

## Our Great Intercessor

(Learning from the Prayer Life of Jesus)

There are many places in Scripture where I particularly identify with the disciples. It's usually when they excelled at being human in their responses. I know I would have been terrified in the midst of a fierce storm on a lake. I'm sure I would have been completely perplexed as to how a little bit of food was going to feed a huge crowd. And I'm afraid I might have made myself scarce when Jesus was arrested and taken away.

But I confess I've felt a bit smug in the past about how I thought I would have responded to Jesus' request for prayer during His darkest moments in Gethsemane (Mark 14:32–42). He asked Peter, James, and John to keep watch and pray as He faced His impending death. Twice He implored them to stay awake, even for just an hour, as He poured out His heart before His heavenly Father. Yet three times they fell asleep—on the hard ground, no less. *Really?* I used to think. *How difficult could it have been to stay awake for an hour when Jesus needed you?*

My smugness quickly turned toward humility one night when I was compelled to get out of bed about 2:00 a.m. to pray about a crisis in the life of someone close to me. I knelt on the floor of my bedroom, with my face in the carpet. I prayed fervently. I cried out to God with great emotion. And then I woke up about 30 minutes later. I had no feeling in either of my legs. They were also “asleep.” As I rolled over on my side and tried to drag myself to bed, I feared I had paralyzed myself from the waist down! The pain and tingling that steadily increases when the blood starts flowing back into “deadened” legs, was a dreadful and agonizing reminder of how easy it is to sleep at critical moments.

Yet, my prayers that night were answered. I realized that even while I slept, Jesus was still praying alongside me at the right hand of our heavenly Father. It was the Spirit of Christ prompting me to pray in the first place—and I'm thankful the prayers of Christ continued on while I dozed. In my weakness, it is a comfort to be partnered with Jesus.

### ***Keep Watch with Jesus***

Jesus demonstrated a truly devoted prayer life. There were times when the disciples got to listen in on His prayers, but often He prayed alone. He prayed in crisis but always gave praise and glory to His Father. He explained persistence in prayer by using the example of an annoying widow who wouldn't take no for an answer—and encouraged the disciples to pray in the same way (Luke 18:1–8). His prayer life inspired His followers to learn more (Luke 11:1).

But Jesus didn't pray just to provide a great model for us. He prayed because He was *compelled* to do so for the Kingdom's sake. He prayed for God's will over His own. Jesus' prayer life continues on today. He is our Great Intercessor.

We live in urgent, critical days. I want to learn how to keep watch with our Lord and stay awake—joining Him in prayer for this desperate world.

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect Magazine*