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# **Intercession in the Church**



**Pastoral Leader Training Booklet**

# **47**

**Train & Multiply™**



**T&M™**

Ask for the Lord's help in establishing more effective intercession in your church.

# PERSEVERING IN PRAYER

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable, to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

He said, “*In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with a plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming!’*”

*And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.”*

(Luke 18:2-8)

## NOTES

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# PRACTICAL WORK

- Set an example for sincere, constant prayer.
- Ask the Lord to help your people to pray regularly and faithfully, together and on their own.
- Teach your congregation the importance of prayer.
- Put the suggestions in this study that fit your situation into practice.
- Encourage the members of the congregation to pray faithfully for each other.



God wants us to keep asking, as the widow did.

The Almighty can do anything. He wants to use His great power on our behalf. But He also wants us to ask Him to do so. He is pleased with our childlike faith.

The Lord Jesus Christ says, *“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”*

(Mark 11:24)

Let us pray with power and perseverance. We will see great answers and works of God.

According to Jesus, our infinite and all-powerful God acts:

- ☐ according to our faith.
- ☐ according to how much we can imagine that He will give us.

God responds when we make our requests in humility, love and faith. In His infinite wisdom, often the Almighty chooses not to act, unless we ask Him to do so, in prayer, and according to His will. This is why an obedient, growing church always prays. It is her joy and great privilege.

We can pray privately, with our family, as a church body or in special prayer meetings.

Our general aim is to encourage our people to pray faithfully and powerfully, both privately and as a church body. This study does not aim to structure highly defined programs for prayer. Specific methods are mentioned only as examples. Let the Holy Spirit guide you as you carry out the New Testament guidelines for prayer.

(Matthew 18:19-20)

We trust the Lord to answer in His perfect way. At times it will be different than what we expect.

He knows what is best for each situation and person.

## THE BLESSINGS OF PRAYER

When we pray, we share in the work of extending God's Kingdom, and establishing His will on earth. People believe and repent, the sick are healed, our lives are transformed more and more into the image of Christ, Satan and his hosts are defeated, and God receives glory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 6:9-15)



- ☐ taking up too much time for singing or discussing prayer requests,
- ☐ the meeting dragging on too long; it is better to stop before people get too tired.

## HELP FOR THE LEADER

A wise leader of prayer will:

- be alert to the leading of the Spirit of God,
- prepare well for the meeting,
- make it very clear what to pray for,
- set the example by his own prayers, not usurping all the time, using simple words, etc.

## FOCUSES FOR PRAYER

### Praise:

- We pray to praise God and give Him thanks.

### Intercession:

- We pray for those who need Christ or have other needs.

### The Church:

- repentance and spiritual hunger (2 Chronicles 7:13-14),
- the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in power (Acts 4:23-31),
- unity (John 17:20-21, Acts 1:14, Acts 2:1),
- pastors and leaders (Ephesians 6:19-20),

- its ministry, and spiritual life (Galatians 6:2, Ephesians 1:17-19),
- the services (1 Corinthians 14:26).

### **World Evangelism:**

- the salvation of unbelievers (1 Timothy 2:1-4),
- Christian workers (Matthew 9:38),
- open doors of opportunity for service (Colossians 4:2-3),
- fruit (2 Thessalonians 3:1),
- sending evangelists to neglected people (Romans 10:14-15),
- needy groups and countries (Romans 15:21).



## **HINDRANCES TO PRAYER**

Mark problems that you have noticed among your people and need to avoid:

- ☐ a spirit of criticism (for example, speaking against other churches, or making negative comments about the way the services are led, etc.),
- ☐ “sideways” or “low-blow” prayer, when someone disguises criticism of another as a “prayer” that is not directed to God, but aimed at the other person. This is merely gossip masked as devotion,
- ☐ interruptions in our communication with God (e.g. someone arriving late, and talking during the prayers, or being too noisy while finding a seat, etc.),
- ☐ over-long or boring Bible readings and prayers,

- Sing hymns of petition or praise, addressed directly to the Lord.
- Pray in a circle holding hands.

### **Bring fresh things to pray for spontaneously**

Let the Holy Spirit bring something new. Prayer that is mere routine lacks fervor and invites distractions. Tell of specific answers to prayer.

Avoid the habit of always praying in the same way, repeating the same phrases mechanically without thought.

Use maps, daily news on the radio or newspapers, as a basis for intercession for other areas of the world, where there is conflict, violence, injustice, or people without Christ. (You might also use Pastoral Training Booklet number 27 “Reach Every Nation”.) Pray for those who minister in, or to, such places.

Use music appropriate to an atmosphere of adoration, praise and thanksgiving.

### **The Authorities of all Nations (1 Timothy 2:1-4):**

- for their conversion,
- for opportunities for evangelism,
- for peace, helped by just, biblical laws.

### **Our Families (Ephesians 5:21 to 6:4):**

- love,
- unity,
- endurance.

### **The Needy (Galatians 1:19, James 5:13-16):**

- the sick,

- the weak or handicapped,
- prisoners,
- the hungry,
- the unemployed.

Prayer leads to action. For example we pray for the hungry, then feed them. Sometimes, the Lord uses us to answer our own prayers.

## UTILIZE PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES

These are examples for helping people to pray, which some churches use. Encourage it in whatever way that God makes possible:

- ☐ Early morning meetings wherever it's convenient to pray together before going to work.

- ☐ Prepare a list of things to pray for: current needs, praise, intercession, thanksgiving, etc. Ask your people to pray also for anything else that the Spirit of God brings to mind.
- ☐ If the group is large, form small groups for prayer.
- ☐ When there are new believers who do not yet know how to pray, or are timid some leaders suggest an initial phrase to finish, for anyone who wants to. (For example, "Father, I thank you for..." or "Father, I ask for...") Or you might ask some to bring their brief prayers written at home, to read at the meeting.

## Options for ways to pray

- Pray silently.
- Read prayers from the Bible (the Psalms, the Lord's Prayer, or selected portions; all the members together, or reading verses alternately with the leader).



- ☐ Before praying, ask a volunteer to explain why we pray and why we believe God will answer (Bible promises, etc.)
- ☐ For more experienced believers, encourage spontaneous prayer, as the Holy Spirit moves. For example Solomon prayed from 2 Chronicles 6:14-42 for a fairly long time. When he finished something supernatural happened. We allow for the possibility of the Holy Spirit coming upon a person to pray for a specific burden.
- ☐ For new believers, make it easy for them to start praying with others. One way is to encourage anyone who wants, to voice a one-sentence prayer for a specific need. Several do this, one after another. But do not embarrass shy people by forcing them to pray out loud before they are ready.
- ☐ When you sense that people need victory over personal struggles, provide a time for surrendering of one's self to God. This might include silent confession of sins and asking for guidance and power for our personal lives.

- ☐ Regular weekly prayer in homes or any convenient meeting place.
- ☐ Before congregational worship, prayer for those who lead or help in the service.
- ☐ During normal services, leave a generous time for prayer.
- ☐ "Prayer chains" in which members agree to cover a certain hour during which they will pray, so that there is continuous prayer during 24 hours on an agreed day (or a week, for a large church).
- ☐ Spending all night, or part of a night, in prayer.
- ☐ Whole days of prayer and fasting.
- ☐ Taking the names of unbelievers to the meeting, to pray for their salvation or healing. We can take the people themselves, to pray for them.

Your additional suggestions:

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**ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN PRAYER**

Mark items that you plan to use:

- ☐ Briefly explain a biblical text which encourages us to pray in faith. If you use any of the texts listed below, write under them what it shows about prayer in your own words:

Matthew 18:18-20

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Mark 11:22-26

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Luke 11:1-13

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Luke 18:1-8

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Acts 1:14 together with Acts 2:1

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Acts 4:23-31

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1 Timothy 2:1-4

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