ISSUE TEN, MAY/JUNE 2013

PRAYERCONNECT Connecting to the Heart of Christ through Prayer

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Carol Madison

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Need a Speaker for Your Prayer Conference or Event?

There are a number of gifted speakers associated with *Prayer Connect*. Jonathan Graf regularly ministers in churches of varying sizes. Carol Madison is also available to minister in the area of prayer for revival and community transformation. Our parent organizations, Harvest Prayer Ministries and the Church Prayer Leaders Network, have many speakers associated with their ministries. You can find their contact information at the respective emails or websites.

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The mission of **PRAYER**CONNECT is

- **1.** To encourage and equip believers toward a deeper walk with Jesus Christ through prayer—our experiential connection to God.
- To resource prayer leaders and pastors with tools to help them motivate, disciple, and mobilize believers in churches to be a part of an army that seeks to pray the purposes of God for churches, communities, and the nations.
- **3.** To be a unifying force between prayer ministries, community transformation groups, and churches.

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Previously in Prayer Connect

Children are untapped spiritual powerhouses. But too often adults fail to mentor, train, and release children in prayer. The March/April



2013 issue looks at how children can be encouraged in their childlike faith and powerful intercession. Authors Kim Butts, Becky Fischer, and Cheri Fuller write about igniting a prayer movement among children. Order at *prayershop.org*.

PUBLISHER'SNOTE



Perpetuating Dull Prayer Practices

ecently I was leading a prayer meeting at a Florida church. We were praying through a section on unity in the Church and local churches of the community. Using John 17 as the scriptural basis of our prayers, we were asking God for unity that would cause people to be drawn to Jesus.



An older man stood up and prayed a powerful but short prayer, crying out to God for that unity. The pastor spoke with

this gentleman after the prayer meeting, and the man related how much he enjoyed the prayer time. It was dynamic, unlike the typical "pray for individual needs" meetings he was used to. He was excited to participate in this new prayer direction.

This story illustrates one of the biggest prayer chokeholds the enemy has on the Western Church. Most of our people use prayer only as a fix-it tool to make the bad situations in their lives better. And most churches feed into that mentality by the way they design their prayer activities.

As churches attempt to increase prayer, they typically focus on things that meet "felt needs" of people. A felt need is something a person deems important in his or her life, such as a need for healing or financial provision. So we offer times of prayer in a service when the prayer team can pray over the person for that need. Or we teach ways to do better prayer-list management. We tend to focus all our praying on individual needs.

What we forget is the kind of prayer that will fulfill what Jesus prophesied over Peter: "On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:18–20). The kind of praying that takes on the kingdom of hell is not, "Please heal Mary's foot, Lord."

Fighting for a Better Way

A major problem in moving a church toward a more Kingdom-of-God prayer mindset is that we may seem to be fighting against something not technically wrong. Scripture tells us to pray about everything. And one of the ways we show love for others is to pray for the things on people's hearts. So we should make avenues available to pray for people's needs.

But if we are to become churches that change our communities and grow the Kingdom of God, we need to take another look at the prayer practices we demonstrate. Are we moving people to become Kingdom-minded, gate-tearing-down people of prayer?

It is the difference between fueling the "what's in it for me?" attitude of people regarding Christianity and the "what can I do for the Kingdom?" mindset. It is the difference between seeing people's needs met and seeing God's plans accomplished.

It is also the difference, as the Florida man discovered, between dull, boring prayer and passion-filled intercession.

–Jonathan Graf

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NEWS&EVENTS God's Movement through Prayer



National Prayer Committee Meets and Prays for Hollywood

he National Prayer Committee (NPC) met in Pasadena, CA, in late January 2013 to pray together, hear reports of God's work throughout the prayer movement, and discuss greater collaboration toward a national spiritual awakening. Some 60 prayer leaders from several national prayer ministries spent time together for this first of two yearly meetings. The group's second meeting takes place in Washington, D.C., around the National Day of Prayer in May of each year.

Dave Butts, NPC chairman, addressed the group regarding the growing prayer movement that culminated in unprecedented numbers of people throughout the United States praying prior to the November 2012 elections. He acknowledged that many people felt disillusioned with the outcome, but he characterized God's answer as "exactly what we need." He added, "We need to pray as those in past days with a vision that God is about do something beyond what we've ever seen. It is a time for the discerning Church to listen and recognize the amazing opportunity before us-and that is not to trust in government, but to trust in God."

The prayer leaders expressed agreement that the most significant need in the United States is for another great spiritual awakening and that God's heart is for revival.

The Denominational Prayer Leaders Network (DPLN) also met for two days prior to the NPC meetings to share reports of the prayer movement within denominations. With a dozen denominations represented, the prayer leaders calculated

they represented more than 100,000 of America's 325,000 congregations. The DPLN shared the NPC's sense of urgency for a spiritual awakening.

Prayer Walking Hollywood

The NPC and the DPLN joined for a day of praying together for the entertainment industry by prayer walking key locations throughout Hollywood. Guided by Karen Covell, founder of the Hollywood Prayer Network, the prayer leaders gained insights into the industry and special prayer needs. The group had prayed through Hollywood two years prior to this gathering, and both Covell and Pastor Scott Erdman, from Hollywood Presbyterian, reported noticeable changes in greater spiritual



NPC members pray with a street actor in Hollywood.

openness for their ministries since then. They are now aware of more than 6,000 committed believers in the industry.

The group also listened to a panel discussion with three industry professionals: DeVon Franklin, senior vice president of production at Columbia Studios; Dean Batali, writer and

executive producer for *That 70s Show*, and actress Nancy Stafford from *Matlock*. They talked about the challenges of the entertainment industry and suggested ways the leaders could pray for them.

Covell, who facilitated the discussion, expressed her hope that NPC and DPLN members would leave with a better sense of how to pray specifically for Hollywood as "the world's most influential mission field." She encouraged increased prayer efforts for transformation: "The content of Hollywood will never change until the hearts of those who create it change."

To join in prayer for Hollywood, go to *hollywoodprayernetwork.org*. To learn more about the NPC, go to *nationalprayercommittee.com*.

Miracles Reported on Set of *The Bible*

he hit miniseries *The Bible* set records on cable television for the History Channel, with as many as 13 million viewers tuning in the first night of the blockbuster. But certain aspects of the filming were even more remarkable. Producer Mark Burnett reports highly unusual behind-the-scenes

occurrences that he labels miracles.

The epic five-part series during the month of March was the most watched entertainment program on cable television, according to ABC's *Good Morning America*.

The making of the TV miniseries was filled with strange happenings that

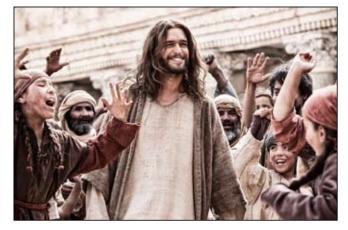




NEWS**&EVENTS**

Burnett can't quite explain. When the actor who portrays Jesus told Nicodemus, "The Holy Spirit is like the wind," a strong rushing wind that felt like the exhaust behind a 747 almost blew the set over and sustained for 20 seconds, Burnett told *Entertainment Weekly*. "Everyone just looked at everyone like, "What just happened?" Burnett said.

The production—filmed in Morocco—also hired a "snake wrangler" to make sure dangerous reptiles did not get near the actors. He usually found one or two snakes each day.



However, on the day the momentous crucifixion scene was filmed, the snake expert found an unprecedented 48 venomous snakes crawling around their recreated Golgotha—the place where Jesus defeated Satan. (Scripture often depicts Satan as a snake.) When the baptism of Jesus was filmed in a reservoir, the producers were alarmed when part of the actor's unique costume came off and floated away.

"Four days later, a kid showed up from many, many, many miles away, who had been seeking us through the desert to return this to us," Burnett told *Entertainment Weekly.* "He didn't know what it was or why he should seek us, but he felt he had to return it."

Mark Burnett and his wife, Roma Downey, appeared before many Christian groups prior to the broadcast, inviting prayer for God to use it powerfully. The series aired its final installment on Easter Sunday.

MARK ELLIS is a senior correspondent with ASSIST News Service (*assistnews.net*).

"Pray for America" Rally Tour Launches

he National Day of Prayer (NDOP) observance on May 2 is just the beginning of this year's efforts to engage, encourage, and equip millions in prayer. Beginning on Memorial Day, May 24—just three weeks after the National Day of Prayer—the first Pray for America Rally Tour will be launched.

Aboard a specially decorated tour bus, the NDOP team has a vision of carrying a prayer challenge from community to community, state to state, and coast to coast. At each stop they will set up tents and tables, audio and video equipment—and pass out helpful resources. Their hope is to engage many people in prayer at each stop. They will also meet with governors, mayors, pastors, and churches—praying for them and promoting the need for fervent prayer in their communities.

The tour will begin in the northeast states, with the New England route going through six states and 12 communities, for a total of 917 miles. The stops include Boston and Springfield, MA; Providence, RI; New Haven and Hartford, CT; Brattleboro, Montpelier, and Burlington, VT; Concord and Manchester, NH, and Portland and Augusta, ME. Sponsors have come forward to fund this route.

Depending on additional sponsorship, a second route of five states, ten communities, and 1,069 miles will take the bus tour from New York City through the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey. That route will culminate in Philadelphia. With more sponsors, the bus tour has the potential of traveling through 24 states beyond the New England route.

"Can you imagine the impact to our nation if thousands of churches, in hundreds of communities, take the challenge to stand boldly in prayer for America all year long?" asks John Bornschein, vice chairman of the NDOP Task Force.



Other ministries have already made a commitment to join the tour, including Joni and Friends with Joni Eareckson Tada, Turning Point with Dr. David Jeremiah, and Harvest Crusades with Pastor Greg Laurie.

To sponsor a state (or states) or to bring the tour to your region, contact Dion Elmore at (719) 559-9574.

NEWS**&EVENTS**



Strategic Prayer for At-risk Countries

In 2014 the Coalition forces will pull out of Afghanistan. It is possible that the violent Taliban rebel movement and other Islamic radicals will gain more control over Afghanistan at that time. These groups could also subvert Pakistan, which has nuclear weapons capable of threatening India, the West, and other parts of the world.

The International Prayer Council is launching a year-long prayer focus for 2013–2014, asking Christians around the world to pray for the dissolution of the Taliban and the restoration of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The International Prayer Council hopes for a massive response from the Body of Christ to ask God for His deliverance of both of these strategic countries from the threat of the Taliban and radical Islam.

Prayer points include:

- For God to raise up intercessors from around the world who will intercede during this crucial time.
- For the Taliban and other radical groups to be thrown into confusion and not allowed to advance in their violence—and that leaders will be removed or caught by Coalition forces.
- For the fear of God to fall on leaders so that they will convert to Christ.
- For Pashtun tribal leaders in Afghanistan to forbid the Taliban to operate in their territory—and actually start opposing them.
- For President Karzai of Afghanistan not to give in to Taliban demands.
- For a moderate party to win elections in Pakistan and spare the country from radical Islam and Sharia law.
- For the small population of Christians not to be afraid, but rather to



be emboldened by the Holy Spirit to stand up in faith and strongly pray for their own countries.

Since the mid-1990s, prayer teams have gone into Afghanistan, praying with local Christian workers for an end to the Taliban. For a period of time, it seemed the Taliban had been defeated, but now it has come back and is threatening to take over.

For more detailed prayer points, go to *ipcprayer.org* and click on newsletter, IPC Connections, February 2013.

Free Medical Clinic Sees Powerful Answers

hen Michael Pearson received news that the free medical clinic he managed near downtown Cedar Rapids, IA—His Hands—was about to lose the building it leased, he called a meeting of the leadership. They discussed several options for handling the untimely news, including going out of business.

Then the new executive director Sharon Patten asked, "Well, what does God want us to do?" That simple question caused the leadership to cease worrying and trying to figure out a plan of action. Instead, they went to prayer. They turned to Scripture and sought God's will, trusting that He would provide. They understood that this unexpected trial left them with a choice: trust Him or try to fix it themselves.

This faith-based organization was established in 1992 to "bring glory to God by meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those without adequate resources." His Hands Free Medical Clinic provides free medical exams and medications, as well as free chiropractic exams.

Moving to a new space would require extensive remodeling and more expenses than they could afford. But during their season of prayer, they sensed God was preparing them for something greater including moving from being renters to owners. He directed them to an even larger facility just a block away that would need to be gutted. Through God's amazing provision, they were able to purchase the building with no loan—but without a dime to spare!

Two weeks after the purchase, Pearson met with the executive director to discuss how to meet the next payroll. They had just finished their discussion with, "God will provide," when Pearson's cell phone rang with an offer of \$10,000 from the previous landlord. This gift allowed them to meet obligations and move forward with the design work.

God's Blessings Continue

The design for the new clinic included an expanded waiting room, extra exam rooms, and an enlarged pharmacy. Knowing they would need volunteers to complete the remodeling work, they anticipated shutting down the ministry for several months.

But they prayed—and again God answered with abundant provision. They were approached by a coalition of craft unions and contractors who needed a place to train apprentices. Not only did they provide free labor but also some of the building materials. With the help of Builders Pro, His Hands added a prayer room, two more exam rooms, another restroom,



NEWS**&EVENTS**

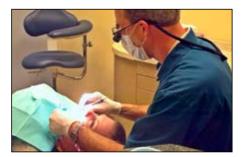
and the wiring and plumbing for a dental clinic that was still just a dream.

Shortly after moving into their new facility, a development company called and said that as part of their own loan negotiations, they were required to donate a certain amount to local non-profit organizations. "Could you use \$100,000?" they asked.

With that unexpected gift, they installed two dental chairs, digital x-ray equipment, and all the other necessary equipment to start the free dental clinic. The immediate demand for dental care overwhelmed them. It is not uncommon to have 600 people on a waiting list. Many patients have never been to a dentist. The clinic is working with local dentists to refer some of the more difficult patients to their offices. And a denture firm donates inexpensive dentures to replace lost teeth. Now the clinic has also developed an area in their building where they teach healthy living classes, emphasizing diet and exercise. Most clients' health problems stem from a lack of education in these areas.

True to the Mission

In the clinic's early history, a local foundation offered them a donation with strings attached—cease operation as a faith-based organization. His Hands turned down the donation. Years later, the board felt led of God to send a letter to another foundation that also specifically excluded faith-based organizations. The foundation board chairman visited His Hands, and shortly thereafter that foundation awarded His Hands a grant to finish the final remodeling. "God acted again in response to prayer," says Pearson.



"In retrospect, the key moment was that board meeting when we recognized that God was acting in this trial—and that our proper response was to pray and seek His will. He had been preparing us, even before we prayed. He moved us ahead much faster than we had planned," Pearson adds. "As a result, we have supplied a thousand more patient contacts than last year. God is truly glorified!"

To learn more about the ministry of this free clinic, go to *hishandsclinic.org*.

Spiritual Awakening Comes to Cuba

ore than a million Cubans have come to Christ in the last ten years. Many refer to the spiritual awakening as the "Cuban miracle." Churches have grown, Christians share their faith openly and boldly, and new believers are baptized despite the pres-

sures they face for making public their commitments to Jesus.

Dr. Jim Denison, founder of the Denison Forum on Truth and Culture, spent several days with Cuban believers—preaching in churches, teaching pastors, and witnessing firsthand the miraculous work of God's Spirit. It was his eighth trip to Cuba.

Denison shares about an encounter with a Cuban pastor who asserts that the revival is a result of suffering. "During one of my first trips to the island, I told a pastor that I would pray for persecu-



tion against his people to lessen. He asked me not to, explaining that their suffering had birthed their revival. Then he confided that he and other Cubans were praying for increased persecution to come against America's Christians, so that we might be strengthened in our faith as well."

Denison reports that churches are packed with worshipers. "My conviction is that God redeems all He allows. Christianity in Cuba is the perfect example of God's redemption at work. The persecution faced by Cuban Christians has purified their faith and strengthened their commitment to Jesus, serving as a catalyst for their spiritual awakening."

-Taken from Mission America Evangelism Connection and *denisonforum.org*.



Theme Introduction

ENTHE SOLUTION CONTRACTOR OF CONTRACTOR CONT

Permeate Your Church with a Culture of Prayer

'm not sure I can adequately describe Joe. This very elderly, stooped-over Jewish man was rejected by his family when he became a follower of Jesus Christ. He was a bit quirky and had very few possessions. In fact, everything he owned fit into a suitcase. When Joe needed a ride, he would call and say he "needed a little fellowship." That meant you were to pick him up, take him to church, and then perhaps buy lunch for him on the way home.

My greatest appreciation for Joe came during times of prayer with him. He never missed a prayer gathering, and, in private, he prayed through the church directory every week, name by name.

I don't remember how I joined a little prayer group with Joe and two other friends. But for a season, we prayed in what we called "the upper room." It was a tiny storage closet above the baptistery. We had to climb very steep stairs to get there and then duck to avoid hitting our heads once we were in the room. Getting Joe up there always presented a challenge, but if it was a prayer time—nothing could deter him!

In that upper room, we prayed for the church. We prayed for the salvation of the lost. We prayed about broken families. We asked the Spirit to do a fresh work in our congregation. Perhaps we were repeating some of the same prayers of the early believers in the original upper room.

Obviously it was not the room itself that made this prayer time special. It was because four people had something in common—we longed for Jesus to be powerfully manifested in our lives, church, and nation. Now I can look back and understand that praying with Joe, in all his quirkiness, was a privilege because Joe was completely devoted to his Lord. Joe's life was permeated with prayer. It was simply what he did, day after day, without fail.

Back to the Upper Room

Now, several years later, I believe God is awakening His Church to our desperate need to "live in the upper room." He is calling us to return to the same devotion to prayer that the early believers lived out. It is time again to assertively incorporate prayer into the very culture of the local church.

A *culture* can be described as the particular behaviors and characteristics that define a people group in a place or time. If your church is marked by a culture of prayer, it means that prayer—like breathing—is a natural and rhythmic necessity. You are known for your prayer lives. Your entire church embraces the mindset that it simply cannot survive if prayer is not foremost.

In this issue you will read from Fred Hartley about upperroom, God-encountering prayer as the launching pad for all ministry. Fred Leonard lists ten ways your church can move toward becoming a house of prayer. And you will gain insight from several pastors about how their churches have wrestled with creating cultures of prayer.

As it turned out, I missed Joe's funeral because we had a Minnesota snowstorm that day. But I so wanted to see the many people who were touched in some way by Joe's prayer life. I had heard that he knew people all over the city. I'm not surprised. A praying man—and a praying church—always have great impact for the Kingdom of God.

CAROL MADISON is editor of Prayer Connect.

From the URAN ERATION OF A CONTRACT OF A CONTRACTACT OF A CONTRACTACT OF A CONTRACT OF A CONTRACT OF A CONTRACT OF

By Fred Hartley

KOOM S THE NATIONS

- he church in Antioch may be separated from my congregation in Atlanta by 2,000 years and 64,000 miles, but we have much in common.
 - We are both multi-ethnic.
 - We both minister to the presence of Christ through worship—this is our primary assignment, and we know it!
- We are both missionally focused—to thrust world-impacting believers off the launching pad of prayer.

Twenty-five years ago the membership of Lilburn Alliance Church in Metro Atlanta was 99 percent white and English speaking. Today our congregation is made up of people who were born in 54 different nations of the world. We have hosted seven different cross-cultural congregations with whom we are ministry partners—Vietnamese, Spanish, Spanish second generation, Eritrean,

A Praying Church Is a Missional Church

HE ONLY THING JESUS BUILT WHILE ON EARTH was the upper room full of praying disciples.

Asian-Indian, French-African, and Chinese. Our Vietnamese congregation has planted seven other congregations around Atlanta, and has led more than 1,000 Vietnamese to faith in Jesus Christ.

None of this would have happened without devoting ourselves to Christencountering prayer. We follow the upper room model of ministry taught by Christ, demonstrated throughout the early Church and most vividly exemplified in Antioch.

The church in Antioch (see Acts 13:1–3 and Acts 11:19–29) was entirely multi-ethnic: Barnabas from the Mediterranean Island of Crete; Simon from Africa; Lucius, a Greek; Manaen, an associate of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul, a full-blood, pedigree Jew!

The eclectic believers all devoted themselves to ministering to the manifest presence of Christ by staying focused in their worship. They fasted. They hungered more for a move of God than for food.

As they knelt on the launching pad of prayer, the Holy Spirit spoke and said to the apostolic-prophets in their prayerfilled, God-encountering gathering: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

They not only built a launching pad of prayer, they had ignition and lift off!

Guiding Principles

Before I tell our story of how God built a launching pad in Atlanta, we need to understand several guiding principles.

- When Jesus built His church, He built a praying church. *What kind of church are you building?*
- When Jesus made disciples, He made praying disciples. *What kind of disciples are you making?*
- The size (scope) of your ministry is determined by the size of your prayer life.
- The size of your church's prayer life is revealed by the size of the answers to prayer. *What are you asking God for?*

The Cape Kennedy Space Center on Florida's east coast built a most remarkable launching pad for the Space Shuttle—Pad 39. It was built to withstand more thrust than any other—36,000 pounds of thrust per square inch. Built of solid, poured concrete, it is 390 feet long, 345 feet wide, and an impressive 48 feet thick!

Jesus said, "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out [thrust forth] workers into his harvest field" (Matt. 9:38, bracketed material added).

If we want *thrust*, we need a launching pad—a sizable launching pad. As Rick Warren often says, "The significance of your church is not determined by your seating capacity but by your sending capacity." Sending capacity is determined by the thrust of the Holy Spirit. In order to sustain Holy Spirit thrust, we need a substantial launching pad of prayer.

Upper Room: The Crown Jewel

It was no mere coincidence that the only

thing Jesus built while on earth was the upper room full of praying disciples. The upper room was the highest accomplishment of Jesus' discipleship ministry the crown jewel. The tragedy of the modern church is that Jesus' highest accomplishment has become our flagrant omission.

An upper room or *huperoon* in Greek (Acts 1:13) was common in the Middle East in Jesus' time. People gathered in the flat, open space on the rooftop of the square buildings for conversation—to sip tea, tell stories, welcome out-of-town guests, or unwind at the end of the day. For Jesus and His disciples the upper room provided a meeting place where they could talk, pray, plan, and eat together.

In one such upper room, Jesus broke bread, served the disciples the Passover meal, and washed their feet. Before He ascended into heaven, while gathered with them on the Mount of Olives, Jesus "gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about'" (Acts 1:4). The word *command*, used in the military, is the strongest word in the Greek language for *decree.* So Jesus put them under strictest orders.

Obviously, 40 days earlier, when Jesus was begging them in the Garden of Gethsemane to pray with Him one hour, His disciples were not yet upper-room disciples. But now they were fully engaged. Something had changed. No sooner does Jesus bodily ascend into heaven, right before their eyes, than they demonstrate that transformation: "Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room [huperoon] where they were staying" (Acts 1:12-13).

The same disciples, who before couldn't pray one hour, now could pray the better part of 240 hours-ten straight days! Into that upper room He had led His disciples. Into that room He had poured out His Spirit. Out from that room He had thrust forth His empowered disciples. Out from that room He carried out His mission on earth.

In a matter of hours the early Church grew from 120 to 3,120. That kind of church growth would be impressive anywhere, but this happened in Ierusalem!

We, as a local church in Metro Atlanta, realized that this pattern of upperroom, God-encountering, launchingpad-building prayer is a prototype that continues through New Testament life. The initial upper room in Jerusalem was by no means the only upper room in the Book of Acts.

- Peter and John were on their way to an upper-room encounter with Christ when they met a lame man (Acts 3).
- The early Church had an upperroom, earth-shaking, prayer encounter with God (Acts 4).
- The apostles appointed deacons so they could remain devoted to upper-room prayer (Acts 6:4).
- Paul had an upper-room encounter with Ananias (Acts 9).
- Peter had an upper-room encounter with God (Acts 10).

The church in Antioch certainly built an upper room that launched the first mission team of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13). In fact, every church Paul planted became an upper room. And when Paul launched a new mission trip, he was sent from the launching pad in Antioch.

An Upper Room in **Every Church**

When Lilburn Alliance Church saw this upper-room, God-encountering, launching-pad-of-prayer pattern, we realized we needed an upper room. We asked God for His blueprint and began a central, all-church prayer gathering

known as the RIVER.

What makes an upper-room prayer gathering unique?

The primary focus of an upperroom prayer gathering has one ultimate purpose-to minister to the manifest presence of Christ. Just as in Antioch they were worshipping the Lord when God gave them their mission, so every

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upper-room prayer gathering has one agenda—to minister to the Lord with our prayer and worship. Until we understand that our first assignment is to minister to the manifest presence of Christ, God will not give us our second assignment.

It was in the RIVER one night that God put a burden on our hearts for the neighborhoods, apartment complexes, and subdivisions immediately adjacent to our church property. I saw a picture of myself going door to door, introducing myself and saying to the people, "I would like to pray for you—what would you like Jesus to do for you?"

This struck a chord with our whole church family. Since then, we have visited 5,000 homes around our church campus. At our Wednesday night AWANA kids clubs, more than half of the children are from the neighborhoods around our church. Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu parents bring their children to our church. It looks like a meeting of the United Nations each week.

Now when I walk the neighborhoods around our church, most of the people recognize me, smile big, and many thank *continued on page 18*

How to Build a Prayer Culture for a MISSIONAL CHURCH

While the Holy Spirit will show you the unique pattern for *your* particular congregation to become a house of prayer for all nations, here are some keys we have discovered in Atlanta and around the world.

The pastor sets the tempo. Jesus made praying disciples (Acts 1:4). John the Baptist made praying disciples (Luke 11:1). We, as pastors and leaders of our people, are the ones who make praying disciples. We dare not delegate prayer discipleship to anyone else.

Bring others with you. Just as Jesus, John the Bap-• tist, and the Apostle Paul brought praying people along with them, we want to invite rising leaders to pray with us. The best way to learn to pray is with people who know how.

Build a prayer shield. A prayer shield is a group of personal intercessors who are recruited to consistently pray for the pastor(s)—prayers for God to protect them from the plots of the evil one and to empower them for service. I now have more than 400 people around the world who are committed to praying for me on a daily, or at least regular, basis.

Appoint a prayer team and a team leader. The prayer team in my local church is a powerhouse. They not only facilitate pre-service prayer—filling the room with the presence of God before our worship celebrations—they mobilize prayer throughout our church family.

5• prayer meeting is a prayer meeting. We find that a prayer meeting breaks out more often than not in gatherings such as small groups, Sunday school classes, women's

meetings, elders' meetings, and business meetings. We follow the pattern, "everything by prayer" (Phil 4:6).

Call for seasons of fasting. We call for fasts through • the year—seven days, 21 days, or 40 days. During these times of accelerated spiritual growth, we see dramatic answers to specific prayers.

Give invitations to meet God. In the middle of Sunday worship we call people to come to "The Garden of Prayer" at the front of the auditorium to meet God. We've discovered that church is not a place to hide from God; it's a place to meet God. People bring their highs and lows, their challenges and their blessings. Some weeks 50 or more people flood to the front and encounter God.

Emphasize mid-week prayer. Our mid-week corpo-• rate meeting is called the RIVER, a worship-based prayer gathering. We assemble chairs in concentric circles, which puts the focus on Christ and keeps us close enough to hear each other pray. It also gives opportunity to call people with needs into the middle of the circle so we can pray over them.

Ask for the nations. The size of our prayer life is revealed by the size of our answers to prayer. Therefore, we ask for the nations. What bigger thing can we ask for than the nations? When we began asking God for the nations, He began to expand our territory. We now have 54 nations worshipping together under one roof. "Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance" (Ps. 2:8). God wants to take us all from the upper room to the nations.

-Fred Hartley

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During the past 25 years, we have seen more than 3,000 people come to faith in Christ through the personal witness and ministries of our people. I wish I could say they all became members of our church, but they have not. The greatest reward, however, is the knowledge that we will all be gathered before God's throne one day in united worship.

The Upper Room Today

The upper room is the closest place to

heaven on earth. Just think about it. Jesus went from the throne room to earth to build the upper room. Before leaving earth He told the disciples to go to the upper room so that He could ascend back to the throne room. From the throne room through the upper room, He would then carry out His ministry

What is the College of Prayer?

ne missional ministry that has come out of our increased prayer life is the College of Prayer International, which helps churches rebuild upper-room, God-encountering prayer environments all over the world.

Fifteen years ago we planted the first campus of the College of Prayer in Atlanta, GA, with a vision of mentoring leaders to reach a lost world through a revived church. We wanted to lead pastors and leaders to a fresh encounter with Christ and teach them to rebuild upper rooms in each local church and in the regional church. Today we have 119 campuses of the College of Prayer in almost 50 nations of the world.

We have noticed a pattern. The more desperate the people, the more eager they are to pray. When you know your very survival depends on God dramatically answering specific prayers, you pray with desperation.

Seven years after the establishment of the College of Prayer in Côte d'Ivoire, a pastor looked intently at me and said, in tears, "I don't know if the church in Côte d'Ivoire would have survived the civil war had it not been for the College of Prayer."

I asked why, and he said, "You opened the door to the supernatural and yet taught us how to avoid excess. When God, through prayer, was all we had, we discovered that God, through prayer, is all we need. The foundation of our church is now built as Christ-encountering prayer."

Holy desperation becomes holy expectation; holy expectation becomes holy anticipation. Hope is rising among the hopeless as they learn to pray and rebuild the upper room.

Designing a College of Prayer

A campus of the College of Prayer consists of a leadership team of at least five Christian leaders with influence to gather 50–500 people twice a year (three days at a time) over a three-year period. During that time the following curriculum is taught: Year 1: "Lord, Teach Us to Pray," Year 2: "Lord, as Families, Teach Us to Pray," Year 3: "Lord, as Local Churches and Workplaces, Teach Us to Pray."

We discovered that a genuine encounter with the manifest presence of Christ normally involves five crucial elements:

- high worship
- deep repentance
- receiving forgiveness and freedom
- being filled with the Holy Spirit
- being empowered for ministry.

Gulu, Uganda, is the epicenter for the "Invisible Children," where a warring tribe comes at midnight to steal adolescent boys, train them to be warriors, and then send them back to their village to kill their families and tribal people. We held three years of the College of Prayer in Gulu.

During a large reconciliation service with almost 1,500 people, members of the warring tribe came and publicly repented of their sins. Hundreds of members of the victimized tribe then stood and wailed, asking forgiveness for their resentment and bitterness. A member of the Ugandan parliament said, "I never thought I would live to see this day. The College of Prayer is truly changing the world."

We have heard similar reports in Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, India, China, Spain, Norway, Congo, and Senegal.

Now God has opened to the College of Prayer many nations where the church is being severely persecuted. We are now serving 14 of the 50 nations where the church is most persecuted. The more desperate the people, the more eager they are to pray.

For more information regarding the College of Prayer, go to *collegeofprayer.org*.

on earth. This is the New Testament upper-room pattern.

In the first century the upper room was on the rooftop. For us the upper room can be in a basement, a chapel, or the back porch. The upper room does not need to be "upper" in location, but it needs to be upper in *priority* and upper in *prominence*. Upper-room, Godencountering prayer is the launching pad and lifeline of every church ministry and activity. Everything else is wood, hay, and stubble (1 Cor. 3:12–15).

Recently, when I preached a new message on the upper room to our people, a woman ministry leader came to me in tears and said, "Pastor Fred, that message described to a *T* what our women's meetings are like every Tuesday morning. Thank you for pointing us to keep first things first."

Though 6,400 miles separate my church in Atlanta from the church in Antioch, we share the same DNA. The same missional thrust that God created in Antioch, He is creating today in Atlanta some 2,000 years later. It is all coming out of a culture of prayer. We take seriously the words of Jesus, "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matt. 9:38).

Our mission is to reach a lost world through a revived church. A lukewarm church will never get the job done. My congregation in Atlanta wants to be part of reaching the remaining unreached people on earth. For this reason we take seriously our call to build a Christ-encountering, upper-room, launching pad of prayer.



FRED HARTLEY is lead pastor of Lilburn Alliance Church in Metro Atlanta, GA, where he and his wife Sherry have served since 1988. Fred is also president of the College of Prayer

International with 119 campuses worldwide, serving more than 30,000 students. He has authored 19 books, including *Everything by Prayer, Prayer on Fire*, and his new book, *God on Fire* (available from *prayershop.org*).

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"On Ramps" to COD'S P

By Fred Leonard

love the picture in Revelation 4 of John entering into the throne room and the presence of God. When he comes in, he finds himself in a scene of incredible, loud, radical worship of the Lord God on His throne.

When I pray, I picture myself entering the throne room of God through the open door in heaven. I can come in only because of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God's only Son, who died for me and paid the penalty for my sin. I am covered in the blood of Jesus.

As I enter in, in my mind I picture Jesus looking at me as one for whom He died. I picture the angels and 24 elders and the four living beings listening as I worship and present my requests to God—my act of prayer. It is an honor and privilege to enter into His presence through prayer.

With this reality, wouldn't it make sense that everyone would want to rush in and talk with God?

How to Disciple Your Church

RESENCE

Toward Prayer

PRAYERCONNECT.NET 21

OUR PRAYER MEETINGS are not overflowing with people crying out to God.

Sadly, this is often not the case. Some people can hardly pray privately, much less corporately. Our prayer meetings are not overflowing with people crying out to God. In fact prayer is one of the most difficult ministries to lead in the church.

Living in the Tension

One reason this ministry is difficult to lead is that followers of Christ live with the tension of God's Kingdom already here among us—and not yet fully realized. In other words, we still sin and rebel against God's rule in our lives. When we are not walking in submission to God's leadership, we are resisting the Holy Spirit. Unless we repent, we cannot be in right relationship with God, and we won't long to be praying and worshiping in the throne room.

Furthermore, if we are living in unforgiveness, our broken relationship with God keeps us from entering the throne room—and we certainly don't want to enter with those who have hurt us! You can still teach Sunday school or be an usher or greeter while you are living in rebellion (though you shouldn't be), but rebellion will greatly hinder your prayer life.

Although discipling a church in prayer is difficult, we don't give up. We know the heart of God is to communicate with us. And—with determination and vision we want to lead the church into this truth.

Here is our top ten list of ways a church can become a house of prayer for all nations:

10. Develop a strategic plan or nothing will change. To grow in prayer, be honest about your church's current status as a house of prayer. Take a look at what is working. Be willing to keep changing. And work to develop a strategic plan that will move you toward your goal. Without an honest evaluation of your current reality and a plan that looks toward the vision God has given you for your future, nothing will change.

Offer many "on ramps" at different speeds to help people begin praying.

Developing a prayer culture in our churches requires talking about prayer at all levels. This means providing many different on ramps for people to learn to pray personally and corporately. At our church people can grow in prayer by spending time alone in the prayer room—learning to pray for lost people or using the various prayer prompts we make available. This way they can practice prayer skills privately and then use them in a corporate setting.

Our corporate on ramps include a weekly missions prayer gathering, preservice prayer, prayer during one of our services, or serving as a "prayer usher" (praying with people to help usher them into a fresh experience of Christ's presence). Each of our ministries (such as youth, recovery, and worship), also offers a pre-meeting prayer opportunity.

Another on ramp is our strategic

teaching on prayer. We teach and encourage spiritual disciplines, offering a monthly prayer workshop and a "Love to Pray" study once a year, using prayer book studies through our prayer meetings. Our church is also committed to hosting prayer conferences.

To be a healthy, praying church, prayer should saturate everything. Beyond the teaching opportunities, we also encourage times of church-wide prayer. For example, we hold an Ash Wednesday service to begin the Lenten season of 40 days of prayer and fasting. Each year we have a month of special church-wide prayer for revival. We join with other churches and host the Global Day of Prayer, the National Day of Prayer, and city-wide prayer events. We participate in and help lead weekly prayer meetings for pastors. The list continues on with many prayer initiatives.

Prayer is not a ministry we do; it has become *who we are*.

8 Make sure the prayer meeting is awesome!

When a prayer meeting is boring, poorly led, and people- or need-centered, people won't likely keep coming. Our church offers workshops for our prayer leaders, teaching them how to lead corporate prayer. Our prayer meetings are characterized by four *L*'s: Lively, Learning, Loving, and well-Led.

When people leave a well-led, Godcentered, Kingdom-focused prayer meeting, they will know they have met with God. And they will appreciate even more their love relationship with Him.

Weave prayer throughout the fabric of everything you do. Keep learning and trying new things.

Prayer must be at the core of a pastor and prayer leader's life and be woven into the fabric of the church. We don't "silo" prayer into a separate ministry. We are a house of prayer that includes every "room" of the church. Prayer remains at the top of our list in everything we do. We may not get through all the business in every meeting, but you can be sure we have prayed. We might restructure our weekend services for a special event, but we will not disrupt our prayer ushers' ability to minister to people during the service, and we won't eliminate a prayer response at the end. Prayer is never simply an add-on.

envelope and try new things. We have offered prophecy training and now have prophecy appointments after the Sunday morning service every few months. We have healing services on Sundays, too. It's good to offer these things during the week, as well, but we find that when we offer them on the weekend, God opens doors for a fresh, forward movement in prayer. Experiencing the blessing of Spirit-led corporate prayer encourages people to discover that reality in their own lives.

Find the right leader for your prayer ministry. Appoint a teacher who is passionate about prayer and joyfully submitted to pastoral leadership.

It is crucial to have an equipper/teacher who has a heart for prayer and can release people into the ministry of prayer. This person, who needs to have learned through experience and struggles, also needs to have the gifting and ability to expand the ministry by training others.

Furthermore, he or she must be someone who is praying in support of the pastoral direction of the church. The pastor has God's authority to lead, and the prayer leader must support the pastor in prayer, words, and actions. Those in the prayer ministry should never pray against the pastor or work to change the leadership. Such actions cause division, disunity, offense, and bitterness—and they are an open door to the work of the devil. The prayer leader needs to be the greatest supporter and encourager of the pastor and of the vision the Lord has given to the leaders.

Train prayer ushers to minister **5** to others.

We train people to usher others into the presence of Jesus and to minister to them through prayer. One of the greatest

It is also important to push the prayer

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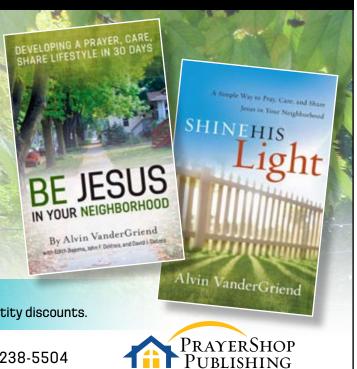
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mistakes some churches make is to assume that people know how to pray, even if no one has taught them. What happens when a prayer usher meets a person in a prayer encounter and discovers the person needs to repent or surrender—or needs to experience healing or deliverance? Do your prayer leaders know what to do? Training a group of prayer ushers who pray under the empowerment of the Holy Spirit is a crucial part of church life.

4 • dation of discipleship. Some churches struggle in the area of discipleship as much as they struggle in evangelism. It is a challenge to see people experience both salvation and the transformation of "becoming like Jesus." We can track evangelism, but how do we track discipleship? I believe the best way is through prayer training.

We have created a prayer training class that encompasses much of what we

Signs of a Culture of Prayer

By Dennis Fuqua

How do you measure the effectiveness of a culture of prayer in your church? Here are some signs that should be present:

"Here and now" prayer, rather than "later and somewhere else" prayer. When someone is asked to pray about a specific request, the norm is to pray right "here and now" rather than the request being put on a list and prayed for at another time when the person is not there.

There are a variety of prayer ministries, but the bottom-line goal is that each individual is being encouraged to be "devoted to prayer."

Leaders regularly describe and demonstrate their commitment to both personal and corporate prayer. This can happen in a passing reference as they preach or teach, or it could be more intentional. Also, they attend and invite others to be a part of any corporate prayer times.

Corporate prayer is a regular part of the weekend services. This can happen in many ways: small groups, one word, responsive, unison, etc. But it is common for people to pray out loud during the service.

5. Following the Moravian principle, "no one ministers unless someone prays." When the worship team meets, they don't just do a quick prayer at the beginning of their worship time. For example, they read and pray through the words of a few songs they will be doing on Sunday. They take time to worship unrelated to Sunday. They pray for the upcoming worship experience, that people will enter into the flow of worship, etc. Or when planning a Vacation Bible School, leaders not only ask for people to coordinate the crafts, games, or stories, they also ask for a person to direct the prayer. And perhaps they have a team actually praying during the VBS itself. Hopefully each ministry team incorporates prayer into all it does. There is an appreciation and application of "all kinds of prayers" (Eph. 6:18). Pray-ers are skilled in many types of prayers—intercession, worship-based prayer, prayer for specific requests, and so on. There is also an appreciation for many styles: quiet, loud, solo, alltogether at the same time, and others.

At the leadership meetings they "pray as much as they discuss." This was a challenge given to me as a pastor—and our normal pattern for years. We tried to spend as much time in prayer during our meetings as we did discussing issues.

There is a "prayer" line in the budget and a specific • person who manages it.

Any prayer pastor or coordinator (whatever term is used) is seen and recognized as staff, whether paid or

volunteer. **10** Ephesians 6:18 does a great job of summarizing some key points here. Praying . . .

- in the Spirit—sensitive to specific things the Spirit wants us to pray about.
- on all occasions—large groups, small groups, individuals, home groups, etc.
- with all kinds of prayer—offering all our requests.
- while being alert—keeping the prayers fresh and letting the Spirit's creativity flow through our prayers.
- always keep on—the value is not seen only in the results, but in the process.
- for all the Lord's people—a variety of needs.

This one verse in Ephesians offers a great start on describing a culture of prayer!

DENNIS FUQUA is director of International Renewal Ministries. His book *United and Ignited* is available from *prayershop.org*.

need to know to walk with Jesus. We train people how to pray for such areas as evangelism, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, forgiveness, using spiritual gifts, prophecy, listening prayer, healing, repentance, surrender, and freedom from sexual sins. As they pray through these components in their own lives, they learn to pray with others as well. They're intentionally being discipled to be like Jesus.

Remember that prayer always

When prayer is moving as it should, it will always lead to God's heart for the lost. Prayer does not become an end in itself but instead always leads to evangelism. Prayer for God's glory is the goal. And we know God receives more and more glory when people come to know Jesus as their Savior (2 Cor. 4:15).

Prayer has to move us to care for, reach out to, and love the lost. Prayer is not self-serving. In fact, it should be listed under the gift of helps. There is no way we can help others more than to pray for them.

Encourage the pastor to set the 4 + table and invite people to the banquet.

It is impossible for the church to move forward into prayer if the pastor is not on board and leading the staff and church in prayer. The pastor has to be championing prayer, attending prayer meetings, and spending time in the prayer room if he or she is to lead others.

Furthermore, as the pastor is leading and encouraging prayer, the staff and leadership also need to be on board-as people who pray, serve as prayer ushers, attend prayer events, pray in the prayer room, and participate in a prayer group each week. It is impossible to call people to do what we are not doing ourselves.

Pray and ask God to pour out His Holy Spirit.

The number one key to becoming a house of prayer for all nations is to be always praying and asking God to pour out His Holy Spirit upon you and to fill your church with His presence. Apart from the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we will never see that vision become a reality. In order for a movement of prayer to take place, we need to intercede for our churches, asking God for the filling of the Spirit.

This is not a program or a strategy. It is a miracle of God to bring your church into His presence. In this way, your church will bring glory to His name.



FRED LEONARD is the lead pastor of Mountain View Community Church in Fresno, CA. His wife Esther is the prayer ministry leader of the church.

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66

like comparing our approach to prayer to Beethoven's Fifth," said Dr. James Banks of Peace Church, Durham, NC. "We take the same theme and repeat it over and over again, with a slight modification."

In the preparation of this issue, we sent 30 pastors a questionnaire about developing a prayer culture in their churches. (See the questionnaire on page 28.) The churches are of varying sizes—from 50 members to 8,000 and everything in between. They are also in various stages of prayer growth. We found the data intriguing and helpful, and we hope it will both enlighten and challenge other pastors and church leaders.

What Does It Mean?

First, we asked pastors to describe a culture of prayer.

"A culture of prayer is a culture that does not just talk about prayer, but actually prays over events and decisions," said Paul Covert, prayer pastor at Central Christian Church, Mesa, AZ. He went on to say that a church with

Developing a Culture of Prayer in a Church

PRAYER IS JUST AS

essential as engaging in global missions."

this culture "looks for ways to introduce prayer into every ministry of the church."

"Such a church," offered Nick Cardases, formerly pastor of Trinity Evangelical Missionary Church, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, "would have everything born out of prayer, rather than prayer being one of the ministries."

Paul Bartnick of the Alliance Church of Zephyrhills, FL, wrote "Prayer is just as essential as preaching and teaching the Word. Prayer is just as essential as engaging in global missions."

"A [prayer] culture exists when a body is confronted with time constraints and the events [it] chooses to cut are not the prayer events. Then the church truly believes that prayer is [its] lifeline and connection to the Triune God," said Scott Roberts of Hope in Christ Church, Bellingham, WA.

David Chotka, lead pastor of Spruce

CULTURE OF PRAYER Questionnaire

Here are the questions we asked our participating pastors. You can read their responses at *prayerconnect.net/magazine/issue-10---upper-room/instinctive/pastors*.

- 1. If you hear a church described as trying to develop a "culture of prayer," what does that mean to you? How would you describe a culture of prayer in a church?
- 2. In light of Acts 2:42: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer," and Acts 6:4: "[We] will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word," what role should prayer have in the life of a church?
- **3.** How do you as a pastor lead or teach your congregation to understand the importance of prayer through what happens in the worship service, prayer events/ministries, and meetings (elders, board, staff, etc.)?
- **4.** How important is it that your leadership is in sync with the importance of prayer—and what steps do you take to ensure that happens?
- 5. How does your church keep prayer at the forefront of what it does?
- 6. What would make someone new to your church recognize that prayer is important to your church?
- 7. Is it important for prayer to be highly visible in a church that wants prayer to undergird all it does? Why or why not?
- 8. What is one prayer practice in your church that has been successful? Describe what you do and why you think people participate.

Grove Alliance Church, in Spruce Grove, Alberta, Canada, stated that "each ministry, each outreach, each mission, each worship service, and each leader has praying leaders, praying ministries—and each major area of endeavor has a clearly identified prayer team. Prayer is a significant factor in board governance and staff meetings, and each pastor [on staff] is required to have a structured daily prayer life."

"A 'culture' in a congregation is a lived-out core value," responded Vince McFarland of Maryland Community Church, Terre Haute, IN. "Not just a value of words, but a value of the way things are done. Prayer is a 'first-nature' quality of living and the power behind decision making. Worship gatherings are 'filled with prayer."

Sunder Krishnan of Rexdale Alliance Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, said, "There is a pervasive sense and awareness throughout the congregation of the fundamental importance of prayer, both individually and corporately." The people in such a congregation, added Krishnan, "are not surprised when the leadership regularly issues calls for corporate gatherings of prayer for a variety of reasons, as well as a consistent encouragement to the pursuit of [a] personal life of intimacy and prayer."

Pastor Jeff Noel of Grace Heartland Church, Elizabethtown, KY, noted that "the culture or DNA is simply what the church does without thinking about it. It moves from intentional to instinctive. The first Church didn't 'think' about praying, they just prayed. Unfortunately that is not the culture of most churches in [the Western world]." Noel went on to say, "We had to intentionally begin the process of making prayer a priority through many different prayer activities. But over the past five years we have experienced those intentional actions become part of the natural culture of how we do church. It is now our DNA. Without prayer we would not be the same church, and people would sense the difference."

As these pastors shared, several similarities emerged. A culture of prayer does not just happen. Pastor Noel's church is not alone in being purposeful; churches need to take very intentional steps to make prayer a priority. Another similarity that emerged is how "in your face" these churches are becoming in regard to prayer, both with creative prayer activities and in what they require in prayer participation—especially of their elders and staff teams.

Becoming Intentional

Many of our pastors believe that for people to understand how important prayer is to their church, there needs to be a balance between making sure prayer is visible and developing prayer behind the scenes.

"What people see is what they unconsciously think matters," said Roberts. "But if the only prayers that occur in the life of a body are the 'visible' ones, then prayer isn't undergirding everything. The church must have a life of prayer that extends beyond the visible into every nook and cranny of the body's life."

"[Prayer] shouldn't be just a show," said Pastor Mike Sager of Faith Church, Austin, MN. "The distinction or earmark of authenticity is that it stems from personal healthy prayer lives, and is not just seen as an activity one does at church."

To assure that prayer grows in the lives of people, most of our represented churches are taking aggressive steps to disciple people in their prayer lives. They also require participation of their leaders.

"If leaders are not in sync about prayer," said Sager, "then we keep plodding and praying until they are. If leaders don't have a common conviction and practice about prayer's priority, then a culture of prayer cannot be developed."

Dee Duke of Jefferson Baptist in Jefferson, OR, indicated that leaders are "asked to write their personal and ministry goals for the year and to include their prayer goals. These would be their involvement in corporate prayer, private prayer, and [prayer] with their wife and family." Then there is accountability, said Duke. At most leader meetings time is spent talking about how they are doing with those goals.

Pastor Chotka said that he personally interviews potential elders and staff about their prayer lives. "How do you hear the Lord's voice?" is one of the

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questions he always asks. "[My] staff will be prayerful or they won't work with me," said Chotka. He regularly carves out time to go into each staff person's office to spend an hour of prayer with him or her. Their elders always pray for at least an hour before moving into any kind of organizational discussion.

Bartnick echoed what a number of these pastors said: "If they [leaders] refuse to learn and develop a prayer life, they disqualify themselves from leadership and need to be replaced."

Not only are these praying churches intentional about what they expect from the leaders regarding prayer, they are very intentional about placing prayer in front of their people. "I once read that vision is lost in 30 days," said Pastor Tom Swank of Northpoint Community Church, Fort Wayne, IN. "If prayer is not visible, its role will soon be lost."

Several pastors have encouraged staff

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"The idea is," said Stout, "that as we encounter people in conversations [each week at church], we don't just say 'I'll pray for you' and then walk away (and probably forget to pray for them); but rather that we take the time right then and there to say, 'Can I pray for you/ with you about that?" Each week at staff meeting Stout has everyone tell whom they prayed for.

I [Jonathan Graf] personally witnessed this when I spoke at Community Heights a few years ago. As I sat waiting for each Sunday morning service to begin, I was truly amazed by how many clusters of people I saw praying for one another in the sanctuary and lobby. People catch on when they see it modeled!

Stout went on to say, "Prayer must be emphasized, validated, and prioritized, whether that is on a Sunday morning in front of hundreds or in a small group in front of eight." But, Stout added, "I believe commitment, more so than visibility, is the highest goal."

That commitment to prayer is worked on heavily by Concord First Assembly in Concord, NC. Associate Pastor Phil Bennett wrote that they encourage people to practice daily Bible study and prayer through a plan they call Brave Christian. Each of the 800 or so participants learns to hear God speak through daily Bible reading and prayer time. They then journal what they hear from God and what their responses are. Next they ask for a deeper commitment—and a smaller number become "Watchmen," who commit to pray for the ministries of the church. Hundreds have signed up to take a slot on the weekly 168-hour, 24/7 prayer schedule.

Rexdale Alliance Church begins each year with a week of prayer that includes prayer gatherings every night. Out of that week comes greater prayer participation in other things. They host a monthly Sunday evening concert of prayer, and have a missions prayer emphasis every Sunday night in September. They also have multiple days of prayer for elders and offer three different corporate prayer meetings each week.

Pastor Lloyd Peters of Fort St. John's Alliance Church in British Columbia, Canada, said he leads in prayer every Sunday morning because it is important for people to see a pastor lead them into the throne room. But, he said, "I pray like I talk. It's very conversational most of the time." People need to see honest, everyday prayer to realize they can do it, too, Peters says.

Devoted to Prayer

National prayer leader Dennis Fuqua, who pastored a local church for more than 20 years and now heads up International Renewal Ministries (Pastors' Prayer Summits), reminded us that "devoted to prayer" is a description that was used seven times in the New Testament. The early Church did not view prayer as something to use only when it was in trouble or something used at the beginning and end of a service. Prayer was as important as the spoken Word, fellowship, or the breaking of bread (see Acts 2:42).

"Prayer is so much a part of what we do," said Dr. Banks, "that it permeates things, and the sense of God's presence soon follows."

"Culture of prayer is an attitude," commented Stout. "An attitude of dependence. An attitude that says that we are incapable on our own—and thus reliant upon the person and power of Jesus Christ."

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was compiled by Jonathan Graf, publisher of *Prayer Connect* and president of the Church Prayer Leaders Network. You can read complete responses to the questionnaire online at *prayerconnect.net/magazine/issue-10---upper-room/instinctive/pastors.*

Living in the UPPER ROOM

A BIBLE STUDY by Sandra Higley

Note: This Bible study is formatted for small group open discussion. If you use this study by yourself, we suggest that you journal your answers to the discussion questions. Also, please use suggested translations where indicated. Biblegateway.com is an excellent source for translations you may not have on hand.

or almost two decades, I've been blessed to attend prayer-saturated churches. But I still remember what it was like to be the prayer coordinator for a church that wasn't completely on board when it came to an upper-room prayer agenda. We would take two steps forward and rejoice, then stumble one step back and sigh deeply.

As we prayed without ceasing and waited on God for our church to develop this mindset, there was only one thing we could control: developing our own upper-room prayer mentality as individuals. That was a tangible way to personally impact a climate change in our local church— "deep calls to deep" (Ps. 42:7). Unless we are operating at a deeper spiritual level ourselves, we cannot expect others to respond to our call to go deeper.

Discussion Questions

Fred Hartley writes about an "upper-room prayer mentality" as a "model of ministry taught by Christ, demonstrated throughout the early Church, and most vividly exemplified in Antioch." The Christians in Antioch devoted themselves to worship, fasting, and hungering for a move of God. Hartley goes on to say that when Jesus was begging them in the Garden of Gethsemane to pray with Him for one hour, His disciples were not yet upper-room disciples.

Take a few moments to reflect. Be honest as you evaluate your own devotion in these specific areas. Would you call yourself an upper-room disciple? Why or why not?

Read Acts 11:23–24. When Barnabas arrived in Antioch, what did he find and how did he encourage the believers? If he met with you today, would that meeting be the same or different? How so? Dennis Fuqua gives us some guidance about honing our upperroom prayer skills. Do you participate in "here and now" prayer, rather than "later and somewhere else" prayer? When someone asks you to pray about a specific request, do you pray "here and now" or put the request on a list for another time when the person is not there?

If you hold back from praying immediately, why do you think you do? What could you do to be more intentional about becoming a faithful "here and now" pray-er?

Fuqua encourages following the Moravian principle: "No one ministers unless someone prays." How would adopting this principle alter your personal avenues of ministry? Would it change how you go about your daily business? Divide the following references among various members of your group and come back together to share what evidence you found that this type of prayer is meant to be routine: Gen. 24:12–15; Deut. 4:7; 1 Sam. 12:23; 2 Chron. 7:14; Ezra 8:22–23; Neh. 1:1–10; Isa. 56:7; Jer. 29:7, 42:3; Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:35, 6:46; Luke 5:16, 18:1; Acts 1:14, 24, 2:42, 12:5–16; Rom. 12:12; Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:16–18; 1 Tim. 2:1–2; Jude 20–21.

Read Ephesians 6:18 and note the instructions about prayer found in this passage. How do you (or can you) implement each of these key points as you develop an upper-room prayer mentality? We are to pray:

- in the Spirit_____
- on all occasions _____
- with all kinds of prayer _____
- while being alert _____
- always keep on _____
- for all the Lord's people _____

Fred Hartley reminds us that "upper room" does not deal with location, rather with *priority* and *prominence*. Look up the references provided and answer these questions:

- When Jesus built His Church, He built a praying Church—as a living stone (1 Peter 2:4–5). How does prayer factor into the church you are building?
- When Jesus made disciples, He made praying disciples (Matt. 6:5–18, 26:41). What kind of disciple are you—and what kind of disciples are you making?
- The size (scope) of your ministry is determined by the size of your prayer life (Ex. 33:17; John 15:16; 1 Cor. 3:6–7; 1 John 5:14–15). How would you describe the size of your current prayer life?
- The size of your prayer life is revealed by the size of the answers to prayer (Ps. 2:8; Matt. 21:21; James 4:2). What are you asking God for right now? What *will* you ask God for?

Action Steps

Fred Leonard observes two obstacles to living as an upper-room disciple:

- Followers of Christ sin and rebel against God's rule. When we are not in submission to God's leadership, we resist the Holy Spirit. Lack of repentance keeps us from being in right relationship with God, and thus we won't long to pray and worship in the throne room.
- 2. We live in unforgiveness, which results in broken relationship with God and keeps us from entering the throne room.

Spend a few minutes asking God to show you if these two obstacles are in any way hindering your prayer life. Ask Him for help in resolving these issues.

According to Leonard, the key to becoming a house of prayer for all nations is to be always asking God to pour out His Holy Spirit upon you and to fill your church with His presence. Close out your study time by responding in prayer.

SANDRA HIGLEY is the author of *A Year of Prayer Events for Your Church*, a book designed to move your church toward developing upper-room disciples. It is available at *prayershop.org*.

<u>By Lisa Bartelt</u>

y first job out of college was as a reporter for my hometown newspaper. My beat—the regular area that I was to write about—was the local school districts. I attended school board meetings and wrote feature articles. I met with superintendents, principals, and teachers to establish relationships.

For the most part, my connections with the school officials were favorable. While it wasn't my job to paint a perfect picture of the schools, I aimed to be fair in my coverage, writing about the good and the bad.

On one occasion, the school superintendent was involved in some questionable dealings with the state board of education. From the newspaper's standpoint and the state board's—he wasn't being honest about

Subbatting Your Hit List to Jesus

Five Ways to Pray for Your Enemies

how he was running the district. At my editor's prompting, I wrote numerous stories about the superintendent's failures to accurately report to the state. Understandably, my relationship with this man was strained, at best.

I dreaded calling him to ask followup questions. He was intimidating, rude, and a little on the shady side. He bullied my editor and threatened to sue the newspaper. My heart would race and my hands would shake any time I had to be in the same room with him. I tended to avoid conflict and hoped God would just make the problem go away.

A Surprising Suggestion

I had become a Christian in college, so when I returned to my hometown after graduation, I found myself lacking the community and direction I had on campus. I often called a spiritual mentor from college to talk, and one time we discussed this uncomfortable working relationship.

Her solution surprised me.

"Why don't you pray for him?" she said.

Pray for him? I thought. I don't even like him; why would I want to pray for him?

But her words echoed Jesus' teachings. "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5:43–44).

In the grand scheme of things, I wasn't being persecuted, but I considered this man an enemy. Jesus' command was clear. I needed to love that superintendent. And the only way I could do that was to pray for him.

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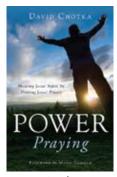
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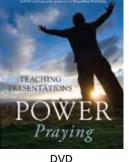
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teaching in his letter to the Romans by saying, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse" (Rom. 12:14). Quoting Proverbs, he added, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head" (Rom. 12:20). Even unbelievers use the common phrase, "Kill them with kindness."

Whatever words you choose to describe this approach, it's an action easier said than done. But it's certainly not impossible.

Here are five ways to help you pray for your enemies:

Make a list. Those who seek revenge often have a "hit list" of • people who have wronged them at one time or another, those they wouldn't mind seeing punished in some way. The teacher in the parable of the Good Samaritan asked, "Who is my neighbor?" In the same way, we can ask, "Who is my enemy?" The goal is not to make a hit list for revenge but to specifically identify people we consider enemies. While we can pray generally for enemies we aren't aware of or with whom we'll never have contact, we'll grow the most if we're praying for personal enemies—people we see or interact with regularly.

How do you know if you regard someone as an enemy? Consider how you react when you think of the person. If you become agitated, angry, or bitter, there's a good chance you've just thought of someone who is an enemy.

Be honest with God. An enemy won't automatically become a friend just because you start praying for him or her. God knows how we feel. It's OK to say, "God, I don't like this person or what he's done, but I know You love him. Help me to love him too."

David's psalms are full of honest feelings about his enemies. He even wishes ill on those who pursue him. We can tell God how we feel and let Him handle it. As the Apostle Paul admonished, "Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord" (Rom. 12:19).

Look for practical ways to meet a need. Few people are mean or ornery just for the sake of being mean. Enemies might have a past hurt, a deep insecurity, or a lingering fear they try to mask with cruelty. Ask God to help you listen to what your enemy says and watch what he or she does.

Another adage says, "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer." We don't have to become best friends, but the more we get to know our enemies, the more we'll see of their needs.

Do the hard thing. Before my husband and I started dating, he was interested in a few girls in a wider circle of friends. I was already convinced of my love for him based on our friendship. It hurt me to see him paying attention to someone else. I could have gone the bitter and jealous route, but God pressed on my heart to love and bless.

I wrote an encouraging letter to one of the girls, thanking her for being among our group of friends and telling her what I appreciated about her. It was a hard letter to write, but I made myself do it. I found my feelings for her softening. I didn't know what God was up to, but later when I entered a dating relationship with the man who would become my husband, my conscience toward the other girl was clear.

Look in the mirror. Recognize that it's possible someone sees you as an enemy. Pray the words of Paul that "as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (Rom. 12:18). Ask God's forgiveness for any behavior in your life that would make you an enemy to someone. Then seek the person's forgiveness if appropriate.

Change of Heart

When I started praying for the school superintendent, I didn't know what to

expect. Would he miraculously confess to his mistakes? Would my job become easier? Would he move on to another job? Would he become a Christian?

I hoped those things would happen, but in reality, my prayers lacked conviction that anything would change. Months passed. I continued to pray regularly for him. I still didn't like the man, but I didn't despise him, either.

One night after a school board meeting, I was leaving the parking lot in my car when he flagged me down. I cautiously lowered my window, wondering if he was going to criticize me for something I'd done wrong or if he was going to threaten me in some way.

Instead, he asked if we could schedule a meeting to talk about some ways to generate more positive stories about the school district. The man who had previously been hard to work with suddenly wanted to work together. I suspected his motives were selfish, but I left the parking lot feeling I'd gained some ground.

I thanked God for hearing my prayers. I never saw outward proof that the man had changed, but our relationship became less hostile. And God had changed my heart as I prayed.

Love your enemies.

Pray for those who persecute you.

The way of Jesus isn't the easy way, but He doesn't ask us to do something He wouldn't do Himself. On the cross, He prayed for His enemies: "Father, forgive them."

May this be our prayer as we follow His lead. 📧



LISA BARTELT is a freelance writer, award-winning journalist, and frequent blogger. Her work has appeared in *The One Year Devotional of Joy and Laughter* (Tyndale) and in

curriculum for Group Publishing. She blogs at *lmbartelt.wordpress.com*.

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HSR112

By Brad Bush

For the Holy Spire Spire

In the first New Testament conference on prayer, led by the Lord Himself in Luke 11:1–13, we find Jesus teaching His disciples to pray (vv. 2–4), to persevere in prayer (vv. 5-10), and to pray in the assurance that His Father will give His children the Holy Spirit (vv. 11–13):

"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"



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Email jong@harvestprayer.com for information. www.prayerleader.com The asking for and receiving of the Holy Spirit was to be the very means by which His Kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven (v. 2). The giving of the Spirit to His followers in answer to prayer would result in the expansion and acceleration of the coming of the Kingdom.

The disciples became active participants in answer to their own prayer in Acts 2 and Acts 4. It began with praying a promise (Acts 1:4, 14; 4:24, 29–30). The result of these outpourings of the Spirit are what we call revivals—fresh impulses of spiritual life revitalizing the Church. Revival is characterized by rapid expansion of the reign of God in hearts, homes, churches, cities, and nations as men and women come into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. This is why revival is often referred to as "days of heaven on earth."

Today, in settings where believers from different denominational and theological backgrounds come together to pray, it seems that praying for the Comforter to come can make some uncomfortable and others confused. I remember leading a citywide prayer gathering and being challenged by a dear older brother because I had led in the singing of the hymn, "Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart." His concern was that we should not be asking for the Spirit in prayer because the Spirit already "descended" at Pentecost. "Don't ask for what you already have," he said. "It's unbelief!"

Or is it? He didn't understand that even though the Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, He has been continually poured out in a similar way in answer to prayer throughout the history of the Church.

Do you share his concerns or have questions of your own such as, "Will praying for the Spirit detract from my focus on Christ? After all, He came to glorify Jesus and not Himself."

It may be encouraging to know there was a time when praying for the Comforter

to come was a common occurrence in the Church.

Historical Prayers for the Spirit

During periods of great spiritual awakening in America, the focus of prayer was on asking the exalted Christ for the Holy Spirit rather than for "a revival." People petitioned the Lord for "outpourings of the Spirit" or for "copious effusions" of the Holy Spirit.

During the Second Great Awakening (1790s–1830s), one of the most widely circulated pamphlets was printed in London by Rev. James Stewart called, *Thoughts on the Importance of Special Prayer for the General Outpouring of the Holy Spirit.* Pastors preached sermons such as "The Outpouring of the Spirit Essential to a Revival of Religion," by William Yates. In New York City, during the 1857–58 Prayer Revival, you would likely have been handed a tract written by a well-known Presbyterian clergyman entitled simply, *Pray for the Spirit.*

For much of our nation's history, a large portion of the praying Church had no problem asking for the Holy Spirit. To them there was nothing confusing or uncomfortable—and keep in mind this was decades before the Azusa Street Revival of 1906 with the birth of the Pentecostal and the later Charismatic movements. Notice that their praying was for the coming of the *Reviver* more than the revival. The focus was on Christ's promise, His provision, and His prerogative as Head of His Church.

We need not fear that praying for the Spirit is taking the focus off of Christ or asking for something we already have, for the following biblical reasons:

When we pray for the Spirit we are petitioning for the personal presence of Jesus Christ.

All revival is ultimately relational. The Holy Spirit is the divine executor of revival and He is Jesus' personal representative (John 15:26; 16:7, 13–15). The Holy Spirit's principle purpose is to give people a regenerated heart and to continue to fill and revive the new heart that He gave. He is the giver and the reviver of our relationship to the Lord Jesus. He is the Spirit of life—Jesus' life in the believer (John 14:6).

When we ask for the Spirit we are asking for a divine Person to come among us and to do what only He can do—reveal more of the presence and power of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the true agent in all revival and always for Jesus' sake. To recognize that we are petitioning for this Person to come among us in His manifest presence and power is to realize we are placing ourselves under the Lordship of Christ because the Spirit is poured out by Christ's authority (Acts 2:33).

We petition in prayer for outpourings of the Spirit because we deeply desire the very presence and power of Jesus to fill our lives and churches, thereby submitting to His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

When we pray for the Spirit we are promoting the glory of Jesus Christ.

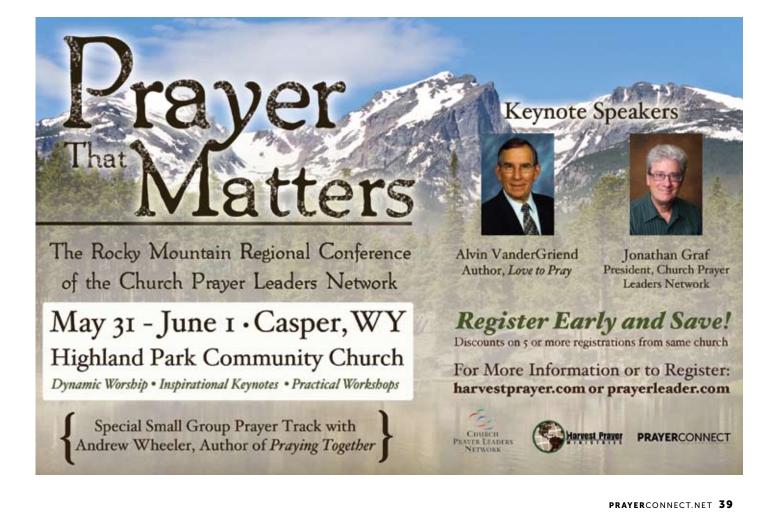
What is our primary motivation in praying for revival? Is it the moral disintegration of our nation or the spiritual lethargy of the Church? To be sure, these should move any follower of Christ to cry out to God. But are we truly grieved that *Christ* is being robbed of His glory in His Church? Are we saddened that our nation refuses to yield to the Savior's royal scepter and receive the true freedom that comes through submission to Him?

To be grieved and saddened by *these things* is to be in harmony with the heart of the Holy Spirit. He grieves and His power is quenched when Christ is robbed of His glory. The Holy Spirit comes to glorify Jesus Christ and testify to Him (John 15:26, 16:12–14). The Holy Spirit is so closely identified with Jesus and His mission that He is called the *Spirit of Jesus* (Acts 16:7). The Holy Spirit is ultimately the only One with the almighty power to promote the glory of the Son, and in turn, delight the heart of the Father.

We can pray for the Spirit to be poured out because we are devoted to promoting the glory of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom.

When we pray for the Spirit we are pleading the New Covenant *promise* of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus of Nazareth wanted His followers to ask with expectation for the gift of the Spirit (Luke 11:13). After His death, resurrection, and ascension, the exalted Lord Jesus—now seated at the right hand of His Father—was given the authority to fulfill the very requests He taught His



followers to pray (Acts 2:32–33, 38–39)! The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was the first provision the exalted Lord gave in response to prayer, based on the New Covenant promise of God (Acts 1:14). The ascended and exalted Lord Jesus is now the Church's head over all things (Eph. 1:22).

Paul prayed that the church in Ephesus would know "his incomparably

great power for us who believe" (Eph. 1:19). This "great power" is available to the Church because "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace" (Eph. 1:7).

The promise of the Spirit to be poured out in response to believing prayer is as good today as it was on the day Peter preached: "In the last days,

THE SUM OF By Jonathan Edwards

he Spirit of God is the chief of blessings, for it is the sum of all spiritual blessings: which we need infinitely more than others, and wherein our true and eternal happiness consists. That which is the sum of the blessings Christ purchased, is the sum of the blessings Christians have to pray for—but that, as was observed before, is the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, when the disciples came to Christ, desiring him to teach them to pray (Luke xi.), and he accordingly gave them particular directions for the performance of this duty, he adds, ver. 13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" From which words Christ, we also observe, that there is no blessing we have so great encouragement to pray for, as the Spirit of God. The words imply that our heavenly Father is especially ready to bestow his Holy Spirit on them that ask him. The more excellent the nature of any benefit is, which we stand in need of, the more ready God is to bestow it, in answer to prayer.

The infinite goodness of God's nature is the more gratified, the grand design of our redemption is better answered; Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, has the greater success in his undertaking and labours; and those desires which are expressed in prayer for the most excellent blessings, are the most excellent desires, and consequently such as God most approves of, and is most ready to gratify.

The Scriptures do not only direct and encourage us, in general, to pray for the Holy Spirit above all things else, but it is the expressly revealed will of God, that his church should be very much in prayer for the glorious outpourings of the Spirit which is to be in the latter days, and for what shall be accomplished by it. –Jonathan Edwards, theologian, 1703–1758

Excerpted from An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People, in Extraordinary Prayer, for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, Pursuant to Scripture Promises and Prophecies Concerning the Last Time. God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. . . . I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy" (Acts 2:17–18). Note the plural *days*. I believe we are in the last days—a period of outpourings of the Holy Spirit!

In the Second Great Awakening, The American Quarterly Register in 1832 reported for the opening of the year 1831: "During this, and several succeeding months, an unusual interest was exhibited on the subject of religion, in all parts of the United States. Thousands, who had before lived in a great measure heedless of their duty, and of their immortal destiny, were awakened to the subject of personal salvation. It is estimated, on credible evidence, that within five months, from February 1, a special interest was felt in scarcely less than 1,500 towns in the United States, and that more than 50,000 individuals professed to have become partakers of the blessings of salvation through Jesus Christ." This was 1,831 years after Pentecost!

We can pray with confidence for the Spirit to be poured out because the exalted Jesus is the purchaser and provider of the promise made by God until Christ returns in the fullness of His Kingdom at the end of this age.

Spiritually Stagnant and Leaky

Most of us are familiar with Revelation 3:20: "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (NKJV). In this verse the Lord Jesus is appealing to His people. Some dimension of His life, His power, His truth, His influence, His fellowship with His people is missing. And He knows it, but apparently the Church does not! If the Church begins to recognize its need, hear His voice, and open itself up to Him in humble repentance—how is it that the Lord Jesus comes in?

He comes into His repentant Church *continued on page 42*

"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things you have not known." Jeremiah 33:3



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All believers have the Holy Spirit and should be filled with the Spirit, so why ask for what we already have? Because we can become spiritually stagnant. Someone once asked D. L. Moody, a wellknown evangelist in the late 1800s, why Christians need to be repeatedly filled with the Holy Spirit. His reply: "Because we leak!"

A church can have a reputation for being alive though it is actually dead (Rev. 3:1). A congregation can become satisfied with its life and ministry, yet the Jesus they're singing about Sunday morning is standing outside the main doors and no one seems to notice (Rev. 3:15–20). When the Spirit is poured out, spiritual stagnation gives way to overflowing fullness. Churches once dead become alive. And the Jesus who stood outside the door is now standing in the sanctuary in His manifest presence and now everyone notices!

For Jesus' Sake

Evan Roberts had it right. As the most prominent human leader during the Welsh Revival of 1904, he would often exhort congregations to pray: "Send the Spirit *now*, for Jesus Christ's sake. Send the Spirit *powerfully now*, for Jesus Christ's sake. Send the Spirit *more powerfully now*, for Jesus Christ's sake. Send the Spirit *still more powerfully now*, for Jesus Christ's sake." An estimated 100,000 came into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and entire communities were transformed in the principality of Wales.

The New Covenant gift of the Holy Spirit and the glorifying of Jesus Christ in His Church cannot be separated—nor should prayer for the pouring out of the promised Holy Spirit be marginalized or maligned. The Lord Jesus Himself left us no options. Let's restore the power of His promise in prayer!

To paraphrase Evan Roberts: *For Jesus' sake, let's pray for the outpouring of the Spirit!*



BRAD BUSH is the senior pastor of Maple Ridge Community Church in West Lafayette, IN, and an executive leadership team member of the National Revival Network.

Brad also works with International Awakening Ministries and will be the host of a conference on revival at the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College in October.





A Dynamite Way to Get Unstuck in Prayer

od's Word is great fuel for heartfelt prayer. The combination of faith-filled prayer and Scripture (pure truth—John 17:17) is dynamite in the hands of a believer. But sometimes we get stuck regarding how to pray for someone.

Here is a way to use Scripture to empower your prayers:

Make a list of people to pray for, such as family, friends, neighbors, or peers. It can be as extensive or as simple as you want.

Jot down some facts about each one's life. Don't become overwhelmed by a person's needs, but trust God to help you focus on one area. If you don't know the individual well (new neighbors, for example), keep in mind that God does. You don't need a complete list. Again, trust God's leading.

Ask God to show you a specific verse to pray over each person. The passage might relate to that individual's season of life (such as geriatric health issues, new parenting, college decisions) or with a specific trial the person is facing (health concerns, employment, relationship difficulties). In addition to problem-oriented topics, you can also pray for positive growth, such as asking God to develop a godly quality in that person.

Pray that Scripture regularly (daily or weekly) for each person. You can personalize it further by inserting people's names into the Scripture as you pray. A simple photo album, with a page for a photo of each person and the corresponding verse, can also guide your prayers.

By faith, blessings will come. The person you're praying for will be blessed because God's Word never returns void (Isa. 55:11). You will learn more Scripture through the repetition. And you may be surprised to discover that when you see that person, the verse you have been praying for him or her is so alive in you that it instantly comes to mind.

This is an exciting way to pray using God's Word as fuel for prayer and trusting Him to use it powerfully.

JOAN SHERMAN is an editorial assistant with *Prayer Connect*.

Lugging Tables and Praying Blessings

he buildings and ground staff at the First Baptist Church of Cleveland, TN, have great attitudes about setting up tables, moving chairs around, and helping people carry their loads into the church. But they take their dedication to managing the facility a step further—these guys are prayer warriors!

The church hosts many classes, studies, and events related to its own ministry. But the church facilities are also used by several groups and vendors from outside the church. Last year the building team set up for 1,100 events.

When the staff sets up a room, they also pray throughout the room for the people who will use it, as well as for the success of the event. As they haul tables around, they pray for God's blessing.



Then they leave behind a note indicating that they've prayed.

On a simple card, they print Bible verses and a message about their prayers—and then sign their names. The team has researched appropriate Scripture passages, including Hebrews 6:10 and 1 Thessalonians 1:3. The verses refer to remembering people in prayer for their work and labors of love.

Wayne Richardson, director of buildings and grounds, says that the response has been "unbelievable." Very few of the cards are left behind in the rooms. In fact, most people ask if they can take the cards with them because they are such a blessing.

Richardson manages this staff of ten men and says it was the team's idea to do more than just set up ta-

bles. "They're a great team of guys," says Richardson. They usually have lunch together and pray in their meetings.

And when they prepare a room for an event, they do more than just the physical set-up. They are also preparing the room by inviting the presence of Christ to bless all who will walk through the doors.



Prayer by the Carload

hen I taught a prayer seminar in small community in Wisconsin, I enlisted help from a resident to do research about the community ahead of time. We noted that early in its history the town was overrun by saloons—51 scattered throughout a

population of only 10,000 people. When I shared this information with the group, they identified a similar spiritual reality in their community today. The town's alcoholism rate currently runs above the average state and national levels.

This simple piece of information

DISCIPLE YOUR PEOPLE

TO PRAY GOD'S WORD

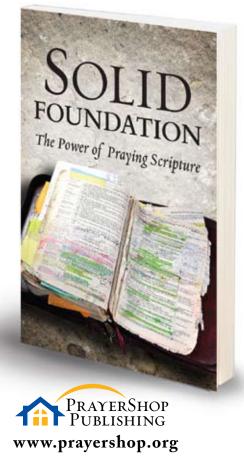
Move them away from viewing prayer as a fix-it tool.

Give it to your small group.

Solid Foundation is a 48-page, 4 x 6 booklet that includes the theme articles of *Prayer Connect* Issue 3. It offers simple, practical help that will equip and motivate the average believer to pray Scripture. Set your congregation on fire as they learn this dynamic prayer method together.

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helped the group begin thinking more strategically about how to pray for their community. They started pooling their knowledge about the history and various key areas in the city, especially places that represented spiritual darkness. As they talked with each other, they realized that many of them had discerned similar things.

Dividing them into small groups of three or four—or just enough to fit into one car—I sent them on prayerwalking (or prayer-driving) assignments. I instructed each carload to spend about ten minutes praying together as a group, asking the Lord where they should go. Then I gave them an hour to drive to that one spot, get out of the car, and pray together. If they had time left, they could ask the Lord about another site to prayer walk.

When they returned to the church, I invited the groups to tell about their experiences. Because they all lived in the community, they were very enthused to hear from each other. As they described what God had shown them and how they prayed, God began planting in their hearts a broader vision and love for their community. Many committed to continue prayer walking with a new strategic mindset.

This simple strategy can be used in any size community. As people live in an area or neighborhood, they begin to observe the spiritual dynamics of their surroundings. Bringing them together to talk and pray about it helps enlarge their hearts for their "territory."

This can be a simple exercise for an adult class, a youth gathering, or a mid-week prayer time. Offering this experience on a regular basis will help people more readily observe the spiritual dynamics around them—and then want to join with others to pray.

CAROL MADISON is editor of Prayer Connect.





Praying for the Hollywood Tribe

wice in the past three years, the National Prayer Committee has held its January meeting in Hollywood, CA. Because the entertainment industry in Hollywood is perhaps the most influential mission field on earth, these prayer leaders chose to come and pray at various Hollywood sites, as well as learn about strategic prayer for those who so heavily impact our culture through this industry.

The Hollywood Prayer Network (HPN) is a non-denominational Christian prayer ministry led by professionals in Hollywood. It was birthed in 2001 for the purpose of mobilizing global prayer for the people, projects, and powerful influence of the entertainment industry. Karen Covell, founder of HPN (also a TV producer), shared her desire to see the spiritual climate of Hollywood changed from the inside out. Covell longs to see more Christians begin to view Hollywood as a redeemable city similar to Nineveh, rather than as Sodom and Gomorrah.

As a member of the National Prayer Committee, Covell has mobilized prayer leaders from around the nation to see the vital importance of reaching the entertainment industry for Jesus Christ.

Many people boycott, petition, or give up on Hollywood. But what if Christians began to see its redemption as God's way of ushering in a cultural and spiritual awakening?

Join the Mission Field

Currently, HPN has mobilized about 6,000 Christians already working in this mission field. Increasingly, more believers are feeling called to Hollywood. They are growing as a community through small groups and Bible studies and are experiencing God's presence in increasingly noticeable ways.

At *hollywoodprayernetwork.org*, you will find a wealth of resources to engage you, your family, small group, or church in strategic, informed prayer for the people who work in this industry. Here are just a few things you will find as you navigate the various dropdown menus on the HPN website:

Prayer Specifics

There are a variety of specific ways to pray for the "Hollywood Tribe."

- Prayer calendars (kid's version as well as teen/adult versions) are available each month.
- Monthly prayer newsletters contain a wealth of people and projects to pray for, along with news and specific prayer targets for each month.
- Incognito Prayer Team (IPT): Sign up if you have a heart for Christian and non-Christian celebrities and decision-makers in the entertainment industry. Intercessors are assigned or can choose to pray for a number of celebrities or cultural influencers incognito—meaning that the person you are praying for will not know you are praying for him or her.
- I to I Program: HPN now has almost 1,500 "I to I" prayer partnerships, with an intercessor on the outside of Hollywood praying specifically for an industry professional who has requested a prayer partner.
- Prayer Walks: On a rotating, weekly basis, industry Christians join other believers who work on studio lots for prayer walks through their lots.
- Prayer Ministries: You will find a

list of area prayer ministries that are accessible to the Hollywood community and beyond.

Other Interesting Features

- Online Store: Support Christians working as missionaries in Hollywood by purchasing helpful tools.
- Hollywood Entertainment Ministries: See a list of websites for more than 20 ministries that serve the Christians working in Hollywood. Hollywood Connect (*hollywoodconnect.com*) is the hub for announcements and information for the Hollywood Entertainment Ministries.
- News and Articles: Don't miss this section filled with articles and news stories that will greatly enhance and inform your prayers for Hollywood!

If you have given up on Hollywood as a place of darkness, please reconsider and ask God to lead your heart toward earnest intercession for the believers there, as well as those who do not yet know Christ. Consider signing up to be a part of the Hollywood Prayer Network (*hollywoodprayernetwork.org*) so that day by day this city will be increasingly filled with the glory of God.

What's Not to Like?

Here are some prayer pages on Facebook we encourage you to "Like." (Add *www.facebook.* com before the / on each address.) **Prayer Connect** /prayerconnect Harvest Prayer Ministries /harvestprayer New Life America /newlifeamerica



PRAYERLEADER Encouragement for Prayer Mobilizers

Encouraging Reluctant Pray-ers By Paul Covert

ne of our men recently wrote these words, "I wish my writing could reflect the passion and deep feelings I have experienced since I have become involved in the prayer ministry. My eyes have been opened and God has allowed me to see His world in a whole new way and to experience prayer to a much different level than I ever felt was possible."

We hear this kind of positive report fairly often, but it wasn't always this way. Many people were not raised in a home where prayer was practiced, so they are uncomfortable praying out loud. Add to that the evil intent of our enemy who will do all he can to cause people to feel awkward in prayer—and you have the perfect storm. But you can build your ministry around figuring out how to help people break through and get comfortable with prayer.

Core Belief in People's Desire

It is important to believe that people would love to pray if they were just coached and had someone walk beside them for a while. We schedule events, trainings, schools of prayer, and small groups that are at the basic level for anyone who wants to grow in his or her prayer life.

One of our prayer partners, who couldn't imagine ever praying in public, learned to love prayer ministry through the help of a mentor:

> Well, I haven't been around this prayer ministry that long, and it sure wasn't at the top of my list of things I ever felt God calling me to do. My mentor and I had been talking regularly and he just threw it out as

a suggestion, something for me to try out, and at first I thought he was joking. Me? Pray in public? No, I think you have the wrong guy.

But I stepped out in faith, and with my mentor literally holding my hand in the beginning, something inside me soon clicked. All of the stories I'd read in the Bible about God using ordinary, weak people suddenly came alive. It felt like I was one of them almost. I have never looked back.

Ways to Encourage New Pray-ers

We believe prayer ministry is as important as any work in the church, so we challenge the best leaders to join our team. These exceptional people make it work and help us weave these prayer principles throughout our ministry:

Offer easy entry points. We try to have places where people can begin praying that are easy entry points. For example, we hold an annual prayer conference designed to inspire people to get stronger in their prayer lives. We also offer a school of prayer each quarter that is four hours on a Sunday afternoon. We always include introductory topics such as, "How do I pray out loud?" We also add some meatier subjects—for instance, "Learning to pray for wisdom for life."

Gear toward men. I never recruit women to pray. They will come and they will pray! But men will not if the room is all women or if it is too "fluffy." We go to great lengths to make it male friendly.

Build relationships. I make sure I go to all the men's retreats and the other events, looking for places I can develop men in prayer. Cathy, our associate prayer ministry director, does the same at all the women's events. We connect with

people and invite them to the prayer room to experience strategic, measured prayer—and they get hooked. Most of the people on our prayer teams have been recruited by someone and joined out of a trusted relationship.

Make the prayer experience relevant and inspirational. One of the reasons people don't attend prayer events is because they grow tired of praying for sick people. We intentionally don't take prayer requests at many of our events. This approach helps people to realize that the focus in times of corporate prayer is not on them.

One of our major initiatives is helping the other ministries of the church build prayer into their lives, events, and departments. We do our best to be in the planning stages of new campuses or major events so that prayer is part of the DNA of the event—and eventually our church. It takes only a time or two before people begin to see the difference prayer makes in their ministries.

Communicate often and well. We produce a monthly newsletter to more than 2,000 people to inform them about the latest things happening in the prayer world. Most people find out about prayer events through this newsletter—or through Facebook or Twitter.

The truth is we have a long way to go in the area of prayer. We are not a house of prayer yet in the sense Jesus had in mind. But thankfully we have several wonderful servant ministers who will "not rest until this thing rocks."



PAUL COVERT is prayer pastor at Central Christian Church, with several campuses in the Mesa, AZ, area (*centralaz.com*).



Preparing My Heart for the Day | By George Müller

t has pleased the Lord to teach me a truth, the benefit of which I have not lost for more than 14 years. The point is this: I saw more clearly than ever that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was to have my soul happy in the Lord. *The first thing* to be concerned about was not how much I might serve the Lord, but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished.

I might seek to serve the Lord by setting the truth before the unconverted; I might seek to benefit believers; I might seek to relieve the distressed. I might in other ways seek to behave myself as it becomes a child of God in this world, and yet, not being happy in the Lord, and not being *nourished* and strengthened in my inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in the right spirit.

Given to God's Word

Before this time my practice had been, at least for ten years previously, as a habitual thing, to give myself to prayer after having dressed myself in the morning. Now I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God, and to meditate on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warmed, reproved, instructed. I saw that thus, by means of the Word of God, while meditating on it, my heart might be brought into *experimental communion* with the Lord.

I began therefore to meditate on the New Testament from the beginning, early in the morning. The first thing I did, after having asked in a few words the Lord's blessing upon His precious Word, was to begin to meditate on the Word of God, searching as it were into every verse to get a blessing out of it, not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word, not for the sake of preaching on what I had meditated upon, but for obtaining food for my own soul.

Meditation Turns to Prayer

The result I have found to be almost invariably is this, that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession,

The first great business was to have my soul happy in the Lord.

or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication; so that, though I did not, as it were, give myself to prayer but to meditation, yet it turned almost immediately more or less into prayer.

When thus I have been for a while making confession or intercession or supplication, or have given thanks, I go on to the next words or verse, turning all, as I go on, into prayer for myself or others, as the Word may lead to it, but still continually keeping before me *that*

food for my own soul is the object of my meditation.

The difference, then, between my former practice and my present one is this: formerly when I rose, I began to pray as soon as possible, and generally spent all my time till breakfast in prayer, or almost all the time. At all events I almost invariably began with prayer, except when I felt my soul to be more than usually barren, in which case I read the Word of God for food, or for refreshment, or for a revival and renewal of my inner man, before I gave myself to prayer.

Speaking to My Father and Friend

But what was the result? I often spent a quarter of an hour, or half an hour, or even an hour on my knees before being conscious to myself of having derived comfort, encouragement, humbling of soul, etc., and often, after having suffered much from wandering of mind for the first ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, or even half an hour, I only then began really to pray.

I scarcely ever suffer now in this way. For my heart being nourished by the truth, being brought into experimental fellowship with God, I speak to my Father and to my Friend (vile though I am, and unworthy of it) about the things that He has brought before me in His precious Word. It often now astonishes me that I did not sooner see this point.

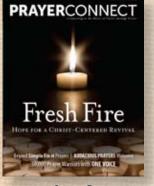
Take the golden key, He calleth thee. Enter into the holy place. 🖸

GEORGE MüLLER (1805–1898) was a Christian evangelist and director of an orphanage in Bristol, England, where he cared for more than 10,000 orphans. His great faith was demonstrated by the hours he spent daily in prayer and Bible reading.





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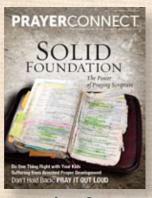


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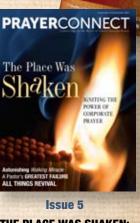
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