

Building an Effective Corporate Prayer Strategy *by Stephen Boyce*

SYLLABUS

A Leaders Guide to:

- Developing and maintaining a powerful corporate prayer strategy
- Training mature and dedicated prayer leaders
- Stirring an appetite for prayer within the church
- Linking vision to prayer strategy

INTRODUCTION

God is moving worship and prayer into the forefront of the local church once again. Prayer cannot be a random activity or loosely organized effort like a pick-up game of sandlot stickball. God is moving prayer to the forefront of the local church because it belongs there. It requires all the attention and thought that the most important activities of ministry require. Vision must be cast for corporate prayer, preaching must proclaim the truth of corporate prayer and leaders must demonstrate the value of corporate prayer. Prayer leads the way into victory and prayer brings home the spoils. The discerning leader will provide the way for corporate prayer to come to the forefront of the local church.

SCRIPTURAL AND HISTORICAL REFERENCES TO CORPORATE PRAYER

The Old Testament has many types and images of overcoming the enemy as a corporate body. The Early Church had daily corporate prayer. Also, according to history, the Early Church prayed the Lord's Prayer three times daily for the first three centuries.

Matthew 18:19-20 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

[20] For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 21:13 "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"

Luke 1:10 And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 3:1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

Acts 16:16 Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.

Eph. 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Col. 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.

Col. 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

1 Tim. 2:1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--

DEFINING THE NEED FOR CORPORATE PRAYER STRATEGY FOR TODAY

Is there a need for organized and strategic prayer? Every ministry considered important within the church is deserving of strategic thought and implementation. For instance, a successful mission's outreach would demand organization and strategy. Likewise, a ministry as important as prayer deserves the best organization and strategy in order for it to bear the greatest fruit.

DEVELOPING A HEALTHY CORPORATE PRAYER STRATEGY

Every important area or activity in which the church is involved should be covered by focused prayer. Also, a large cross-section of the church should be actively providing prayer support.

- It should cover major aspects of the kingdom involvement:

Leadership

Vision and Direction

Major Projects

Congregational Needs

Community Needs

The Nation and World

- It should include various segments of the church:
 - Women*
 - Men*
 - Children*
 - Leaders*
 - Ministry Teams i.e. Worship Team, Evangelism Team, Youth Leaders, Media, etc.*

BUILDING A STEP AT A TIME

- Developing a strategic plan for prayer and intercession will be determined by our vision and understanding of the purposes God has for us to accomplish.
- It is important to identify the prayer strategies that are working and effective and those that need to be adjusted or even eliminated.
- Incorporate focused prayer into the important areas of ministry. Implement prayer as a primary part of each ministry endeavor.
- Make provision for each prayer group to meet at the time and in the place that will best accommodate them.

TRAINING MATURE AND DEDICATED PRAYER LEADERS

Properly training leaders and coordinators is key to establishing a solid infrastructure for prayer in the local church.

- Continually bring definition to the focus and purpose of prayer before and after times of prayer. Don't assume everyone is up on what you are up on.
- Teach the importance of maintaining a mind and heart of unity within the prayer group.
- Determine the level or nature "warfare" type prayer you may be comfortable allowing in a local group. Prayer styles are easily learned and passed on to new people.
- The leader / coordinator needs to know how to maintain order while keeping on track with the purpose.

CREATING AN APPETITE FOR PRAYER WITHIN THE CHURCH

Prayer can become just a dry form of ministry unless it is watered and tended in the hearts of the entire congregation. This will ensure effectiveness and potency throughout the year. It is not enough to be excited about prayer for one month.

- Recognize where key points of faith may be established. A certain area or geographical may be key to stirring a prayer appetite.
- Keep the passion for prayer—preach it!
- Keep the passion in praying—teach it!
- Develop a vehicle for displaying the fruit of corporate prayer.

LINKING VISION TO PRAYER STRATEGY

It is a commonly understood idea that we ultimately *get* what we pray for. God allows leaders to see into the future of the church in order to cast the vision and establish the direction. But we must pray the future goals into our present reality.

- What is important to you?
- What needs to happen by the end of the year?
- Praying for a certain ministry helps to establish that ministry and produce the fruit of that ministry. For instance: Praying for the lost quickens vision for evangelism.

Acts 4:24-31 *When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them.*

[25] *You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:*

“Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

[26] *The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.'*

[27] *Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.*

[28] *They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.*

[29] *Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.*

[30] *Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."*

[31] *After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

CONCLUSION:

NURTURING A CORPORATE PRAYER STRATEGY

Corporate prayer strategies are yet to be released in a more extravagant, “burning heart” way in the Church.

The Revival that the whole Church world is saying is eminent, will be established and maintained through an unprecedented Worship/Prayer Movement that is being developed in the leader/the visionary/ the vanguard local church of the day whom has “ears to hear” what the Spirit is saying.

The Spirit will not be heard unless this “new sound” of corporate worship and prayer strategy finds its place in our homes, our churches, and our nation. As the leader makes plain to every member of the Body that . . . apart from Him, we can do nothing, and that every Christian has a psalm, a hymn, a spiritual song, to offer, there is a depth of prayer that will be released in us, His Bride.

Many are getting prophetic insight, believing it to culminate into a 24 hour round the clock Worship and Prayer meeting in regional churches all over the U.S. Not one strategist has the whole answer. However, there is an unfolding in the design and creativity in prayer strategies coming forth in order for the mantle of authority to abound in the Church of the 21st Century. The Holy Spirit is speaking to many Prophets, Apostles and Intercessors, Psalmists and Levites on how to deepen the intimacy of the Church with Christ, through prayer, and how to establish this prayer mantle to equip the next generation.

Give us the blueprint, Lord!!!

SELAH