



## DEVELOPING THE CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER TEAM

*"First of all, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone."* (1 Timothy 2:1)

Prayer Ministry is our response to God's love in Christ, connecting us to God through His Word, by His Spirit and empowering our ministry. Where there is no vision or plan regarding prayer, a congregation normally responds to prayer requests through Sunday morning prayers and views the pastor as the one hired to pray. A Prayer Ministry helps the congregation to grow in prayer and discipleship. Steps that you might take include:

### ***Assessing the congregation's current prayer ministry***

An honest evaluation of your congregations' current life of prayer can help you determine how to grow in your prayer ministry. Take a moment now to assess your congregation's current prayer ministry. Next to each item, evaluate on a scale of 0-10: 0-2=very seldom; 3- 5=seldom; 6-7=often; 8-10=almost always. Add all scores and divide by 10 for your average.

<p>____ Prayer is understood as a key part of our pastor's job description.</p> <p>____ Prayer is a daily expectation for leaders of our congregation (council, staff, and committee heads).</p> <p>____ Prayer is seen as critical to the faithful preaching of God's Word and worship leadership.</p> <p>____ Prayer seminars are held one to two times a year and at least 10% of our members attend.</p> <p>____ Prayer opportunities are available for the congregation and community during the week.</p> <p>____ Prayer "partners" pray for our congregation's staff and their families.</p> <p>____ Prayer articles appear consistently in our congregational publications and on the web.</p> <p>____ A prayer room is available in our church building and is often used by members.</p> <p>____ Prayer is available before or after worship through the ministry of a prayer team.</p> <p>____ Answers to prayers are made known in the congregation to thank God and inspire faithful praying.</p> <p>TOTAL _____ AVERAGE _____</p>
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- What are we doing well?
- What needs strengthening?

There are probably few congregations in North America that would score consistently in the 8-10 range. Like tending a garden, once the vision for prayer has been established, your congregation, as "soil", must be prepared by tilling it through clear, creative, and frequent communication. Continuous opportunities for learning about prayer will build a broad-based understanding and an active practice of prayer within your congregation.



### ***Establishing a prayer ministry team***

- Begin praying for the Lord to guide this effort and to provide those He wants to serve on this team
- The purpose of this team is to .....
  1. strengthen the congregation's relationship with God through prayer
  2. expand their understanding and commitment to prayer
  3. be a catalyst for spiritual formation within the congregation
  4. pray for the members, community, world

### ***Laying a solid Biblical foundation***

- Preach a series of sermons on prayer
- Provide an introductory congregational prayer retreat (Resource: SED Spiritual Life Team)
- Offer Bible classes and workshops on prayer (e.g. Lord's Prayer)

### ***Developing and reinforcing a "vision of prayer"***

- The pastor and prayer team prayerfully develop and lead this effort. The Pastor's commitment to prayer and modeling is essential. The pastor must be a person of prayer. He needs to establish and uphold a vision for prayer in the congregation.
- Provide frequent and creative communication through:
  1. A prayer newsletter (email)
  2. Sermons
  3. A symbol (e.g. SED symbol for prayer)
  4. Prayer banners
  5. Newsletter articles
  6. Prayer resources, lists, etc. on the congregation's web page

### ***Training and involving people in prayer and spiritual renewal*** (the following resources may be helpful)

- 50 DAYS ABLAZE! St. Luke Lutheran Church, 330 Hannahstown Road, Cabot, PA 16023, 724/352-2777, [stluke@stlukecabot.org](mailto:stluke@stlukecabot.org), [www. Stlukecabot.org](http://www.Stlukecabot.org). LCMS World Mission, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295, 800/254-9495, [mission.orders@lcms.org](mailto:mission.orders@lcms.org), [www.lcmsworldmission.org](http://www.lcmsworldmission.org). Printed materials can be purchased (one complete set for \$30) from Business Alternatives, Inc. Attn: Rob Siegman or Susan Eisenberg, 630 Plum Industrial Court, Pittsburgh, PA 15239, 724/325-2777 or 800/916-9111, [production@busalt.com](mailto:production@busalt.com), [www.busalt.com](http://www.busalt.com).
- DeVries, John. "Why Pray?" (40 day devotional), "Why Give?" "Why Study The Bible". Mission India, PO Box 141312, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49574-1312, 877/644-6342, [info@missionindia.org](mailto:info@missionindia.org), [www.missionindia.org](http://www.missionindia.org)



- Kieschnick, John H. "THE BEST IS YET TO COME" (7 Doors Of Spiritual Growth). Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 281/333-4535, [www.gdlc.org](http://www.gdlc.org) (click resources) Small Group DVD's & Church Wide Campaign; 800/346-9041 for promotional materials
- PRAYER TRIPLETS - gather in triplets 10 times for 100 minutes over 100 days (sharing, praying) – goal 50% of average worship attendance (i.e. George Bullard) Give me your email if you want a copy.

***Developing prayer teams and prayer partners*** (some examples may include)

- **Preparation Prayer Group**  
Prepares rooms for worship, learning, and other activities by arriving early and walking through the room and offering prayer.
- **Evangelism Prayer Group** (*"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ."* Col. 4:2-3)  
Prays for the congregation and individuals to be open, aware, and responsive to daily opportunities to share the love of Jesus Christ. Connects prayer and your church's outreach ministry.
- **Discipleship Prayer Group**  
Prays for the teachers of Sunday school and bible study classes.
- **Preaching and Worship Prayer Group**  
Meets with the pastor before worship for a time of prayer. Prays during worship.
- **Healing Prayer Group**  
Is available after worship to anoint with oil, lay hands on, and pray for healing. Develops and assists with special healing services.
- **Centering Prayer Group**  
Regularly spends time together sharing and in silence listening for the message of God.
- **Intercessory Prayer Group** (one night a week for an hour)  
Prays for those who request prayers and for needs within the congregation and community.

***Celebrating publicly those who serve in this ministry***

- Affirm and publically support those who serve in the congregation's prayer ministries
- Actively recruit people into prayer ministry

***Using and seeking out prayer resources***

- Prayer Coach or Partner
- Prayer Retreats and Workshops
- Listening prayer (discernment) for decision making
- Church Library with books on prayer and spiritual formation
- A designated prayer chapel or room
- Personal testimonies
- Prayer vigils
- Private confession and absolution



- Healing prayer ministry (during/after worship, special services)
- Prayer Breakfast
- Days of prayer & fasting
- Prayer chain
- Praying in Color (cf. Connie Denninger)
- National Day of Prayer Service
- House blessings
- Prayer Walking
- Concert of Prayer
- Prayer lists (in bulletin, etc....get permission to make public)
- Prayer request cards
- Praying through the membership directory
- Teaching on spiritual warfare (Eph. 6)
- Southeastern District Prayer Partners

Where there is a vital prayer ministry, members believe that prayer is crucial to the health and growth of the church. They are not praying out of a sense of duty. They are convinced that God hears and answers and that their prayers are really making the difference. It is a natural part of the life of the believer and church.

