

Prayer Ministry



Officers Workshop!

Presenter: Pastor Curtis Hall

I am grateful for the honor and privilege to welcome you to our South Central Conference Officers training workshop for the year 2024. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God will do great things for the Prayer Ministry for the conference, the churches and for us as individuals.

More than anything else, we want to be filled with the Spirit of God so that prayer becomes our first priority and that our churches will become houses of prayer! Prayer is needed now more than ever before! The churches need prayer warriors. They need to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to fall upon the members of the church, so that we can witness for Christ and hasten His soon coming! Secondly, we want prayer to become the “main ingredient” in our churches! The Bible says in Isaiah 56:7, “For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”

So once again, I would like to welcome you and I pray that this prayer workshop will be a blessing for you. During this workshop, we will be praying and seeking the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us! Thank you for taking out the time from your busy schedule to be with us.

Sincerely,

Curtis Hall, Pastor
Prayer Ministry Coordinator

Why Prayer Ministries?

1.) A prayer ministry makes it possible to develop and organize prayer programs within the church.

2.) Christ said that in the last days, we should be praying. Matthew 9:37, 38 says,

“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.”

3.) When the church is praying, more power is promised to the church, individuals and families.

4.) More prayer is needed in the church, intentional prayer for pastors, teachers, church leaders and every member.

5.) A separate ministry provides an opportunity for the Church to be more intentional about prayer.

6.) A prayer ministry can be the undergirding of other ministries and programs.

7.) Most importantly, an active prayer life will carry people into a deeper relationship with Christ and with one another.

From the book, *Spirit Baptism and Prayer*, the author writes,

“Prayer is as essential to our Christian lives and the work of God on earth, as breathing is to everyday living. If one refuses or is unable to breathe, his life ceases. If one refuses to pray for himself, he will be very weak spiritually and ultimately cease to be a Christian” p. 9.

Christ actually meant prayer to be the great power by which His church should do its work. Because of the church's indifference to prayer and power, the church has learned to do work without the Holy Spirit presence and the lack of prayer. Dennis Smith writes,

“We have learned to depend on our own wisdom instead of God's wisdom. We depend on our methods, plans and strategies to advance God's work. We use our management and training skills to manage the daily operations of the church. We also look to psychological insights in order to deal with people rather than insights of the Spirit. It has been said, ‘If the Holy Spirit were withdrawn, most Christians would not know it and the majority of the work of the church would go on as usual’ ” *Spirit Baptism and Prayer*, p. 30.

From *The Praying Church Sourcebook*, “Prayer is the most important work in the kingdom of God. It is a labor for which there is no substitute in the kingdom of God” p. 15.

There must be a right mindset for prayer. Powerful, faithful and effective prayer must be built on a correct mindset concerning prayer. If we understand how prayer fits into God's rule of our lives, we are more likely to give prayer its rightful place.

The Prayer Coordinator

The prayer coordinator is an essential element for a praying church. He or she is a person who will help to integrate prayer into the total life of the church – at the conference level and in the local church.

The first thing a potential prayer leader must do is answer this important question: “Is this just something I want to do, or is this something God is calling me to do?”

Qualifications of a Prayer Coordinator:

The person or persons appointed to this position should possess the following traits

- Strong personal prayer life
- Spiritual maturity
- Gifts to organize, encourage and give leadership in prayer emphasis
- That you are in good and regular standing with the church and have the confidence of church leaders
- Have some time to attend prayer events
- To be a team player
- Having a servant's heart

The work of the Prayer Coordinator

One of the first places to begin will be to identify those people in the church who have indicated an interest in intercessory prayer. This can be done by placing announcements on a survey in the bulletin. Another means is to note those who volunteer for prayer during church services, then approach each one to find their interest in this type of ministry.

Next, the coordinator should research and evaluate the church's current prayer ministries – both at the conference and local church levels. Contact other churches to see what they are doing in this area.

Once you have found individuals who show an interest in intercessory prayer, meet to decide who will pray, plan and communicate prayer initiatives.

The prayer coordinator will work with the pastor in the identification and selective of a respected person in each church to serve as the local church coordinator.

Provide for training, suggestions, materials and networking.

Help in the implementation of plans for prayer partners and /or individuals who are committed to daily prayer for specific people – by name – pastors, teachers, publishing and medical work, church leaders at the conference, union, North American Division and General Conference.

Some suggests avenues for exploration could be Prayer in the Worship Service, Family Prayer, Prayer on the Telephone, Prayer Emphasis Week, Prayer Chains, Prayer Partners, Prayer Meeting, Senior Intercessors, Evangelism Prayer Groups, Prayer Retreats, Day of Prayer Activities, etc.

The Praying Church Sourcebook gives the prayer coordinator some principles to keep in mind:

1. Begin with simple strategies, then move into harder, more complex ways of involving people in prayer.
2. Start your work among leaders in the congregation.
3. If possible, upgrade prayer activities or systems that are already in place.
4. Begin changes where they are most natural and where you expect the greatest receptivity.
5. Develop one idea at a time.
6. Work with other church committees to help infuse more prayer into their areas of responsibility.

Getting Started

When people pray, things happen! With the exception of God's grace, prayer is the most abundant and underused resource available to the church. From the book *Steps to Christ*, page 94, the author writes,

“What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children, and yet there is much manifest reluctance on our part to make known our wants to God. What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God's heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith?”

Where prayer has been emphasized, the church has grown.

Prayer is a resource available to the church at all times. A prayer ministry will make use of this resource to provide strength, guidance and blessings to the church staff and members, the community and the world.

Begin with Prayer:

Churches that want to start a prayer ministry need to begin with prayer. God is eager for us to ask for help. He wants us to ask and keep asking. The more time we spend in prayer at the beginning, the stronger the ministry will be. God gives confirmation to other people, through a sense of peace about a decision and by His leading in circumstances.

We need to pray for God's timing. Waiting on God's timing makes the job easier.

Seek a Vision

A vision provides a sense of purpose, direction, and motivation for prayer ministry. A lasting vision is not just a human idea. You can define vision as follows:

“Vision is a picture held in your mind's eye of the way things could or should be in the days ahead. Vision connotes a visual reality, a portrait of conditions that do not exist currently” *The Power of Vision*, p. 24, 25.

Many people, when they have a vision, feel inadequate to carry it out. When we see the need and how great it is, we might very well feel inadequate to meet the need. Many people in the Bible who received a vision from God and saw the task placed before them felt just this way. God assured Paul, as He assures us today, that His grace is still sufficient for us and His power is still made perfect in our weakness.

Communicate the vision to the group members. The vision needs to be lifted up for others to grasp and follow. It isn't enough to share the vision once. The vision needs to be done repeatedly.

Ask God to give clear direction. Seeking the heart of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit can take some time. We don't need to be in a hurry. It is God's ministry. He will provide all we need.

Vision statement for South Central Conference:

Transforming God's church into *Houses of Prayers* for all people through the power of the Holy Spirit and effectual intercessory pray-ers.

Mission Statement:

Try and state the mission in one clear sentence. Stating the mission this way helps the ministry to be focused and valuable to the church family. Here is an example statement:

The mission of the prayer ministry is to pray, teach others to pray, to study the Scriptures together, and to provide prayer and ministry opportunities. To encourage members to participate in the fulfillment of our church's vision and mission as we are inspired by the Holy Spirit.

A mission statement can be defined as: "A broad, general statement about who you wish to reach and what the church hopes to accomplish" *The Power of Vision*, p. 34.

The Mission Statement for South Central Conference:

The mission of Prayer Ministries is to train local church Prayer Coordinators, Prayer Federation Officers in implementing and maintaining strong prayer ministries that create an environment for transforming our churches into "*Houses of Prayers* for all people" and prepare the church for the latter rain and the second coming of Christ.

Goals provide some details about the mission plan. For example, some goals might be:

1. To encourage people to pray more.
 - a) Pray in departmental meetings.
 - b) Pray in small groups.

2. Teach church members and others to pray.
 - a) Share different forms of prayer.
 - i. The Lord's Prayer
 - ii. The A.C.T.S. Prayers
 - b) Methods of Prayer.
 - i. Vocal Prayer
 - ii. Meditational Prayer

3. Develop opportunities for people to become more involved in prayer, Bible study and ministry.
 - a) Have specific times allotted for prayer
 - b) Have people pray for specific topics, (i.e. children, homeless, nursing home residents)

Prayer as a Ministry

The objectives include the development of the following:

1. An intense desire for a favorable opportunity to witness for Christ.
2. An intense desire to express gratitude and devotion to Him.
3. A burning desire to be like Christ.

Prayer is exciting and offers many opportunities for ministry. Choose the ministry that suits your church.

Help people grow. Start with something easy. Adapt ideas to fit your needs. Look for ideas from other places.

Explore Resources

What resources are available for starting a prayer ministry?

At the early stages, you might look especially for these resources:

- A handbook or manual giving principles, ideas and methods. You can also search the Internet.
- A resource person with experience in prayer ministry and prayer ministry organization.
- At least one person with experience who is willing to pray regularly for the planning, developing and implementation of the new prayer ministry.
- It might also be helpful to attend a conference or seminar on prayer, especially one that deals with organizing prayer ministry.

Planning a Prayer Ministry

Schedule a time for planning. A plan is a flexible tool. Remember that a good ministry plan is dynamic, not static. Things change. A good plan grows out of a vision.

Decide on Key Values

There are a variety of possible values that could be highlighted through prayer ministry. A church might be most concerned about in-depth study and discipleship programs, versus a focus on reaching new pray-ers. Individual prayers, group Bible study with prayer and ministry have become central values in many places.

Develop A Strategy

We need to ask God what form the ministry needs to take. Be sure church leaders understand and approve of the prayer ministry. Better yet, make sure the ministry has enthusiastic leaders who will lead by example. Recognize that people have different backgrounds and levels of Christian maturity, as well as varying schedules and commitments. Design ministries that will be suitable for people at several levels of maturity and prayer times that will accommodate a variety of schedules. There are many creative ways that large and small churches can offer a variety of prayer experiences.

A Workable Ministry Plan

A useful, workable ministry plan includes the following elements:

- A compelling mission statement
- Practical goals
- Clear Objectives
- Specific actions plans
- Adequate job descriptions for key responsibilities
- A basic organizational chart showing who is responsible to whom
- A simple budget, if money will be spent.

Prayer Ministry Teams

The prayer ministry team is a group of two to six people with special interest or special gifts in prayer. This team meets regularly to pray with others for healing, for physical and spiritual healing, for deliverance from Satan's oppression, for guidance and spiritual blessing.

This team is committed to praying with hurt people, both church and unchurched. The members work only as a team, praying along with at least one or two others from the team. They are available to go out and pray with the sick and those who are homebound, with people in the hospital and with families in times of crisis.

The prayer ministry team is also available to pray with those who come forward during or after worship. Often the church provides a prayer room for this purpose, a place where the prayer team can meet privately with those seeking prayer.

The team may also be present at the church for a specified time during the week in order to meet with people for prayer, especially those who have been referred from a counselor or pastor. The team is also present at healing services or other prayer services to help individuals who may need special or follow-up prayer.

Qualifications of the Prayer Team:

The prayer ministry team deals with many different kinds of people. These individuals might have complex or crisis situations and dangers that accompany spiritual warfare. It's important to choose the team members carefully. Look for people with the following qualities:

1. A strong personal prayer life. The key ingredient in praying successfully with others is a life of experience in the ministry of prayer.
2. A firm understanding of the place that God intended prayer to have in the church and in the Christian life.
3. Experience in lay counseling. As mentioned above, many people may seek prayer because of long-standing emotional or spiritual problems. It's important that team members be able to recognize these problems and by way of questioning, get at the root problem behind the surface symptoms.
4. Love for people. A prayer ministry for others is based on a sensitivity to people's needs, a compassion that reaches out to them and a willingness to serve them in prayer.
5. Spiritual maturity. Spiritual warfare through prayer can be dangerous or overwhelming for those who are young in the Christian life. Participating in a prayer ministry team requires strong faith and maturity in the Word.
6. A consistent Christian lifestyle.
7. Spiritual gifts of intercession, faith, healing, encouragement, or insight. God uses these gifts in the realm of prayer to combat Satan's oppression.

8. Willingness to support team members in ministry. At times, members will need to support each other in prayer or put aside personal differences in order to do God's work together.
9. The ability to keep confidences.

A Church that Neglects to Prays

1. Prays about what it does.
2. Fits prayer in.
3. Prays when there are problems.
4. Announces a special time of prayer – a few show up.
5. Asks God to bless what it is doing.
6. Is frustrated by financial shortfall. Backs down from projects.
7. Is tired, weary and stressed out.
8. Does things within its means.
9. Is involved in the work of man.

A Church Devoted to Prayer

1. Does things by prayer.
2. Gives prayer priority.
3. Prays when there are opportunities.
4. Announces a special time of prayer – many show up.
5. Asks God to enable it to do what He is blessing.
6. Is challenged by financial shortfalls – calls for fasting and prayer.
7. Mounts up with wings like eagles, runs and doesn't grow weary, walk and does not faint.
8. Does things beyond means.
9. Sees the world as its parish.
10. Is involved in the work of God.