

Catching Prayer



My seven-year-old grandson can drive! Oh, don't worry, Jack doesn't take the car out on the highway. But he can drive our tractor/mower and our all-terrain vehicle on our rural property. Again, don't worry. He can't do it without Grampy sitting with him. There is a safety mechanism that requires him to sit on the seat—or the engine turns off. And since Jack can't reach the gas while sitting, it will be a few years before he can mow without me!

I am amazed, however, at what he picks up simply by watching how his Grampy does it. He knows where the key goes and how the gear shift works. He can steer, although that still needs some improvement.

Jack did not learn his tractor skills from reading a manual. No, he watched and copied what he saw.

Prayer is caught, too.

Model It!

An important reason to fight for and improve corporate prayer in a church is that it provides an incubator where new

believers can observe prayer—and then learn to do it. Churches that have no place for believers to pray together stymie the prayer growth of the new believers. It's not helpful for the "struggle-to-pray" people either.

Young or struggling believers have few models to follow when they do not see prayer being practiced or when they do not hear a variety of prayer styles incorporated into gatherings. There is nothing to catch.

As prayer leaders we might bemoan our poorly attended prayer meetings, but do we work on making these prayer meetings dynamic and engaging? So many prayer meetings are dull and boring, with only seasoned believers who pray for several minutes, each covering everything on the list. That can deter novice pray-ers from even trying to pray aloud.

What about in our worship services? Is there any variety of prayer happening that can be a model for people? Or do we simply use opening and closing prayers, covering the same prayer topic every week?

As prayer leaders, have you thought of mentoring a new believer or younger believer in prayer? You could be a great role model for them. But make sure a significant part of your mentoring is letting the individual(s) hear you pray so they can catch it!

In addition to modeling, however, sometimes a "user manual" can be helpful to understand some of the finer points of prayer operations and pass them on. PrayerShop Publishing recently released two books that can help you encourage prayer to be caught in your church. *Developing Dynamic Prayer in a Church* (an ebook) was written by me. And *Prayer That's Caught and Taught* (a print book) was written by *Prayer Connect* editor Carol Madison. Both are available through prayershop.org.

Help others "learn to drive" their prayer lives. Let prayer be caught!

–Jonathan Graf is the publisher of *Prayer Connect* magazine and a popular speaker on prayer. To receive more encouragement and practical help like this article, subscribe to *Prayer Connect*.