

SHAPING FOR MISSION

TIPS AND IDEAS TO CREATE A
PRAYING
CHURCH

The greatest times I have had being a Church member, leader and pastor have been through the power of prayer working in and through my life and Church. I have witnessed miracles in many contexts as I have interceded on other's behalf. There are the miracles of seeing friends, family and neighbours come to know Jesus or return to a loving Church; after praying and asking for leaders to see previously unknown or unidentified people stepping forward; witnessing miracles in the community as doors have been open and lives transformed. The power of prayer to transform the heart of a disciple and empower the heart of an unbeliever is something in which we can all have opportunity to participate.

Without Jesus, Church is merely just another club. If we are to effectively shape for mission we must be intentional about placing Jesus back in His rightful place as Head of the Church, seeking His will at each step along the way!

Below are some tips and ideas you can implement in your Church to enhance the level of prayer and to experience the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through you and your Church community.

- 1. Value Prayer** – This means that you as an individual and leader will live a life of prayer by example. This might include sharing times of prayer at the beginning of meetings, featuring it in the worship service, preaching and teaching about it and praying for people when they need it.
- 2. Pray together in worship** – Sadly today prayer time in the worship service can become just another component rather than an opportunity to encounter and talk with the one who we are there to worship. So instead of it being just the usual 3 – 4 minute prayer from the Elder up front, seek the prayer needs of those in the Church before praying by simply asking who needs prayer for a particular need such as health, a family member,

relationship crisis, financial hardship, work etc. By taking a few minutes before the prayer time you encourage the whole Church to unite in prayer and create a culture of a praying Church rather than just a praying person.



- 3. Pray for members then and there** – Sometimes we tend to deal with issues others share with us by deferring it to another time or palming it off to another person. Meanwhile, we miss one of the greatest opportunities to lead out in prayer. When someone comes to share their need, pray for and with them right then and there. Don't be afraid to do so because by doing this you are not only interceding on their behalf but also discipling them and others in living a life of prayer.
- 4. Pray for the Church facility and those who will shortly be there** – As a pastor, it has been when I have intentionally prayed around the Church facility and for the people who would be about to come that weekend that I have experienced some of the most powerful times in Church life. It is simple. Really. Just wander around your Church facility either Friday night or Saturday morning and pray for every room that is going to be utilised and for the people who will

use them from Beginners right through to adults. Pray for the worship service, the sanctuary, any pastors and elders and then continue on through to the car park (a lot of ministry happens in Church car parks). This is bathing your Church in prayer. I would also pray for the empty chairs I knew of in the Church; and if the Church was full I would put more out! By intentionally praying for your Church like this and for each of those empty chairs you are giving permission for God to fill that room, event, program, gathering and chair and to add to your number.

- 5. Prayer Walks** – Organise Church prayer walks into the community, putting cards into letterboxes indicating that their house



had been prayed for. If some members are able, knock on doors and offer to pray for any needs of the community. Pray for opportunities!

- 6. Prayer Vigils** – These are a powerful time as together you come and petition the Lord, spending time together in prayer and seeking the Lord's will.
- 7. A Prayer Board** is a visual way for the Church to intentionally pray together. Make sure it is clearly stated what you are praying for. I have found prayer for both those not yet a part of the Church community and for those who may have left the Church are best. Simply place them in your Church foyer along with markers and encourage all to use them. In previous Churches I have pastored we

would pray over these boards in prayer meeting as well as other meetings of the Church. Answers to prayer and miracles are still occurring years later!

8. Place Importance on Prayer Meetings

– Sadly today prayer meetings are becoming a rarity in Churches so much so that they are in danger of becoming just another community club rather than being a living expression of Jesus Christ. We must ensure that the Church first and foremost is connected with Jesus and we can only do that through meeting together and sharing in times of prayer. Show up to midweek prayer meetings; start prayer meetings before Church; before Sabbath School; whenever you are able.

- 9. Prayer Request forms** – Providing members and attenders with opportunities to share needed prayers is crucial to cultivating healthy growing disciples. We need to ensure that we resource members with opportunities to share. This may include Prayer and Praise forms available in the foyer of Church, info desk etc., which, once completed can be placed in a slotted box in the foyer or in the offering bag. You may also have prayer request forms on your website, Facebook and other outlets giving people the opportunity to be prayed for.

- 10. Prayer Cards.** The gift of prayer must be lived out and utilised by Church members who are passionately praying for the harvest. Have attractive prayer cards available so that little messages of prayer, love and support can be written on them and then posted or shared. You will be surprised how much of an impact this can have on those being prayed for.

Continued on next page >>

Ellen White wrote in *Signs of the Times*, Sept 11, 1893 "The Church may be composed of those who are poor and uneducated; but if they have learned of Christ the science of prayer, the Church will have power to move the arm of Omnipotence. The true people of God will have an influence that will tell upon hearts." May we create praying Churches that are shaping for mission by growing more and better disciples.

Challenge

If you were to measure the level of prayer in your Church, what would you score it out of 10? Why?

What can you do to help your Church become a praying Church? Think about it, pray about it and share with your pastor about what you can do.



www.disciple.org.au

Written and produced by:

Pr. Greg Pratt
Personal Ministries Director
South Queensland Conference