

Prayer Leader or Prayer Catalyst

In his latest interview, Phil Miglioratti of The Reimagine.Network talks with *Prayer Connect* editor, Carol Madison about the new book, *The Praying Church Handbook*, that Carol compiled from material in *Prayer Connect*.

Of key interest in the interview is the distinction between prayer leader and prayer catalyst.

Phil: To compile this book you had to look through the large archive of “Prayer Leader” columns of *Prayer Connect* magazine. Describe the reader you had in mind as you were reviewing past columns.

Carol: Our Prayer Leader columns are designed to encourage and inspire local church prayer leaders in their designated roles of mobilizing prayer in their churches. We share ideas, resources, and ways they can increase the prayer involvement of their congregations. While this book will not be for everyone interested in prayer, it will help those with the role of inspiring various avenues of prayer in their churches.

Phil: What were you looking for that made these 30 stand out?

Carol: I tried to categorize the chapters based on specific prayer topics or overarching prayer themes. For instance, there is a section on establishing your church as a house of prayer. Or you might be interested in ideas of how to strengthen corporate prayer—or prayer related to families and younger generations. We also include a section on special prayer emphases like human trafficking, prayer needs of the military, or our desperate need for revival. There’s a smattering of just about every kind of creative prayer angle.

Phil: In the Foreword, Jonathan Graf identifies the “prayer catalyst.” Not a ministry position but someone who? . . .

Carol: Every church has a prayer catalyst—or more than one! In fact, I’m sure you could ask people in any local church to give the name of a prayer catalyst—and they could come up with one. Probably the same one! Prayer catalysts are always thinking about ways to engage more people in prayer. They champion prayer, show up for prayer, and invite others to join them on prayer adventures. They may not necessarily be the devoted and fervent “intercessors” who pray for long hours and remember every request. But they are ones who inspire and equip others to pray with more hope and faith.

Phil: Agree or Disagree— “Local Church Prayer” is different from individual prayer, and prayer catalysts must equip church members to reimagine praying through teaching and modeling.

Carol: Local church prayer has a corporate aspect to it, in that we seek to join with others in prayers of agreement, vision, and Kingdom impact. While our personal prayer lives can be rich in intimacy with the Lord, consistent in prayers for the needs of family and friends, and a deepening of our faith, corporate prayer turns the focus toward a collective desire to see the advancement of God’s Kingdom through revival, the ministries of the church, and the outreach efforts. But many people can be intimidated by prayer that involves others, and so prayer catalysts play a key role in providing encouragement, modeling, and equipping. People learn from hearing prayer catalysts pray with confidence!

Phil: What signs do you see that reveal the strengths and expose the weaknesses of local church praying?

Carol: Local church praying is always most motivated by praying church leaders, including the senior pastor. If prayer is viewed as “*something the intercessors do*,” then local church prayer will not grow beyond a small group. When the

pastors and leaders model prayer in worship services, call for and attend prayer gatherings, and invite participation in prayer initiatives throughout the year, you can count on growth of the prayer movement. If the senior leadership relegates prayer to others—rather than lead or partner alongside other leaders—you will have faithful, but frustrated intercessors who long for more. *Local church praying is as healthy as its praying leaders.*

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