

HOW TO LEAD A DYNAMIC PRAYER MEETING

We have blood-bought access to the THRONE OF GRACE. We must learn to find mercy and grace in time of need. We must learn to make withdrawals from the THRONE OF GOD'S GENEROSITY. As Spurgeon said, 'The way to bring God great glory is to draw from God great grace.'

This document will:

- 1) Explore what the early church prayed for (compiled by John Piper).
- 2) Give some tips to leading a dynamic prayer meeting.

1) THE EXAMPLE OF THE EARLY CHURCH'S PRAYER CONTENT.

They called on God to vindicate his people in their cause. And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? (Luke 18:7).

They called on God to save unbelievers. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved (Romans 10:1).

They called on God to direct the use of the sword. Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying through all prayer and supplication on every occasion . . . (Ephesians 6:17-18)

They called on God for boldness in proclamation. Pray at all times in the Spirit . . . and also for me, that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel (Ephesians 6:18-19) And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness (Acts 4:29).

They called on God for signs and wonders. And now Lord . . . grant your servants to speak thy word with boldness . . . while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of thy holy servant Jesus (Acts 4:30). Elijah was a man of like nature with ourselves and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit (James 5:17-18).

They called on God for the healing of wounded comrades. Let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick man and the Lord will raise him up (James 5:14-15).

They called on God for the healing of unbelievers. It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery; and Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him healed him (Acts 28:8).

They called on God for the casting out of demons. And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer" (Mark 9:29).

They called on God for miraculous deliverances. So Peter was kept in prison; but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church . . . When he realized [he had been freed], 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 12:5,12). But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake (Acts 16:25-26).

They called on God for the raising of the dead. But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed; then turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, rise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up (Acts 9:40).

They called on God to supply his troops with necessities. Give us this day our daily bread (Matthew 6:11).

They called on God for strategic wisdom. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him (James 1:5).

They called on God to establish leadership in the outposts. And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they believed (Acts 14:23).

They called on God to send out reinforcements. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest (Matthew 9:38). While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off (Acts 13:2-3).

They called on God for the success of other missionaries. I appeal to you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints (Romans 15:30-31).

They called on God for unity and harmony in the ranks. I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me (John 17:20-21).

They called on God for the encouragement of togetherness. [We are] praying earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith? (1 Thessalonians 3:10).

They called on God for a mind of discernment. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ (Philippians 1:9-10).

They called on God for a knowledge of his will. And so, from the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding (Colossians 1:9).

They called on God to know him better. [We have not ceased to pray for you to be] increasing in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10; cf. Ephesians 1:17).

They called on God for power to comprehend the love of Christ. I bow my knees before the Father . . . that you may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge (Ephesians 3:14,18).

They called on God for a deeper sense of assured hope. I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers . . . that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints (Ephesians 1:16,18).

They called on God for strength and endurance. [We have not ceased to pray for you to be] strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy (Colossians 1:11; cf. Ephesians 3:16).

They called on God for deeper sense of his power within them. I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers . . . that you may know . . . what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe (Ephesians 1:16,19).

They called on God that their faith not be destroyed. I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren (Luke 22:32). Watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man (Luke 21:36).

They called on God for greater faith. Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24; cf. Ephesians 3:17).

They called on God that they might not fall into temptation. Lead us not into temptation (Matthew 6:13). Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak (Matthew 26:41).

They called on God that he would complete their resolves. To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his call, and may fulfil every good resolve and work of faith by his power (2 Thessalonians 1:11).

They called on God that they would do good works. [We have not ceased to pray for you that you] lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work (Colossians 1:10).

They called on God for forgiveness of their sins. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors (Matthew 6:12).

They called on God for protection from the evil one. Deliver us from evil (Matthew 6:13)

2) SOME IDEAS TO HELP YOU LEAD A DYNAMIC PRAYER MEETING.

- As a general guideline, and feel free to break from this format, try this format for a prayer meeting:
 - 1) Praise (everyone)
 - 2) Practical direction (leaders)
 - 3) Prophetically pray (everyone).
- Lift the sights of the people to the greatness of God. He's large and in charge. Read passages that build faith and amplify God's power, faithfulness and His promises! As a general guide, therefore let the first part of the prayer meeting be devoted to worship and praise.
- Sometimes testimonies of answered prayer from previous weeks can be very encouraging.
- Avoid being intense or overly emotional. Cultivate an atmosphere of joy and gladness. That was the dominant mood of the church in Acts! However, also beware of being non-enthusiastic, and non-energetic, which both can lead to a more 'dull' prayer time.
- Keep the word of God central and encourage biblical prayers.
- Use Acts 4:23-31 as a biblical model for corporate prayer. See the role of scripture, the raising of voices in agreement and the anticipation of the Holy Spirit's presence and activity among them.
- When you lead a prayer meeting make sure that the directions you give are clear. In other words if you want one person to pray at a time, say so. If you want everyone praying together aloud at the same time, say so. People need clear leadership.
- Try and coach the people to pray along tracks and avoid a whole lot of tangent prayer. Encourage the people to wait on the Holy Spirit for a while.
- Practice times of waiting to let a key prophetic word settle. Pray off that word before moving to an unrelated issue.
- Encourage the full participation of the priesthood. This happens when all pray together. But this can also be expressed in smaller groups. Give clear briefs to the groups. Sometimes it is helpful to encourage short prophetic feedback from the groups.
- Don't allow prayers of criticism, anger or frustration to go unchallenged. Neither allow people to push a cause/agenda. Gently correct and then help that person afterwards.

- As elders/deacons we need to measure the ultimate success of a prayer meeting by sense of God's presence and the level of contribution of the saints. For a season it may be necessary for some of us to limit our contributions to once or at the most twice. (Not for the person leading!)
- Encourage a non-religious and uncontrived culture of agreement in prayer. "Yes Lord!" "Please Jesus!" and, "For your glory alone God!" are some of the heartfelt expressions of agreement that should characterize our prayer times.
- Praying with the understanding and praying in tongues should also be encouraged. Be careful of intimidating those who are not yet praying in tongues. Always give explanation so we avoid confusion. Remind the people that we are participating in a supernatural faith.
- Arrive at the meeting prepared with some "burdens/issues" that we feel called to pray about. Bring the key info to the people without overwhelming them with facts. Beware of confidential information being used unwisely.
- Always seek perspective of the elders present if you are unsure about anything. That is what teaming is all about.
- Beware of making simple matters complicated (like praying for something where the matter is clear biblically) and making complicated matters simple (like Israel and the question of the land borders).
- Be creative but avoid the trap of thinking that "the new" is always best. Let your creative juices serve the strong prophetic thrust of prayer. What is God calling us to pray for and how, are more important issues than a pretty PowerPoint that stimulates our senses. Nonetheless, use them if it serves the moment. Remember, what God will bless as a supplement, He will curse as a substitute.
- Keep the concept of bowls and harps central. In Rev 5 we see the relationship between worship (harps) and prayer (bowels on incense). Worship/praise are a critical part of honouring the God we are praying to.
- Encourage the priesthood to pray short/sharp prayers. Allow for weightier contributions from the spiritual heavyweights. But generally encourage people to keep prayers shorter. Discourage anyone from dominating a prayer meeting with too many contributions, and too-long contributions.
- Help everyone to realize that prayer is a muscle that develops or wastes away, depending on its use. It is not helpful that people are faithful in attendance but not in actually praying.

- Never be afraid to call the group to humility and high praise for God, when prayers are answered or when we are experiencing seasons of favour. There are many ways to do this, but it is key to building a credible history with God.