

A Sure-Fire Catalyst to Get People to Pray

Prayer leaders and pastors often ask me, “What one prayer idea seems to be the most effective at getting the most people in a church praying?” There are a lot of effective prayer ideas these days—but each seems to bring a different result.

But when the question is “which idea is most effective at getting the most people praying,” the answer is easy: doing an all-church prayer initiative.

What is a prayer initiative? It is when everyone prays on the same theme over a set period of time—often a week, month or 40 days. Since it is for a manageable time period, if promoted properly within a church, a prayer initiative often inspires even those who don’t regularly pray about church issues to do so.

Many denominations have annual initiatives such as a Week of Prayer. Churches often use prayer initiatives prior to a building or development campaign. Missions groups have been using them for years (Praying through the Window, 30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World, etc.) Why? Because if they are supported by the leadership of a church and are promoted well, nothing rallies more people to prayer than an initiative.

The Benefits

What are the benefits of prayer initiatives?

1. They teach people to pray biblically. Most prayer initiatives offer great prayer guides, with powerful, kingdom prayers that are based upon Scripture. So people are not left to their own abilities to think what should

I pray? They are given clear direction. And that puts people at ease. The Scriptures also make sure they pray God's will. As a result, they learn to "pray better."

2. It provides a season of strong corporate prayer in a church. When praying through an initiative there is a lot of agreement taking place, which Scripture reminds us brings results (Mt. 18:18-20). Powerful corporate prayer brings results—CrossPoint Church is a clear example of how God responds when a church takes prayer seriously. Another small-town church that participated in Seek God for the City (see Featured Resource) a number of years ago saw its congregation double (from 30 to 60) in a few months' time.
3. It increase participation in the ongoing prayer life of the church. A number of people will get so excited by what God did to them spiritually, that they will continue to pray for and with the church afterwards. Churches that provide and promote additional prayer opportunities following an initiative will see a raise in participation.

As prayer leaders we often struggle to increase our church's prayer energy. I firmly believe that an initiative can provide the quickest jump start available. It can revolutionize your church!

—**Jonathan Graf** is the president of the Church Prayer Leaders Network. A popular speaker on prayer, Jon is available for weekend prayer conferences. You can contact him at jon@prayerleader.com.