

## Strenuous Praying

From *Effective Prayer*, by J. Oswald Sanders

*“Strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.” –Romans 15:30*

All vital praying makes a drain upon a man’s vitality. True intercession is a sacrifice, a bleeding sacrifice, a perpetuation of Calvary, a filling up of the sufferings of Christ. Jesus worked many mighty works without outward sign of strain, but He *“offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears”* (Heb. 5:7). Our Lord’s intercession was to Him a costly ministry and so will it be to the one who follows in His steps.

Intercession is no dreamy reverie accompanied by a warm glow of pleasing emotion. Rather it is depicted as wrestling, and agonizing. *“Epaphras ... is always wrestling for you in his prayers”* (Col. 4:12). The same word is used of a man toiling at his work until thoroughly weary (Col. 1:29) or striving in the arena for the coveted prize (1 Cor. 9:25). It describes the soldier fighting for his life on the battlefield (1 Tim. 6:12), or the man who struggles to defend his friend from danger (Jn. 18:36). It pictures the agony of earnestness of a man to save his own soul (Lk. 13:24). But its supreme significance appears in the tragedy of Gethsemane. *“Being in agony he prayed more earnestly”* (Lk. 22:44), an agony induced by His grief over the sins of a lost world.

True intercession is costly. Our Lord first gave Himself and then made intercessions for His murderers. He could do no more for them. Are we asking of God something we could supply? Have we given ourselves for those for whom we intercede, or are our prayers costless and crossless?

*“Men always ought to pray and not lose heart”* (Lk. 18:1). God may not always give at our first asking because He has something important to teach us. We may need to seek and knock as well as ask. But He is not impatient of our constant coming and He will respond to our persistence.

## How to Start a Cords of Three Prayer Ministry

**Step 1 – Commit** yourself to God as His servant to begin this new prayer ministry. Ask Him to help you identify one or two (max.) other believers and invite them to join you each week for a 10-15 minute phone prayer meeting. Don’t expect everyone to say “yes.”

Write the names below of those you are going to invite to join you.

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**Step 2 – Organize** an initial phone meeting to decide on the logistics (day, time, who will initiate the call, etc.). Put it on your calendar and don’t let anything supplant it.

**Step 3 – Resolve** to begin on a specific date and to be committed to the Lord, to each other, and the weekly prayer meeting.

**Step 4 – Deploy.** Get started. It may seem a bit awkward at first, but your *Cords of Three* prayer ministry will quickly become a powerful spiritual influence in your life and the lives of those you meet with each week.



# PRAYER JOURNAL

APRIL 2026

