

**Church Consulting  
& Revitalization Team**

# STRENGTHENING

## CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER



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### Introduction

If there was ever a time when we needed to strengthen personal and congregational prayer it is now. The times we live in call for the church to be light in a very dark world and to be salt in an unsavory world. The times call for healthy churches that will glorify God and make a difference in our communities and in our world.

Healthy churches that glorify God are praying churches. Praying churches recognize the importance of Jesus' words in John 15:5, *"I am the Vine you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."* Prayer is the means by which we as followers of Christ stay connected to Him. It is our constant declaration of dependence on Him. We will not bear the fruit of discipleship without this vital connection with Jesus. But with this vital connection, Jesus promises we will bear "much fruit."

*This resource was written by members of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Church Consulting and Revitalization Team (at the time of first publishing). Those members included the following: Jeff Crabtree, Alan Dodson, Paul Badgett, Todd Gray, Nick Sandefur, Jason Stewart and Alan Witham. This resource was written to help you as a church leader strengthen your personal prayer life as well as that of your church. As you apply the principles outlined in this resource, our prayer is that your congregation will bear eternal fruit to the glory of the Father.*

Alan Witham

*Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are from the Holman Christian Standard Bible.*

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## CHAPTER 1

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# Why Should We Pray Together as a Church?

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Perhaps it would be difficult to find a Christian who would dispute the necessity of prayer in the life of the believer. Likewise, most Christians would probably agree it is important for them to pray corporately. In practice, however, many churches demonstrate reluctance toward corporate prayer. Consequently, the church at large is in a weakened condition. Leonard Ravenhill noticed this years ago. He stated, “This much is sure in all churches, forgetting party labels; the smallest meeting numerically is the prayer meeting. If weak in prayer we are weak everywhere.”<sup>1</sup>

What is corporate prayer? Wayne Grudem offers a simple definition: “Prayer is personal communication with God.”<sup>2</sup> When communicating with God, the person of faith offers Him praise and worship, thanksgiving, confession, and requests. Corporate prayer, then, is the planned or unplanned gathering of two or more believers during which they communicate to God praise and worship, thanksgiving, confession, and requests.

The average church member needs to be convinced of the necessity of praying regularly with other believers. He needs to be concerned when he does not regularly participate with and notice his fellow church members praying with one another.



### **1. The biblical record compels the church to pray corporately.**

#### **The temple was a place of corporate prayer.**

In the Old Testament, the temple was given by God to be a place where His followers would meet with Him. God chose to let His glory dwell there. He commanded that worshipers bring their offerings and sacrifices to this special place, along with their prayers.

When you imagine the activities around the tabernacle and temple, you likely see lines of people bringing their sacrificial animals to offer Yahweh. The sounds of the animals, the whirring of people, the chants of the priests, the pungent smell of burning incense and animal flesh, and the constant smoke ascending from the altar mingle together to create quite a spectacle.

Oddly enough, though, we do not regularly blend the sound of prayer with the other events. This is interesting because God Himself called the

temple “a house of prayer.” *“I will bring them to my holy mountain of Jerusalem and will fill them with joy in my house of prayer. I will accept their burnt offerings and sacrifices, because my Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations”* (Isaiah 56:7, NIV). Jesus Himself reiterated this in the New Testament when He cleansed the temple. *“And he was teaching them and saying to them, ‘Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers’”* (Mark 11:17, ESV).

By God’s design, the temple would be a place where Old and New Testament characters would pray together corporately. When Zechariah was ministering there in Luke 1, the Bible indicates a group was there praying together. *“And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense”* (Luke 1:10).



## **2. Jesus and His disciples prayed corporately.**

In the New Testament, as the temple was transitioning from being a physical structure at a geographical location, to being a living structure, *“built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood”* (1 Peter 2:5), corporate prayer is emphasized further. The Gospels present Jesus praying with His disciples. Perhaps the most poignant example of this is Jesus asking the apostles to pray with Him in Gethsemane.

After the Last Supper and the Upper Room Discourse, just before their Lord was arrested, tried, mocked, and crucified, He asks the disciples to pray together as He prays apart from them, taking only Peter, James, and John with Him. It should be noted that He commanded the larger group of disciples to pray together corporately (see Matthew 26:36-46).



## **3. The Book of Acts presents the believers praying together.**

No book of the Bible illustrates a faith community praying corporately more fully than Acts. It was a normal practice with those early believers.

- a. They prayed together in the upper room in the days following Jesus’ ascension. *“All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers”* (Acts 1:14, ESV).
- b. They prayed corporately seeking God’s direction for the replacement of Judas. *“And they prayed and said, ‘You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place*

*in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place” (Acts 1:24-25, ESV).*

- c. One may infer that corporate prayer preceded the coming of the Holy Spirit. *“When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place” (Acts 2:1, ESV).*
- d. Corporate prayer was a core activity of the first New Testament church. *“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42, ESV).*
- e. They prayed together for boldness after the arrest and release of Peter and John. The Lord answered their request powerfully. *“And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God. And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:24, 31, ESV).*
- f. Again, believers were praying corporately when an angel delivered Peter from prison. *“. . .he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying” (Acts 12:12, ESV).*
- g. On two occasions, Acts presents Christians praying together informally. When Paul left the believers at Ephesus, they prayed together as they parted. *“And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all” (Acts 20:36, ESV).* Similarly, when he departed from Tyre. *“When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed and said farewell to one another” (Acts 21:5-6, ESV).*



#### 4. Corporate prayer is a priority of the New Testament church.

Let's go back to Acts 2. Following the gift of the Holy Spirit and Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, the church was born. In verses 42-47, Luke highlights certain features of the first generation church. Among those activities, prayer is introduced to us as a priority to which the early Jerusalem saints devoted themselves. It was a fruit of a genuine conversion and life in Christ - a core activity of the early church:

*“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and **the prayers**” (Acts 2:42, ESV).*

These core activities were carried out in community. *Teaching* requires a teacher and students. *Fellowship* and *the breaking of bread* obviously require the presence of multiple believers. In that same community of learning and fellowship, the participants prayed.

The text says the followers *devoted themselves* to it. It was a primary activity, not a passing fad. James Montgomery Boice said, “In the Greek the definite article occurs before the word *prayer*. The text actually says, *to the prayers*. Obviously, that is a reference to something formal - to worship in which the people got together and praised God.”<sup>3</sup>

In the New Testament, when the church gathered, we see them teaching and preaching the Word of God, observing the Lord’s Supper, fellowshiping with one another, and praying. They engaged in evangelism and ministries of mercy outside the church. Corporate prayer is a priority of the church.



## **5. Historically, sweeping movements of God have been precipitated by corporate prayer.**

History gives us many examples of God moving in overwhelming fashion when His people come together in earnest, corporate prayer. T.W. Hunt, in *Church Prayer Ministry Manual*, indicates that is certainly true of spiritual awakenings. He asserts that “every awakening was born by a remnant committed to prayer.”<sup>4</sup>

In *The Coming Great Awakening*, David L. McKenna describes the “Haystack Prayer Meeting” that precipitated such a movement of God.

They huddled under a haystack. Ordinarily the five college students met under the protective branches of a large maple tree and under the cover of night to read the Word of God, confess their sins, sing a song of forgiveness and pray for revival on their campus. Even the minutes of their meetings were kept in secret.

Tonight was different. The small, beleaguered company had been driven from their secret sanctuary by thunder that drowned out their prayers, lightning that crackled around them and rain that drenched them to the skin. An old barn with the comfort of a haystack became their refuge. There, with the storm symbolizing the hostility of their campus against them and their faith, they intuitively knew that their moment had come. God would answer their prayers. With the mysterious wind of his Holy Spirit, he would bring convicting and cleansing power to Williams College, a school founded through spiritual revival but now a seedbed for sin and skepticism. A Great Awakening was on the way!

The time was 1806, when our American ancestors struggled to establish the democracy that had been won in the War of Independence. The place was Williams College in Massachusetts, where Christian students had to meet in secret in order to avoid public ridicule. The people were a



non-descript band of five students, who seemed to be too serious for their own good. As unlikely as the time, place and people may seem, one of the Great Awakenings in American history can be traced back to 1806 at Williams College when a thunderstorm drove five students to prayer while huddled under a haystack.<sup>5</sup>

To this day, a monument stands on the campus of Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts, commemorating this “Haystack Prayer Meeting.” On top of the monument, there is a globe. A sweeping, worldwide missionary movement was initiated by the earnest, corporate prayer of five college students. The globe on that monument bears testimony that the world has never been the same.



## **6. The condition of today's church necessitates corporate prayer.**

The contemporary church in the United States is weak. Southern Baptist churches, in general, are weak. The North American Mission Board indicates that 10-15% of Southern Baptist churches are healthy and multiplying, 70-75% are plateaued or declining, and 10-15% are at or near risk. Thus, church revitalization is a conversation born of necessity. Most local churches must necessarily experience revitalization or die.

However, no amount of pragmatism will bring about revitalization. If programs, in and of themselves, were the answer, church health would not elude us. Revitalization is wrought by prayer, a movement of God, and Holy Spirit-filled planning, organizing, and leadership.

The church does what it can do. It gathers in many forms to labor over important matters. Deacons strategize regarding how they can best minister to families. Search committees pore over recommendations and résumés. Finance teams work long hours to construct budgets. Small-group leaders toil in meetings developing plans for ministry. Why, then, do we not corporately plead for God to do what only He can do?

The things for which we pray are the things that only God can do. Likewise, the things for which we do not pray are the things we perceive we can do. Could it be that we do not agonize corporately for revitalization because we think we are able to achieve it without Him? Are we risking the Laodicean sin of self-sufficiency? *“For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked”* (Revelation 3:17, ESV).

The question is not, “Why should we pray corporately?” Rather, it is, “Why should we not pray corporately?” In what condition has a lack of earnest, faithful corporate prayer left the church?



## CHAPTER 2

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# What Are the Barriers to Corporate Prayer Meetings?

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*"For My house will be called a house of prayer, for all nations" (Isaiah 56:7b)*

Jim Cymbala, in his book *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, asked the question, "Does the Bible say anywhere from Genesis to Revelation, 'My house shall be called a house of preaching?'"<sup>6</sup> The answer to Cymbala's question is an emphatic NO!

In the majority of churches, there is greater emphasis placed upon teaching and preaching than on corporate prayer. As a result, it should not come as a surprise that church prayer meetings are dying all across the land. What are the barriers that prevent churches from having breakthroughs in the area of members praying together?



### 1. Common barriers to corporate prayer meetings:

- **Church members may prefer other activities over attending corporate prayer meetings.**

Prayer meetings interfere with those activities.

- **Some pastors neglect to prepare properly.**

Bible teacher, Jill Briscoe, stated, "Some of the most boring times of my Christian life have been spent in prayer meetings."<sup>7</sup> Why would this be true? Often times it is due to a lack of preparation for the meeting itself.

- **Some claim corporate prayer meetings are man-made services. Therefore, attendance should be optional.**

It has been said that, "Attitude will determine one's altitude." If the attitude toward attending is that it is optional, then the likelihood of faithful attendance is near zero.

- **Church members offer substitutes for God's plans, ways, and purposes.**

One of these substitutes is entertainment. Church members today believe they need to be entertained when they come to church. They often ask the question, "What am I going to get out of this?" Or, they will ask, "What's the point?"

- **The attitude of “been there and done that” within the church.**

This involves church members who tried coming to a corporate prayer meeting, but were not impressed enough to come back.

- **Some church members prefer to spend the time with family.**

Church prayer meetings usually take place during the evening hours, which typically follows a long day at work or school. Members often prefer to spend those hours with their immediate family.

- **Parents will often use their children’s activities as excuses for not attending corporate prayer meetings.**

Children’s sports or after-school activities, often conflict with the church’s prayer meeting. Parents will often say they cannot attend the meeting because the children are so busy with outside events.

- **Some church members do not have an intimate relationship with the Lord.**

These members do not have a consistent prayer life to begin with. Consequently, these believers have no real hunger for a time to meet with other Christians for the purpose of prayer. These types of members possess a “cultural Christianity,” falsely assuming that giving a few dollars and attending Sunday morning services is sufficient.



## **2. Suggestions for overcoming common barriers to corporate prayer meetings**

- a. Church members may prefer other activities over attending corporate prayer meetings.**

Remind Church members that not having a priority of prayer within the church is to forget James 5:16. The Bible teaches that, “*The urgent request of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect.*” Explain to the congregation that there has never been a time in the life of the church or country when prayer has been more desperately needed. Radio personality, Molly O’Day, asked, “Have you had a good prayer today?” She would then say, “If you have been too busy to pray, then you’ve been far too busy.”<sup>8</sup> Prayer must be the top priority of local churches moving further into the 21st century.

- b. Some pastors neglect to prepare properly.**

This barrier could be overcome by employing good books that would help a busy pastor make the preparations needed. For example, notice some tips for prayer meetings taken from the book *Small Group Ministry in the 21st Century*, from Group Publishing. They are:

- **Share answers before you start.** Prepare for your meeting by gathering answers to the church's prayer concerns. "Nothing kindles spiritual fire like knowing God is at work in your midst" (p.137). If possible, jot down answered prayers for future reference.
- **Keep a prayer list.** Most churches already have a prayer list, but some may not. If you do not have a church-wide list, then prepare for your next meeting by making one. Then, hand the list out at the next meeting. The pastor should urge church members to keep the list close so they will be able to pray for the needs of the church during the following week.
- **Follow up with each other.** "When you get together, ask questions about whether a specific prayer has been answered. Keep people motivated by reminding them of the prayers you've made and finding out when they're answered. Don't let people get by with a shrug. It's important to you, to your group (church), and to God that you all know what God is doing in your midst." The Bible says, "*Sing to Him, sing praise to Him; tell about all His wonderful works*" (Psalm 105:3).
- **Pray big, pray little.** "Encourage people to realize that no prayer is too big or too small for God. Whether someone in the group needs a new house, direction on a new job, or guidance regarding major surgery, make it a matter of prayer. But don't forget the smaller things - like little aches and pains, problems of the day, affording clothes for a child, or a special occasion you want to celebrate. Nothing is too big for God to deal with, and nothing is too small for God to be concerned about. If it matters to you, it matters to God" (p.138).
- **Celebrate answers to prayer.** "Remember to spend time praising God for the prayers He answers (which, in reality, is everything you pray about)" (p.139)<sup>9</sup>

**c. Some claim that corporate prayer meetings are man-made services, therefore attendance should be optional.**

The truth is, it is not known when modern-day corporate prayer services actually began. Prayer meetings probably started because the church saw a need for more corporate prayer. It has often been referred to as a time to recharge the "spiritual batteries." Prayer services have traditionally been held on Wednesday evenings, most likely because it is in the middle of the work week. Many churches have eliminated Wednesday night prayer services, even though members displayed a growing need for edification in the things of the Lord. Churches need to be reminded that the world is

in sorry shape, and lowering the standards of corporate prayer will not bring about the spiritual change most claim they are seeking.

**d. Church members offer substitutes for God's plans, ways, and purposes.**

Stories of how God has used corporate prayer in the past to bring people to Christ are a good way to change attitudes toward the church praying together. Churches need to be reminded that God has chosen to honor the prayers of a unified body of Christ. Richard and Henry Blackaby shared the story of Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries during the Korean revival of 1907. They noted, "Missionaries prayed together until prior feelings of antagonism or competition disappeared. Once the church and mission leaders were unified in their desire for the Holy Spirit to bring revival, it came. Tens of thousands of people were converted, although little had been done to evangelize them other than the unified prayers of God's people" (*Fresh Encounter Workbook*, p.134)<sup>10</sup>

**e. The attitude of "been there and done that" within the church.**

The greatest advertisement for prayer meetings in the church is the changed lives that result from corporate prayer. Pray that God will transform the lives of those who do attend, so God may spark a revival of prayer in the church. Remember, Satan works overtime to keep Christians from praying together. Take time to ask, "Could this church truly be described as a 'house of prayer?' Next, ask, "If it could not be described as such, what needs to change so it can become a church that honors the Lord through obedience in the discipline of prayer?"

**f. Some church members prefer to spend the time with family.**

Prayer meetings usually follow a long day of work or school. Church members do need face time with their families. However, they also need face time with the Lord. The priestly blessing in Scripture is as follows, "*May Yahweh bless you and protect you and be gracious to you; may Yahweh look with favor on you and give you peace*" (Numbers 6:24-26). Daniel Henderson says, "We were made to enjoy God's presence and find strength, peace, and perspective in the intimate connection available to us in Christ through prayer."<sup>11</sup>

**g. Parents will often use their children's activities as excuses for not attending corporate prayer meetings.**

Parents need to be reminded that children are a primary reason members ought to attend prayer meetings. If there was ever a time in the history of the world that parents ought to be calling on the church to pray for children, it is now. With the emphasis today on sexual immorality, drug use, outbursts of anger, narcissism, drunkenness, abuse, and carousing,

children of Christian parents need to be prayed for by the church like never before. Children ought not to cause Christian parents to run from the church's prayers, but compel them to run to the church for prayer.

**h. Some church members do not have an intimate relationship with the Lord.**

When Christians fail to have a relationship with the Lord that is real and personal, what is needed is confession and repentance. It has been said, "Repentance is one of the most positive words in the Christian vocabulary." In Malachi 3:7, God says, "*Return to me, and I will return to you.*" The Bible also says, "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (1 John 1:9). Confession is the method that God uses to cleanse His people. Remember, God will not use a dirty vessel. Ask the congregation this question: Has the church sinned against God by treating prayer as if it were minor or even insignificant?

Dr. Jeffery Van Goethem in an article titled, *Why Prayer Meetings Are Dying*, states, "I have a friend who has been an itinerant teacher of prayer, traveling the continent and the world for over thirty years. He states he has not come across even ONE prayer church in America."<sup>12</sup> This is a terrible indictment upon the body of Christ. Thom Rainer, in an article entitled, *Do We Really Pray in Our Churches*, writes, "As the role of corporate prayer has diminished in churches, so has the outward focus of those churches. When churches stop praying together, churches cease to be healthy."<sup>13</sup> The Bible gives insight to the healthy spiritual life of the early church by stating, "*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to **prayers***" (Acts 2:42).

## CHAPTER 3

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# How Can We Prepare a Church to Begin Praying Together?

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The early church in Acts was a model of a praying church. Pastors and lay leaders agree prayer needs to be a priority. Most would affirm that churches are to be “houses of prayer.” But many congregations fall short of that mark.

Some churches have gone away from prayer meetings in light of time constraints. There are only so many hours during which the church can gather, and effective programs and ministries have replaced those times once reserved for prayer. Other churches have maintained a traditional time slot for prayer, only to see the number of participants diminish. The most difficult meetings to get people to participate in are those featuring prayer.

How can churches pray together in light of negative past experiences or present demands on time? How can a church create a culture where participation in corporate prayer is valued? How can a church begin to pray together?

Changing the culture of corporate prayer takes time and effort. However, it is critical to begin the process of praying together. Here are some practical steps to jump-start corporate prayer in a local church.



### 1. What can be done to prepare a church to begin praying together?

**a. Preach/teach about the value of praying together.** From the pulpit, a pastor can sow seeds that will take root in the heart of a congregation. For corporate prayer to be a part of congregational life, it will have to be valued by that congregation.

- **Conduct a New Testament survey about the topics and outcomes of prayer meetings.** In the previous chapters, several passages have been highlighted that could be used to guide a prayer survey.
- **Teach a good theology of prayer.** Help church members understand the significance of why we pray, why the Heavenly Father desires His people to pray, and why we should pray corporately.
- **Prayer is more than asking.** It is more than simply praying for the sick among us. This is absolutely a part of prayer, but it is so much more. Prayer is dependence upon God; prayer is seeking

God's glory; prayer is agreeing with God's purposes for humanity and His creation; prayer is asking for God's leadership; prayer is surrendering to God's will.

- **The Father loves for us to acknowledge our dependence upon Him.** When we pray together and God answers, the people of God corporately acknowledge the hand of God at work.
- **Teach about historical outcomes of church prayer meetings.** It has been argued that every great movement of God began with His people on their knees. The people of God are encouraged and motivated by hearing how God has moved in the past. A pastor could share about specific church instances during prayer meetings, on Sunday nights, in deacons meetings, etc. There are several works listed in the appendix to serve as a good resource for this.

**b. Model prayer in life and ministry.** If the pastor leads the way, prayer will become a part of the culture of a church.

- **When people ask for prayer, pray for them immediately.** This should happen during counseling, church service times, and in daily life. Spontaneous moments of prayer within a corporate setting illustrate the value to your people.
- **Utilize corporate worship to pray for decisions, church needs, and hurting people.** Whether you use the altar, laying of hands, silent prayer, group prayer, or any other model when a need arises in the church, don't say "pray for this" and leave, PRAY FOR IT TOGETHER.
- **Pray regularly with people who are part of your daily routine.** In multiple staff member settings, start the day with prayer in the office. Set the tone for leadership by emphasizing the need to pray together. In single staff member settings, pray with those who regularly visit the church. Invite a group of people to join you daily.

**c. As the pastor, champion corporate prayer.**

- **The pastor should be the primary leader of corporate prayer.** Others are capable of leading well. The pastor does not have to be the best prayer warrior in the church, nor the only champion for prayer, but he has to take ownership of the prayer meeting if it is to succeed. People need to see that prayer is not a throw-away event.
- **The pastor needs to be present during corporate prayer.** He does not have to be the primary person praying, but his presence signifies importance.



- **Promote corporate prayer times during the main worship service.** Invite people to attend these prayer times.
- **Enlist a prayer team dedicated to ensuring a “house of prayer” mentality.** This group should be a cross-section of the church that values prayer. It should promote prayer, evaluate current practices, schedule special events, and support the overall prayer ministry of the church.

**d. Provide prayer training for members.** The disciples plea, “Lord teach us to pray,” is still in the hearts of Christ followers.

- **Provide training for personal prayer time.** A church that has many personal “prayer warriors” will pray more effectively than churches that do not. Training your people to have a strong personal devotional life will elevate the church’s corporate prayer life. Therefore, before corporate prayer time, teach through a personal prayer model. Greg Frizzell’s *“How to Develop a Powerful Personal Prayer Life”* and Don Whitney’s *“Praying the Bible”* are helpful resources.
- **Set expectations before prayer meetings.** Some members fear “being called on to pray,” while others may feel inadequate praying aloud. Help alleviate these fears by establishing expectations of the prayer meeting. Will everyone be expected to pray aloud? Will people be in small groups or large groups? Will the meeting be organized or spontaneous?
- **Before you pray, explain the model of prayer being utilized.** Resources could include John Franklin’s *“And the House Was Shaken,”* Greg Frizzell’s *“Models for Dynamic Prayer Meetings,”* or Ronnie Floyd’s *“Pleading with Southern Baptists.”*

**e. Give the prayer meeting a good time slot.**

- **People’s calendars are already overbooked.** If a church doesn’t currently have a prayer service, it will have a hard time starting one at a new time. No matter how much leaders exhort members, it’s hard to get a good turnout for prayer on Friday night or early morning. A 30-minute prayer meeting on Friday morning may be great for those who attend, but it’s rarely attended by more than a few people.
- **Give prayer a regularly scheduled slot.** By putting prayer service in a regular church time slot (Sunday night/Wednesday night) it is possible for more people to attend, and sends a signal that prayer is important.

- **Use the time slot that works best for your church.** Many churches have effective programs, and they find that Wednesday is the most effective time for those programs. Perhaps an hour on Sunday night would be better utilized as a prayer time. For churches that have “over-programmed,” it may be necessary to eliminate some programs in order to pray.

**f. Join the prayer time with times of fellowship.** Share a meal after prayer services. Some churches may be too big for such fellowship, but most are not. The meal sets apart the evening as an anticipated fellowship event, as well as a time for prayer.

**g. Invest in the planning of the prayer meeting.** Corporate prayer is so important that we need to do all we can to make it meaningful and satisfying to those who attend. The biggest difference between an enthusiastic, effective prayer meeting and a dull, ineffective one is planning. Asking people to randomly pray for 30 minutes will not sustain most people’s interest. Many churches gave up on the prayer meeting because no one knew how to plan one.

- **Spend significant time preparing to lead church members in prayer.** This will accomplish two things. One, people will know the pastor was not being “lazy” by simply having people pray. A full night of prayer is not intended to be a night off for the pastor. Two, members will be enabled to pray together because the pastor has prepared to lead them.
- **Provide structure.** People need categories for prayer. They need models for prayer. They need theological boundaries and direction. The pastor who provides this for the church will see an increase in Kingdom-focused prayers.

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# What Should We Pray for as a Church?

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There is a tendency for churches to become imbalanced and one-sided in what they pray for as a congregation. Sometimes that imbalance has to do with a self-centered focus. The temptation is only to think in terms of: “What can I ask others to pray for as it relates to me or my family?” Sometimes the imbalance has to do with the way we structure our prayer meetings. Churches sometimes share prayer requests for 15 minutes and pray for three minutes. At other times, the imbalance relates to the one-sidedness of praying mostly for people in our families, churches, and communities who are sick and need God’s healing touch. Lifeway Research conducted a study asking people what they pray for and concluded that 74% pray for their own problems and difficulties, while 20% pray for people of other faiths or no faith.

Churches need little encouragement to pray for sick friends and family members to be healed. Many church prayer meetings have been referred to as “organ recitals” (praying for Aunt Sally’s stomach problem and Uncle George’s colon problem). Praying for the sick is encouraged in Scripture. James 5:16 exhorts us to “pray for one another that you may be healed.” However, churches often spend more time praying sick people away from heaven than they do praying lost people away from hell.

Praying for our own needs is encouraged in Scripture as well. In Philippians 4:6, we are encouraged to “let our requests be made known to God.” However, when we look at the entire Bible, we are encouraged to adopt a plan for prayer that includes the previously mentioned topics, but also includes a great deal more. When gathered for corporate prayer, for what should a church pray?



### PRAY FOR A FRESH VISION OF GOD

*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and His robe filled the temple. Seraphim were standing above Him; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another: Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Hosts; His glory fills the whole earth. The foundations of the doorways shook at the sound of their voices, and the temple was filled with smoke.*

*Then I said: Woe is me for I am ruined  
because I am a man of unclean lips  
and live among a people of unclean lips,  
and because my eyes have seen the King,  
the LORD of Hosts.*

*Then one of the seraphim flew to me,  
and in his hand was a glowing coal that he had taken from  
the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said:*

*Now that this has touched your lips,  
your wickedness is removed  
and your sin is atoned for.*

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying:*

*Who should I send?*

*Who will go for Us?*

*I said: Here I am. Send me.*

*~ Isaiah 6:1-8*

Prayer should start with a focus on God, not with a focus on ourselves. When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He shared with them what we know today as the Model Prayer, or the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:7-13). Note that he began the prayer with a focus on God by saying, "Our Father in heaven, Your name be honored as holy. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Jesus wanted us to place His interests before our own. He wanted us to begin with an "emptying of self" in order to be occupied with the things of God.

Pray recognizing God for who he is: holy, just, righteous, faithful, all powerful, all knowing, ever present, strong and able, creator, redeemer, sustainer.

Pray recognizing and praising God for what He has done in the person and work of Christ.

Pray thanking God for His grace shown through the finished work of Christ.



### **PRAY FOR BROKENNESS AND HUMILITY**

*"If My people who are called by My name humble themselves,  
pray and seek My face, and turn from their evil ways, then I will  
hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land."*

*~ 2 Chronicles 7:14*

Humility involves recognizing our sinfulness before a Holy God. It involves a confession of our desperate need for God, His cleansing and forgiveness. Humility results in prayer and seeking God.

Pray approaching God with a spirit of humility.

Confess your desperate need for Him and for His forgiveness.



**PRAY FOR THANKFULNESS AMONG THE CONGREGATION AS YOU  
RECOGNIZE GOD'S ACTIVITY IN THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY**

*"Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through  
prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests  
be made known to God."*

*~ Philippians 4:6*

Spend time praising God for recent answered prayers.

Thank Him for people who have come to faith in Him in recent days.

Thank Him for guests who are attending your church.

Thank Him specifically for His activity in your personal life and  
in the life of the church.



**PRAY FOR BROKEN AND STRAINED RELATIONSHIPS  
TO BE RESTORED THROUGH FORGIVENESS**

*"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything  
against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven  
will also forgive you your wrongdoing."*

*~ Mark 11:25*

Pray asking God to reveal any strained relationships in your  
own life.

Pray asking God to work in the lives of church members who  
are experiencing strained relationships with others.

Pray for strained and broken marriages to be restored.

Pray for strained relationships among children and parents.

Pray for the healthy resolution of conflicts and for unity within the church family.



### **PRAY FOR LOST PEOPLE TO BE SAVED**

*"Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God concerning them is for their salvation!"*

*~ Romans 10:1*

Pray that God will bring strong conviction of sin and bring a great awareness of the desperate need for Jesus in the lives of lost people.

Pray that lost people will hear the gospel.

Pray that lost people will repent and believe in Jesus.

Pray that strongholds will be torn down in the lives of lost people.

Pray for lost people by name.



### **PRAY FOR GOD TO GRANT THE CONGREGATION BOLDNESS TO ENGAGE IN SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS AND GOSPEL SHARING**

*"And now, Lord, consider their threats, and grant that Your slaves may speak Your message with complete boldness."*

*~ Acts 4:29*

Pray for forgiveness for the sin of silence and not sharing the gospel.

Pray for boldness to share our faith stories and testimonies with others.

Pray for wisdom to transition conversations to a focus on spiritual things.

Pray for wisdom in addressing the questions and objections of lost people.

Pray for determination not to give up on difficult people.



## PRAY FOR CLEANSING OF PERSONAL AND CONGREGATIONAL SINS

*"Let Your eyes be open and Your ears be attentive to hear Your servant's prayer that I now pray to You day and night for Your servants, the Israelites. I confess the sins we have committed against You. Both I and my father's house have sinned."*

*~ Nehemiah 1:6*

Pray over these questions:

What sin(s) in my own life hinder my church from experiencing greater health and growth?

What sin(s) in our congregation hinder the church from moving forward with increased health and growth?

What does Jesus see and condemn in our congregation?  
(Revelation 2-3)



## PRAY FOR THE CONGREGATION TO FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION AND MAKE DISCIPLES

*"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

*~ Matthew 28:19-20*

Pray for the church's plan for making disciples.

Pray for members to take the next steps in their faith journeys.

Pray for new believers to grow in their young faith.

Pray for Christians to invest time in discipling others.

Pray for fathers and mothers to disciple their children in the faith.

Pray that God would raise up more disciple makers in the church.

Pray that the church would have a good balance of evangelism



(sharing the gospel and seeing people saved) and discipleship (helping people grow in Christlikeness as followers of Jesus).



**PRAY FOR YOUR PASTOR AND STAFF, LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS, STATE GOVERNMENT LEADERS, OUR PRESIDENT, AND NATIONAL LEADERS**

*“You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in the concerns of civilian life; he seeks to please the recruiter.”*

*~ 2 Timothy 2:1-4*

As you pray for your pastor and staff:

Pray for God’s wisdom for leading.

Pray for their time of preparation for preaching and teaching.

Pray for God’s blessing on their families.

Pray for their ministry to their families.

Pray for spiritual protection from the work of the enemy.

As you pray for community, state and national leaders:

Pray for God’s wisdom in leading our government.

Pray for their constant dependence on God as they work in decision-making processes that effect large groups of people.

Pray for God’s blessing on their families.



**PRAY SCRIPTURE PASSAGES THAT RELATE TO REVITALIZATION**

*“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers. Then fear came over everyone, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all,*

*as anyone had a need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple complex, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with a joyful and humble attitude, praising God and having favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to them those who were being saved."*

*~ Acts 2:42-47*

This scripture passage presents the qualities and characteristics of a healthy church. As you pray for a greater level of health for your congregation, use the verses in this passage (and others) to guide your prayers. **Example:** The first verse speaks of the early believers "devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching." You might pray, "Lord, help us have a hunger for hearing Your word and help us be devoted to eagerly gather each time Your Word is taught or preached."



**PRAY FOR A RECEPTIVITY AND UNDERSTANDING OF  
WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS SAYING TO YOUR CHURCH**

*"Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches."*

*~ Revelation 3:6*

Each of the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 end with the same encouragement: "Listen to what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; Revelation 3:6, 13, 22). The voice we need to hear above all others is the voice of God through His Holy Spirit, helping us know what we need to confess, change, and begin doing.

Pray over these questions:

What is the Holy Spirit saying to us about what we are doing well?

What is the Holy Spirit saying to us about what we need to confess, repent of, and quit doing?

What is the Holy Spirit saying to us about what we need to begin doing?



**PRAY FOR PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALING  
FOR PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY**

*"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed."*

*The urgent request of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect."*

*~ James 5:16*

Pray for sick people to be healed.

Pray for God to use difficulty to bring about His purposes and plans in the people's lives.

Pray that God would be glorified as people who deal with sickness bear strong witness to their faith in Christ.

Pray for the sufficiency of God's grace to be evident in the lives of people dealing with illness.

Pray for caregivers to have physical, emotional, and spiritual strength to help their loved ones.



**PRAY FOR THE MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH TO BE EFFECTIVE  
IN HELPING THE CHURCH FULFILL ITS GOD-GIVEN MISSION**

*"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

*~ Matthew 28:19-20*

Pray for the Sunday school / small group ministry of the church.

Pray that the Bible will be faithfully taught.

Pray that teachers will be devoted and conscientious in their teaching.

Pray that teachers will fulfill their roles as disciples of people.

Pray that new classes will be birthed in the next year.

Pray for the different Sunday School departments and classes and the leaders in those areas.

Pray that classes will be outreach-oriented and seek out guests and absentees.

Pray for the outreach ministry of the church.

How does the church conduct outreach? Pray for the church's plan and the people who are involved in it.

Pray for the missions ministry of the church.

Pray that God will give the church a vision for reaching the world.

Pray for International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, and Kentucky Baptist Convention missionaries.



**PRAY FOR A FRESH VISION FROM GOD REGARDING  
HIS PREFERRED FUTURE FOR THE CONGREGATION**

*"They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia and were prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the message in Asia. When they came to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, bypassing Mysia, they came down to Troas. During the night a vision appeared to Paul: A Macedonian man was standing and pleading with him, 'Cross over to Macedonia and help us!' After he had seen the vision, we immediately made efforts to set out for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to evangelize them."*

*~ Acts 16:6-10*

Pray asking God what He wants for the church in the next year to two years.

Pray asking God for a vision to reach unreached people in the community.

Pray asking God what steps the church needs to take to experience greater health.

Pray asking God how He wants your congregation to fulfill the Great Commission.



**PRAY FOR THE GOSPEL TO BE PROCLAIMED TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH THROUGH  
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION MISSIONARIES AND MISSION WORK**

*"Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door*

*to us for the message, to speak the mystery of the  
Messiah, for which I am in prison."*

*~ Colossians 4:2-3*

Pray for International Mission Board missionaries as they plant churches and share the gospel.

Pray that the gospel will be proclaimed among people groups who have never heard.

Pray for laborers to be sent into the harvest.

Pray that God would call out pastors and missionaries from your church.

Pray for Kentucky Baptist Convention staff and their work to help churches reach Kentucky and the world for Jesus Christ.



**PRAY FOR OTHER BIBLE-BELIEVING CHURCHES AND  
GOSPEL-FOCUSED MINISTRIES IN THE COMMUNITY**

*"Not to mention other things, there is the daily pressure on  
me: my care for all the churches."*

*~ 2 Corinthians 11:28*

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth and expressed his love and counsel for them. He was quick to remind them of the fact that he was also praying for and concerned about the well-being of all the churches.

It is easy for a congregation to have a near-sighted, singular focus on its own church and fail to have a "Kingdom" focus. We must remember our church is part of something much greater, namely the Kingdom of God.

Pray for the churches in your local Baptist association.

Pray for new churches to be planted in your community.

Pray for pastors of local congregations.

Pray for churches in the community to experience revitalization.

Pray thanking God for His work in churches that are growing and reaching people.

Pray for unity among churches in the community.

Pray for gospel-centered local ministries (the local crisis pregnancy center or men's homeless shelter).



### **PRAY FOR THE UPCOMING SUNDAY SERVICES**

*"But you, dear friends, as you build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, expecting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life."*

*~ Jude 1:20-21*

Pray for God to be glorified through next Sunday's worship services.

Pray for lives to be transformed by the power of the Word and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Pray that people will live out the truth of the Sunday School lessons and sermons shared on Sunday.

Pray for the pastor as he prepares and delivers Sunday messages.

Pray for the worship leader and musicians as they prepare to lead the congregation in worship.

Pray that people will give their tithes and offerings joyfully as an expression of worship to God for His faithfulness as provider.

Pray for Sunday School teachers and Bible study leaders as they prepare to share from the Word.

Pray that the congregation will be warm and friendly to guests and that they would feel welcome in our services.

Pray that good follow-up will be done to connect with guests who attend on Sunday.

## CHAPTER 5

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# Incorporating Prayer in Congregational Worship

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So how **DO** you incorporate prayer within a corporate worship service? Simply put: intentionally. There are hundreds of ways to use prayer within your Sunday morning gatherings if you take a few moments to consider who is in your congregation and the purpose of corporate prayer. When planning worship, do you leave space for a spoken prayer? Do you invite individuals to be responsible for voicing a prayer? Would your congregation be shocked to have a time within the Sunday morning worship service to actually pray? You see, if we do not include these special times, then why are we surprised that our people miss seeing the hand of God at work all around them?

In looking for ideas of whom you could use for these special times, don't forget to survey your entire congregation. Carefully think about who normally attends Sunday morning worship. Hopefully you have multiple generations worshipping under the same roof, so consider using a representative from each of those generations on a regular basis. What about deacons or small-group leaders? What about the various ministry groups within your four walls? With some thoughtful consideration, the list of those available can fill several pages.

So, now that your creative juices are flowing, what are ways you could use prayer on Sunday morning? Of course there are the default times of prayer like the invocation, the offering, and the invitation, but what about other times? Have you ever thought about having a time of prayer for a particular ministry of your church? Or what about praying for personal prayer requests from the congregation? Or how about spending some specific time praying for the lost souls near where we all live, work, or attend school? What about having a time of confession and asking for forgiveness? Again, finding subjects to pray for, will not be hard to come up with if we just take time to ask for God's help on the matter.

As you weave intentional times of prayer into your worship services, be sure to prepare ahead of time and communicate with those whom you ask to lead a voiced prayer. Make sure any technical issues are covered, such as proper sound reinforcement and lighting. Over time, as you include these specific times of intentional prayer, your congregation will begin to experience things that are prayed for and against. Most church leaders do not need to be convinced that we should include more time for prayer in our services. They need encouragement to design prayer intentionally into the Sunday morning worship. Just do it. If necessary, cut back on sermon time, or omit a congregational song.



In seeking creative ways to pray, look at what is happening in your community. Make sure you have a Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other. Look for opportunities God is giving you and your church family to come alongside the community through prayer. Make it a big deal when you are together. Start a habit of praying, but make sure it's not just you who is praying.

Should you decide to dedicate portions of your service to prayer, you could do so by involving segments for specific areas. One idea would be to have a time of extended prayer, followed by an appropriate congregational song or two. The flow would look much like a call-and-response theme. Another idea might involve the use of a family to pray over a specific matter, and thus create an intergenerational moment for the congregation. Again, as you open your heart to the potential use of prayer with your congregation, know that the Lord will provide you with ideas and creativity if you will allow Him to do so.

Here are some examples of using prayer in your morning order of worship:



- **Before the choir sings, have a choir member pray.**
- **Consider hearing a testimony from someone in your congregation and have him or her pray.**
- **Set aside a time to receive prayer requests and assign each one to someone to pray for it, then pray.**
- **If you have a children's choir that sings on a Sunday morning, let one of the children pray before or after. Do the same if you have a senior adult choir sing.**
- **Look at using a multi-generational family for prayer. Have the grand parents start, then ask the children, grandchildren, and maybe great grandchildren to follow.**
- **Look at incorporating prayer in between congregational songs or even during the music.**
- **Have specific times of prayer for: the lost, the hurting, the needy, the community, schools, leaders within your community, leaders within your church, your staff, and various ministries.**
- **Begin to include a time of confession for your congregation. We hardly ever give time for our people to try and make things right.**

This is a short list of ideas that you can use. If you spend a few moments asking God to direct ways of having prayer in your service, He will provide ideas. So go ahead and let

God speak to you. Ask Him to reveal ways to pray and names of people who can pray for your congregation. You will be surprised.

As we close this chapter, please know there is no definitive way to use prayer within your Sunday morning gatherings. In fact, many of you will craft other ways and methods to use prayer on a weekly basis. The key is to just do it. If you do not start this week, then make it a priority to start this month. If you're not careful, the calendar will rush past and you will have missed a wonderful opportunity.

## CHAPTER 6

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# Models for Personal Prayer

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*"A prayerless church cannot send a praying religion to  
heathen lands" ~ E.M. Bounds<sup>14</sup>*

This statement by E.M. Bounds, who ministered during the Civil War, is still as true today as it was when he lived. The previous chapters of this book have focused on congregational prayer. Church leaders must understand that one of the most desperate problems today is still prayerless churches. Development of a powerful and Spirit-filled congregational prayer ministry is important for God's direction of the local church. However, the Spirit's power and strength of congregational prayer will rise no higher than the personal prayer lives of the pastor, staff, and congregation.

*"To desire revival ... and at the same time to neglect  
(personal) prayer and devotion is to wish one way and  
walk another." ~ A.W. Tozer<sup>15</sup>*

Strong individual prayer is a foundational component for a powerful congregational prayer ministry. Many churches today are seeking revival. It is through personal prayer that man will return to God, and He can bring a mighty revival. One question every Christian should ask himself is, "How is my personal prayer life?" The goal of this chapter is to provide insight and resources that will guide individuals into a deeper personal prayer life which, in turn, will strengthen the congregational prayer ministry of the local church. The resources in this chapter are beneficial for a new Christian beginning a personal prayer lifestyle or for the maturing disciple growing deeper in his or her prayer life.

*He was praying in a certain place, and when He finished, one  
of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as  
John also taught his disciples."*

*He said to them, "Whenever you pray, say:*

*Father, Your name be honored as holy.*

*Your kingdom come.*

*Give us each day our daily bread.*

*And forgive us our sins,*

*for we ourselves also forgive everyone*

*in debt to us.*

*And do not bring us into temptation."*

*~ Luke 11:1-4*



## **WHAT ARE SOME MODELS FOR PERSONAL PRAYER? (HOW TO KEEP YOUR PERSONAL PRAYER LIFE FRESH)**

There are two types of people in the world: those who are saved and those who are lost. All who are saved have become children of God, but each believer is at one of three levels of spiritual maturity. Level one is a new Christian who is beginning the “learning” process of the faith. There are many believers who have received Christ but remain at this level because they are never discipled. Level two is a developing disciple; someone who has begun to change in lifestyle and behavior, showing he or she is moving into a deeper walk with the Lord. The final level is a person who is a multiplier. That person replicates their walk in the life of another believer, thus fulfilling the Great Commission.

Every church must have a process to help in the spiritual growth of each disciple. As we begin looking at personal prayer, the first fact we must embrace is that we are not all at the same level in our prayer lives. As we think about personal prayer, we must help the level one and level two individuals develop in their spiritual disciplines. A level three believer will develop on his or her own, growing and multiplying those around him or her. Below is a list of models and resources a church leader can employ to help believers deepen their personal prayer ministry.



## **DEVELOPING A FOUNDATION OF PRAYER FOR A NEW CHRISTIAN**

After a person has asked Jesus to save them, they begin the process of sanctification. It is extremely important for each church to have an intentional mentoring process for new Christians. A way to help a new Christian develop the foundation of prayer is to help him or her begin a daily quiet time. There are many resources that can be used by mentors to begin this discipline.



## **P.I.P. MODEL (PREPARE, INTAKE, AND PRAISE)**

Using the P.I.P. model will help a new disciple begin seeking the Lord daily. It allows for a new believer (level 1) to prepare to meet with God by reflecting on Him and completing this statement, “I want to meet with God today because \_\_\_\_.” As they begin each day in the P.I.P. model, they will prepare to meet with God. They will also have a daily Bible reading that will allow them to engage in the intake of God’s Word. After they intake, they begin to praise the Lord and communicate with Him. As they become more disciplined with this model, their mentors could help them move to a different model.



## **A.C.T.S. (ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, AND SUPPLICATION) MODEL OF PRAYER**

This model allows the disciple to be systematic in his or her prayer life. They begin by praying prayers of adoration, praising the Lord for who He is. The second step is confession, sharing with the Lord any sin in his or her personal life. After a time of confession follows a time of thanksgiving to the Lord and acknowledgement of the blessings in his or her life. The final area of this personal prayer model is supplication, asking the Lord for things for others and themselves. Each day the prayer time is guided using the A.C.T.S. model.



### **PRAYING THROUGH SCRIPTURE**

When we learn how to pray through Scripture, we will not be imbalanced in our prayer time or become stale. Let us look at Psalm 90:1-3 as an example.

A Prayer of Moses, the man of God.

***Lord, You have been our refuge in every generation.***

*~ Psalm 90:1*

Lord, I thank You that You've made yourself known to mankind! Father, as I think back over my life, I am thankful that my parents were believers. I am also thankful that my grandmothers both loved You. The family heritage that You have given me is rich in love for You!

Lord, would You continue to bless my family with the knowledge of You! Lord, I pray that my grandchild would come to know You in Your time. Lord help my daughter and son-in-law to live a life that exemplifies their great love for You!

***Before the mountains were born, before You gave birth to the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity, You are God.***

*~ Psalm 90:2*

Lord, in your Word You remind me that You are the beginning and the end! I am grateful that You have all things in Your hands. Thank You today for the creation of snow, which reminds me of the pure love You have for me and of the forgiveness I can experience through You.

*You return mankind to the dust, saying, "Return,  
descendants of Adam."*

~ Psalm 90:3

Father, thank you for the peace of knowing that as a child of Yours, I have a home after this life; that heaven is my eternal home with You! Lord, today help me live to give You glory for Your everlasting plan for redemption. Lord, give me eyes to see those around me who need to hear about You through my witness today!

A disciple might read this entire Psalm and use it to guide his or her daily prayer time. The Psalms can be prayed through every day. Don Whitney has outlined a way to use the Scriptures as a guide through which to pray. Begin by looking at the Psalm that corresponds with that day's date (March 5th you would begin with Psalm 5). Then, add 30 to each of the chapter numbers. So March 5th you would begin with Psalm 5 then scan 35, 65, 95, and 125. A person would take about 30 to 60 seconds to scan these five Psalms, seeking the Spirit to direct you to which one to pray through today. The Psalms seem to be an excellent place to use this model. However, the narratives and the pastoral letters can also be a great guide to prayer.

Don Whitney asserts, "Reading alone was never the primary means of absorbing the Bible." His encouragement would lead to praying Scripture, as well as meditating on the Word of God.



## USING PRAYER IN THE BIBLE TO GUIDE OUR PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Begin by identifying a number of the prayers found in the Bible. As you begin to read and meditate on these prayers, how do they challenge your personal prayer life? An example can be found in Matthew 6:9-15. The Lord's Prayer is a place to pray through the text and come into agreement with the Lord about issues of obedience. As you pray through John 17, oneness could be the theme for your prayer. Many prayers throughout the Bible can be used in this way to enhance personal prayer.



## PRAYING WITH A MAP

Dr. Chuck Lawless teaches how to set up our prayer closet with many resources. He challenges his students to have a world map in their prayer closet to begin to pray for the world. He encourages us to be global in our prayers.<sup>17</sup>



## PRAYER JOURNAL

A prayer journal is a way to keep our prayer life current and fresh. A prayer journal can be as simple as a notebook or as sophisticated as a cell phone app. The basic journal would have a space for today's date, then a space for today's concerns followed by an area for prayers that have been answered with the date they were answered.



## ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER

For every believer, there are times of sweet prayer and very dry times of prayer. Often, during those dry times, it is easier to make prayer less important. One way to have a more balanced time of personal prayer is through having an accountability partner. Each person should find someone to hold him or her accountable each week and ask the questions, "What has God been saying to you in prayer? How is your prayer life going?" The time of accountability can offer encouragement during dry times and provide better understanding of the times of sweetness.



## PRAYING WITH YOUR SPOUSE

Praying together is a way for Christian couples to develop a deeper prayer life. Agreeing in prayer can show greater power during prayer. Dr. Gregory Frizzell's book, *Powerful Prayer for Every Family* is a resource that can be used to guide couples through a time of prayer. He offers three different patterns of partner praying: Evening or Morning Prayer Time, Spontaneous Conversational Couples' Prayer, Expanded Couples' Prayer time.



## BOOKS ABOUT PRAYER

Another way to enhance our personal prayer is by reading books from praying people. We are challenged to deepen our prayer lives when we read the great testimonies of prayer in other believers. See the recommended resources at the back of this book for suggestions.



## RESOURCES

In the appendix of this book you will find outlines for several of the models described above, including the following:

- How to have a Quiet Time
- A week's Quiet Time guide
- A Cleansing Guide for Fullness and Power by Dr. Gregory Frizzell
- P.I.P Daily Guide



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# Congregational Prayer Models

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Once a pastor and congregation have made the decision to begin praying together as a church, the next logical question is: “How will we pray together?” What should be the format or structure of the prayer meeting? Should the church just show up and pray or should it have some guidelines for the meeting? Authors and practitioners answer these questions in different ways. Some want to be careful not to over-program the prayer meeting to keep it from becoming too mechanical. There may be a need, however, to offer some structure to keep the meeting focused. What follows is a description of seven models for corporate prayer meetings. Each of these can be used in a one-hour prayer gathering. Each will be formatted in this document as a 6 P.M. evening prayer meeting.



### MODEL 1

#### *Traditional Bible Study and Prayer Meeting*

- 6:00** **Open the Bible and begin a 30-minute Bible study:** Consider topics relevant to church growth and church health. The book of Acts is a good place to help the church see the power of church health and what can happen as a church experiences the power of God. Consider providing a handout for Bible study participants to follow along. Share helpful insights from the text and allow attendees to answer questions in order to stimulate learning and encourage participation leading up to the prayer time. Be sure to hold yourself to a 30-minute study and bring the Bible study portion to a close just prior to 6:30.
- 6:30** **Prayer portion of the service:** For the sake of simplicity, consider dividing the prayer meeting time into two categories: prayers for those inside the church and prayers for those outside the church. Ask for prayer requests for those inside the church and call on two people to pray for those who were mentioned. Then ask the group to pray for those who are not part of the church family, the lost and unchurched, and ask two people to pray for those names. These categories can be developed in time to focus the prayer on particular ministries, prayers for those who have visited services and are prospects for salvation or church membership, or those who are known to be unchurched or de-churched. The key to this prayer

time is to maintain focus on both those who are part of the family of God and those who are not. Also, in time, the pastor can have the prayer meeting attendees gather into smaller groups and pray for the needs mentioned. The pastor may also, in time, open the meeting for all willing attendees to pray for the needs mentioned. This model offers a basic structure that can help transition a 45-minute Bible study into a more prayer-focused meeting. It can also be inverted to have the prayer portion first and the Bible study second.

**How to prepare:** First, the pastor prepares a Bible study that is relevant to the needs of the church, and he decides ahead of time what questions will be asked of the participants. He will then need to identify people who will be willing to lead in prayer when asked.



## MODEL 2

### *Highly Structured Focused Prayer Gathering*

(Each participant and attendee is given a detailed order of service stating the names of pre-determined people who will pray and the topics for which they will be praying.)

#### **6:00    Announcement of the meeting focus and opening prayer**

***Announcer:*** State the purpose for this particular prayer gathering, (i.e., church revival, vacation Bible school, back to school, strengthened families, church unity, etc.) and read an appropriate Scripture related to the overall event.

***Prayer 1:*** Pray for the overall prayer time and pray in general about the stated purpose of the meeting. Make sure the prayer relates to the Scripture that was read. The prayer should be prayed as if one person is interceding on behalf of all who are gathered and the attendees are encouraged to participate mentally and prayerfully with the person who is praying. For the remainder of this example, the prayers will relate to the topic of church growth.

#### **6:10    Focus: Pray for unity in church growth**

***Announcer:*** Read John 17:20-23 and state the importance of church unity in relation to evangelistic church growth.

***Prayer:*** Pray for the church to be unified around the mission of reaching the lost and unchurched for Christ.

**6:20    Focus: Pray for power in church growth**

*Announcer:* Read Acts 1:4-8 and state the importance of the Holy Spirit's power for biblical church growth to occur.

*Prayer:* Pray for a fresh visitation of the Holy Spirit on the church and its members. Pray for the pastor, deacons, Sunday school teachers, committee members, etc. to be filled with and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

**6:30    Focus: Pray for wisdom in church growth**

*Announcer:* Read Acts 6:1-7 and state that as the church grows, there will be issues that must be addressed and that the church and its leaders need wisdom from God to address relevant and pressing issues.

*Prayer:* Pray for wisdom in the use of space, facilities, new programs to begin, and other ministries to end or phase out, etc.

**6:40    Focus: Evangelism in church growth**

*Announcer:* Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and state that for the church to experience biblical growth, it must be focused on reaching the unchurched.

*Prayer:* Pray for the members to grow in personal evangelism, for the pastor to know how to do the work of the evangelist, and for the church to insist on being intentional about reaching people with the gospel.

**6:50    Focus: Pray for miracles in church growth**

*Announcer:* Read Acts 16:6-34 and state that as the early believers were moving forward in their mission, great miracles were happening for the sake of the gospel.

*Prayer:* Pray for the leadership of the Lord on the church with its mission. Pray that God will connect members of the church with those who desperately need the gospel. Pray the church will be able to celebrate the power of God in bringing people to Christ.

*Closing Prayer:* The pastor, or designated leader, should come to the front of the gathering and close out the meeting with a final prayer that will tie all the previous prayers together.

This prayer meeting model can be adjusted for any topic relevant to the life of the church and can be a good alternative format to the regular prayer meeting

structure to pray for a focused need in the congregation.

**How to prepare:** To prepare for this model, the pastor will produce an order of service showing the prayer categories, arrange for those who will read Scripture and those who will pray.



### MODEL 3

#### *A Combined Corporate and Small-Group Prayer Meeting*

(Adapted from Dr. Gregory Frizell's "Biblical Patterns for Powerful Church Prayer Meetings," Pages 23-25)<sup>18</sup>

- 6:00 Welcome and worship:** A brief time of welcoming the attendees to the prayer gathering and a song or chorus to set the tone for the meeting.
- 6:05 Testimonies of answered prayers:** This can be done by asking for volunteers from the congregation to share answered prayers, or arrange a person in advance who has experienced an answer to a prayer for which the group has been praying.
- 6:10 Scripture reading and opening prayer:** Read a passage of scripture that focuses on the goodness and grace of God in hearing and answering prayer.
- 6:15 Time for personal confession:** Allow people to have a moment to silently confess all things that may exist between them and God that would otherwise hinder their prayer efforts.
- 6:20 Identify prayer needs:** Take time to identify pressing needs in the life of the church, its members, and its ministries. Keep this time focused and help the effort by providing a prayer sheet with needs already listed.
- 6:25 Corporate prayer time:** Have someone open the prayer for one of the needs mentioned and then allow for spontaneous prayer from others in the gathering. Repeat this practice two or three times to highlight and pray for other presented needs.
- 6:35 Small-group prayer time:** Release individuals to gather into small groups and pray through all topics or the prayer list as the Spirit leads them. This could be a good time for someone to mention needs he or she may not feel comfortable mentioning in a larger group.

**6:55** **Concluding corporate prayer:** Allow for a few people to voice a final prayer focused on some of the needs mentioned. This is a good time also to pray for the upcoming Sunday worship service and for God's power to move in that service.

**How to prepare:** To prepare for this model, the pastor will need to coordinate with the worship leader to choose the music that will be most appropriate for the theme of the meeting; arrange testimonies that fit the prayer need of the church; select Scripture to be read; and designate individuals ahead of time who will be asked to lead in public prayer, as well as those who will lead a small group in prayer.



## MODEL 4

### *A Simple Corporate Prayer Meeting*

(Taken directly from Dr. Gregory Frizzell's, "Biblical Patterns for Powerful Church Prayer Meetings," pages 26-28. The only change is the time of the meeting from 7:00 to 6:00.)<sup>19</sup>

**6:00** **Welcome and opening hymns or choruses**

**6:05** **Brief testimonies of praise or answered prayer**

**6:10** **Scripture reading and spiritual preparation**

**6:20** **First season of prayer** (for the lost and backslidden)

**6:35** **Second season of prayer** (for missionaries, church ministries, denominational needs, revival and spiritual awakening)

**6:50** **Third season of prayer** (for the sick & bereaved)

**7:00** **Concluding prayer of agreement**

**How to prepare:** To prepare for this model, the pastor will need to coordinate with the worship leader to choose the music that will be most appropriate for the theme of the meeting; arrange testimonies that fit to the prayer need of the church, select Scripture to be read; provide a starter list to help the church pray for the lost and unchurched, as well as a list of missionaries, ministries, sick, and bereaved.



## MODEL 5

### *A God-Centered Prayer Meeting*

(This model is taken from John Franklin's book, "And the Place Was Shaken," Pages 66-70, with explanations added for each section of the prayer meeting.)<sup>20</sup>

- I. **Focus on God:** In this opening portion of the prayer meeting, attention should be given to activities that highlight who God is, what He can do, His presence, getting His perspective, and hearing His voice. Some of the possible activities include reading Scripture, hearing words from the leader, music, testimonies, or a dramatic skit.
- II. **Respond from the heart:** In this portion of the prayer meeting, attention is given to activities that will help prayer meeting participants become God-centered, exercise faith, become honest with God, repent of sin, depend on God, and praise the Lord. Some activities that could promote these responses include singing, small-group discussion, praying aloud all at once, responsive readings, and large-group sentence prayers.
- IV. **Present your request:** In this portion of the prayer meeting requests can be focused on the sick, financial needs, job needs, and other personal concerns.
- V. **Close in celebration:** The focus of this portion should be directed to times of thanksgiving and praise.

**How to prepare:** To prepare for this model, the pastor will need to give prayerful attention to the focused purpose of the prayer meeting; think through what tools he will use to help the participants focus on God; consider how people will be asked to respond to God; and prepare for the direction of the celebration time at the end of the meeting.



## MODEL 6

### *Prayer Stations Model*

(This model could be used occasionally to pray for the upcoming Sunday morning worship service or any other specific topic of choice.)

The idea behind the Prayer Stations Model is to establish five stations of prayer throughout the church auditorium or worship center. The praying group is divided into five

approximately equal groups and asked to begin praying at one of the five stations. After a period of 10 minutes, the pastor will signal a time to change stations, and the groups will then move to the next station in order for their next 10 minutes of prayer until each group has prayed at all stations and the pastor concludes the prayer meeting. One example of establishing the five stations for prayer is listed below:

**Station One: The podium**

In this opening portion of the prayer meeting, attention should be given to activities that highlight who God is, what He can do, His presence, getting His perspective, and hearing His voice. Some of the possible activities include reading Scripture, hearing words from the leader, music, testimonies, or a dramatic skit.

**Station Two: The choir or praise team area**

At this station, prayers will gather around the area where song leaders, worship leaders, musicians, and singers will lead the congregation in corporate worship. They could then pray for the selection of the songs, the worshipful spirit of those who will lead them, the support of the congregation in singing the songs, and for God to be honored by the music.

**Station Three: The guest welcoming area**

At this station, prayers will gather around the front doors into the sanctuary and pray for the guests who will visit the service. They can pray that guests will come and that when they do, they will be welcomed and treated as honored guests in the name of Jesus. They can also pray that the greeters and others who will minister to guests do so out of a welcoming and hospitable spirit.

**Station Four: The pews or seating area**

At this station, prayers will gather around one particular set of pews or chairs that is representative of the entire seating area. They will then pray for the families and individuals who will sit in those seats on Sunday morning. They can pray for the needs of families and singles, for their involvement in the ministries of the church, and their devotion to Christ.

**Station Five: The altar or front of the stage area**

At this station, prayers will gather around the front of the stage where people will come during the invitation in response to God's

activity in their life. They can pray for the lost to come seeking counsel on salvation; for the backslidden to come in repentance and surrender; for those who are being called into vocational ministry to come seeking affirmation from the church family; or for families and singles to come uniting with the church family.

This model serves as a good tool to refresh the weekly prayer gathering and is helpful to pray for special occasions or “big-day” Sunday morning services such as Easter, Christmas, revival services, or other days that are set aside to welcome guests and reach out to the lost.

**How to prepare:** To prepare for this model, the pastor will need to designate and identify each of the stations for prayer and identify several ways to pray at each station. It also may be helpful to appoint a leader for each of the groups that will gather at the stations.



## MODEL 7

### *The Ministry Representative Model*

(This model involves representatives from the various church ministries requesting specific prayer.)

The Ministry Representative Model is structured so that leaders of the church’s various ministries are asked to come into the prayer meeting at scheduled times, take a seat at a designated spot, share a brief request on behalf of their particular ministries, and receive prayer from the group.

**6:00 Pastor opens the meeting:** The pastor announces that the prayer meeting is about to begin, explains the format for meeting, provides a seat for the ministry representatives, and asks the congregation to gather toward the front for the comfort of those for whom the group will be praying. He will then lead in a general opening prayer for the various ministries and volunteers of the church.

**6:05 Representative for the nursery/child care ministry:** The designated representative for the nursery and child care ministry takes the seat up front and shares the needs of this particular ministry. Two designated persons pray for this ministry and the needs mentioned. (Each subsequent representative will follow the same format.)

**6:15 Representative for the youth ministry**



**6:25 Representative for the children's ministry**

**6:35 Representative for Sunday school ministry**

**6:45 Representative for Vacation Bible school**

**6:55 Pastor closes the prayer meeting:** The pastor calls on two or three members to thank the Lord for the volunteers who serve His church and designate one of those to pray to close out the meeting.

This prayer meeting model allows the church to occasionally lift up in prayer those who faithfully serve. It also allows the members to see the faces of those for whom they are praying and feel a personal connection to the ministry being emphasized. The categories can be changed according to the needs and ministries of the church, and the representatives can be changed from leaders to the various volunteers in those ministries. This model has an added benefit of helping those who serve feel valued and supported by others in their church. In some cases, it may seem appropriate for attendees to place their hands on the shoulders of those for whom they are praying. This should only be done with the agreement of those being prayed for as some may feel claustrophobic or anxious when in close proximity to others.

**How to prepare:** To prepare for this model, the pastor will need to arrange for a representative from each of the designated ministries to come to the prayer meeting at scheduled times throughout the hour.

These seven models for corporate prayer meetings are meant to be used as templates that can be copied and applied to one's ministry context, and also as guidelines for leaders to develop their own structure for prayer meetings. Each of them requires advance preparation on the part of the one leading the prayer meeting. In some cases, the preparation will involve a prayer sheet to be provided to participants, while in other cases the preparation will involve making contact with people ahead of time to solicit their involvement in the prayer meeting. While no structure can guarantee a powerful prayer meeting, some structure is likely needed to help participants remain focused. In order to keep these prayer meetings fresh, the leader should pay attention to preparation, involvement of many people, the use of different structures occasionally, and, most importantly, prayer for the meeting.

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## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### **A Cleansing Guide for Fullness and Power** by Dr. Gregory Frizzell

Dr. Frizzell's resource guides the reader through prayer, examining seven areas for personal spiritual inventory. These areas are Pure Thoughts, Godly Attitudes, Holy Speech, Right Relationships, Rejecting Sin, Renouncing Sin, and Embracing Full Surrender and Obedience to Jesus. Using this guide will allow the Holy Spirit to evaluate areas of the believer's life that need attention.

### **A Passion for Prayer** by Tom Elliff

This book seeks to help the reader develop or deepen his or her communion with God. Drawing on personal experiences and the reassurances of God's Word, Pastor Tom Elliff shares the principles, challenges, and disciplines of prayer.

### **A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World** by Paul Miller

Author Paul Miller shares his insights and conclusions about how to connect the broken pieces of a believer's life and allow prayer—even when poorly delivered—to fill the gaps with meaning and substance.

### **A Six Month Guide to Better Prayer** by Paul Miller

This book has wisdom from some of the great people of prayer over the centuries.

### **A Weekly Prayer Guide**

Some churches produce a weekly prayer guide for their members to use to be consistent and strategic in their prayer lives. North American Mission Board, International Mission Board, and Women's Missionary Union also have weekly prayer guides available that can be used by individuals to enhance their personal prayer lives.

### **And the Place Was Shaken: How to Lead a Powerful Prayer Meeting** by John Franklin

John Franklin highlights not only the theology behind powerful corporate prayer times, but also the effective habits and practices of a praying church. Know why God especially requires corporate prayer.

### **How to Develop a Powerful Personal Prayer Life** by Dr. Gregory Frizzell

This practical biblical tool takes believers from seeking God's hand to effectively seeking His face.

### **Models for Dynamic Prayer Meetings** by Dr. Gregory Frizzell

This resource is available only at [frizzellministries.org/resources](http://frizzellministries.org/resources). It helps the reader discover that God-led prayer meetings are powerful and energizing, not boring or intimidating.

**Organizing Your Prayer Closet: A New and Life-Changing Way to Pray** by Gina Duke

This workbook helps the reader to better understand how, why, and when to pray. The book is organized with instruction for how to pray in the first half of the book. The last half of the book gives the reader a more organized way to pray and account for answered prayers. The book is a true labor of love from the author's heart to be used for individuals to grow in their love and dependence on God.

**Pleading with Southern Baptists: To Humbly Come Together Before God in Clear Agreement, Visible Union, & in Extraordinary Prayer for the Next Great Awakening & for the World to Be Reached for Christ** by Ronnie Floyd

**Powerful Prayer for Every Family** by Dr. Gregory Frizzell

This is a resource that can be used to guide couples through a time of prayer. Frizzell uses three different patterns of partner praying: Evening or Morning Prayer Time, Spontaneous Conversational Couples' Prayer, and Expanded Couples' Prayer time.

**Praying in the Word of God** by Kathie Grant

This book is a guide to praise, confession of sin, praying for believers, and praying for the lost. The book is filled with Scripture and prayers for personal prayer time.

**Praying the Bible** by Dr. Donald S. Whitney

This book outlines an easy-to-grasp method that has the power to transform a prayer life by praying the words of Scripture.

**The Circle Maker: Praying Circles Around Your Biggest Dreams and Greatest Fears** by Mark Batterson

Sharing inspirational stories from his own experiences as a circle maker, Batterson helps the reader uncover his or her heart's deepest desires and God-given dreams and unleash them through the kind of audacious prayer that God delights in answering.

**The Weapon of Prayer** by E.M. Bounds

E. M. Bounds offers perhaps a more profound understanding of prayer than any other contemporary Christian thinker. His classic books on the personal communication with God explore how prayer must come from the whole being and strengthens faith in Christian lives.

**30 Days to a More Dynamic Prayer Life: Making God Your Focus** by John Franklin

This resource provides practical help with growing a relationship with the Lord and deepening a prayer life. This book has a reading and interaction for each day that will facilitate growth to a dynamic prayer life.



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## APPENDIX

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### MY NEXT STEP COMMITMENT

As a result of what I have just read, I will take the following next steps...

1. In my personal prayer life, I will \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. In leading my congregation to more intense congregational prayer,

I will \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. One thing we are doing well and need to continue regarding

congregational prayer is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. One thing our church lacks in congregational prayer is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. I will make myself accountable to the following person regarding

these next steps \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## **INVENTORY 1: BEHAVIOR-BASED INVENTORY OF PASTORAL AND CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER** (to be completed by pastor)

### **Personal Inventory**

(to be completed by the pastor regarding his personal prayer life)

I have recently done the following as it relates to my personal prayer life (check all that apply).

- ☐ Spent daily time with God in prayer
- ☐ Experienced meaningful personal prayer times
- ☐ Prayed for the salvation of lost persons by name
- ☐ Thanked God for a specific blessing in my life and family
- ☐ Prayed for my church staff and church leaders
- ☐ Prayed for the Sunday services at our church
- ☐ Prayed in my heart as others led in congregational prayer in my church
- ☐ Recorded (in a notebook or journal) the things I need to pray for regularly
- ☐ Prayed for more than a half-hour
- ☐ Prayed reflecting on a Bible passage I had just read
- ☐ Spent time listening to God as a part of my prayer time
- ☐ Spent time meditating on the meaning of a Scripture passage asking God to clarify the meaning and application needed

### **Congregational Inventory**

(to be completed by the pastor regarding congregational prayer)

Our congregation has recently provided the following as it relates to congregational prayer (check all that apply).

- ☐ Personal prayer opportunities with other believers
- ☐ A congregational prayer time of more than 30 minutes in duration
- ☐ Meaningful congregational prayer time in worship services
- ☐ Encouragement to come forward to seek prayer at the close of a service
- ☐ Prayer times devoted to praying for lost people
- ☐ Intentional prayer times for gospel impact in our community, state, county, and world
- ☐ Prayer times devoted to an unreached people group
- ☐ Prayer times devoted to specific ministries in our church
- ☐ Prayer for additional leaders and laborers to be raised up
- ☐ Prayer for students by name
- ☐ Prayer for children and students attending our church to be saved





## INVENTORY 2: HAVING A BALANCED APPROACH TO CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

**This inventory serves as a checklist to determine: “How balanced is our congregational prayer ministry?”**

Recently our church has prayed for the following in a congregational prayer time (check all that apply).

- \_\_\_\_\_ For a fresh vision of God
- \_\_\_\_\_ For brokenness and humility before God
- \_\_\_\_\_ For broken and strained relationships to be restored through forgiveness
- \_\_\_\_\_ For lost people to be saved
- \_\_\_\_\_ For boldness to engage in spiritual conversations and sharing the gospel
- \_\_\_\_\_ For cleansing of personal and congregational sins
- \_\_\_\_\_ For the congregation to fulfill the Great Commission and make disciples
- \_\_\_\_\_ For our pastor, staff, and leaders
- \_\_\_\_\_ For local, state, and national government leaders
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prayed through Scripture passages that relate to congregational health and vitality
- \_\_\_\_\_ For receptivity and understanding of what the Holy Spirit is saying to our church
- \_\_\_\_\_ For physical and spiritual healing for persons in the church and community
- \_\_\_\_\_ For a fresh vision from God and His preferred future for the congregation
- \_\_\_\_\_ For the ministries of the church to be effective in helping the church fulfill its God-given mission
- \_\_\_\_\_ For the upcoming Sunday services
- \_\_\_\_\_ For the gospel to be proclaimed to the ends of the earth through SBC missionaries and mission work
- \_\_\_\_\_ For other Bible-believing churches and gospel-focused ministries in the community



### INVENTORY 3: EVALUATING THE HEALTH OF MEMBERS PERSONAL PRAYER LIVES

**This inventory could be administered to members of the congregation on a Sunday morning (during a Sunday school hour or as a take-home assignment to be returned to the church the next Sunday).**

How often do you engage in personal prayer?

- ☐ Once a day
- ☐ Three to five times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ I pray but not constantly
- ☐ More than once a day

When I have a personal prayer time, I ...

- ☐ pray first thing in the morning
- ☐ do so as a part of my devotional time
- ☐ pray in the evening
- ☐ keep a prayer journal
- ☐ meditate on Scripture

When I pray, I usually spend

- ☐ 5-10 minutes
- ☐ 10-15 minutes
- ☐ 15-25 minutes
- ☐ more than 30 minutes

During my normal time in personal prayer

- ☐ I do all the talking
- ☐ I spend most of the time talking

- ☐ I listen and talk equally
- ☐ I listen more than I talk

I have a prayer partner that I meet with

- ☐ once a week
- ☐ more than once a week
- ☐ once every couple of weeks
- ☐ as we find time

The church where I am a member provides \_\_\_\_\_ resources for personal prayer (fill in the blank with the word or phrase that best describes your church)

- ☐ weekly
- ☐ monthly
- ☐ seasonal
- ☐ no
- ☐ very few
- ☐ too many

Our church encourages congregational prayer

- ☐ through a weekly service
- ☐ through small groups
- ☐ through development of prayer partners

Our church has ... (complete the sentence with the statement that best describes your church)

- ☐ helped me in my prayer life over the past year
- ☐ given me confidence in my prayer life over the past year
- ☐ not contributed to my growth in prayer over the past year

My church has a \_\_\_\_\_ prayer ministry (fill in the blank with the word or phrase that best describes your church)

- \_\_\_\_\_ strong
- \_\_\_\_\_ weak
- \_\_\_\_\_ non-existent
- \_\_\_\_\_ exciting



**Electronic copies of the above inventories can be accessed at the following link:**

*<http://www.kybaptist.org/prayer>*



## HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME

### 1. Make a personal quiet time the top priority of your day.

Select a time to spend with God that fits your schedule. Usually, morning is preferable, but you may want or need to choose another time.

My quiet time is/will be \_\_\_\_\_ every day.

### 2. Prepare the night before.

If your quiet time is in the morning, set your alarm. If it is difficult for you to wake up, plan to exercise, bathe, dress, and eat before your quiet time.

Select a place where you can be alone. Gather materials, such as your Bible, notebook, and a pen or a pencil, and put them in the place you selected so that you will not waste time in the morning.

The place for my quiet time is/will be \_\_\_\_\_.

### 3. Develop a balanced plan of Bible reading and prayer.

Pray for guidance during your quiet time.

Follow a systematic plan to read your Bible. You can read through a book, follow a devotional guide, study a character of the Bible, or study a topic, like forgiveness, to get you started.

Make notes of what God says to you through His Word. Is there an example to follow or avoid? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a truth that should influence your life?

Pray in response to the Scriptures you have read.

As you pray, use various components of prayer. Express your love for God. Thank Him for giving you His life through Christ. Share with God how you need His power in your life. Ask Him to live through you as you make decisions throughout the day.

### 4. Be persistent until you are consistent.

Strive for consistency rather than for length of time spent. Try to have a few minutes of quiet time every day rather than long devotional periods every other day.

Expect interruptions. Ask family members to respect your quiet time

and turn off any electronic devices that may distract you. Satan tries to prevent you from spending time with God. He fears even the weakest Christians who are on their knees. Plan around interruptions rather than being frustrated by them.

Use a calendar to mark that you have completed your quiet time for the day. Remember, God wants to spend quality time with you. Don't rush through your quiet time so that you can check off a 'to-do' item.

#### **5. Focus on whom you are meeting.**

View this as an opportunity to spend time with God rather than a habit of having quiet time. If you scheduled a meeting with the person you admire most, you would not allow anything to stand in your way. Meeting with God is even more important. He created you with a capacity for fellowship with Him, and He saved you to bring about that fellowship.



### **P.I.P. DAILY GUIDE**

**Prepare: Meeting the Real God**

**Intake: Making God's Word Real**

**Praise: Worshiping a Real God**



### **QUIET TIME:**

**Monday: 1 John 4:13-16**

**Tuesday: Psalm 119:11-16**

**Wednesday: Matthew 6:9-13**

**Thursday: Colossians 1:15-20**

**Friday: Colossians 1:21-24**

**Saturday: Romans 5:1-5**

**Sunday: Romans 5:12-17**



## **A CLEANSING GUIDE FOR FULLNESS AND POWER** by Dr. Gregory Frizzell

### **1. Pure Thoughts: Proverbs 23:7a; 2 Corinthians 10:5**

- a. Do I have a pattern of unclean or lustful thoughts?
- b. Do I think far more about worldly things than spiritual things?
- c. Am I often guilty of angry thoughts?
- d. Do I frequently entertain thoughts of doubt instead of trust?
- e. Am I often filled with thoughts of bitterness and unforgiveness?

### **2. Godly Attitudes: Philippians 2:5**

- a. Am I lukewarm about spiritual things?
- b. Am I in any way proud or condescending toward others?
- c. Is there anyone of whom I think jealous, envious thoughts?
- d. Do I have an attitude of doubt or unbelief?
- e. Do I have a tendency toward being harsh or critical?

### **3. Holy Speech: Matthew 12:36; Ephesians 4:29, 5:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:18**

- a. Have I uttered any inappropriate or slang speech?
- b. Do I have a pattern of cursing or off-color words?
- c. Am I prone to exaggeration or lying?
- d. Do I have a pattern of critical, judgmental speech?
- e. Have I said things that would cause great shame if made public?

### **4. Right Relationships: Matthew 5:23-24; 6:14-15**

- a. Is there anyone I have offended but from whom I have not asked forgiveness?
- b. Have I failed to seek full reconciliation and make restitution to anyone I have offended or harmed?
- c. Do I harbor the slightest unforgiveness and anger toward anyone?
- d. As a father/mother, am I serving my family?
- e. Have I in any way failed to show respect or attention to my parents?
- f. Have I spoken negatively about someone behind his or her back?
- g. Am I involved in any form of gossip or negative, critical speech?
- h. Is there any pattern of failing to respect and support my spiritual leaders?

### **5. Rejecting Sins of Commission: Psalm 51:3**

- a. Am I engaged in any form of sexual immorality?

- b. Have I compromised my beliefs by viewing anything unclean via movies, TV, or Internet?
- c. Do I have habits that abuse my body?
- d. Do I commit idolatry by placing anyone or anything over loving and serving God?
- e. Have I dabbled in any form of gambling or new ageism?
- f. Am I doing anything for which I do not have perfect peace?
- g. Am I in any way harsh or unkind to others?
- h. Have I abused God's grace by taking sin lightly?
- i. Do I confess sins but fail to forsake them?

#### **6. Renouncing Sin of Omission: James 4:17**

- a. Am I failing to abide in Jesus by neglecting regular time in His Word and prayer?
- b. Do I neglect to be a daily witness and fail to generously support evangelism and missions?
- c. Have I neglected to discern and use my spiritual gifts?
- d. Am I allowing any point of spiritual bondage to remain in my life?
- e. Have I failed to support and respect my spiritual leaders?
- f. Am I failing to daily pursue holiness?
- g. Am I robbing God by failing to tithe and give generous offerings beyond the tithe?
- h. Have I neglected to work and improve my marriage and family life?
- i. Do I pray for my family?

#### **7. Embracing Full Surrender and Obedience to Jesus: Matthew 16:24**

- a. Have I willfully failed to surrender every part of my life to God's total control?
- b. Has God told me to do something, yet I still haven't obeyed Him?
- c. Is there some area where I pretend not to know what God is saying, yet deep down I know I do?
- d. Are there things God has told me to stop, yet I still do them?
- e. Is there any area of service I should be doing, yet I am not?
- f. Have I continued to sin willfully in areas about which God has clearly spoken?





# STRENGTHENING

## CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

**THE KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION:**  
**created by churches, for churches, to help churches**  
**reach Kentucky and the world for Christ**

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