Encouragement through Prayer

Colossians 4:2 "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful."
1 Thessalonians 5:17 "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

I would like to share an inspiring story of one woman's joy experienced through encouraging words of others.

STORY - Marathon Mom of 4 Kayla Kunz

Running since the 7th grade, the now mom of 4 continues to enjoy running by participating in marathons. Her family offers support by attending her events, enthusiastically cheering her on from the sidelines. They even train alongside her while offering verbal encouragement to press on through the challenges.

At a recent marathon, Kayla's family were once again on the sidelines - cheering on her every stride. At mile 25, with a little over one mile remaining, her husband began to video her as she passed them by. Not realizing he didn't stop the video, his phone began to record all of the praises, accolades and encouragement they shouted out on her behalf.

It wasn't until they later reviewed the video when they discovered the voice recordings. Kayla was beyond inspired by their words.

She states, "In this life, you don't always get to hear what people say about you, and in this moment, I heard it loud and clear." She went on to say, "You can do anything when your'e backed by loving support."

You see, prayer is one way we can express encouragement for others. It can even be as simple as "God Help." It is the intent of our heart which gives weight and meaning to our prayers. As we pray over students, teachers, faculty and staff, we are indeed, cheering them on from the sidelines. Our heartfelt prayers are recorded in the heavenly realm, with the blessing being returned to the recipients, even if they never hear a singe word we've said.

As I lead us in prayers of encouragement over them, would you please be in agreement on their behalf? Let us pray…

Gracious Heavenly Father. How grateful we are to have this space to gather together tonight. Hear our prayers as we take this moment to be a side-line with a direct-line of encouragement for others.

Lord, we first pray over the students as the journey into a new academic life stage tomorrow. Give them guidance, protection and wisdom as they learn new subjects, consider future prospects and navigate complex life issues. Protect them from harm, acts of violence and negative cultural influence. Guard their developing minds and remind them how they are loved and treasured. Grow in each of them a sense of purpose and confidence. Surround them with strong, safe mentors and who can shape and influence their decisions and choices. We ask also for positive and healthy interactions with peers, teachers and parents throughout this new year.

For our teachers, we pray also for your guidance and wisdom as they nurture, advocate and influence our children. Build in each one a character full of patience and discernment to manage the needs of each student and to be a positive role model during moments of conflict. We pray they are able to make safe spaces for these kids to learn undistracted and without additional stress. Give them love and compassion beyond the academic setting for each child who passes through their classroom.

And for our staff and school administrators who have the daily tasks of decision-making, problem-solving and enforcement. We ask your wisdom and guidance be upon them as they lead by offering support to teachers and students throughout the school year. May their interactions with families and the community be ones that are full of integrity, grace and a willingness to provide a nurturing environment. Give them clarity and unity to work cooperatively for the greater good, knowing that their decisions help shape our future generations.

And for the families of these children, Lord. The unsung heroes behind the scenes facing countless hours of homework, extra activities, etc. Help them to find a balance between Homelife, school, homework, activities and schedules.

And lastly, we look to You, God to help anyone here tonight who might be struggling with relationship issues, spiritual matters, health concerns, work struggles and other life challenges. Help us find ways to be devoted to prayer for one another throughout the year and more intentional to include it as a daily practice. Because who couldn't use more encouragement? Thank you for how you deeply You love and care for us. In the name of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit we give the glory. ~ Amen