

May 2022 Classic/Basic sharing summary; Samaritan™ Classic Share increase voting now open

Member Households in Classic/Basic: 78,901

May Needs: \$28,798,470

May Shares: \$28,622,484

Samaritan™ Classic Needs shared in May have been prorated at 10 percent and shared at 90 percent.

After three consecutive months of proration, ministry Guidelines require Samaritan Ministries' Board of Directors to propose a Share increase (Section IV.A.2). Voting on the proposed increase outlined in the chart below will remain open to participants in Samaritan Classic until 11:59 p.m. CDT May 11.

The proposed Share amounts are unchanged from those put forth in March as continued careful review of the data indicates these changes are necessary to meet members' eligible submitted bills.

- For the past 16 months, eligible bills in Classic have outpaced Shares by an average of \$1.6 million per month.
- More than 14,500 member households have had at least one Need prorated this year.

Considering the sustained return to long-term trends of increasing medical Needs—amplified by the effects of rapidly rising inflation—the Board is confident that current Classic Share amounts are inadequate to meet the Needs that members have agreed to share.

Participants in Samaritan Classic are able to vote through a unique link sent on

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Classic Proposal

| Member Group | Current Share | Proposed Share |
|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1 person under age 30 | \$160 | \$177 |
| 1 person age 30 or older | \$227 | \$263 |
| 2 person | \$454 | \$511 |
| 3-7 person | \$530 | \$596 |
| 8+ person | \$555 | \$682 |
| Widowed/divorced with children | \$330 | \$408 |

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Get your \$250 Healthcare Bluebook fair-price reward

Using Healthcare Bluebook to compare cost and quality ratings before you see a provider is one of the most important ways you can steward your fellow members' Shares, and now you can receive a \$250 reward for choosing a green fair-price provider. For details, visit SamaritanMinistries.org/reward.

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April 26 to the email address that they use to log into Dash.

For more information, go to these pages on our website:

Share Increase FAQ: SamaritanMinistries.org/shares

Proration FAQ: SamaritanMinistries.org/prorating-faqs

Guidelines, Section IV: SamaritanMinistries.org/resources/classic-basic-guidelines?section-4

11 Misconceptions about Share increases: SamaritanMinistries.org/march-2022-share-increase-thoughts

Inside this month's newsletter

Intercessory prayer: Assistant Editor Greg Feulner delves into his experience with the power of intercessory prayer, which is a key part of being a Samaritan Ministries member. He also offers suggestions on making it a significant part of your life. Pages 1, 12, 14.

Missionaries to Ukraine: Samaritan Ministries members who also serve as missionaries in Ukraine share their hearts about those suffering there. Page 3.

Member Spotlight: Stephanie Davis combines her love of sports and for people with disabilities in her position as national program director of The Miracle League. Page 4.

Member messages: Read posts of joy and gratitude from members who are in our Samaritan Ministries Community Facebook Group. Page 8.

"Stone breaker": Can an herb from the Amazon River basin be used to stave off kidney stones? Page 10.

The Doorpost: Editor emeritus Ray King reminds us that if we are obedient servants of Jesus, we can expect to be treated like He was treated. Page 16.

Get God-honoring banking while advancing God's Kingdom!

At Christian Community Credit Union (CCCU), faith and finances go hand in hand. When you put your money at the CCCU, it helps provide affordable loans to churches, ministries, and their members. CCCU's goal is to help families save more and earn more so they can give more. Enjoy these CCCU special offers:

- Higher rates on savings
- Affordable loans (home, auto, personal)
- Free checking with \$\$ bonus
- Financial stewardship resources
- \$100 donation to Samaritan for qualifying accounts opened

Visit myCCCU.com/Samaritan or call 800.347.CCCU (2228), ext. 4375. Mention Group Code 1372.

May 2022 Save to Share™ Needs

- **Charity** was diagnosed with disc degeneration and dysplasia, impingement, and labral tears in her hips. A total of six surgeries were needed to repair both hip sockets.
- **Kelly** is being treated for colon cancer.
- **Jensine** is being treated for breast cancer.

These Needs were assigned to members who participate in Save to Share™ for Needs greater than \$250,000. They have already been shared, so no additional giving is necessary. They are listed to enable all members to pray.

MAY 2022

Christian Health Care Newsletter

Intercessory prayer allows us to lift up fellow members in need

by Greg Feulner



(iStock)

INTERCESSORY PRAYER IS simply praying for others, and it is at the heart of Samaritan Ministries.

When we receive information about another member's Need, we have the privilege of lifting up a brother or sister before the Lord in a challenging time. It is an act of faith, and it can only be brought about by the life-transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

I learned of the tremendous blessing that comes through intercessory prayer in one of the hardest times of my life. I came close to dying in my 20s from a body weakened by the effects of two different diseases, one following the other. Within weeks, I had lost over 30 pounds, hardly being able to keep food down. Every night I had severe abdominal pain and was making five to eight trips to the bathroom, and, because of internal bleeding, I was losing blood every time. Critically anemic, malnourished, and without sleep, my health continued to spiral out of control.

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Samaritan™
MINISTRIES

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Being treated like Jesus was treated

Member Letter:

GOD IS ALWAYS FAITHFUL

After almost three years living with the knowledge that cancer is active in my body, it is a comfort to know that the Samaritan family is there. The doctors do what they can, but God is the healer. The notes are comforting. Not everyone sends a note, but if they were to receive a note of encouragement when they were very sick, they would learn what the power of love and compassion can really do. I suppose it is hard to write to a total stranger, but I am amazed how God uses the words in these notes to speak to me personally and to uplift me on the uncertain path of cancer.

**Howard
KENTUCKY**

Christian Health Care Newsletter

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Noteworthy | From the Editors

Assistant Editor Greg Feulner's article on page 1 is about a topic that has been vital to Samaritan Ministries since its beginning: intercessory prayer.

We are called by God to pray for one another (James 5:16) and encouraged by dozens of examples of prayer warriors throughout the Bible, such as Daniel, David, and, of course, Jesus. Prayer has also always been a key to health care sharing through Samaritan.

- It's baked into our member-to-member sharing.
- We make it a point to offer to pray with our members when they call us.
- Our Prayer Guide team spends each month assembling the prayer requests that members submit with their Needs and organizing them for your use both in print and electronic formats.

In his article, Greg recounts his own experiences with bad health and how it taught him the power of intercessory prayer. He also offers several tips on improving our own intercessory prayer practices.

Please read the article, especially the suggestions, and ask the Lord to show you how to improve your own practice of intercessory prayer.



Michael Miller
EDITOR

Helpful Resources

► Facebook.com/groups/samaritanmin

Reach out to other members in our Facebook Group.

► Important emails

Medical Needs: needs@samaritanministries.org
Sending or receiving Shares: membership@samaritanministries.org
Your membership: membership@samaritanministries.org

► Health Resources App | [Dash.SamaritanMinistries.org](https://dash.samaritanministries.org)

- Compare quality and cost of health care services in your area using Healthcare Bluebook. Receive a \$250 reward when you submit a screenshot showing you chose a green fair-price provider.
- Use MediBid to receive bids from doctors for tests or treatments you are seeking.
- Email a medical professional or call a nurse (free), or call a doctor who can write a prescription (\$25).
- Access discount tools for prescriptions and lab tests.

► Writers guidelines: samaritanministries.org/writers-guidelines

Missionaries to Ukraine know ‘heavenly Father is sovereign’

by Michael Miller

SAMARITAN MINISTRIES members Chris and Mary Malone are back in the U.S. on a one-year furlough from their ministry in Ukraine, but their hearts are with the families there that they have served for 20 years.

The Malones, of Ukraine Ministries of Oklahoma (ukraineministriesofoklahoma.org), returned to the U.S. on January 11 with their five children who still live with them. They wanted their whole family—they have nine children, five of whom have Down syndrome and four of whom are adopted from Ukraine—to be together for the first time in five years. The original plan was to return to Ukraine next January, but that, of course, may not happen, depending on developments in the Eastern European nation suffering brutal attacks from Russia.

“But we are holding it all lightly because we know that our heavenly Father is sovereign and He is good,” Chris says.

“I am so glad that my wife and children are not there,” Chris continues. “However, I do wish I was there to serve alongside my brothers and sisters as they serve the families whose lives were already terribly difficult. I don’t question whether we heard the Lord correctly. There is no doubt in our hearts or minds that He was

calling us out for this season. It is just painful to not be there during this really difficult time.”

The Malones started serving Ukrainians in 2001, traveling there several times a year to hold youth camps, pastor and ministry leader training conferences, marriage and family conferences, and other training sessions.

They moved there permanently in February 2012 with their nine children.

“Our fifth child was born with Down syndrome,” Chris says. “We subsequently adopted four more children who also have Down syndrome.

“We were led to move to Ukraine because of what we saw in orphanages where children like ours with Down syndrome lived—or, more accurately, ‘existed,’” Chris says. “I mean, the short answer is that the Lord drew us there.”

But, Chris says, the Lord had further plans for them.

“We were immediately approached by a woman who had organized an event at Christmas time for about 15 families,” Chris says. “She wanted us to help her in a ministry to families who are affected by disability. That is what we have done since meeting her.

“We began with about 15 families that we were actively serving in some way—and, of course, sharing

the Gospel with. In 2021, we served over 350 families in some way.”

Key offerings of their ministry include summer camps for families affected by disability, seasonal large events open to all, weekly small-group Bible studies, and a weekly worship service tailored to families affected by disability.

Chris says that, until well into February, “the people in our circles didn’t really expect that Russia would invade,” and, if it did, it would be a “re-invasion of the areas already occupied by them since 2014.”

“I am not an expert in geopolitics and our understanding of how people felt about the possibility of invasion is limited to our ministry circles,” Chris says. “I am not speaking for even the average Ukrainian. It’s just our personal experience where we live.

“I won’t share specifics about any of that for their safety, but the situation is very distressing and continues to get worse and more uncertain,” he says.

“Thank you for praying for these people that we love so much.” ♦♦♦

Ukraine Ministries of Oklahoma has set up a prayer page for Ukraine at ukraineministriesofoklahoma.org/pray-for-ukraine/

Member Spotlight

Stephanie Davis: The Miracle League

by Michael Miller



Member Stephanie Davis

MiracleLeague.com

Email Stephanie@miracleleague.com

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LITTLE LEAGUES ACROSS the country are in full swing, and that happily includes children with disabilities thanks to people like Stephanie Davis.

As national program director of The Miracle League, Stephanie, who lives with her husband, Brian, and their children near Athens, Georgia, is able to combine her love of sports and of working with people who have special needs. In the process, she shows the love of Christ by helping children with disabilities play baseball “no matter their ability.” About 50,000 children, with an equal number of personal “buddies,” are involved in 320 local Miracle Leagues in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

Batter up: Miracle League (MiracleLeague.com) is a nonprofit organization that provides opportunities for children with special needs to play baseball. In the late 1990s, the Rockdale Youth Baseball Association in Conyers, Georgia, had begun inviting children who otherwise couldn't join a typical team to play their own games with accommodations and special rules. However, it was soon apparent that special facilities were needed for those with wheelchairs, walkers, or



Stephanie Davis with husband, Brian, and their children, Emory and Bode
(Photo by Matthew Pendry)

braces to be able to navigate the bases and field. The solution to these problems came in 2000 with the birth of The Miracle League.

“The players need a fully accessible, rubberized surface and complexes that are also fully accessible so they can get from the parking lot to the field,” Stephanie says.

Each player has a “buddy” who mirrors him or her, which includes adults in some cases. A buddy may push a wheelchair around the bases or hit a ball for them.

“Whatever the player's special

need might be, the buddies are there to protect them and help them play the game,” Stephanie says.

Most Miracle Leagues are open to players ages 4 and up of all abilities. Players typically qualify for a Miracle League “if you wouldn't qualify or be able to safely participate in a youth baseball program.”

“We have everyone from children with learning disabilities to children with severe physical disabilities,” she says.

'So inspired': Stephanie became aware of Miracle League when



Stephanie Davis, right, and another Miracle League representative celebrate a player's accomplishment. (Courtesy The Miracle League)

HBO's *Real Sports* aired a report on it in 2001.

"I did some research and found the organizers of the original league, and we were just so inspired that we decided to replicate the idea and start the second local Miracle League, which was in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, in 2002."

It was perfect for Stephanie, who was then 20 years old and had worked with individuals with special needs throughout her life and was always on the lookout for new ways to help them.

"I just thought, 'Everybody needs this opportunity,' and to bring these two things together was really a dream for me."

She believes she was "blessed abundantly" by the Lord as she was

involved in sports growing up.

"I couldn't imagine not having those priceless experiences, so it is now my mission to use the gift that God gave me to provide everyone that opportunity to play no matter their ability. I try my best to show the love of Jesus to everyone I serve. I feel like this is the calling that God has given me."

Consulting: Stephanie's job is to consult with local organizations as they establish a local complex and league.

"That could be an individual, company, or an already-established nonprofit," she says.

The cost of installing a complex depends on the location and site.

"If you had a perfect site to grade, the cost would be about

\$400,000 to \$500,000," Stephanie says. "That would include grading, asphalt, a rubberized surface on top of the asphalt, fencing, dugouts—everything you would need for the field itself."

Some of the most common partnerships are with local YMCA chapters or with a city or county municipality that oversees parks and recreation.

"From there, they typically organize some type of nonprofit that raises the money locally," she says. "All money does stay local. We consult with them on best practices of how to build the field and run the program without having to reinvent the wheel. We bring a lot

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of different avenues and benefits to the table to help them.”

Extra innings: Leagues determine their own schedules.

“Each league looks a little bit different depending on who they’re partnered with and what part of the country they’re in,” Stephanie says. “But we do encourage them to run both spring and fall seasons, so it would kind of mirror what

most youth baseball associations already do. That makes it a lot easier for parents who have multiple kids in multiple programs.”

Many leagues do extra-innings events throughout the year, such as holiday gatherings, support groups for parents, or dances for the children.

During COVID-19: Leagues had to get creative during COVID-19

shutdowns of sports activities.

“The pandemic and shutdown affected all of us, but it was really devastating physically, emotionally, and mentally to families with special needs because a lot of the children’s therapy is in person and typically done daily,” Stephanie says.

“Our local leagues got really creative. They offered virtual gatherings. They did small-group and

Why Samaritan Ministries?

Twelve-year-old Bode Davis had a “horrible bike accident” in 2020, suffering a concussion, broken collarbone, and nerve injury in his leg.

He recovered (praise God!), but bills were piling up for Brian and Stephanie Davis of Georgia.

“Between life flight and a week in the trauma unit, plus eight weeks of therapy, bills were adding up,” Stephanie says.

But working with Samaritan Ministries staff and receiving support from the members eased the burden for the Davises.

“From day one, Samaritan Ministries was there for us—praying for us, guiding us through the process, negotiating bills for us,” says Stephanie, national program director for Miracle League. “Then the encouragement we got from members was priceless. People were praying and reaching out to us with so much love and support. I can’t imagine going through that horrible time without this network of Christians bearing each other’s burdens. It’s been a huge blessing for our family.”

The Davises, who run a landscape company with Brian’s brother, joined Samaritan after tiring of “health insurance runarounds.”

“Annual renewal was one of the most stressful times of the year,” Stephanie recalls. “We

would be canceled, or our policy wasn’t available, or premiums were just going through the roof and weren’t affordable for our family anymore. Then, when we did need to use it, the deductibles were so high that we felt like we could have paid cash and done better without having insurance.”

That’s when a friend at the Davises’ church told them about health care sharing and, in particular, Samaritan. The Davises did their research on the different ministries and settled on Samaritan, partly due to their friend’s experience but also because of Samaritan’s guidelines concerning pre-existing conditions.

The Davises’ daughter, Emory, has a heart defect, a pre-existing condition that limits or eliminates sharing for Needs related to that condition for five years. What the Davises found, though, was that Samaritan’s Guidelines “fit our needs the best” when it came to the pre-existing condition.

“We figured that after five years of no issues or treatment, we could get related Needs shared,” Stephanie says. “A lot of the other ministries offered nothing for pre-existing, so we were excited about the fact that we could get to a certain point and it could be shared.” ♦♦♦

family clinics at the fields. They had a lot of drive-bys, whether it would be to visit the kids at their house or bring our mascot to their yard, or have drive-by parades.

"A lot of our leagues went beyond the realm of baseball and started delivering food or medications to families by a lot of their volunteer supporters. They supported them with gift baskets and activities to help keep the kids busy."

Most leagues were back in action by last year's fall season and Stephanie believes the majority were getting ready for a spring season.

Fresh air and joy: Miracle League participation has both emotional and physical advantages.

"It brings so much joy to families because we are providing the players a way to be included in a team sport, which has never happened for them before," Stephanie says. "Most of the joy we see is from being with friends and coaches and buddies, as well as spending time outside. They are getting exercise and fresh air, but most importantly they have a place to belong. That's where we see the most joy: their experience with others, being involved instead of secluded—just the joy of achieving something, whether it be hitting a ball, running the bases, or scoring a run." ◆◆◆

Michael Miller is Editor of the Samaritan newsletter.



A typical customized, accessible baseball diamond for a Miracle League affiliate. (Courtesy The Miracle League)



A supporter congratulates a Miracle League player and his "buddy." (Courtesy The Miracle League)

Samaritan Ministries Community Facebook Group

Hear from some of our members on the Samaritan Ministries Facebook Group

THE FOLLOWING ARE messages that were posted in the Samaritan Ministries Community Facebook Group ([facebook.com/groups/samaritanmin](https://www.facebook.com/groups/samaritanmin)) of how God has provided through you. Praise Him as you read on!

Annie, New York



This is Theodore. He is holding a bag full of notes from Samaritan members from 2014. This little guy had surgery at 1 day old, spent 49 days in the NICU, and battled allergies and gut issues for years. He's now a 7-year-old solid muscle man and mama is finally ready to let go of these notes of prayers and encouragement. My hope chest is filling up and I need the room for new memories. Please know that your gifts and letters make a difference in the lives of the people you are sending them to!

Brady, Alabama



Baby #4 is here! McKenna Cassia was born on Tuesday morning, January 25, 2022, weighing in at 7 lbs. 4 oz. and 19 inches long. She is beautiful, healthy, and is ready to have fun with her brothers and sister. Malynda is the most amazing mommy to our four kiddos. Our oldest son, Major, is already taking McKenna under his wing! Thank you, Lord, for giving our family new life.

(Also, when we called Samaritan Ministries to add McKenna to our membership, the amazing lady who took our call prayed Jesus' blessing over us. You truly can't ask for a better health care sharing partnership than SMI!)

Deborah, Indiana

I am so blessed! My \$11,000 dollar hospital bill has been paid! Thank you all, you beautiful people!! Praise Jesus Christ, The Most High King of Kings!

Dianna, Minnesota

Thank you, Samaritan community, for your support during our pregnancy! We welcomed Edmund Andrew Lee to our home on October 23. Bless you for your notes and, yes, checks. I especially loved that related chiropractic care was shareable. I felt like I was able to take better care of myself without taking away from our family's resources. Those who gave specifically have probably already received their thank-you notes, but I wanted to thank the larger community as well for being there and making this possible for us and others.

Kaitlin, Texas



The Lord is so faithful! Elias was able to come home from the NICU after 60 days!!!

Rebecca, Illinois

My husband and I each had insurance through work but maintained our membership in Samaritan Ministries, because, even though we didn't need it or use it for years, being able to support and pray for our brothers and sisters in the Lord is such a blessing. This year, we both were in the hospital for a long time. We needed the extra support and we are so glad we maintained it. We are looking forward to the day we can be givers again and not just receivers. We praise God for Samaritan Ministries members!

Trisha, Michigan



We wanted to introduce our Samaritan family to Gracelyn Margaret and send a big thank you for sharing in what ended up being a pregnancy filled with lots and lots of specialists and testing.

At our 20-week ultrasound, the maternal-fetal medicine doctor spent no less than 30 minutes trying to convince us to terminate and ended the appointment saying that, since we were not interested, we could go home and wait for our daughter to die—she wouldn't make it more than a couple more weeks and, if she did, her lungs wouldn't develop and she would not be viable. She was severely growth restricted, had echogenic bowels, and she had nearly no amniotic fluid.

We went home and cried and prayed. We asked our friends and family to pray. We found a new, more supportive maternal-fetal medicine doctor. Long story short ... she was born at 37 weeks and was tiny but healthy and we came home together. Praising God for answered prayers and this tiny miracle.

Praise God for His mighty provision!
If you're on Facebook and haven't joined the
Group yet, please consider doing so!

facebook.com/groups/samaritanmin

Chanca piedra used by some to battle kidney stones

by Michael Miller

Herb from the Amazon River basin may have properties that discourage formation of painful hard deposits in urinary tract

KIDNEY STONES ARE among the most common and most painful malfunctions of the human body.

Mayo Clinic describes them as “hard deposits made of minerals and salts that form inside your kidneys.” Passing them through your urinary tract is bad enough, since they often resemble small pieces of coral or lava rock.

Anybody who has had kidney stones knows the drill:

- Lower back pain becomes increasingly worse over a few days or a few hours.
- The pain becomes nearly unbearable.
- The stones are (very painfully) passed.

That’s the happy version. The unhappy version is when the stones are too big to pass and block the urine from leaving the kidney. The pain becomes excruciating and may abate for an hour or more but will always return.

I suffered my first stone on New Year’s Day 1997, but that one passed. Painfully, but it passed. In December 2018, though, a stone too large to pass became lodged in



Chanca piedra grows in the Amazon River basin and is known as “stone breaker” or “seed under leaf.” (iStock)

my right kidney, causing excruciating pain for about an hour before it subsided, long enough for me to get to the hospital and get access to pain control.

Eventually, I was able to have lithotripsy. That noninvasive procedure shoots ultrasonic energy or shock waves directly at the stone through the back, breaking it into smaller pieces so it can then pass naturally.

All was well.

Until June 2019, when another one formed, this one in the left kidney.

Same situation: too big to pass.

I had followed my doctor’s orders after the first one, too: drink lots of water, cut down on the sodium. So, after my second stone (or stones; there may have been more than one), I decided to do my own research and found a Peruvian herb called chanca piedra (“CHANK-ah pee-AY-drah”), which translates as “stone breaker.”¹ The plant’s scientific name is *Phyllanthus niruri*.

I found a brand of chanca piedra online that had a lot of good reviews and was highly recommended by other sites. I ordered a bottle of capsules and started small in my dosage, about 500

milligrams daily, increasing it over time. I'm now up to 1500 milligrams per day. Some Samaritan Ministries members commenting in our members-only Facebook Group said they only take chanca piedra when they're feeling kidney stone symptoms.

I haven't had another stone since I started taking chanca piedra. At least not yet.

True, I still try to drink a lot of water and continue to back off the sodium, so that helps, I'm sure. But I believe that taking chanca piedra every day has helped keep the stones away.

Chanca piedra can be taken like I take it, in capsule form, or it can be drunk in a tea. The jury's still out on whether one form is more effective than the other, but I'm sticking to the capsules for now. They're easier and quicker to take than drinking a tea that may or may not taste good and which I may or may not remember to make and drink twice a day.

At least one scientific study² affirms chanca piedra's potential as a treatment for kidney stones, with others not quite as enthusiastic but not dismissive, either. The Brazilian study says the herb "has been shown to interfere with many stages of stone formation, reducing crystals aggregation, modifying their structure and composition as well as altering the interaction of the crystals with tubular cells leading to reduced subsequent endocytosis." (Endocytosis is the process by which substances are brought into a cell.³)

'Very gentle'

Samaritan Ministries member

Jocelin Whitaker, who has a doctorate in traditional naturopathy and runs a health food store in Ohio, likes to recommend chanca piedra to her clients because "it's something very gentle."

"Studies say it helps to balance the urinary tract's pH, so it basically makes the environment so that stones are less likely to form," Jocelin says.

She sells one chanca piedra product that also has hydrangea, celery seed, and burdock in it, but that combination could possibly interfere with medications, she says, so some people should stick to the straight chanca piedra.

A change in diet can also help fend off stones, she says.

"People can get too much calcium and other things from processed foods, which throws off the pH of your body," Jocelin says. "If your digestive system isn't breaking down your food properly, things like kidney stones can form."

Where it's from

God placed the chanca piedra plant in the Amazon River basin. Healthline.com says that "The plant has thin, leaf-covered branches and can grow up to about 2 feet tall. It gets the name 'seed-under-leaf' because its seed pods, which bloom into small green flowers, grow beneath the leaves."⁴ The entire plant is used in the production of the supplement, which reportedly also lowers blood sugar and helps with the digestive system and liver besides the kidneys. "Supposedly, it contains phytochemicals—or plant compounds—that can increase urine flow, kill harmful bacteria and

viruses, and relieve inflammation."⁵

One study of 56 people with kidney stones who took 4500 milligrams of chanca piedra per day showed the stones decreased in size and number in about two thirds of the participants.

WebMD cautions use of chanca piedra by pregnant and nursing women, people with diabetes and bleeding disorders, and people about to undergo surgery.⁶

So while the science is still out on chanca piedra's effectiveness, it's looking promising.

And a lot less painful. ♦♦♦

Michael Miller is Editor of the Samaritan Ministries newsletter.

The information provided in this article is for educational purposes and is not meant as medical advice. It is the opinion of the writer. The information is not meant to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health professional.

¹ Other names, according to healthline.com (<http://healthline.com/nutrition/chanca-piedra>) are "gale-of-the-wind," "seed-under-leaf," and "shatter stone."

² Boim, M. A., Heilberg, I. P., & Schor, N. (2010). Phyllanthus niruri as a promising alternative treatment for nephrolithiasis. *International Braz J Urol*, 36(6), 657–664. <https://doi.org/10.1590/s1677-55382010000600002>

³ Endocytosis. (2019, August 5). In Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endocytosis>

⁴ Shoemaker, M. S. S. (2020, May 22). Chanca Piedra: Benefits, Dosage, Side Effects, and More. Healthline. Retrieved January 12, 2022, from <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/chanca-piedra>

⁵ Lee, N, Khoo, William, Adnan, M. A., Mahalingam, T.P. Fernandez, A.R., & Jeevaratnam, K (2016). The pharmacological potential of Phyllanthus niruri. Retrieved January 12, 2022, from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27283048/>

⁶ CHANCA PIEDRA: Overview, Uses, Side Effects, Precautions, Interactions, Dosing and Reviews. (n.d.). WebMD. <https://www.webmd.com/vitamins/ai/ingredientmono-441/chanca-piedra>

I would be up for hours most nights because of the intense pain. Not wanting to wake my wife, I could be found lying on the couch in the living room, sometimes sobbing, sometimes staring off into the nothingness of the night, turning over the same thoughts again and again, asking, "Is this it, God? Is this how it all ends?"

Here, in those dark hours of the night, I learned to pray. For months after thinking of nothing but my plight, God lovingly broke me where I needed to be broken. God, in His mercy, gave me a tremendous gift of warmth and light in the darkness: Himself. I walked with God during those times down paths I'd never known. I was shaped and formed into the person I am today. Confession, prayer, and simple reflection on His Word brought my meager faith into a greater richness and depth of vitality. God taught me to look beyond myself and my suffering to His eternal throne. "My grace is sufficient for you" became more than sentimental words. I clung to them for dear life. In time, the Spirit gave me strength and in this I grew to think less of myself and more of God. And the more I did that, the more He put others on my heart.

Instead of only praying for my body, I began to pray more and more that God would bring me nearer to Himself. As I grew in my longing for closeness to Him above all else, my heart yearned to see God work in the lives of others. I began to pray for my family more and for members of our church and community, especially those who were suffering. This, I came to see, is the proper disposition of

Practice intercessory prayer

1. Read through the Samaritan Ministries Prayer Guide every month, using the days provided as a guide, or praying for one, two, or several Needs that you feel particularly burdened to pray for. Also, don't forget to pray for the specific Need your family has been assigned that month.
2. Write down the prayer requests of others on a note card. Have a card for every week (or month). Doing this reminds us of the needs of others when the distractions of life make it easy to forget.
3. Be in the habit of praying at all times: in the grocery store, driving, at home, in bed, during the good times and the bad. Jesus lives to make intercession for us to the Father; every time is a good time to pray.
4. Worship God in spirit and truth. Seeing God rightly and adoring Him as King puts the world into perspective.
5. Ask God to empower you in your prayer life. Pray in confidence that Spirit indeed intercedes for us. ♦♦♦

More on intercessory prayer on page 14

intercessory prayer. When we pray, it is an expression of our absolute surrender to God as the provider of all things. Our prayers and petitions for one another are motivated by a love for His name and affection for His people.

Love for the saints

As members of Samaritan Ministries, we do not pray for one another as strangers, but as brothers and sisters united in the family of God. We are the Body of Christ, who is our Head, built into a temple of God's dwelling, united by

the eternal bond of the Holy Spirit. It is no wonder then, that, in the greatest of recorded intercessory prayers, Jesus prays for His people to be united in truth (John 17:11, 17-19, 22-23).

Intercessory prayer springs from love for the members of this Body. "Owe no one anything," Paul says, "except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8). Are we mindful of this in our prayers? Do we feel the weight of the charge to love one another as a debt owed? Are we burdened in our prayers by



(iStock)

the suffering of a brother or sister? The same Spirit that unites us speaks through Paul to the church in Galatia when He says, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

One element of intercessory prayer that does not always get the attention it deserves is this element of struggle. As Epaphras struggled in his prayers for the saints in Colossae (Colossians 4:12), we ought to struggle in our prayers on behalf of others, because we believe prayer is God's means to change things (2 Corinthians 1:11; Philippians 1:19; 1 Timothy 4:4-5; James 5:15-18) and we, out of love and aligned with His will, desire to see Him glorified in His servants. Consider the struggle behind Paul's words to the Corinthians, "For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to

cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you" (2 Corinthians 2:4). We will fight for those we love. Why would it be any different in prayer?

Through intercessory prayer, the Holy Spirit develops in us a greater compassion for others. If I am praying for a specific person with a specific health condition or trial, I am forced to think through what that must be like for that person. I am moved to compassion like the compassion Christ has for His people. If I am angry with someone and I go before the throne of God in prayer, I see myself in the brilliant and awesome majesty of the eternal God and I am humbled by my own sin and my own desperate need of mercy. My anger toward my brother or sister turns into a desire that he or she know the Lord more deeply. This in turn compels me to show kindness and so fulfill the law

of Christ by loving my neighbor.

But what if I don't know how to pray for someone specifically? I have a friend who just lost his son this past year. How can I possibly understand something so painful when I have not experienced it myself? While we seek to empathize with others, we don't need to (nor can we always) understand the plight of a brother or sister. The Spirit intercedes for us to the Father (Romans 8:26-27). God hears our prayers, and He understands the plight of His children with absolute perfection.

What we pray for ultimately is for God's glory and for Him to manifest Himself to His children. We can trust that it is better to pray than to not pray. God will take care of the rest.



Greg Feulner is Assistant Editor of the Samaritan Ministries newsletter.

Intercessory prayer: Is this a good way to spend valuable time?

by Greg Feulner

Jesus said love for God and love for others are the two greatest commandments. Our prayers reflect how real that is for us in our own hearts. If that sounds discouraging, look at it another way: Our prayers are an opportunity for us to grow in that love for God that Christ calls us to and in our love for our neighbors.

The back cover of the book *Does Prayer Change Things?* by R.C. Sproul pointedly asks, "Is prayer a good way to spend valuable time?"

That's a very good question, and the answer is instructive. One's response reveals the difference between a Christ-centered view of reality and a worldly view of reality. How you and I understand this makes all the difference in our prayer and in how we view God and everything that happens in our lives.

We live in a culture that thinks in materialistic terms and in terms of controlling one's own destiny. We are strong, independent. There is no room for God.

From the flesh's perspective, you and I gain very little from prayer. We sit there alone, eyes closed, hands folded, "doing nothing" it would seem. Prayer goes against every habit throughout the day: Do you want to eat? Make yourself a meal. Is the room messy? Clean it. Do you need to email someone? Write

the email and send it.

But in prayer, rather than exercising control, we surrender our control. Prayer is our acknowledgment of our humanness, of our total dependency on the Giver of life. In prayer, we come before the throne empty-handed, seeking Him Who created the world by the power of His Word, Who sustains all things in Himself (Acts 17:28; Colossians 1:17). What value is there in prayer? Much in every way! Through Elijah's prayers, the widow's son was raised from the dead (1 Kings 17:20-24). Through that one man's prayers, God brought a drought on Israel that lasted years. And through prayer, God made it rain again (James 5:17-18). The prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much (James 5:16).

This is not to say, of course, that we can control the weather by mere will. It is God who works His will in the world through our prayers and not the other way around. Our finite minds cannot possibly comprehend the end of all things and, as creatures, we must always submit our desires to His perfect, eternal will. The Son of God petitioned the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane before He was to suffer on the cross. Three times the Incarnate Son of God pleaded with the Father to remove

the weight of this burden from Him. Nevertheless, He submitted His immediate desires to the Father's eternal will for the salvation of us all (Matthew 26:38-44).

Intercessory prayer starts with a right perspective of God and of our role in the world. One may see more from a mountaintop than in a valley. In an infinitely greater way (in a perfect way), God sees more than we do.

Surely from Job's perspective the violence done to him may have seemed to lack any real meaning or purpose, but God displayed His glory through Job, and He has blessed innumerable readers of the Bible through Job's trials.

Joseph may well have prayed a hundred times to return home from slavery and from unjust imprisonment in Egypt. But God had other plans, and through Joseph's suffering, and in God's infinite wisdom, the people of Israel were saved from famine. Through man's wicked intent, God brought about the salvation of the sons of Jacob through whom came the Messiah, the Savior of the world (Genesis 50:20).

We are acting foolishly when we suppose we know better than God.



Greg Feulner is Assistant Editor of the Samaritan Ministries newsletter.

Prayer for the Persecuted Church



Chinese street evangelist Chen Wensheng

Chinese authorities repeatedly detain evangelists

Two evangelists have been detained by Chinese authorities recently, reports International Christian Concern and Voice of the Martyrs-Canada. Street evangelist Chen Wensheng was arrested several times in March due to his outreach activities. After the second arrest, he was sent to a drug rehabilitation center for eight days as his punishment. When he has been brought before officers, he has shared the Gospel with them and prayed for them. Zhou Jinxia was detained after trying to share the Gospel with Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife, Peng Liyuan. ChinaAid says Jinxia frequently holds evangelistic signs outside a gate the couple routinely passes through and has been detained several times for doing so. She is described as "an unbreakable, irrepressible Christian woman." *Pray for Wensheng and Jinxia and all other evangelists who are taking the Gospel to the people of China.*

Prayer points

- Afghan Christians are being forced out of their homes and jobs by the Taliban.
- Pakistani Christian Fansan Shahid has been charged with blaspheming Islam in a Facebook post.
- Dr. Wang Minghai and Wan Hongxia, who taught at a house church school, are in jail in China, awaiting trial on charges of "illegal business operations." ♦♦♦



Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

HEBREWS 13:3

Our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world are being persecuted for the sake of the Gospel. We need to remember them in prayer and action.

Each month, we will provide updates and offer prayer points gleaned from a variety of sources. Please use them in your prayer time and possibly to seek other ways, small or large, to supplement our prayers with action.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PERSECUTED CHURCH:

International Christian Concern
persecution.org
800-422-5441

World Watch Monitor
worldwatchmonitor.org

If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you.

John 15:18

✂ Detach and place on your refrigerator

THE DOORPOST

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9, 11:18-21



"If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

"Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My Word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of My Name, because they do not know Him Who sent Me."

JOHN 15:18-21

Jesus said the words above to His disciples on the last night they were together before He was crucified. He also said other things as well that night that are recorded in chapters 13-17 of the Gospel of John. All the things He said were to keep the disciples from falling away. He warned them that the time would come when people would kill them and think that by doing that they were serving God (John 16: 1-4).

If we are obedient servants of Jesus Christ, we can expect to be treated the way He was treated—loved by those who love Him and hated by those who hate Him. When we face upheaval in the world, it doesn't necessarily mean we are doing anything wrong. We need to remember that He told us this was coming and to continue in fellowship with Him.



For The Kingdom,
Ray King

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Ray King".