

ATHENS *Prayer Network* USA

Mobilizing Your Church to Pray

There is not a recipe for mobilizing prayer in a local church. However there are key principles, which are essential building blocks that allow for flexibility in their application. Here are six of them!

The commitment of the Pastor and Leadership Team

Everything rises and falls on leadership. As a pastor is, so will his congregation be. The prayer ministry of any church will rise or fall on the leadership of the pastor. Such a position of incredible influence! No wonder James 3:1 says that we should not presume to be teachers because of stricter judgment. Mobilizing prayer cannot happen unless the pastor and leadership team lead and model the way. Prayer leadership cannot be delegated. Having said that, the senior leader does not need to lead this ministry. Rather, the senior pastor must totally embrace prayer and the cost of mobilizing their congregation. Not only must the senior pastor lead the prayer charge, and model this for their congregation, it is absolutely essential that he is praying for his people. The pastor cannot simply say he values prayer (most pastors would say that). It has to be an actual value for him!

Building awareness through the pulpit

Preaching a sermon, let alone a short series on prayer, will not mobilize the congregation to prayer. Such a task takes years to accomplish. Starting with preaching on intimacy with Jesus, and then over time including prayer somehow into most of your messages. As you personally grow in prayer, share what you're learning and out of the overflow preach a series. Allow space for testimonies and stories of answered prayer. Remember to always tie prayer to intimacy with Jesus!

Establish a regular corporate prayer gathering

Sadly the corporate prayer meeting is often the most boring, least attended and dullest meeting of the church! This is an absolute tragedy! Prayer meetings should be exciting, vibrant and the most attended meeting in the church. There is something that happens when two or more are gathered in Christ's name, seeking Him on behalf of their church, city, or nation. A key to successful corporate prayer is keeping it moving and lively. If you break into groups keep them around 6, so everyone does not feel they need to pray out loud. On the other hand, if you have a group of intercessors gathered, silence, waiting and praying in small clusters is quite appropriate.

Make prayer a priority on everything the church does

Prayer needs to become the atmosphere of your church, not just another program. It needs to permeate through out everything you do. Instead of simply leading prayer from up front, where people turn their minds off for a few moments, lead your people by giving them something to pray for. Allow space to pray silently, or break into groups of 5-6. Consider setting aside a room for prayer before, during and after the services. Consider how to collect and distribute prayer requests (and answers). Schedule prayer and (even fasting) vigils around specific causes.

Develop a strategy for training and ongoing prayer resourcing

Identifying, training, releasing and ongoing resourcing your prayer warriors is essential! Your small groups are a great platform to teach how to pray, and experiment with it. Consider developing a community of intercessors, and link them with people from other praying churches.

Keep the focus of prayers outward

Corporate prayer is not a time to catch up on personal prayer needs. It is a time to agree together for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done in your context! Pray that God's Spirit would be poured out on your city.

It is important to wait on God for His strategy for mobilizing your congregation into a praying church. This will only happen if you, as the pastor committed first to pursuing an intimate relationship with Jesus and then to a life of prayer. Out of your abundance continually teach your congregation on prayer. Establish on-going prayer meeting with an outward focus. Work prayer into everything you do.