESSION

- A. Matthew 26:36-46

### III. OLD TESTAMENT INTERCESSORS/MEDIATORS

*"My sons, do not be negligent now, for the Lord has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that you should minister to Him and burn incense." 2 Chr 29:11*

- A. **Priests ministered to God, burned incense, served Him in the temple, and made intercession for the sins of the people.** Old Testament priests brought the sin offerings of Israel into the presence of God and asked the Lord to receive the offering and forgive the people. Priests were mediators, bringing the people back to God. They were set apart for the bloody, solemn work of interceding through prayer and sacrifice. Through the priests' ministry of intercession, God gave the people a means to worship, to draw near, and to be made whole.

*"Then Moses said, "This is the thing which the Lord commanded you to do, and the glory of the Lord will appear to you." And Moses said to Aaron, "Go to the altar, offer your sin offering and your burnt offering... Offer the offering of the people, and make atonement for them, as the Lord commanded." Leviticus 9:6-7*

- B. In Hebrews 8, Jesus is described as a **Minister** in the sanctuary or in the Holy of Holies and as a **Mediator**. A mediator is defined from Strong's concordance as "a go-between, a reconciler (an intercessor), one who intervenes between two, either in order to make or restore peace and friendship. Jesus is the ultimate Mediator/Intercessor. He lives as a priest forever, continuing forever as an Intercessor for us. He has invited believers into the same eternal value and priority of Ministry and Mediation before God.

*"We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle...now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant..." Hebrews 8:1-2, 6*

*“...in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another Priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:15-15, 24-25*

*“It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” Romans 8:34*

#### IV. MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION

- A. The term “prayer” has broad definitions-it could mean worship, praying in tongues, intercession for revival, or meditation in the Word, etc. The term intercession can be used to define the action of “asking prayer” or “agreement prayer” with God, and are prayers made for yourself, other people, or topics (ending of abortion, etc). It is an act of agreement with God for something.
- B. We want to build on the foundation that **the heart of intercession finds its origin within a friendship**. God designed intercession (and all prayer) to be deeply relational and to have a strong grounding in intimacy. God has chosen believers to be in partnership with Him.
- C. In prayer and intercession, Jesus wants us with Him and He wants us to do what He is doing. He is a Person, and intercession is designed to be a divine exchange of His emotions, thoughts and desires into your heart. We have access into His heart and we can feel His emotions. He creates plans and purposes from the overflow of intimacy, and He wants us to partner with Him in the things He wants to accomplish. Jesus views intercession as a part of our union/marriage with Him- it’s not weird for Him to desire engagement, obedience-filled responses, agreement, and active participation from us.
- D. God is looking for friends to labor in prayer with, and we can participate in intercession with Him as a ministry to others, but also it moves/ministers to His heart that we would want to stand and agree with Him. Our influenced perspective from our culture's definition of “ministry” needs to change; He desires us to be priests and to minister to Him, not primarily basing our identity on accomplishing something. His command concerning the Great Commission does not trump the 1st Commandment. He wants lovers first not workers. We touch His heart and move Him and from that basis of friendship we can minister with Him to others in intercession.

*“Intercession! Would one not say that this is the very holiest exercise of our boldness as God’s children? It is the highest privilege and enjoyment connected to our communion with God. It is the power of being used by God as instruments for His great work of making men His habitation and showing forth His glory.” - Andrew Murray*

- E. *“Missions exist because worship does not.”* John Piper - What would you call any believer or unbeliever into if it wasn’t worship and prayer? Worship and Prayer is the foundation of His Kingdom and must be the foundation of our life. Throughout the Bible and history, we never see moves of God happen without first God raising up friends/intercessors to birth it in intercessory prayer.

## V. TESTIMONIES

## VI. GAPS, BREACHES, WALLS, WATCHMEN

- A. In Old Testament Scripture there is a powerful analogy to what intercession is like in the spiritual realm. In the book of Ezekiel, it talks about gaps and breaches in a wall around a city not being filled by an intercessor. In the natural and the spiritual, a city, land, and the people within it lay unprotected if a wall has a gap in it. Ezekiel is declaring God's searching heart for a friend to stand in the gap for the promises God has for Israel and for the land.

***"You have not gone up into the gaps [breaches] to build a wall for the house of Israel to stand in battle on the day of the Lord."*** Ezekiel 13:5

***"The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger. So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one."*** Ezek 22:29-30

- B. Similarly, Moses stood in the breach for Israel. One example is in Exodus 32, God was set on destroying His people because of their sin in making a golden calf right after the Mt. Sinai encounter. Can you imagine- betrayal!!!! But through Moses' prayer and partnership, there was an intercessory exchange where God's heart was moved with compassion and He relented because of Moses' cry. Moses not only brought the commands/heart of God to the people but acted as mediator and intercessor to and with God on behalf of them.

***"And the Lord said to Moses, "Go...! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them'...'I have seen these people... and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation."... Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, and said: "Lord, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants... So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people."*** Exodus 32:7-14

- C. Moses was one who stood in the gap between God and the people- He was an intercessor and a friend of God.

***"Therefore He said that He would destroy them, had not Moses His chosen one stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath, lest He destroy them."*** Psalm 106:23

***"The Lord talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire. I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain."*** Deut 5:4-5

- D. Isaiah also gives language to what intercessors do; they are compared to watchmen who lift up their voices in song and who never are silent. Intercessors are those who seek to know Jesus' heart, and persevere in watching and praying for His heart and purposes to come to pass.

*“Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, With their voices they shall sing together; For they shall see eye to eye When the Lord brings back Zion...” “I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent”* Isaiah 52:8 and 62:6