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Pray Like Birdie

Ready:

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”
- Romans 12:12

Set
Birdie Pitts served Christ for all of her 92 years on earth. On August 9, 2001, she went home to be with the Lord. She was my first official FCA prayer warrior when I started with FCA almost 20 years ago. Little did I know, however, that Birdie had actually started praying for me 11 years before I even joined FCA. I was in eighth grade when I first met two buddies, James and Tim (Birdie’s grandson), at a summer camp in New York. Not only did I make two lifetime friends at that camp, but I also made a commitment to full-time ministry. When I returned from camp, I met Birdie, and she started to pray for me, her grandson’s new best friend.

Birdie prayed for Tim, James and me faithfully that God would use us significantly for His glory. For 20 years Birdie’s prayers shaped and transformed the three of us. Tim became a youth pastor, James became a missionary in Hungary, and I came on staff with FCA. It was evidence of a powerful God and the faithful intercession of His saint, Birdie.

While attending Birdie’s funeral, I thought about how many lives she’d touched through her prayers. Birdie was not only faithful in prayer, but also faithful to call me and ensure that I gave her specific prayer requests. Over the years, she would call and say, “I haven’t received any prayer requests from you this month. The ladies are gathering tomorrow for prayer. You don’t need prayer this month?” She truly kept me on my toes. The highlight for me was when she would have me over to her prayer groups at her apartment. After a quick FCA update and sharing specific requests, we prayed. No idle talk or chit-chat. We got down to business. We were there to pray!

Birdie was serious about prayer. She carved out the time needed to call upon the Lord for others. She knew about prayers of strength and length. She wrestled with God. Doors were opened. Hearts were moved. Lives were transformed. Many people offer their hands to do ministry, but few do the hard part of breaking strongholds through intercession. Birdie pressed in.

It seems like many people today use the “…like Jesus” phrase. Lead like Jesus. Serve like Jesus. Pray like Jesus. Jesus modeled prayer to His disciples and even taught them to pray. I study the Scriptures to learn why and how to pray, but it’s hard for me to truly know what it is like to pray like Jesus. While it’s not the same, I do know what it means to “pray like Birdie.” During those 20 years, I watched and studied how she prayed. Here is what I learned:

1. Be consistent. Set a regular prayer time—daily, weekly and monthly.
2. Be persistent. Pursue prayer with others. Don't let prayer fall between the cracks.
3. Be specific. Dig into the nitty-gritty. Don't be general. God loves details.
4. Be faithful. Show up! Others are counting on your prayers.
5. Be praying. Don't talk, pray! Get down to business.

When I think about Birdie, I am reminded of Leonard Ravenhill's famous quote about prayer: "The church has many organizers, but few agonizers. Many resters, but few wrestlers. Many who are enterprising, but few who are interceding. People who are not praying are playing. In the matter of effective praying, never have so many left so much to so few. Brethern, let us pray."

Birdie will forever be a part of why I am in ministry, and I am grateful for the hundreds of hours she invested before the throne of grace on my behalf. She was a prayer warrior. She changed more lives than she knew.

I wonder how many people are counting on our prayers—not on what we can do for them, but on how we can pray for them. Lord, we want to pray like Birdie and know that our lives counted for eternity. What are we waiting for? Let's get praying!

Go

1. What does it mean to be faithful in prayer? (See Romans 12:12.)
2. Do you have a Birdie in your life? If so, describe her (or him).
3. How have you seen power of prayer at work in your life?
4. When reading Leonard Ravenhill's quote, what hits home?
5. How can you begin to "pray like Birdie"? Look over the five ways.

Workout

Isaiah 59:1
Colossians 4:3
2 Timothy 1:7

Overtime

"Father, thank You for the blessing of prayer. Sometimes, I admit that prayer is hard. My mind races through other things, and it is difficult to stay focused. Help me to be persistent in prayer. I don't want to waiver. I desire to lay hold of the treasures of heaven such as hope, peace, joy and purpose. Teach me to pray, Lord. I want to impact others through my prayer life. I know people are counting on my prayers. Thank You, Lord. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit so I can pray according to Your will. In the name of Jesus I pray. Amen."

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