An Evaluation of the “40 Days of Prayer for Church Revitalization” as an Instrument for Initiating a Revitalization Process at First Baptist Church, Pikeville, KY

A Thesis Project Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Divinity in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Ministry

by

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September 2020
The current lack of health found in many churches across the United States requires the development of prayer strategies that will propel local churches toward a renewed passion for the gospel through revitalization. The purpose of this project is to evaluate the effectiveness of the “40 Days of Prayer for Church Revitalization” devotional guide, a resource developed by the Church Consulting and Revitalization Team of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, when utilized in local Churches. By using quantitative surveys in three Kentucky Baptist churches that utilized the “40 Days of Prayer” resource as well as qualitative interviews with those church’s pastors alongside the State Convention’s Team Leader, this project’s goal is to understand the strategy, review the results, and develop a strategic plan of implementation for launching a revitalization effort at First Baptist Church in Pikeville, Kentucky.

Length: 136 words.
Acknowledgments

This project resulted from the support of many people in my life. It would be impossible to acknowledge all of them in such a brief space.

First, all glory goes to God my Savior and to Christ Jesus my hope.

I owe so much thanks to the members of First Baptist Church in Pikeville, KY, whom I have the honor of serving as pastor and who prayed for me every step of this journey.

Thanks to Jason Lowe, who is not just a co-laborer in the gospel, but one of my best friends. His conversations, wisdom, and editing made this project better than I could have accomplished alone.

Dr. Steve Rice has been a friend and mentor in ministry to me, and also provided the idea for this project. I am a better husband and pastor because of his being a father in the ministry to me.

I wish to thank Dr. David Pederson for his time and encouragement in this project.

Finally, I want to thank my incredible wife Emily and our children Isabella, Jackson and Jacob. None of this would have been possible without them cheering me on.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In 2015, members of the Church Consulting and Revitalization Team of the Kentucky Baptist Convention published a tool to assist pastors and church leaders in implementing an intentional prayer strategy as they strive to begin a journey toward revitalization. This resource, entitled “40 Days of Prayer Devotional Guide for Church Revitalization,” provides a biblical, practical and strategic tool for members of a congregation to study as they begin a mutual journey toward renewal.¹

Statement of the Problem

Roughly ninety five percent of churches in North America average one hundred persons or fewer in weekly worship attendance. In addition, over eighty percent of established churches in North America are either experiencing a plateau in their weekly attendance or have moved into a full decline. Every year, somewhere between thirty-five hundred to four thousand established churches die in the United States alone.² How many of these could have been turned around to experience health and growth once again if God’s people had begun to pray and seek Him to revitalize their church? Leonard Ravenhill once observed, “Without exception, all true revivals of the past began after years of agonizing, hell-robuing, earth-shaking, heaven-sent intercession. The secret to


true revival in our own day is still the same. But where, oh where, are the intercessors?"³ Those desiring to see God begin a work of revitalization will discover numerous books, blogs, courses and programs claiming to offer the secret formula for experiencing success. Yet, few resources are devoted exclusively to intentional prayer strategies for struggling churches to implement as they begin a revitalization effort. The goal of this project is to demonstrate the importance of intentional prayer in the initial stages of a revitalization work, examine the effectiveness of a prayer guide written for use during a work of revitalization, and develop a plan to implement the resource during the revitalization launch phase at First Baptist Church in Pikeville, Kentucky.

**Statement of Importance and Purpose**

Due to the challenging nature of their roles, pastors and church leaders need direction when it comes to starting a revitalization process. Struggling churches often require outside assistance to navigate the process of developing a revitalization strategy. The need for an intentional method uniting God’s people in prayer for revitalization is what guides this project. The purpose of this project is to study the role of prayer in initiating a holistic revitalization process by evaluating the Kentucky Baptist Convention’s “40 Days of Prayer Devotional Guide for Church Revitalization,” assessing its effectiveness when employed by three Baptist churches in the state of Kentucky, and proposing a process to implement the prayer guide for maximum impact at the launch of a revitalization strategy for First Baptist Pikeville, Kentucky. This project will also demonstrate results to aid other pastors and church leaders seeking to employ a similar

prayer strategy during their work of revitalization, along with associational mission strategists, church consultants and denominational leaders working with local churches in their revitalization efforts.

A quantitative survey created for this project sampled members from three Baptist churches in Kentucky and qualitative interviews were conducted with the pastors of those churches, as well as the Kentucky Baptist Convention’s Church Consulting and Revitalization Team Leader. The data collected during the research phase of this project is studied to understand the effectiveness of the “40 Days of Prayer Devotional Guide for Church Revitalization” when used by multiple members of a church. Those results are then applied to developing a strategy to successfully implement the prayer guide at First Baptist Church in Pikeville, Kentucky to serve as the first step of a larger revitalization process.

**Special Terminology**

This project will use the words “revitalization” and “renewal” interchangeably throughout its pages. Church revitalization has been defined in this way: “a movement within protestant evangelicalism, which emphasizes the missional work of turning a plateaued, declining, or rapidly declining church around and moving it back towards growth and health.”

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discussing the concepts of revitalization. A number of the works discussed in the review of literature later in this chapter reflect this common practice.

The phrase “church health” refers to a component of revitalization seeking to move a local church out of patterns leading to decline and into patterns producing renewed vibrancy. There are several factors used when describing what makes a church healthy, and oftentimes church leaders differ on what those factors should be. Mark Dever, Senior Pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church and the founder of IX Marks Ministries, provides this definition to clarify:

A healthy church is not a church that’s perfect and without sin. It has not figured everything out. Rather, it’s a church that continually strives to take God’s side in the battle against the ungodly desires and deceits of the world, our flesh, and the devil … A healthy church is a congregation that increasingly reflects God’s character as his character has been revealed in his Word.⁵

The “40 Days of Prayer Devotional Guide for Church Revitalization” is the instrument chosen to be evaluated for this project. It is a devotional prayer booklet published by the Church Consulting and Revitalization Team of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. The prayer guide is designed to equip church leaders and members through forty daily readings consisting of Scripture, devotional thoughts, prayer suggestions, and examples of how God brings hope to churches through revitalization. The full title shall be shortened to “40 Days of Prayer” throughout this project.

First Baptist Church of Pikeville, Kentucky is an autonomous local church located in the foothills of Central Appalachia. The author has served as the senior pastor of this congregation since the fall of 2015. Previous to accepting that role he had served as an

⁵ Mark Dever, What is a Healthy Church? (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 40.
associate pastor in the church since 2009. The research results of this project shall be used to develop an intentional prayer strategy revolving around the “40 Days of Prayer” to implement in this congregation. The church name shall be shortened to “FBC Pikeville” throughout this project.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention is a cooperative missions and ministry entity of Southern Baptist churches in Kentucky. Nearly twenty-four hundred autonomous churches across the state are in cooperative partnership with the denominational agency, with an estimated seven hundred and fifty thousand members comprising those churches. The Kentucky Baptist Convention’s mission statement reads as follows: “Created by churches, for churches, to help churches reach Kentucky and the world for Christ.” The full title shall be abbreviated to “KBC” throughout this project.

The Southern Baptist Convention is the largest protestant denomination in the United States. More than fifty thousand churches profess to be in cooperative partnership with the convention. Southern Baptists churches range in size, culture, membership requirements, socio-economic makeup, ethnicity, worship styles, and ministry approaches. These congregations choose to partner together around the central tenets of the gospel, the Lordship of Jesus Christ, inerrancy, missions, and other beliefs outlined in their confessional statement “The Baptist Faith and Message (2000).”

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8 [http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/](http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/).
full title of the denominational body shall be abbreviated to “SBC” throughout this project.

The term “church consultant” is employed when referring to Christian professionals who specialize in the field of church revitalization. The majority of the consultants mentioned in this project are employed as members of the KBC’s “Church Consulting and Revitalization Team.” This team includes six regional consultants who are each assigned a geographic territory of churches to serve in the state of Kentucky. These consultants have received specialized training in church revitalization, conflict resolution, administration, and other areas to assist pastors and local churches in practical matters.9

**Statement of Limitations**

As is the case with all research, there are limitations when considering the scope of this project. First, results of the data from this project will be applied only toward a single congregation. Though this research will provide valuable discoveries for a variety of churches, FBC Pikeville has been selected to specifically develop an intentional prayer strategy customized out of the research.

Second, the project will limit its consideration of church revitalization to the areas pertaining to the roles and usages of corporate prayer. In most revitalization strategies, a number of factors within the church’s beliefs and practices are assessed. Mission statements, staff organization, leadership structures, discipleship strategies, statements of faith, and a number of other topics would be analyzed to develop a long-term road map

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back to health. This study shall instead narrow its focus to explore the effectiveness of a single prayer resource and applying those results to developing a prayer strategy at the outset of a larger revitalization process for FBC Pikeville.

Next, the research data uncovered in this project is not designed to be used as a tool to evaluate the overall health of a local church. As noted above, the majority of churches in the United States fall into the categories of experiencing either a plateau or decline in their attendance. It is assumed those congregations may benefit from the results of this research as it relates to implementing the “40 Days of Prayer” in their local context. But the specific recommendations outlined in this study are not intended to be implemented uniformly in every church.

A final limitation concerns the common challenges present when conducting quantitative surveys and/or qualitative interviews. The quantitative people clusters who are sampled for this project’s survey instrument have been selected from three churches located in the central and eastern regions of Kentucky who completed the “40 Days of Prayer” in their personal time with the Lord. The results presented in chapter four and the applications developed in chapter five will be drawn from the data collected from those church members. Likewise, the qualitative interviews will be limited to the three pastors who lead those congregations surveyed, as well as the Team Leader of the Church Consulting and Revitalization Team of the KBC who led in the development of the “40 Days of Prayer” devotional guide. The author found examples for using quantitative and
qualitative research in Thom Rainer’s book, *Breakout Churches*,\(^ {10}\) as well as *Look Before You Lead* by Aubrey Malphurs.\(^ {11}\)

**Statement of Methodology**

This project consists of six chapters. Each chapter develops the necessary building blocks to effectively implement the prayer method found in the “40 Days of Prayer” devotional guide as the initial step of a revitalization strategy at FBC Pikeville. The following outline lists each chapter followed by a summary of the arguments presented therein:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction**
- **Chapter 2: The Theoretical Basis for an Intentional Prayer Strategy as the First Step in Revitalization**
- **Chapter 3: The Research Methodology and Process of Data Collection**
- **Chapter 4: The Research Findings**
- **Chapter 5: The Process of Implementation for FBC Pikeville**
- **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

**Chapter One – Introduction**

The introduction serves to familiarize the reader with all necessary background material and proposes the direction for this project. It states the problem, addresses the nature of the research design, and proposes a solution to be explored in the following chapters. The introduction also defines any special terminology that may be unfamiliar to

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\(^ {10}\) Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), Appendix.

\(^ {11}\) Aubrey Malphurs, *Look Before You Lead: How to Discern and Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 220.
readers, outlines the methodology to be employed, and concludes with a review of the relevant literature on the topics of prayer and church revitalization.

**Chapter Two – The Theoretical Basis for an Intentional Prayer Strategy as the First Step in Revitalization**

Chapter two examines why it is beneficial for a church to initiate an intentional prayer strategy at the outset of a revitalization effort. God prescribes prayer to His people as the path for His people return to Him (2 Chronicles 7:14), and so prayer is the right place to begin when seeking renewal and unity of spirit within a local church. There are three considerations investigated in this chapter. First, a survey of the biblical texts demonstrates a number of examples when corporate prayer was the means God’s people pursued when desiring renewal. Second, the theological rationale more broadly considers how intentional prayer is the catalyst God has designated to grant revitalization to His people. Third, a case study highlighting the life and ministry of Jim Cymbala and the Brooklyn Tabernacle explores the practical aspects of how a local church pastor can leverage an intentional prayer strategy as the starting point for a work of revitalization.

**Chapter Three – The Research Methodology and Process of Data Collection**

The third chapter presents the methodology used to conduct the research stage of this project. A sampling of members from three different churches in the central and eastern regions of Kentucky are studied through quantitative data collected through a standardized survey administered by the author. All three churches met the criteria of having previously utilized the “40 Days of Prayer” with multiple members as a method of

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12 Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the English Standard Version.
intentional prayer. Worship attendance, Sunday School enrollment, baptisms per year, the pastor’s tenure and other relevant information is summarized to demonstrate the current trends in the churches and why these congregations are candidates for revitalization. After this, the development of the survey questions is presented, followed by a brief overview describing how the surveys were administered. The formation of the qualitative interviews with the pastors of the churches and the KBC Team Leader is provided. This chapter also discusses the data collection process employed by the author to gather and summarize the research findings.

Chapter Four – The Research Findings

This chapter analyzes the quantitative survey responses and provides relevant observations gleaned from the data. It assesses how the respondents viewed the effectiveness of the “40 Days of Prayer” in leading them to intentionally pray for revitalization. It also assesses their personal impressions of the prayer guide’s lasting benefits. The survey instrument examines the following topics: how effective church members believed the prayer guide was for their church, what was the greatest benefit they received from the time they invested in the forty days, how effective were outside speakers and consultants during the study, did personal prayer increase for specific categories (the pastors, the leadership, the lost, etc.), was the church viewed as healthier after completion, and were prayer ministries developed or enhanced as a response to the forty day study. Relevant information from the qualitative interviews is presented to provide clarity to the findings from the viewpoint of the pastors. It will also consider the strengths and weaknesses of the prayer guide uncovered by the survey results.
Chapter Five – The Process of Implementation at FBC Pikeville

Chapter five applies the results of the research by using the “40 Days of Prayer” to develop an intentional prayer strategy as the stimulus for a larger revitalization effort at FBC Pikeville. A short history of the church is presented, as well as current community demographics, attendance trends, and other relevant data to demonstrate why revitalization is needed in this church. This presentation is followed by a seven-step process to implement an intentional prayer strategy utilizing the “40 Days of Prayer” among church members. The author hopes to demonstrate how an intentional prayer strategy can be advantageous as the first step to revitalizing FBC Pikeville, as well as how it can provide valuable applications for other local churches seeking to begin their own work of revitalization through intentional prayer.

Chapter Six – Conclusion

The final chapter summarizes the project and shares practical ministry lessons discovered in the process of completing this project. Six benefits to developing intentional prayer strategy are discussed and how the “40 Days of Prayer” makes a positive contribution in the life of local churches. Next, four areas of potential future research are outlined, followed by a final word from the author to conclude the study.
Review of Literature

Books

*Comeback Churches*\(^{13}\) by Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson addresses the noticeable and drastic decline in attendance experienced by many churches over the past fifty years. The majority of churches in the United States fall into one of two categories: either they are stagnant in plateau or they are in a full decline. Yet the authors are convinced there is hope for established churches. Their objective is to explore how local church pastors and leaders can move their congregations toward making a comeback, so they might experience growth and vibrancy once again. Stetzer and Dodson examined three hundred churches demonstrating evidence of rebounding out of a state of decline to once again experiencing growth health. They present their research findings and observations to help the reader understand many of the challenges encountered during a work of revitalization. The chapter titled “Three Faith Factors” highlights prayer as a one of the three factors in these churches, helping them make their comeback from decline.

*Transformational Church*\(^{14}\) by Ed Stetzer and Thom Rainer explores the challenging topic on how to foster transformation in a declining church resistant to change. This is one of the more important subjects for understanding the challenges of revitalization, and this book is the product of one of the largest research projects of its kind. It is particularly helpful in demonstrating how the authors developed the research instruments for their study. They chose to place much emphasis on long-term

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revitalization processes where an intentional emphasis on prayer had been applied in the early stages of the effort. The authors observe, “Prayer leaders agree we are missing our most significant resource when we neglect the spiritual discipline of prayer. We live in an age where we have so many other methods or activities to resort to besides prayer. We need prophetic voices to embrace the need of calling the church to prayer.”

*Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive,* by Thom Rainer is a quick read based on a simple parable created by the author. He begins with a parable about a sick patient who eventually dies, but later reveals the patient is not a person but is instead a local church. Each chapter reflects on the principles of church health Rainer has learned from examining the culture often resulting in the death of a once-vibrant congregation. He demonstrates how a congregation is unlikely to survive when the past is made to be a hero, when the budget is inwardly focused, when the Great Commission is omitted, when preferences of members drive the focus, and when the church family rarely prays together.

Stephen A. Macchia’s book *Becoming a Healthy Church: 10 Characteristics,* resulted from an eighteen-month project comprising one hundred church visits and approximately nineteen hundred surveys analyzed to produce ten characteristics of a healthy church. Macchia addresses each of the following lessons acquired through the research: God’s empowering presence, God exalting worship, spiritual disciplines,

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15 Ibid., 144.


learning and growing in community, a commitment to loving and caring relationships, servant-leadership development, an outward focus, wise administration and accountability, networking with the body of Christ, and generosity. The book provides a helpful process outlining how leaders can implement these traits to guide their churches back into a position of health.

*There’s Hope for Your Church: First Steps to Restoring Health and Growth,*18 by author Gary L. McIntosh, focuses on coaching church leaders through specific steps to restore health in their own local congregations. The book seeks to encourage leaders who are struggling, as well as to provide practical advice applying to many of the challenges they might face. The steps prescribed include seeing the potential, committing to lead, learning the principles, discerning God’s vision, building a coalition, lifting the morale, making hard decisions, refocusing the ministry, equipping for change, dealing with resistance, and staying the course. Unfortunately, McIntosh does not address the role of prayer in any of these groupings. It is surprising that a book outlining the “first steps” of a church health process would not explicitly include prayer.

*A Guide to Church Revitalization*19 edited by R. Albert Mohler Jr. gives the reader a useful collection of essays to introduce readers to many of the issues surrounding church revitalization. Each chapter provides a clear picture of why revitalizing established local churches is imperative and provides ministry examples demonstrating success stories. The strongest chapters of this collection share the interviews from

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multiple pastors who have led long-term revitalization efforts. They highlight the value of prayer in their ministries as they asked the Lord to revitalize their congregations.

*From Embers to a Flame*\(^{20}\) by Harry Reeder examines many of the key elements of revitalization through the lens of biblical theology. The book seeks to balance a dependence on God’s Spirit as the path to experience true revitalization while applying the principles found to be useful during the pursuit of church health. Reeder’s arguments are drawn from relevant biblical texts, but he does not neglect to share personal experiences of revitalization to illustrate his points. He proposes ten revitalization strategies constructed from Scriptural examples and have evidence of being practiced in church history. His principles can be overgeneralized in certain places, but the framework he developed makes this a useful treatise on the topic of church revitalization. He also devotes an entire chapter to the topic of intercessory prayer during revitalization. While this chapter is helpful in how it explores the first century church’s pattern of intercession as reported in the book of Acts, his argument lacks any mention of how leading a congregation through a prayer strategy can fit into the larger process of revitalization.

*Biblical Church Revitalization: Solutions for Dying and Divided Churches*\(^{21}\) by Brian Croft provides a plan for pastors to prepare their hearts spiritually before beginning an effort to revitalize the church they lead. His purpose is encouraging pastors to build a long tenure at the church they serve in order to experience the change produced by a genuine outpouring of revitalization. In the chapter titled “Preparation,” he discusses


numerous steps a pastor might use to create forward momentum in preparing for a revitalization effort, including prayer. The strength of this book is its pastoral voice and practical approach to the topic. Croft does not overstate his points, but the book would have been stronger had he included more illustrations and practical suggestions.

*Revitalize: Biblical Keys to Helping Your Church Come Alive Again,*²² by Andrew M. Davis compliments the preceding book by Brian Croft. Davis has served a lengthy tenure as the pastor of First Baptist Church in Durham, North Carolina and led his church through a challenging work of revitalization. He opens by sharing his personal experiences at First Baptist, but his primary objective is to survey what the Bible says about leading a church back into a position of health. He argues that church health cannot be measured by numerical growth alone, because many numerically large churches in America today are unhealthy due to false teaching and practicing elements of a prosperity gospel. One helpful feature of Davis’ writing style is he devotes time at the end of each chapter to share practical suggestions applying to situations most church leaders will face when pursuing revitalization. Sadly, there was no mention of how a pastor can leverage prayer either privately or corporately when seeking renewal.

Mark Clifton’s book, *Reclaiming Glory: Revitalizing Dying Churches,*²³ brings together the concepts of church revitalization and church replanting to show how they complement one another in bringing new life to dying churches. He agrees that while planting new churches is vitally important, there remains a need for pastors to go into

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dying churches to replant with the goal of those churches returning to health. This is far from an easy calling, and Clifton admits, “It’s often easier to close a dying church and go across the street to plant a new one than it is to replant.”\textsuperscript{24} He discusses the process to diagnose when it is the right time for a church to consider replanting, the four different pathways potentially leading to a church replanting, and six replanting imperatives guiding a leader’s efforts. Throughout the book he also shares encouraging success stories from around the United States to demonstrate how these efforts can be successful.

*Can These Bones Live: A Practical Guide to Church Revitalization*\textsuperscript{25} by Bill Hernard is written from a pastor’s perspective using Ezekiel 37 as a model for church revitalization. He points to lackluster evangelistic efforts, apathetic churches, a lack of servant leadership, and shortened pastoral tenures as all contributing to the reasons why churches experience decline. He shows pastors and other church leaders how pursuing church health is intrinsically linked to experiencing church revitalization. Each chapter discusses the problems often faced during revitalization and how he recommends leaders address those challenges. One of the glaring absences from Hernard’s recommendation is a prayer strategy designed to foster renewal.

In his book *Returning to Holiness: A Personal and Churchwide Journey to Revival*,\textsuperscript{26} Gregory R. Frizzell developed an excellent resource for individuals and churches seeking a method for intentional prayer. Frizzell does not include a timetable for

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\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 18.


completing his prayer method. He chooses instead to guide the reader through seven categories of sin and how to confess specific sins in those categories to experience spiritual cleansing. Each category presents ample Scripture verses for reflection, ideas for personal application, and questions intended to expose sins of the heart needing to be confessed. Even though this work does not address either the biblical or historical role of corporate prayer in experiencing renewal, it does provide church leaders a tool to distribute to members as an intentional prayer strategy during a revitalization effort.

_How to Develop a Powerful Prayer Life: The Biblical Path to Holiness and Relationship with God_27 is also authored by Gregory R. Frizzell. His previously mentioned title serves as a personal prayer guide toward spiritual cleansing. This book seeks to provide directions to improve the reader’s spiritual success in prayer. The chapters outline the prayer tips Frizzell discovered from examples of what he refers to as “prevailing prayers” in the Bible. After sharing five basic types of prayer he finds in Scripture, Frizzell shares guidelines for a developing a stronger prayer life. He divides these guidelines into five phases: approaching God through daily praise and worship, getting clean before God, praying dynamic prayers of petition, powerful intercession, and hearing God’s voice through meditation. Two useful tools are provided near the conclusion. The first is a daily prayer guide that could function as a template for those who are beginning to develop their prayer life. The second tool is a prayer of commitment for the reader to personalize for developing greater accountability with the Lord.

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And the Place was Shaken: How to Lead a Powerful Prayer Meeting28 by John Franklin studies the examples of prayer found in the practices of the early church in the book of Acts. Franklin surveys all the occurrences of prayer throughout the first six chapters of Acts and discovers they consistently portray the Apostles leading corporate or group prayer with other believers. Not a single occurrence in those early chapters address the personal prayer lives of the early Christians. He concludes that the New Testament intentionally places emphasis on the Apostles dedicating themselves to “leading the people of God to pray together.”29 This realization leads him to build a case for shaping modern prayer meetings around the patterns described in the corporate prayer gatherings of the early church.

Serving in your Church Prayer Ministry30 by Charles E. Lawless Jr. is a brief but insightful book focused on developing and strengthening local church prayer ministries. He begins by examining the importance of prayer in the life of every church, followed by his recommendations for customizing an intentional prayer ministry. Lawless gives attention to practical details such as setting an agenda for prayer gatherings, calendaring intentional times of prayer, setting the budget, designing a prayer room or dedicated space for prayer, and publicizing prayer gatherings to the entire congregation. The chapters conclude with questions for personal reflection or group discussions among a team planning to launch a prayer ministry.

28 John Franklin, And the Place was Shaken: How to Lead a Powerful Prayer Meeting (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2005).

29 Ibid., 8.

Beth Moore is the author of the outstanding book, *Praying God’s Word: Breaking Free from Spiritual Strongholds*.³¹ Instead of exploring various principles for prayer, Moore pens fourteen chapters useful for private devotional studies to guide readers with Scripture-based prayers and encouraging quotes. The chapter topics include idolatry, unbelief, pride, insecurity, addiction, despair, unforgiveness, and many others. This work is a useful resource to employ in a variety of contexts, but it provides the greatest benefits for church leaders looking for a resource to recommend to church members in need of personal revival during revitalization.

*Praying the Bible* by Donald S. Whitney is a resource for pastors to use as they prepare to lead any prayer emphasis in their church.³² It is also invaluable for the pastor who seeks a simplified book on prayer to provide to lay leaders as they begin an intentional prayer strategy. The question Whitney addresses is why Christians do not pray more if prayer is how we experience the presence and blessings of God. He determines the way to have a vibrant and active prayer life begins with praying through specific verses and passages of Scripture, with emphasis devoted to the Psalms. This book is succinct, yet it is packed with insights for developing an intentional prayer method during revitalization.

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Journal Articles

“Moving Forward on our Knees: Corporate Prayer in the New Testament” is penned by Grant R. Osborne in which he surveys the historical background of corporate prayer throughout the Second Temple period. He surveys much of the second temple literature of Judaism to portray the common worship practices in the culture surrounding Jesus and his first followers. The research provides a fascinating glimpse into the prayer practices regularly featured in worship during the Second Temple period, as well as many of the synagogues spread out across Judea and Galilee. Osborne surveys Jesus’ patterns of prayer and the details provided in the Book of Acts. Interestingly, he argues that corporate prayer was at the heart of the early church’s identity, whereas the emphasis in the modern church has pivoted away from corporate prayer and toward private prayer. His conclusions allow for other applications, but Osborne stops short of exploring any of them in a satisfying manner. He draws attention to the connections between corporate prayer in the New Testament and the great revival movements in church history. But he glosses over these too quickly, leaving it to the reader to discover how the biblical data points to an understanding of corporate prayer for the church looking to experience renewal.

Ryan McGraw chose John 14:12-14 to be the textual grounding for his article, A Theology of Corporate Prayer: Preaching, Prayer Meetings and You. He observes how


34 Ibid., 253.

modern western churches are declining and points to Jesus’ teachings on corporate prayer as the foundation for him blessing the preaching of the church. The passage from John’s gospel shows how Christ comforted his disciples as he was preparing for the crucifixion. Jesus spoke of his disciples performing even “greater works” than Himself. These works came to fruition in the book of Acts as the activities of the Apostles led to the exponential growth of the early church. Corporate prayer and the Spirit-filled preaching of the Word were the means to experience the “greater things” Jesus promised. McGraw directs attention to how corporate prayer is the means through which the Holy Spirit chooses to work. A church desiring to see genuine renewal must prioritize corporate prayer gatherings and the preaching of the Word. This article shows how God uses the corporate prayers of His people to bless the preaching of His Word among its listeners. God blesses His people with spiritual renewal and health as they unite in intentional prayer.

**Dissertations**

In his 2012 dissertation, *An Evaluation of the Growing Healthy Churches Program as a Method for Producing Healthy, Growing, and Reproducing Southern Baptist Congregations*, Donald Lynn Hardaway examines a strategy designed to improve the overall health of local churches. He selects the “Growing Healthy Churches” program, developed by Dr. Paul Borden, to evaluate in the context of local churches. He chose to limit the scope of his research in two ways: to Southern Baptist churches familiar with Dr. Borden’s model, and to a small geographic region of the United States.

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Even though churches from other denominations and regions had utilized the program, Hardaway believes these parameters give him the best survey results. The author intends to adopt this pattern of using a defined geographical region to sample for this project. A challenge in Hardaway’s study is the research was limited to only the viewpoint of the pastors and did not consider the viewpoints of church members or ministry staff. The pastor’s perspective is always useful when considering the effectiveness of a church health program, but their impressions may differ from others on staff and within the congregation.

*Core Values Assessment as Part of a Church Revitalization Effort for Eastern Hills Baptist Church*[^37] is a dissertation by James Weddington examining a single aspect of a church revitalization effort. He targets the congregation he pastors as the case study for his project, assessing the core values of the congregation and how efficient they are when considered within the larger goal of revitalizing Eastern Hills Baptist Church. Core values shape the process of revitalization for a congregation according to his thesis, and will be a determining factor for measuring health, sustainability and growth. His research studies the historical and contemporary values shaping the church, it explores the different ways core values have influenced the broader church culture, and it assesses the current core values of the congregation through quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. Weddington’s project does provide a helpful assessment of how his members respond to their core values, but it falls short by not engaging with outside sources during

[^37]: James E. Weddington, “Core Values Assessment as Part of a Church Revitalization Effort for Eastern Hills Baptist Church” (D.Min diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015).
the process. One wonders whether interviewing other pastors who have developed core
dvalues for their congregations would have helped him in his research.

A final dissertation with relevance to this project is *Equipping a Select Group of
Leaders of Holly Grove Baptist Church, Spring Hope, North Carolina, to Pray in
Preparation for Church Revitalization*. The author, Sean Allen Lee, provides a strategy
for equipping lay members of his congregation to pray in preparation for church
revitalization. He argues prayer is the logical place to begin a revitalization effort because
it requires spiritual support from church members. Lee selects a six-member cohort to
join him in an intentional prayer strategy over the course of eight weeks. He demonstrates
how this group would model a pattern of prayer in their personal lives and would then
spread through the rest of the congregation. This would yield members ready to lead
during the next steps of revitalization. A helpful component of this dissertation comes
when Lee administers a pre-test survey and later a post-test survey comprised of the same
questions to his cohort. Though general in nature, the questions allow him to measure any
changes in opinion among the group. However, Lee’s findings lack substantial
conclusions on the issues of intentional prayer and its value in launching a revitalization
strategy.

**Conclusion**

The need for renewal in churches today requires deliberate effort on the part of
spiritual leaders. The importance of intentional prayer while asking God to grant

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38 Sean Allen Lee, “Equipping a Select Group of Leaders of Holly Grove Baptist Church, Spring
Hope, North Carolina, to Pray in Preparation for Church Revitalization” (D.Min diss., Southeastern Baptist
Theological Seminary, 2016).
revitalization cannot be overstated for the long-term health and growth of local churches. Chapter two will argue the case for an intentional prayer strategy when pursuing revitalization by exploring the biblical foundation of corporate prayer, a theological rationale for the proposal, and a practical case study from modern church history.
CHAPTER 2
THE THEORETICAL BASIS FOR AN INTENTIONAL PRAYER STRATEGY
AS THE FIRST STEP IN REVITALIZATION

Introduction

Revitalization is the process of moving a church out of a state of stagnation or decline and toward health and growth once again. However, true revitalization cannot be initiated through human efforts alone. It begins only when God sovereignly chooses to bless a church with renewed vibrancy after years of spiritual inertia, followed by a fresh desire to reach the community around them. A spiritual leader cannot manufacture revitalization, but they can position a congregation to be ready for God to send revitalization. Leading a church into a position of readiness begins through intentional prayer focused on discovering God’s direction for its future. Therefore, the natural place to begin a journey toward revitalization is prayer.

This chapter explains the theoretical basis of an intentional prayer strategy uniting a congregation at the inception of a revitalization effort. The first section surveys relevant biblical passages showing how intentional prayer was often a key factor when God granted renewal to His people. The next section develops the theological rationale for intentional prayer toward revitalization while incorporating biblical illustrations to support the argument. The final section presents a case study on Jim Cymbala to examine the prominence placed on prayer in his leadership of the Brooklyn Tabernacle in New York City, as well as how his story demonstrates the importance of intentional prayer in revitalization.
A Biblical Survey of Relevant Texts

Throughout the pages of both the Old and New Testaments, a pattern emerges exhibiting prayer as the first response by God’s people when turning their hearts back toward Him. Numerous examples emerge when revitalization is understood as God’s people returning to Him out of a desire for a restored relationship with Him. In this section, the relevant examples of intentional prayer in relationship to spiritual renewal found in the Bible are surveyed to better understand their relationship.

**Genesis 4:25-26**

This text is considered by some scholars as the first mention of prayer in the Bible. Earlier in the narrative, Cain had murdered his brother in a fit of jealous rage because his offering was rejected by the Lord while Abel’s received acceptance before Him. The tragedy sent shockwaves through history’s first family as Cain was banished from his homeland. Adam and Eve lost both of their sons to tragic circumstances, yet in Genesis 4:25 she conceived again a third time and gave birth to a son they named Seth.

At this point, the author has set the stage for the genealogical record beginning with Adam. But before commencing it, he inserts a curious summary statement: “At that time people began to call upon the name of the Lord.” No explanation is hinted as to why the author chose to include this statement in such an unusual place, as it does not

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have any direct correlation to the genealogy including Seth or his son Enosh. Yet it does signal something new and different beginning to take place in the spiritual lives of human beings. After the fall, an evolving recognition developed of mankind’s need for personal connection with God.

Calling upon the name of the Lord appears to mean more than simply a few individuals were developing their personal prayer lives. This phrase, “call upon the name of the Lord,” became a formal description of petitioning God publicly for the nation of Israel. It was also used corporately when God’s people would seek renewal after a time of idolatry or sinful rebellion. These two verses possibly unveil the first recorded example of intentional prayer in human history, with the implication of renewal as the heart of their desires.

**Joshua 7:6-9**

The Pentateuch provides only a few clear examples of corporate prayer during Israel’s formative years, but its presence was often implied. Once the Israelites took possession of the promised land, a cycle begins where they would drift into sin and rebellion. They responded in these episodes by turning back to God for forgiveness and renewal in response to their failure to remain faithful to their covenant relationship with Him. In Joshua 7, the Israelites were coming off a victorious campaign over Jericho and had now turned their attention to the city of Ai. The Israelite army engaged their enemy

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41 Millar, 20.


43 Millar, 20.
with confidence, only to be stunned by a devasting defeat. In the wake of their
disappointing loss, Joshua responded by going to God in prayer:

Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the
Lord until the evening, he and the elders of Israel. And they put dust on their
heads. And Joshua said, “Alas, O Lord God, why have you brought this people
over the Jordan at all, to give us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us?
Would that we had been content to dwell beyond the Jordan! O Lord, what can I
say, when Israel has turned their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites
and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it and will surround us and cut off
our name from the earth. And what will you do for your great name?” (Joshua
7:6-9)

God informed Joshua the defeat befell them due to sin’s presence in the camp of
Israel. Achan and his family had disobeyed the instructions the Lord gave to them before
their campaign began. However, before any of this information came to light, Joshua
understood they needed to turn to the Lord in prayer for help.

Joshua’s reaction in verse six is interesting. He expresses the grief of his heart
with the symbolic expressions of tearing his clothes and heaping ashes upon his head.44
He follows this by bowing before the Ark, a physical demonstration of his reverence to
the presence of the Lord. It is also notable how these actions were not limited to Joshua
alone. He also included the elders of Israel in these responses during the aftermath of
their defeat. Joshua did not realize the root of their sorrows rested in a sin issue among
the people, but his first instinct was to go to God in prayer with the elders of Israel. Gary
Millar helpfully summarizes, “Joshua’s prayer is an example of the right principle
applied to the wrong situation, but there can be little mistaking the fact that his

44 Marten H. Woudstra, The Book of Joshua: The New International Commentary on the Old
understanding of the purpose of prayer coheres perfectly with all that we have seen so far.”

1 Samuel 7:3-5

Another instructive example is found during the lifetime of Samuel. Israel once again abandoned their faithfulness to the covenant relationship with God, sliding into idolatry and spiritual rebellion. After almost two decades of spiritual ruin and decay, the prophet addressed the people of Israel in 1 Samuel 7:3-5:

And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the Lord with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the Lord and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” So, the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the Lord only. Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you.”

The Israelites came to a point where they were ready to repent and turn back to the Lord to begin experiencing his blessings once again. The prophet Samuel, who also functioned as a judge over Israel, called for a time of national repentance and a return to worshipping God alone. Once the leadership of the tribes of Israel agreed, he convened the people to gather at Mizpah and he prayed over the nation as a first step in revitalizing their fidelity to the Lord

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45 Millar, 46.
2 Chronicles 7:14

The early chapters of 2 Chronicles recount the constructing of the temple in Jerusalem under the reign of King Solomon. Once completed, he presided over a public service to dedicate the newly finished center of Israel’s worship. As part of the dedication, Solomon led in a lengthy prayer before the gathered nation asking for the Lord’s blessings throughout future generations. As he concluded the prayer, fire descended from heaven and ignited the sacrificial offerings placed upon the altars. This breathtaking miracle filled the temple with the glory of the Lord and drove the Israelites to their knees in worship. The people would have spent weeks afterward marveling at the awesome demonstration of God’s power, followed by a return to their homes.

Once the excitement had settled, the Lord chose to appear to King Solomon in a dream and spoke these memorable words found in 2 Chronicles 7:14: “if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” This verse has often been employed throughout church history as a formula for experiencing revival among God’s people.46 This encounter with the Lord followed the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem where intentional prayer was the central component of the incident.

God voiced to Solomon that along with humbling themselves and seeking His face, the Israelites should pray. The sense here conveys returning to the Lord begins with prayer offered corporately and unity sought collectively.47 “God then encouraged

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46 One example of this is found in Stephen Olford, *Heart Cry for Revival* (Ross-Shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2005), 29.

47 See also 1 Kings 9:1-9 for a parallel account.
Solomon by the promise that if His judgment ... should fall on the nation for their sin, they need only turn to the Lord in earnest humility and repentance and they would find forgiveness and restoration."\textsuperscript{48}

1 Kings 18:17-40

Moving ahead in the biblical narrative, 1 Kings 18 presents a familiar Old Testament event providing helpful application to the relationship between intentional prayer and revitalization. The prophet Elijah went to confront King Ahab of the northern kingdom of Israel for allowing syncretism to dominate the religious landscape of the nation. Ahab had been turning a blind eye for years to his wife Jezebel’s pagan worship practices. Elijah was sent by God to bring charges against Ahab for abandoning the covenant relationship with God and allowing the worship of the false god Ba’al. He called for a prophetic face-off between himself and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Ba’al at the peak of Mount Carmel. All Israel\textsuperscript{49} gathered to watch the episode unfold on the mountain. Two altars were arranged each with a sacrificial bull placed on top of the wood, but they were not to be set ablaze. Now Elijah established the terms of the prophetic battle: both parties would devote themselves to prayer and whoever’s deity answered by sending fire from heaven to consume their offering would be declared the true God. Elijah generously allowed the prophets of Ba’al go first, and despite the many


\textsuperscript{49} The phrase “all Israel” in Hebrew may possibly refer to only the heads of the families or tribes in a representative role from across the Northern Kingdom. See Donald Slager, A Handbook on 1 & 2 Kings (New York: United Bible Societies, 2008), 551.
hours they devoted to prayer and cultic pagan rituals, they received no answer from heaven. When Elijah’s turn came, he prayed this prayer found in 1 Kings 18:37, “Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.”

Fire immediately descended from the skies and consumed the bull atop Elijah’s altar. After witnessing these events, the Israelites turned back to the Lord, slaughtered the prophets of Ba’al to completely remove their idolatry, and experienced renewal in their relationship with the Lord. This turn of events hinged on the intentional prayer offered by a spiritual leader in the sight of all the people.

2 Kings 22:11-13

Josiah began his reign over the southern kingdom of Judah at the young age of eight years old. His grandfather Manasseh had been one of the most spiritually destructive kings in the Old Testament due to a lengthy administration allowing him to establish pagan worship practices as the standard throughout his nation (2 Kings 21:1-9). After Manasseh died, Josiah’s father Amon was leading the people in this same downward trajectory. However, his rule was cut short when he was assassinated by his servants during his second year on the throne (2 Kings 21:19-26). This scandal forced Josiah’s unexpected rise to the highest role in the nation while still a boy.

Josiah was a much different leader than either his father or grandfather. He quickly became known as a man who sought to do what was right in the eyes of the Lord. After almost two decades into his reign as king over Judah, he launched a project aimed at renovating the long-neglected temple. During this restoration process, a copy of the
Book of the Law was discovered after apparently being absent for many years and it was brought to the king. After hearing it read aloud, Josiah reacted in this way in 2 Kings 22:11-13:

When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Milcaiah, and Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king’s servant, saying, “Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.”

Josiah experienced a shift in his pursuits away from the physical repairs of the temple and toward the spiritual repair of his heart and the hearts of his people. He recognized the extent of their drift away from the Lord’s expectations, thus leading him to desire spiritual revitalization. His first response was a gesture of personal grief and humility in tearing his clothes, followed by gathering his trusted leaders to join him in seeking the direction of the Lord. This account demonstrates how a desire for revitalization moved from one leader’s heart to the hearts of others with prayer.

**Nehemiah 1:4-11**

The book of Nehemiah narrates his efforts to repopulate Jerusalem and rebuild the long-decimated city walls. The account takes place after both nations of Israel and Judah fell to foreign powers and the majority of the two Jewish populations were scattered in

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50 There is debate among Old Testament scholars concerning what book or books were discovered. Some believe it would have included all five the books of the Pentateuch, while others maintain it is more likely that it was a copy of Deuteronomy. See Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2019), 601, for a helpful summary of all views.
exile throughout various provinces of Babylon. Nehemiah had risen to become a high-ranking servant in the king of Persia’s court. One day he received word about the destruction of Jerusalem and the fear experienced by the remnant community members. Since the walls had been demolished and the gates were in disrepair, the Holy city was both uninhabitable and disgraced in the sight of surrounding communities. After receiving this news, he was distraught with grief for many days. He devoted himself to a time of fasting and prayer, and one of those prayers is recorded in Nehemiah 1:4-11:

As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And I said, “O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes be open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father’s house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses. Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.’ They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayers of your servants who delight to fear your name …”

This prayer illustrates a heartfelt petition longing for true revitalization occur among God’s people. Nehemiah offered unqualified praise to the Lord, he confessed his sins and the sins of the Israelites, he petitioned God to remember the covenant He made with His people, he pleaded for God to restore His favor to them, and he concluded by

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asking for the courage to request a leave of absence from the king’s court so he could return to Jerusalem and lead in a recovery effort. Prayer was the first step in Nehemiah’s vision to bring revitalization to the hearts of God’s people once again.\textsuperscript{52}

Psalm 85

The book of Psalms is a compendium of personal and corporate prayers in the Old Testament, many of them written from a desire to experience renewal in troubled times. Psalm 85 provides a helpful example of prayer as it relates to asking the Lord to bring a work of revitalization. The author wrote during a time of brokenness experienced by the Israelites as the people faced the consequences of God’s judgment for their sins. He lamented about how much had been lost in their physical well-being as well as their spiritual standing. This created a longing for God to restore His people back into a position of favor once again.\textsuperscript{53} The author prayed in verse six, “Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?” He closed the poem in Psalm 85:12-13 with these words, “Yes, the Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before him and make his footsteps a way.”

This psalm was composed for a congregation to sing as an expression of their longing for God to restore them back into a right relationship with Him.\textsuperscript{54} It could accurately be categorized as a revitalization prayer extending hope to God’s people as they corporately turn to Him again. One commentator concludes, “The issue in the psalm

\textsuperscript{52} Millar, 124.


\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 638.
is the breach that needs to be healed, not the exact event that caused the breach. This is a prayer for anytime the people are in need of restoration.”55

**John 17:20-23**

In the New Testament, the words of Jesus are especially important to understanding the role of intentional prayer during revitalization. John 17 records the prayer Jesus offered only hours before He would be arrested by night. Among other things, He prayed that His disciples would be strengthened and protected in days of confusion and fear following His crucifixion:

> I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me (John 17:20-23).

His prayer enunciated more than just a general request for unity among the disciples in His final hours before going to the cross. Jesus petitioned for His followers to become a uniquely unified body of believers devoting their lives to becoming obedient to everything He taught them. He also asked that their lives would display a pattern of unity attracting the world to the beauty of the gospel. D. A. Carson observes, “As the display of genuine love amongst the believers attests that they are Jesus’ disciples … so this display

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of unity is so compelling, so un-worldly, that their witness as to who Jesus is becomes explainable only if Jesus truly is the revealer whom the Father has sent.”  

It is also important to notice how Jesus prayed not just for His disciples in that particular moment of time, but also for all His disciples throughout future generations so they would be perpetually marked by a witness of unity. “His concern here is … that those who will hear the word of the apostles in the future will be caught up in the sweeping work of God, which finds its fulfillment not in visible unity on earth but the perfected unity of God and his reconciled people.”  

This unity is to be observed by every follower of Jesus as a visible testimony to others who observe their lifestyles. This prayer can be viewed as a template for all His followers to use whenever they need to renew their spiritual health. The desires of His heart directly apply to the importance of intentional prayer as a starting place for revitalization among His followers today.

**Acts 4:23-31**

In the book of Acts, the early church set the standards for seeking revitalization, many of which every contemporary congregation can now implement. Acts 4:23-31 provides an example related directly to intentional prayer. After a group of the disciples were arrested and ordered to stop preaching and teaching about Jesus, all the believers in Jerusalem assembled together to discuss their options:

When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they

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57 Millar, 182.

58 Carson, 569.
lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made
the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through
the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit,
‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of
the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the
Lord and against his Anointed’ — for truly in this city there were gathered
together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod
and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do
whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now,
Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to
speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to
heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy
servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place in which they were
gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit
and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

The first instinct for these believers when facing an overwhelming obstacle and
the threat of demise to their faith was to pray. Psalm 2 shaped much of the theology
behind their petitions to the Lord, and they enunciated their absolute dependence upon
the Sovereign Lord as they plead for Him to intervene in this situation. Yet nowhere in
the corporate prayer did they ask God to remove them from the danger or seek His
supernatural intervention for protection from the authorities.\textsuperscript{59} What did they pray for
instead? According to F. F. Bruce, “The apostles therefore prayed that they themselves
might have courage to proclaim their message without fear or favor, and that God would
place the seal of his public approbation on their witness by granting further mighty works
of healing and similar signs and wonders through the same name which had cured the
lame man—the name of his “holy Servant Jesus.”\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{59} Millar, 193.

\textsuperscript{60} F. F. Bruce, \textit{The Book of Acts}, The New International Commentary on the New Testament
Once they finished, God confirmed His approval of their petitions by shaking their gathering place through an earthquake. This sign confirmed their faith and gave them greater boldness to keep pressing forward with their gospel witness. An argument can be made that they experienced a form of renewal after they devoted intentional time to prayer.

**Revelation 2:1-5**

One final example comes out of the book of Revelation. Jesus addressed seven churches scattered across Asia Minor in the second and third chapters, with the first recipients found to be the church of Ephesus. The Lord extended a clear and direct call for this congregation to renew their love and devotion to Him:

“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. ‘‘I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent’” (Revelation 2:1-5).

Ephesus had previously been known as a church strong in their faith. It was planted by the Apostle Paul and later Timothy would serve for a time as pastor. Yet, Ephesus still experienced a season of spiritual decline. Jesus addressed this by stating the collective body of believers had “abandoned the love you had at first.” Leaving their first love implies they had lost their passion for the Lord that had once been vibrant as new
followers of Christ, but they had now become spiritually apathetic and stagnant.\textsuperscript{61} While prayer is not explicitly mentioned in these verses, it is natural to assume that one of their first responses to this warning would have been to call for an intentional time of prayer as a church body to rekindle their relationship with Jesus once again. This would have spurred unity and provided clarity as they sought to “remember,” “repent” and “do the works” to revitalize their spiritual health.

### A Theological Rationale

The theological rationale for this project is built on the premise that ministry within established churches needing revitalization must embrace the importance of intentional prayer when initiating the work. While some examples of this have been established in the previous section, this section seeks to explore the basic assumptions shaping this project’s approach to establish an intentional prayer strategy to be utilized during the work of revitalization.

It is important to distinguish between the words “revival” and “revitalization” as they are employed in church health studies. In some usages, the words are used synonymously because of the similarities in spelling and overall purpose. This is understandable for a several reasons. First, both concepts recognize how spiritual apathy, lethargy and disunity can lead to unhealthy congregations that will eventually die apart from an intervention by the Holy Spirit. Second, both focus on turning declining local churches back toward health and growth. Finally, both direct their efforts toward

Christians who are members of the local church yet anticipate an increase in baptisms and greater evangelistic fervor to result.⁶²

There are also differences between the philosophies of revival and revitalization. Revival is an outpouring of God’s presence dependent upon the Holy Spirit producing spiritual fruit among believers that spreads new passion and devotion to an otherwise stagnant body of believers. Richard Owen Roberts defines revival as “an extraordinary movement of the Holy Spirit producing extraordinary results.”⁶³ While church leaders can prepare for it by developing plans and scheduling meetings, true revival is an outpouring of God’s presence that cannot be elicited through forms or ceremony.

On the other hand, Revitalization emphasizes processes and planning to restore health and purpose to a church experiencing spiritual and numerical decline. In defining this relatively new concept, Luke Holmes explains, “Church revitalization is a helpful phrase that illustrates what needs to be done within what many describe as ‘legacy’ churches. A new church plant is not needed; instead, there is a need for revitalizing – literally to ‘imbue something with new life and vitality’ – churches that have long been stagnant or declining.”⁶⁴ Revitalization is more structured in its approach and a greater interest is placed upon methodology than is typical for revival. Revival focuses on cultivating the presence of a person, namely the Holy Spirit. Revitalization focuses on developing a process for the Holy Spirit to bless. Another way to frame these differences

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is revival is a supernatural process yielding supernatural results, whereas revitalization is a natural process yielding supernatural results. True revival will produce revitalization in a local church, but revitalization may occur in a local church without experiencing revival.65

Another theological consideration for this rationale is how prayer will often precede a move of God’s Spirit to evidence God initiating revitalization. R. T. Kendall writes, “Prayer is a great mystery; why God doesn’t act without waiting for us first, I do not know; I only know that he has tied himself to prayer.”66 In the Old Testament book of Exodus, the story of Amalek bringing out his army to wage war against the people of Israel provides a good illustration.67 Moses sent Joshua to wage war against this enemy and his forces, while he would remain on an adjacent hillside to engage in the “spiritual battle” of prayer. Interestingly, the author notes how Moses positioned himself with his staff lifted toward the sky throughout the day. As long as his hands remained lifted toward God in a gesture of prayer, Israel experienced success over the army of Amalek. However, when Moses’ arms grew tired and he lowered them, Israel’s soldiers would begin to suffer defeat. Aaron and Hur stationed themselves on either side of Moses’ arms to stabilize them. They did this to assist him with this noticeably important activity so he could remain in his posture of reverence. The author does not specify whether or not Moses is praying during the battle. However, he does assume a posture of intercession in

65 Ross, 24–25.


67 Cf. Exodus 17:8-16.
his activity for the people. So, a principle discovered from this story is how the Lord is responsive to His people’s needs through intercession. Whenever God’s people experience a renewing of His presence or a church experiences a work of revitalization, it often occurs in response to intentional prayer.

One of the foundational assumptions of Christianity is that God not only hears the prayers of His people, but He also answers them. Likewise, one of the central doctrines of the Christian faith is the sovereignty of God over everything visible and invisible. Theologians have historically applied the word “omnipotent” to describe Him, which is a Latin compound word meaning “all-powerful.” Wayne Grudem defines it this way: “God’s omnipotence means that God is able to do all his holy will … Whereas God’s freedom referred to the fact that there are no external constraints on God’s decisions, God’s omnipotence has reference to his own power to do what he decides to do.”

Throughout the pages of Scripture numerous verses attribute God with the unhindered ability to do anything He so chooses in His universe.

Thus, prayer is one of the ways Christians acknowledge the sovereignty of God and demonstrate their dependence upon His rule and power. Tim Keller convincingly argues that the Bible is essentially a grand narrative about God, which is why prayer occurs so often in its pages. Prayer functions as an extension of the sovereignty of God in and over our lives. He concludes, “To fail to pray, then, is not to merely break some

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70 Ibid., 217-218.
religious rule – it is a failure to treat God as God. It is a sin against his glory.”71 This is not only true when it comes to a single individual’s prayer life, but also of a church failing to pray for God to revitalize them.

One of the objectives in the work of revitalization is to steer a church toward rebuilding a healthy relationship with God after a season of drift and spiritual inertia. The Bible is clear that intentional prayer is the means to achieve that end. The prophet Joel’s ministry provides a useful illustration of this truth. In response to a plague of locusts operating as agents of God’s judgement upon His people, the prophet called the nation to join collectively in repentance. He instructed them, “Consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.”72 In a follow-up message, he issues an almost identical call for Israel to respond with public repentance: “Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants.”73 Greg Frizzell defines the biblical concept of a solemn assembly like this:

Furthermore, solemn assemblies are times for believers to acknowledge God’s righteous judgement upon His people (or the nation). It is a time to acknowledge our desperate need to return to God for His forgiveness, mercy or special direction. Solemn assemblies are not some casual program or fad. They are times to face up to the fact we have offended God and lost His full blessing and protection.74

72 Joel 1:14.
73 Joel 2:15-16.
The pattern of repentance we find here is repeated across the pages of the Bible, as well as throughout church history with the stories of Christian leaders calling their congregations and even nations to repentance through intentional prayer. The picture seen here of a solemn assembly compelling God’s people to spend intentional time in prayer leads to the restoration of a right and healthy relationship with God through spiritual revitalization.

A final consideration is that prayer prepares the hearts of God’s people for the challenges they will face as they embark together on a journey toward revitalization. Scripture warns that whenever God’s people seek renewal, Satan and his forces of evil will vehemently work against those efforts. The enemy desires to spiritually cripple Jesus’ followers, which is why Paul writes in Ephesians 6:11-12:

… put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

He followed this by listing the protective weaponry Christians should arm themselves to defend against the enemy. However, prayer is not listed as one of those pieces. Instead, he positions prayer at the climax of his exhortation as an altogether distinct component of spiritual warfare. He encouraged them to be “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication” (Ephesians 6:18). According to John Stott, Paul distinguished prayer for this reason:

Finally, Paul adds prayer … not (probably) because he thinks of prayer as another though unnamed weapon, but because it is to pervade all our spiritual warfare.
Equipping ourselves with God’s armour is not a mechanical operation; it is itself an expression of our dependence on God, in other words of prayer.\textsuperscript{75}

Prayer is a necessity at the outset of any spiritual endeavor to draw near to the Lord, for no other reason than prayer is the primary defense against an enemy who seeks to thwart any effort to restore health and growth in God’s Kingdom.

A Case Study: Jim Cymbala and the Brooklyn Tabernacle

Jim Cymbala is a pastor and author who effectively incorporated an intentional prayer strategy instrumental in God bringing revitalization to his church. He was born in Brooklyn, New York, and in the early years of his life he developed a love for basketball affording him the opportunity to play competitively at both the high school and collegiate levels. He began dating his wife Carol during college, having met her through the church his family attended during his youth. They married right out of college. Upon graduating, he chose to enter the business world of New York City.\textsuperscript{76}

Though he did not possess any formal theological training, he was soon encouraged to pursue ministry by his father-in-law and would eventually begin serving as pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle. Previous to his tenure, the inner-city congregation had dwindled to only a few dozen individuals still attending each week. Denominational leaders held discussions about permanently closing the church due to its minimal impact within the community. He felt like giving up often during those challenging early years.


\textsuperscript{76} Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God’s Spirit Invades the Hearts of His People* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 12.
The church was not reaching new people, it was struggling financially, and it seemed a hopeless endeavor to continue a work producing so little fruit.  

Cymbala shared a moving example of how disheartening it could be leading the Brooklyn Tabernacle in those early days. He grew so discouraged about the spiritual state of the church that in the middle of a Sunday night sermon he began crying and could not preach through the sobs. He stopped the sermon, asked his wife to start playing on the piano and invited everyone in the service to come pray at the altar. He had few expectations, but to his surprise people began to trickle down to the altar and they began to call out to God together. One man even came forward to repent and seek forgiveness for stealing money from the offering plates. Cymbala described this as the first real spiritual breakthrough since arriving at the church. He described that night like this:

That evening, when I was at my lowest, confounded by obstacles, bewildered by the darkness that surrounded us, unable even to continue preaching, I discovered an astonishing truth: God is attracted to weakness. He can’t resist those who humbly and honestly admit how desperately they need him. Our weakness, in fact, makes room for his power.

Cymbala’s family had become concerned about his health and helped send him and Carol on a vacation. During their time away, they realized the only thing that could save their dying church was a powerful move of God’s presence. Though he does not use the word in his book, he sensed God must initiate a revitalization among the congregation for it to thrive once again. He spent extended time in prayer confessing his weaknesses, expressing his love for the city, and reaffirming his belief in the power of the gospel. In


78 Cymbala, 19.
those moments of prayer, he experienced the presence of the Lord show up in a palpable way. He sensed the Lord saying to him,

If you and your wife will lead my people to pray and call upon my name, you will never lack for something fresh to preach. I will supply all the money that’s needed, both for the church and for your family, and you will never have a building large enough to contain the crowds I will send in response.  

Upon returning from vacation, he announced to the congregation the Lord had spoken to him in a powerful way about the future of the Brooklyn Tabernacle. The church would begin devoting themselves to intentional prayer during their Tuesday night prayer meetings, and they would gauge their health and success as a congregation upon that weekly time of prayer. While things did not change overnight, Cymbala was committed to his vision of prayer as the launching pad for the health of his downtown ministry. As time passed, the weekly prayer meeting would grow exponentially in spirit and attendance. The Brooklyn Tabernacle has become renowned for its Tuesday night prayer services and is recognized around the world as a church centered on the power of prayer. Each week, thousands of people wait in line outside the church to attend their weekly prayer service.

In studying the case of Jim Cymbala and the turnaround of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, a few challenges are present when connecting his story to an intentional prayer strategy during revitalization. First, Cymbala did not begin his ministry by

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79 Ibid., 24-25.
80 Ibid., 27.
developing a plan to revitalize the church. His goal would have undoubtedly centered on seeing the church restored to health, but there is no evidence of him formulating an official plan to turn the church around. Also, his strategy to incorporate prayer to begin revitalizing the Brooklyn Tabernacle was not built around a particular tool or methodology. Instead, it was a spiritually experimental endeavor capitalizing on the established weekly prayer meeting.

Yet there are a number of characteristics found in Jim Cymbala’s journey proving its relevance for this project. First, he served as pastor of a church within the cultural context he grew up. While it is no guarantee of success, understanding a culture from the inside and having roots within the church or locale is often helpful. He also found himself pastoring a church quite literally on the brink of death. This was not a congregation with money in the bank, a celebrated heritage, or influential members who were committed to it rebounding. But he sensed a clear call from the Lord to stay at the church for a long time. Once God revealed to him that prayer would be the factor to seeing spiritual and numerical health, Cymbala remained committed to the vision and poured his life into his ministry at the Brooklyn Tabernacle. These factors are vital to understanding the power of intentional prayer when seeking revitalization.

After reflecting upon Cymbala’s story of how intentional prayer revitalized the Brooklyn Tabernacle, three observations become evident. First, the spiritual recovery of this dying church began with a focus on bringing the congregation together for intentional prayer. The undeniable place God led Jim Cymbala to pursue a work of spiritual renewal at the Brooklyn Tabernacle was prayer. He demonstrates this when he
writes, “If our churches don’t pray, and if people don’t have an appetite for God, what does it matter how many are attending the services?”

Second, he unified the people who were present around a pattern of intentional prayer which opened the door of renewal. Cymbala never speaks of trying to recruit leaders from stronger churches to come help him. He did not wait until he could develop more mature believers to give him stronger support. Instead, he describes those first services in this way:

We were not there to hear one another give voice to eloquent prayers; we were too desperate for that. We focused vertically on God, rather than horizontally on one another. Much of the time we called out to the Lord as a group, all praying aloud in concert, a practice that continues to this day … The format of a prayer meeting is not nearly as important as its essence – touching the Almighty, crying out with one’s whole being.

Finally, Cymbala firmly held to his conviction that prayer must be the foundation of any work of God to bring life to a dying church. He recognized a commitment to the Lord and patience to trust Him along the journey would yield a revitalized congregation. Addressing this topic, he writes, “Without learning the secret of how to wait in faith, many of us become spiritually fatigued as we pray. We may start doubting whether God’s promises apply to our particular situation.”

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82 Cymbala, 58.

83 Ibid., 29-30.

Conclusion

Intentional prayer has the potential to guide a church toward greater unity and readiness to embark on the difficult journey toward revitalization. It takes an immense amount of prayer, hard work, and patience in order for a dying church to become healthy and vibrant once again. The Bible repeatedly shows that God is willing and ready to bring renewal to His body if members will humbly seek His face in unity and surrender. When the leadership feels led to begin such a journey, an intentional plan to get God’s people praying together should be the first step.

Having established the theoretical basis for this project through biblical examples, a theological rationale, and a practical case study, the next chapter will explore the research methodology used in this project. It will also present the benefits of the “40 Days of Prayer” as a resource to assist members of local churches as they begin their efforts toward revitalization.
CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology and data collection process used to evaluate the effectiveness of the “40 Days of Prayer” devotional guide. Initially, the author planned to conduct the research among the membership of FBC Pikeville and evaluate the prayer guide based upon the results from only one congregation for this project. This idea proved to be problematic because of limitations imposed by sampling a single church to determine the perceived effectiveness. The author determined the project would yield better results to analyze the prayer guide’s effectiveness when utilized by three different churches across the state of Kentucky. Based on those results, a strategy for implementation could be developed to apply at the launch of a revitalization effort for FBC Pikeville. This plan provided more reliable data and yielded stronger conclusions.

The research for this project required the use of both a quantitative survey instrument and two qualitative interviews to investigate the perceived effectiveness of the “40 Days of Prayer.” The theoretical basis for a revitalization effort to begin with an intentional prayer strategy has been demonstrated in the previous chapter. The challenge faced by many church leaders is how to find a prayer model that aligns their members around a vision for revitalization.

All factors used to develop an appropriate research process for investigating the perceived effectiveness of the “40 Days of Prayer” are discussed in this chapter. An
explanation of the preliminary steps used to establish the research methodology is provided, followed by an overview of how the data from three different churches in Kentucky was collected, processed and analyzed.

**Research Methodology**

The research phase for this project spanned nine months, beginning in February 2017 and continuing through December 2017. The research sought to discover and analyze the perceived effectiveness of the “40 Days of Prayer” with the following considerations:

1) The research data would be drawn from the membership of three different local churches selected because they lie within one hundred and fifty miles of FBC Pikeville.

2) All three churches were in cooperative partnership with the KBC and SBC.

3) The pastors of the three churches previously utilized the “40 Days of Prayer” with their members in preparation for and anticipation of a broader revitalization effort.

The preparation required a number of important decisions to ensure the research maintained a clear focus and produced data yielding positive results to analyze. First, the prayer tool serving as the instrument of study was identified. Next, the author used that resource to develop a quantitative survey to administer in congregations familiar with it. Third, qualitative interview questions were crafted to uncover useful data from the pastors of the churches surveyed as well as the KBC team leader involved with developing the selected resource. Last, the author sought to discover and enlist three churches in eastern and/or central Kentucky meeting the parameters outlined above.
Selection of the Instrument to be Evaluated

The author established three criteria to be sought in the prayer resource utilized for this project:

1) The resource must be devotional in nature.
2) The resource must be appropriate for use by an entire congregation.
3) The resource must specifically address revitalization in a local church context.

The author examined a number of prayer resources to consider as potential resources for this project. However, the majority of them ultimately fell outside at least one of the parameters listed above. Only the “40 Days of Prayer” met the required guidelines.

The author became aware of the prayer guide through a friendship with Dr. Steve Rice, Team Leader of the Church Consulting and Revitalization Team at the KBC. Rice was formerly a transitional pastor for FBC Pikeville while the author served in a support staff role. After outlining a revitalization strategy with him, Dr. Rice suggested the “40 Days of Prayer” since it was designed for church members to use as they prepare for revitalization. The author reviewed the prayer guide after the conversation, and it became the prime choice for evaluating in this project.

The “40 Days of Prayer” is unique in its design and approach to intentional prayer. It educates on the various elements of revitalization through daily devotions aimed at assisting readers as they pray through the relevant topics. Those topics include repentance, forgiveness, unity, stewardship, community engagement and evangelism. The prayer guide is also designed to be accessible for a variety of reading levels. Its authors

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85 Most of the potential resources were surveyed in the review of literature found in chapter one.
are church consultants who have served as pastors or leaders within local churches prior to joining the KBC staff. They also remain active as members of a local church within their communities as they work with the churches across their respective regions. These factors allow their writing to connect with a variety of members regardless of their background or level of education.

The prayer guide provides six weeks of daily readings, personal reflections, and prayer suggestions. The first five weeks offer seven full days of devotional readings. The final week, week six, offers five days of devotionals. The final day of the study allows the reader to evaluate their own church’s readiness for revitalization, which if completed properly, requires more reflection and prayer than the previous days in the study. The goal is that by the end of the forty days, members who have worked through it thoughtfully and prayerfully will be ready to bring positive ideas and a spirit of unity to their church as they begin seeking revitalization together.

There are helpful characteristics to the “40 Days of Prayer” not found in other resources. First, instead of a single author writing the daily reflections, multiple church consultants joined together to write the devotionals. There is an evident unity in direction throughout the forty days, but the unique voice of each author provides variety to the readings. Second, each of the daily devotionals begin with a specific text of Scripture for the authors to apply in the context of church revitalization. This format proves more effective than starting with a topic and then supporting it with an assortment of Scriptural references. Finally, the “40 Days of Prayer” includes longer articles at the end of each week’s readings exploring the deeper issues involved when a church is praying for
revitalization. While these prove to be a benefit to every reader, they are especially helpful for pastors to use in group discussions with key leaders of their church.

**Development of the Research Survey**

The author chose to develop a quantitative survey to evaluate the “40 Days of Prayer” for this project. The survey proved to be essential to the results of this project because it gauges the perceived effectiveness of the devotional by members of a local church starting a work of revitalization. The author sought the opinions of church members who used the prayer guide as it relates to two issues. First, how did members rate its impact on their personal prayer lives? Second, how did members perceive its usefulness in fostering more prayer in their churches corporately, specifically in respect to unifying them around the vision for revitalization?

Fourteen questions comprised the quantitative research survey to ensure it would be general enough to use with various members of different congregations, but also yield answers specific enough to rate the effectiveness of the devotional guide. The first two questions cover basic demographic information of the respondents: their age range and their roles in the church. Because the survey was anonymous, the author deemed it important to include a question confirming the respondent did in fact complete the “40 Days of Prayer.”

After these preliminary inquiries, the remainder of the survey sought to discover how each respondent viewed a number of revitalization issues after completing the prayer guide. Instead of using a uniform set of responses throughout the survey, the author chose

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86 The survey can be found in Appendix A.
to include more flexible options for respondents, so their answers yielded more specific results. The questions divided into three broad categories:

1) How does the respondent rate the “40 Days of Prayer” devotional guide’s impact on their personal prayer life?

2) How does the respondent rate the “40 Days of Prayer” devotional guide’s impact on their church’s readiness for revitalization?

3) Were there additional factors the respondent felt enhanced the effectiveness of the “40 Days of Prayer” devotional guide in their church?

The author consulted with Jason Lowe, Associational Mission Strategist for the Pike Association of Southern Baptists, to construct the questionnaire. Lowe earned his undergraduate degree with an emphasis in statistical analysis, as well as having previous employment experience in this field. He works with many Baptist state conventions, denominational leaders, and local associations in survey analysis. The author asked him to assist in reviewing the survey instrument to make sure the questions would yield the best possible data to analyze and to clarify the question formatting so the survey would not be confusing to respondents.

**Development of the Interview Questionnaires**

The author developed two separate qualitative interview questionnaires to ascertain the opinions of the spiritual leaders who could provide relevant insight to this project. The first questionnaire was developed for Dr. Steve Rice, Team Leader of the Church Consulting and Revitalization Team of the KBC. Rice offers unique insights to this project in a few different ways. First, he leads the team that developed the prayer
guide. While his consultants wrote the daily devotions, Rice formulated the overall direction of the prayer guide and writing assignments as part of his role at the state convention. Second, he has consulted with numerous churches and networks as they sought to implement this prayer guide to begin their revitalization efforts. The author developed six questions for the interview, exploring the background to developing the prayer guide, the estimated number of churches to have implemented it, the reaction of those churches to it, the optimal time for a church to introduce the prayer guide, additional ideas pastors have developed in preparing to use this resource with their congregations, and his recommendations for pastors as they consider the next steps after the forty days conclude.87

The author built a second questionnaire for the pastors of the three churches enlisted to participate in this project. The author wants to discover what circumstances led these leaders to choose the “40 Days of Prayer” as a means to begin the process of revitalizing their churches. These pastors would also provide their personal impressions of any positive influence the prayer guide left on their congregations, allowing the author to compare and contrast the pastor’s perceptions with the survey responses from members of their respective churches. These questions explore the obstacles the pastors encountered, the participation level they experienced among members, any preparations completed in advance to the forty-day emphasis, and the results they perceived from the members of their congregations.88

87 The interview questionnaire for the KBC team leader can found in Appendix C.

88 The interview questionnaire for the three pastors can be found in Appendix D.
Enlistment of the Participant Churches

In May of 2012, the KBC’s messengers voted to approve a major restructuring of its Mission Board Staff introducing three new teams focused on distinct areas of ministry across Kentucky. As part of the restructuring, the Church Consulting and Revitalization Team was established to partner with associational leaders, pastors and church members to strengthen KBC congregations. The team’s responsibilities include networking, resourcing, and encouraging churches and church leadership as they develop strategic processes to understand their purpose and fulfill their God-given mission. Figure 3.1 shows a map of the regional divisions applied to the state of Kentucky by the KBC:

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89 This information was provided to the author by the KBC Mission Board Staff.

90 The map was reproduced with permission from The Kentucky Baptist Convention from their website, http://kbc.staging.communityq.com/regional-consultant-group,1366.
FBC Pikeville is located in Pike County, which sits in the east region of the map found in Figure 3.1. The author originally planned to enlist three churches out of the east region to participate in this project. However, because the “40 Days of Prayer” was a relatively new resource at the time, the majority of KBC churches in the east region either were not yet familiar with it or had not chosen to employ it in their church. The author discovered three churches which previously employed the resource, but only one met the criteria outlined for the project earlier in this chapter.91

Because of this obstacle, the author chose to widen the range of consideration for viable churches to ensure the participants would meet the criteria. As seen in Figure 3.1, the most advantageous areas for recruiting potential congregations were the south region and the north central region. The author reached out to David Stokes, who serves as the Associational Mission Strategist for the Central Kentucky Network of Baptists, one of the largest Baptist associations in Kentucky. Stokes has also worked closely with the KBC in developing revitalization strategies for churches in his association. He recommended the “40 Days of Prayer” to multiple churches in his network as they prepared to launch revitalization efforts. Based on Stokes’ advice, the author enlisted two churches from the north central region to participate in this project. A short description of each of the three participating churches is provided below, along with the relevant demographic data compiled from their Annual Church Profile Reports (ACP).92

91 Of the other two churches considered, one was not large enough to gather enough survey results while the other had recently experienced a pastoral transition.

92 Many Southern Baptist Churches voluntarily choose to submit Annual Church Profile Reports to their local associations each year. That information is then forwarded to state conventions as well as the national convention in order to compile annual statistical data that gauges the health and growth of churches within the SBC.
- *Meta Baptist Church, Pikeville Kentucky*

Meta Baptist Church is located roughly five miles outside of Pikeville. Reverend Bill Staggs has served as bi-vocational pastor of the congregation since 2001. Meta Baptist Church has historically been one of the stronger churches among the Pike Association of Southern Baptists. However, the church has experienced a steady decline in attendance and giving in recent years. Table 3.1 shows the church’s data from the years 2013 to 2017:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average Worship Attendance</th>
<th>Average Sunday School Attendance</th>
<th>Total Baptisms</th>
<th>Total Receipts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$265,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$220,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$224,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$169,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$183,651</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staggs grew concerned about the downward trend he was witnessing in his congregation, so reached out to the KBC for assistance. They began assisting him in thinking through the implications of starting a revitalization process. He began building excitement among the members of his congregation by distributing the “40 Days of Prayer” and asking them to join him in praying through the study.93

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93 Bill Staggs, Interview by author, Pikeville, KY, October 2, 2017.
- Pinckard Baptist Church, Versailles, Kentucky

Pinckard Baptist Church is situated in Versailles, a town located twenty miles outside of Lexington, KY. The church is part of the Central Kentucky Network of Baptists and Dr. Mike James has served as pastor for over six years. James has worked in a variety of ministry roles, including as a Church Development Strategist for the KBC. He also co-authored a book on church growth with Dr. Ken Hemphill.94 Table 3.2 breaks down the statistics for the church from 2013 to 2017:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Worship Attendance</th>
<th>Average Sunday School Attendance</th>
<th>Total Baptisms</th>
<th>Total Receipts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$272,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$260,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201595</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$261,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$255,876</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

James went to Pinckard Baptist Church knowing the church needed revitalization. He began laying the groundwork to move the congregation toward revitalization within


95 In 2015, Pinckard Baptist Church provided only a partial ACP report. The only data submitted were their total baptisms and missions giving for that year.
the first few years of his tenure. As he formulated a larger revitalization process, he chose the “40 Days of Prayer” as the first step in the plan for the church. ⁹⁶

- *Lexington Baptist Temple, Lexington, Kentucky*

Lexington Baptist Temple sits in the heart of Lexington, Kentucky. Derek Holmes has served as pastor for five years and is passionate about revitalizing this historic congregation. The church is located in a blossoming area of Lexington as they see new subdivisions and townhomes regularly constructed around their church property. Table 3.3 provides a glimpse at their current trends:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.3</th>
<th>Lexington Baptist Temple Statistics, 2013-2017⁹⁷</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average Worship Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Holmes led Lexington Baptist Temple through a multi-year revitalization process developed with the help of denominational leaders and consultants. One part of the

⁹⁶ Mike James, interview by author, Louisville, KY, November 13, 2017.

⁹⁷ Lexington Baptist Temple was an independent Baptist church until joining the KBC and SBC in 2018. Because of this, the church did not complete ACP reports for the years included in this study. The data was provided to the author by the church’s office staff.
process focused on moving the church from being an independent Baptist church to joining both the KBC and SBC. The church also sought to align locally with the Central Kentucky Network of Baptists. Before beginning this revitalization effort, Holmes decided to invite the church’s adult Sunday School classes to pray through the “40 Days of Prayer” as a means to prepare their hearts for the work of revitalization.98

**Data Collection Process**

Once the author developed a research methodology, the next phase of the project required the formulating of a data collection process. The components of the data collection process are discussed below. The first outlines specific procedures the author followed to procure the relevant data serving as the basis for evaluating of the “40 Days of Prayer.” The second explains the methods employed to analyze and summarize the data in its most useful form. The third considers the assumptions made by the author to correctly inform how the data should be interpreted.

**Procedures**

The data collection phase of this project lasted for approximately four months during 2017. This span of time was necessary to schedule the best times for administering the surveys with church members, conduct interviews with all three pastors, conduct an interview with the KBC team leader, and to compile the data.

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- Administering the Surveys

The author considered the option of conducting the research online through a survey tool such as surveymonkey.com. However, this option was abandoned due to the challenges of gathering each church member’s personal information, recruiting them via email or telephone, and providing enough instructions to complete the survey. The author opted instead to administer the survey in person before or after a scheduled service in coordination with the pastor. This allowed all individuals present who completed the forty-day study to participate in compliance with an informed consent through Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board. This option also made it possible for the surveys to be administered in a controlled setting so participants would feel more comfortable and it would not disrupt their routines.

The author blocked off three weekends between the months of August to October 2017 to travel to each church location for a weekend visit and administer the surveys. The pastors were asked to provide the best location and time during the day for a survey station to be set up so members who completed the prayer guide would be available to participate in the survey. Packets were compiled in advance to be distributed to each individual choosing to take part in the survey. The packets contained a blank printed copy of the survey, a printed copy of the instruction sheet, and a printed copy of the “Informed Consent” approved by Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board. The author remained present the entire time the surveys were being administered to answer any questions from the participants. The pastors were also encouraged to be present as much as they wished to support the study and provide feedback to members.
The author sent an email to all three pastors in July of 2017 to set up a one-on-one phone call with each of them. During the phone call, the author described the process outlined above and requested permission to be present to administer the survey at their church during a service of their choosing. Once the pastors agreed, the dates were set for the research to be conducted.

As noted, the author remained present during the administration of the survey so participants would be provided verbal instructions along with their packets. This also allowed for questions to be answered as participants completed the surveys. It was expected that some participants may need clarification to some of the instructions, reminders about certain details of the “40 Days of Prayer” referenced in the survey, or clarification to any of the wording not making sense to the participant. The author also brought extra copies of the prayer guide for participants who wished to review it before or during the survey. No time limit was placed on participants to complete the survey. No outside influence of any kind was offered by the author or the church pastor. No incentives, compensation or rewards were provided to individuals who volunteered to complete the survey. Once the participants completed the survey, the author thanked them for their valuable input to this project. One week after the survey was administered at each respective church, the author wrote a personal thank you note and sent it in care of each pastor to be read or distributed at his pleasure.

- Conducting the Interview with the Three Pastors

Once the on-site visits had been completed, the author contacted each pastor to schedule the best time to conduct a phone interview. The interview questionnaire
consisted of seven questions designed to give the pastors an opportunity to share their opinions of the “40 Days of Prayer” as a tool for beginning their revitalization process, as well as to assess what they believed to be the strengths and weaknesses of the experience. Once the pastors agreed to the interview, they were informed it would take approximately fifteen minutes depending on the length of their responses. The questionnaire was sent in an email to each pastor three days before the interview was scheduled so they would be able to review it in advance. No time limit was placed on the length of the interview unless requested by the pastor. No outside influence on how they should answer any of the questions was offered by the author. No incentives, compensation or rewards were provided to the pastors for participating in the interviews. After the completion of the interviews, the author thanked each of them for their contributions to this project. One week after the interview of each respective pastor, the author wrote a personal thank you note and sent it to their church office address.

- Conducting the Interview with Dr. Steve Rice

The final step of the data collection process allowed the author to conduct an interview with Dr. Steve Rice, Team Leader for the Church Consulting and Revitalization Team of the KBC. The interview questionnaire built for him contained six questions to provide the author with background information about the development process of the “40 Days of Prayer,” as well as discovering additional methods of implementation he has observed to be successful since its publication. Rice was contacted by email in October

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99 See Appendix D.

100 See Appendix C.
2017. Once he agreed to participate, he was informed the phone interview would last approximately twenty minutes, depending on the length of his responses. The questionnaire was sent in a separate email five days before the interview was scheduled to allow him the opportunity of reviewing it in advance. No time limit was placed on the interview unless requested by the team leader. No outside influence was offered by the author regarding how to respond to any of the questions. No incentives, compensation or rewards were provided for participating in the interview. After the author completed the interview, he thanked Dr. Rice for his valuable contributions toward this project. One week after the interview, the author wrote a personal thank you note and sent it to his office address at the KBC.

**Data Analysis**

The author compiled the data collected from the quantitative surveys into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet directly from the paper copies. Any answer sheet left incomplete was removed from consideration, as well as answer sheets indicating the respondent did not completed the “40 Days of Prayer” during the time allotted by their respective church.

The data from the spreadsheet was entered into an IBM statistical product called SPSS. SPSS allowed the author to quickly analyze the data sets and summarize them into a helpful format. The author ran descriptive analyses on all the appropriate variables,

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101 Three surveys were removed from consideration because they were submitted incomplete. Four survey were removed from consideration because a respondent stated in question 3 that they had not participated the “40 Days of Prayer” emphasis by reading and praying through the devotional guide.

means, and standard deviations. In analyzing the data, the author sought to discern as many insights as possible based on the data collected from the surveys.

Assumptions

As is common in all forms of research, the author made certain assumptions when it came to the data. The author assumed participants who completed the survey would answer each question honestly, making every effort to communicate their opinions on the “40 Days of Prayer” as it related to the revitalization effort in their respective church. It was also assumed the sampling of members who completed the study in their local church and would agree to participate in the survey would be lower than the pastor’s initial expectations. While the churches welcomed any members willing to join for the length of the study, all three of the pastors focused their attention on teachers, volunteers, and key lay leaders. In addition, because the author would only be on site for a single Sunday there would naturally be some individuals who completed the devotional but were unavailable to participate in the survey on the assigned day.

It was assumed the pastors who agreed to participate made every effort to inform their congregations about the survey in advance, working to ensure an adequate number of members would be present and willing to complete the survey. The author also assumed the pastors would be open and honest in their responses during the interviews. It was assumed they would not try to promote or degrade the prayer guide for reasons unrelated to its perceived effectiveness in the experience of their local congregation. Finally, the author assumed Dr. Rice would be honest and unbiased in his responses to
the interview questionnaire as they relate to his perception of the positive and negative results identified by churches when using the “40 Days of Prayer.”

Conclusion

This chapter described the methodology utilized for the research of this project. It explored how the resource for study, the “40 Days of Prayer,” was selected to evaluate. It provided an overview of how the quantitative research survey was developed, followed by how two different qualitative interview questionnaires were drafted. This was followed by a description of how three Kentucky churches were discovered and enlisted to participate in the research phase of the project.

After this, the data collection process was broken down to show the steps involved in its rationale. The author explained the procedures involved in collecting the data from the quantitative surveys and the qualitative interviews. The steps and tools used to analyze the data were discussed, followed by a summary of the assumptions brought to the data collection process by the author. In the next chapter, the author shall examine the research data collected from the survey results and interviews. This information will be used to give a fair assessment to the “40 Days of Prayer” and to uncover its strengths and weaknesses before a process of implementation is developed for FBC Pikeville.
CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

In 2015, the KBC’s Church Consulting and Revitalization Team published the “40 Days of Prayer” for churches in search of a prayer tool focused upon revitalization. Over twenty thousand copies have been published to date.\(^{103}\) In chapter two, the author argued an intentional prayer emphasis among a body of believers is the proper place to begin a revitalization effort. Encouraging God’s people toward intentional prayer is evidence a church is advancing in the work of revitalization. While a host of prayer resources, studies and books are available, finding one to best serve a congregation’s needs can be challenging. The “40 Days of Prayer” provides a tool for the average church member to use in their personal time with the Lord, while also teaching the principles and obstacles associated with revitalization. The issue to explore at this stage of the project is the effectiveness of the prayer guide in moving God’s people toward renewal.

This chapter considers the results of a research study designed by the author to evaluate the effectiveness of the “40 Days of Prayer.” It examines the relevant insights gleaned from a quantitative survey conducted in three churches across Eastern and Central Kentucky. The responses from qualitative interviews held with the pastors of those churches are included, as well as the response from a qualitative interview with Dr. Steve Rice, interview by author, Louisville, KY, November 13, 2017. Dr. Rice also communicated that churches in Tennessee, Florida, Indiana, and Texas had acquired copies of the devotional guide. He also stated that multiple state conventions, particularly the pioneer conventions such as the Minnesota/Wisconsin Baptist Convention, had been provided copies. The guide has now been translated into Korean and Spanish.
Steve Rice of the KBC. A summary of the key findings from the data shall conclude the chapter, including strengths and weaknesses discovered about the prayer guide and how it is employed.

**General Factors**

The author developed a quantitative survey of opinion questions centered around the “40 Days of Prayer.” This survey was administered to participants from the three KBC churches introduced in chapter three. The questions explored two broad categories from the respondent’s points of view: their perception of the prayer guide’s impact upon their personal prayer lives and their perception of the prayer guide’s impact on members across their congregations. In total, fourteen questions comprised the survey administered to respondents during the research phase.

A total of thirty-four individuals completed the survey for this research study. Respondents were asked to identify the area or areas of ministry they currently participate in their church. This included paid as well as volunteer positions, and they were asked to check multiple options if more than one role applied to them. The roles of service are shown in Figure 4.1:

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104 The author acknowledges that the number of surveys completed were slightly lower than desired. However, a few factors led to proceeding forward without adding more churches to the sampling. First, all three churches fall into the categories of either “smaller” churches or “small to medium” churches based on their membership and average attendance. The sample size is consistent with those members who would be most active in the life of the churches. Second, statistical analysis textbooks have argued that for most sampled populations, thirty or more is a sufficient sample size for the normal approximations to be reasonable. See James T. McClave, Frank H. Dietrich and Terry Sincich, *Statistics*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall Publishing, 1997), 241.
The author was not surprised the majority of respondents served in Sunday School, as those individuals are typically the most faithful in attendance and the most engaged in the life of a church. It was also notable that the second largest response category identified themselves as “none of the above.” This reflects a number of members sampled were not serving in any leadership role, yet desired to participate in an intentional prayer strategy offered to them. This also shows a potential for stronger results since the majority of members in every church do not hold a leadership position. Figure 4.2 breaks down the age demographics of the participants. Half of all respondents were age sixty or older. This fell in line with expectations, due to the fact that all three congregations are established churches.
Looking closer at the breakdown of responses in each individual church, exactly half of the respondents from Lexington Baptist Temple were under the age of fifty. Pastor Derek Holmes was pleased with this news, as he noted a number of young families had joined their church in recent years. He believed these younger families cultivated a new energy to the prospects of revitalization and watching them participate in the “40 Days of Prayer” built excitement for the congregation.

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105 See Appendix B for a fuller analysis breaking down all the survey results by individual churches.

106 Holmes, interview.
Survey Results

The survey asked participants a series of questions designed to provide insight in two areas. Six of the questions explored the prayer guide’s perceived effectiveness in the prayer life of the respondent. Five of the questions seek to discover the prayer guide’s perceived effectiveness among the congregation as a whole from the respondent’s perspective.

The Prayer Guide’s Effectiveness Among Participants

In question four, respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of the “40 Days of Prayer” during their personal prayer time. It was important to discover early in the survey if participants believed the “40 Days of Prayer” enhanced their private prayer lives at the conclusion of the forty days they committed to using the resource. They were provided four options to choose from: extremely effective, somewhat effective, somewhat ineffective, and extremely ineffective. Figure 4.3 shows ninety four percent of participants responded that the prayer guide was either extremely effective or somewhat effective during their personal prayer time. These percentages indicate that the study guide provided significant value in the prayer lives of church members preparing for revitalization.
Another finding about the prayer guide’s effectiveness resulted from question five on the survey. Respondents were asked to identify the greatest benefit of the devotional guide to themselves. They were asked to choose one or more options provided in a list, as well as to write in any answer not included on the list provided. The options provided to them were the daily Scripture reading assignments, the writer’s daily meditations on the texts, the prayer ideas included at the end of each day’s reading, or the weekly reflections concluding each section. Because these elements compromised the structure of the prayer guide, the author did not anticipate a significant number of additional answers. None of the respondents provided additional responses in the space afforded.

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107 It is possible that the wording of the question may have been confusing to some participants. Because it asks for the “greatest benefit” (which is both superlative and singular), respondents might not have recognized that they were permitted to choose multiple options. However, that does not appear to have been a negative factor due to the number of respondents who did in fact select multiple options.
Figure 4.4 shows over half of the respondents identified the prayer ideas concluding each day’s reading as the greatest benefit to them personally. Pinckard Baptist Church saw three fourths of their participants indicate it as the strongest benefit of the prayer guide. This result was welcomed by their pastor, Dr. Mike James. One of the reasons he chose the “40 Days of Prayer” came from a desire to see his congregation develop greater consistency in their prayer habits as they began preparing for revitalization.

Nearly half of respondents also selected the daily Scripture selections as important to their experience during the forty days. This was not surprising. The majority of participants indicated they were in a leadership position, such as a Sunday School worker, deacon, prayer ministry leader or a paid staff position. These individuals are often expected to be active in personal Bible study and prayer. Since many of them likely knew they were preparing for a revitalization effort as a church family, it makes sense that a high percentage of them would find value in Scripture readings highlighting the importance of church renewal.

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108 See Appendix B.

109 James, interview.
Questions nine through twelve on the survey were clustered together to evaluate the effectiveness of the survey based on how the respondents believed their prayer lives did or did not improve upon completing the “40 Days of Prayer.” The survey measured how often the participants prayed for their church and/or church leaders prior to participating in the forty days, versus how often they prayed for them after completing the forty days. The author designed this question with the intention of measuring behavior rather than perception. The respondents were given five options to choose from: at least daily, at least weekly, at least monthly, rarely, or not at all.

Figure 4.5 reveals the majority of respondents affirmed they were actively praying for their church and church leaders both before and after the forty days. However, there was a noticeable shift in frequency. Before participating in the “40 Days of Prayer,” twenty nine percent of respondents stated they prayed at least daily, while forty seven
percent acknowledged they prayed at least weekly. After completing the prayer guide, the number of respondents who prayed at least daily almost doubled. Given the importance of praying for their church and church leaders during a revitalization process, this data indicates the prayer guide was effective in motivating those surveyed to pray more frequently.

The second cluster of questions asked respondents to rate how often they prayed for lost people in their community before the forty days, versus how often they prayed for lost people in their community after completing the study. The results produced two notable shifts in frequency among the participants. Before using the prayer guide, twenty six percent of respondents stated they prayed for the lost in their community at least daily. By the end of the forty-day study, the percentage of participants who prayed at
least daily grew to thirty five percent. Also, the number of participants who stated they prayed for the lost in their community at least monthly before using the prayer guide doubled once they concluded the forty days. The full results are shown in Figure 4.6:

**Figure 4.6**  
*Prayer for Lost People in Community Before and After Participation*

These results were consistent with the reasoning behind the three pastors choosing the “40 Days of Prayer.” Each of the pastors were asked to share their own desired results among their members who completed the prayer guide. They were also asked if they believed it helped their church advance in the process of revitalization. All three stated they sensed a noticeable growth in the prayer habits of the participants. These pastors received encouragement from members telling them that they were being prayed for more often. They said more prayer requests were being voiced in prayer meetings and small
groups for lost family members and friends.\textsuperscript{110} Harry Reeder confirms the importance of this type of intercessory prayer in church revitalization:

A church must have multiple initiatives to implement the strategy and priority of intercessory prayer. We must pray for the lost, our friends, the hurting, our worship, and our leadership. Remember, Satan \textit{preys} on leaders and \textit{prays} against leaders. Our Savior informed us of this when he responded to Peter’s claim that he would never leave or forsake the Lord even if all others did. He compassionately and clearly communicated that Peter would also fall away by informing him that before the cock crowed, he would deny him three times. Furthermore, He informed Peter that “Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you [all of you] like wheat” (Luke 22:31). In that simple statement Jesus reveals that Satan \textit{preys} on leaders and \textit{prays} against leaders.\textsuperscript{111}

\textbf{The Prayer Guide’s Effectiveness Among the Congregation}

The second subgroup of questions on the survey asked respondents to share their views the perceived effectiveness of the “40 Days of Prayer” upon their entire congregation. Question six revealed that two of the three churches invited a regional consultant and/or a KBC staff member to work with the church during a scheduled workshop.\textsuperscript{112} For the church members who indicated they did host a consultant, question seven asked them to rate the effectiveness of the training provided. The options provided to them were extremely effective, somewhat effective, somewhat ineffective and completely ineffective. The majority of respondents selected somewhat effective or extremely effective as their answer. These results are displayed on Figure 4.7.

\textsuperscript{110} Staggs, interview; James, interview; Holmes, interview.

\textsuperscript{111} Reeder, 105. Emphasis his.

\textsuperscript{112} The two churches that invited in a guest consultant/speaker were Meta Baptist Church and Lexington Baptist Temple. This was indicated on question 8 of the survey, and then confirmed by the pastors during their follow-up interviews.
While this question did not apply directly to the effectiveness of the “40 Days of Prayer,” it was an important inclusion to this survey. One of the common practices for churches working toward revitalization is to invite a consultant to do an onsite visit and speak to the congregation. In the case of this prayer guide, its authors are church consultants. It is reasonable to believe a church would want to take the opportunity to schedule one of them and learn how to best implement it, ask questions, and hear stories of its success for other congregations. The data from the survey supported this assumption.

**Figure 4.7**
Effectiveness of a Guest Speaker

Question thirteen asked participants if they believed their congregation had grown healthier after completing the “40 Days of Prayer.” They were provided four options: strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. There was a
slight agreement in all three churches that their congregations were healthier after participating in the study. Figure 4.8 shows fifty six percent of all respondents indicated they somewhat agreed with the question, while eighteen percent responded they strongly agreed. One possible reason for these results is that while the participants found value in completing the forty-day study, they did not feel it was sufficient by itself. A robust strategy for intentional prayer built around the prayer guide may have yielded better results for these churches.

The next question asked participants if their church had developed or enhanced any prayer ministries since completing the “40 Days of Prayer.” Once again, they were provided four responses: strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. Figure 4.9 shows forty four percent of the total respondents somewhat agreed
that their church’s prayer ministry had been developed or enhanced since completing the study. Twelve percent strongly agreed with the statement.

The data becomes more interesting upon further examination. Six percent of respondents from Meta Baptist Church strongly agreed, while a sizable fifty percent of them somewhat agreed. At Pinckard Baptist Church, none of the respondents selected they strongly agreed, while sixty three percent said they somewhat agreed. However, Lexington Baptist Temple’s respondents were neutral on this question. Fifty percent of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed, while forty percent somewhat disagreed. 113 This implies there may be differences of opinion in the church about how effectively the forty days strengthened the prayer ministries within the church. When asked about the results they observed after the “40 Days of Prayer” devotional and how it helped their churches in the process of revitalization, none of the pastors addressed the impact it made on their church’s prayer ministries.114

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113 See Appendix B.

114 Staggs, interview; James, interview; Holmes, interview.
A final question in the category of the prayer guide’s effectiveness among the congregation asked respondents if their church scheduled follow-up meetings or developed new small groups as a result of the study. One reason for asking this question was to discover if any of the churches took steps to continue the emphasis on intentional prayer for revitalization. Based on the responses shown in Figure 4.10, both Meta Baptist Church and Lexington Baptist Temple conducted some type of follow-up meetings, while Pinckard Baptist Church did not. These results were confirmed by Bill Staggs and Derek Holmes in their follow-up interviews.\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{115} Staggs, interview; Holmes, interview.
Overall Impressions

The research conducted in these three churches was designed to measure the effectiveness of the “40 Days of Prayer” as an instrument for intentional prayer to begin revitalization. Overall, the author concludes the prayer guide is a useful resource for local churches, but it requires a more detailed strategy for implementation to maximize the results. Based on the findings, the following strengths and weaknesses were discovered.

Strengths

One strength of the “40 Days of Prayer” is how it created a greater emphasis and frequency of prayer among the participants. Dr. Steve Rice noted one of the reasons for developing the prayer guide was to provide a tool for churches making prayer the foundation of a revitalization effort. While revitalization is a work only brought by the
Holy Spirit, intentional prayer can be the catalyst God uses to bring lasting renewal to a church.\footnote{Rice, interview.}

This strength is apparent from the data presented in this chapter. The respondents indicated the prayer guide was at least somewhat effective in their personal prayer lives and in fostering prayer in their church. There was agreement among the participants that their churches were healthier after they participated in the forty days. Two of the three churches indicated their prayer ministries were enhanced as a result as well. Even though praying for the lost did not yield a substantial increase, this is likely due to the fact the resource is focused on the reader’s relationship with God to experience revitalization. The author believes this is why the survey showed prayer for the churches and church leaders increased, but prayer for the lost remained at the same level. Simply put, the central aim of the “40 Days of Prayer” is to enhance an individual’s inward experience of renewal.

A second strength is the simple and straightforward approach of the prayer guide. The respondents uniformly indicated they found the greatest benefits from the daily prayer ideas and assigned Scripture readings. Those Scripture readings required only a few verses per day throughout the forty days, and the prayer ideas were limited to a few sentences for stimulating the reader’s daily prayer time. The three pastors also identified the “user-friendly” approach of the “40 Days of Prayer” as a reason they selected it for their congregations. Bill Staggs feared the longer book-length studies would intimidate some of his church members, but the brevity of this resource helped get them excited about the study.\footnote{Staggs, interview.} Mike James gave a similar response when asked about his reasons for
selecting the prayer guide. He believed the simple design of it allowed more of his members to complete the study. He also sensed it provided momentum in their revitalization efforts and produced noticeable growth in many members of his congregation.118

Another strength of the prayer guide is how it cultivated a spirit of unity among the members of these churches. One component to a successful revitalization campaign is harmony among believers as they seek to become healthy once again. A byproduct of every member reading the same daily devotions and praying over the same topics for forty days is they will be more likely to align around the same vision once they complete the study. Participants in all three churches indicated they believed their church was healthier after participating in the forty-day study. All three of the pastors sensed a greater unity among their members as well. They were each asked how the prayer guide had helped their church in the process of revitalization, and a common theme in their answers was greater unity of spirit. For example, Derek Holmes stated his participants showed stronger support to his leadership in meetings held at the conclusion of the forty-day journey. They were also willing to make adjustments to the church’s schedule that allowed them to connect with unchurched people in their community. He pointed out this would not have been the case prior to using the prayer guide.119

A final strength is how the “40 Days of Prayer” honestly addresses the challenges facing churches in need of revitalization. While it regularly directs the reader to the hope

118 James, interview.

119 Holmes, interview.
of renewal God can bring to any church, the prayer guide shows revitalization cannot be manufactured or programmed into a church. There are no instant remedies that change the hearts of God’s people. But the research does demonstrate though a church cannot schedule revitalization, it can put itself in position to receive revitalization from God. Dr. Steve Rice stated it this way: “We believe that church revitalization is ultimately a work of the Holy Spirit of God. Of course, God uses people, but apart from the Holy Spirit, nothing eternal and lasting will happen. We believe the 40-day guide provides an opportunity for prayer to become the foundation of a revitalization focus and movement.”

Weaknesses

Along with these strengths, there are also weaknesses surfacing from the research. First, one of the challenges the “40 Days of Prayer” does not address is ensuring the focus does not become more about a process than the people. Throughout this project, revitalization has been referred to as a process or a movement, which are helpful descriptors in the context of research. However, true revitalization occurs in the people who are experiencing spiritual renewal within the body of Christ. It is a subtle, yet dangerous temptation for leaders to make their efforts more about a process. The prayer guide could be strengthened by addressing this issue to church leaders and then unpacking how to keep their people focused on spiritual renewal throughout the forty days.

120 Rice, interview.
Another weakness is the lack of emphasis placed on utilizing a consultant or any type of coaching during the forty days. This prayer guide was written by full-time consultants who work for the KBC and possess expertise in the field of revitalization. They have assisted numerous churches in formulating plans for spiritual renewal. The research demonstrates two of the three churches invited a consultant to coach them during their forty-day study. However, there was little indication it was effective for any of these churches. It would be beneficial to develop a formal training procedure designed around the “40 Days of Prayer” for consultants to then bring with them into a local church. The introduction to the prayer guide acknowledges the Church Consulting and Revitalization Team is willing to assist any church upon invitation. A helpful addition would be to create an appendix with suggested benefits of requesting a coaching session from a regional consultant. This would also serve to further unite a congregation around the concepts they have been discovering.

A final weakness is the “40 Days of Prayer” lacks clear methods for how church leaders might implement it successfully within their congregation. One of the strengths of this resource is how it is designed for flexibility. While it is meant to be read one day at a time, there is the potential for additional ways a church could creatively employ it. For example, a church might find benefit from using the prayer guide in place of their normal Sunday School curriculum for the forty days, thus allowing each class to discuss the previous weeks readings in smaller groups. Another church may find value in their pastor preaching a sermon series built around it for six weeks. A renewal service to conclude the study may help a church family appreciate the gravity of what they have completed together and provide a time of reflection upon what they have all experienced together in
their journey. The “40 Days of Prayer” requires a few examples of different models like these for imaginative implementation. The author suggests including sample worship service outlines to use as a closing celebration to the forty days. This would assist churches as they transition from the intentional prayer emphasis into a broader revitalization strategy.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the research conducted with the help of three pastors who had previously utilized the “40 Days of Prayer” with the members of their churches. Observations and conclusions were drawn based on the quantitative survey administered to members of the congregations, along with qualitative interviews conducted with the church pastors and the KBC Team Leader who developed the prayer guide. The next chapter shall provide a process for implementing an intentional prayer strategy developed by the author to introduce a vision for revitalization at FBC Pikeville.
CHAPTER 5
THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION FOR FBC PIKEVILLE

Introduction

Church revitalization is not easy. It requires a level of patience, effort and flexibility some leaders are not prepared to invest. Nevertheless, there are church leaders ready and willing to do the work necessary for pursuing it. The challenge they face is knowing where to begin. The goal of this project is to demonstrate the usefulness of starting a work of revitalization with an intentional prayer strategy, giving a congregation hope for a better future. The author selected the “40 Days of Prayer” as the resource to study in terms of its effectiveness when employed as part of a prayer strategy in a local church. The final component of this project is to use the research findings to develop an intentional prayer strategy for the church the author serves as senior pastor, FBC Pikeville.

A fully developed implementation process will strengthen the results of the “40 Days of Prayer” as a local church begins their pursuit of revitalization. The research in chapter four indicated the prayer guide is a useful tool for educating church members on revitalization. It is simple in its design, devotional in its nature, and intentional in its goal. But it lacks an accompanying process for implementing it in a church as a preparation for the work of revitalization still to come.

In this chapter, the conclusions drawn from the research are applied to develop an intentional prayer strategy using the “40 Days of Prayer” as the primary resource. This strategy is designed for FBC Pikeville, but it presents applications relevant to other
congregations desiring an implementation plan. A brief history of FBC Pikeville is outlined to provide a better understanding of the congregation’s background and relevance to this study. This is followed by an analysis of the recent trends in the church’s health and why revitalization is now necessary for the congregation. Finally, the author outlines a seven-step process for an intentional prayer strategy designed around the prayer guide. The author hopes this process provides a useful template for the reader to customize to fit their own plans to begin praying for revitalization.

A Brief History of FBC Pikeville

In 1904, a small band of Christians organized a new church in the eastern Kentucky town of Pikeville, which at that time had no record of a Baptist church in the area. The town had become somewhat famed due to the blood feud carried out between the Hatfield and McCoy families. As early as 1887, the Kentucky Baptist Board of Missions (now the KBC) saw a need for new works in the eastern region and began placing missionaries in the area to begin planting new churches. T. J. Riggs was the first recorded Baptist missionary to serve in the Pikeville area, however there is no record of regular worship services conducted nor evidence of converts during his ministry. He remained in Pikeville for only a brief period before transitioning to a new area of ministry. However, this early work would eventually prove fruitful.

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121 The McCoy family primarily resided in Pike County, Kentucky. Most of the court trials throughout the ordeal occurred in the Pike County Courthouse, located in downtown Pikeville. See Otis K. Rice, *The Hatfields and the McCoys* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1982).

At the dawn of the twentieth century, R. L. Baker was assigned to the Pikeville area to once again attempt starting a new Baptist mission. His labors led to discovering a few Baptists who began meeting with the hopes of forming a new church in the town. The Pikeville Missionary Baptist Church (later changed to First Baptist Church) organized in July of 1904 in a living room in downtown Pikeville. Twelve charter members comprised the fledgling body of believers, and within a few years, three more members were added to the congregation.

Early worship services convened in various public spaces across Pikeville, beginning with the city school building and then followed by the Weddington Nickelodeon (i.e. movie cinema) located on Second Street. As the membership continued to grow, so did the need for a place of worship to call their own. A plot of property in downtown was purchased in December of 1906, along with the calling of L. F. Caudill as pastor. Caudill is credited for launching the church’s first Sunday School program focused initially on reaching children in the community.

Even though the congregation had purchased land, the church was still meeting in the downtown movie theater as late as 1910. The next pastor, R. A. Barnes, led the church to acquire a matching funds grant from the state missionary board. The church raised twenty-five hundred dollars that was matched by the grant, thus allowing them to break ground on construction. Barnes delivered the first sermon in a new sanctuary located on Third Street on April 3, 1911. This location served as the church’s home for nearly fifty years. FBC Pikeville would soon call its longest tenured pastor to date, E. L. Howerton, who served for thirty-one years. Under his leadership, the church grew from
around one hundred members to well over six hundred. Eight mission churches were also planted out of the congregation during Howerton’s ministry.

In 1955, the church voted once again to purchase property. This time they acquired land located on Fourth Street, where the church continues to meet as of this writing. The groundbreaking for a new sanctuary took place in 1956, with the first phase of the facilities dedicated in a special service on March 9, 1958. Harold Wainscott was called to serve as pastor during this period and continued leading the church to plant mission works throughout Pike County. Following his tenure, Curtis Warf began a fourteen-year pastorate at FBC Pikeville. He oversaw the completion of a new sanctuary and additional education space. The church also added new ministry staff positions during these years. A church secretary was added to assist with office responsibilities, followed by the calling of a part time music minister who was soon promoted to full-time status. Following Warf’s departure, Glenn Mollette was called as pastor. He continued to grow the staff by calling a full-time youth and education minister.

The final decade of the twentieth century proved to be tumultuous for FBC Pikeville, due to multiple pastoral scandals and divisions leading to a decline in membership and regular attendance. Paul Badgett accepted the call to become pastor in 1999 and his ministry stabilized the church’s recent fractures. He led the church to undertake a new building program which included expanding the education building and remodeling the church sanctuary. The author came on staff at the church as associate pastor in 2009, and succeeded Badgett as Senior Pastor in August of 2015. No less than fifteen pastors have served throughout the church’s storied history, and FBC Pikeville

123 Ibid.
continues to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in Pikeville, the surrounding region and the world.

Community Demographics

The church sits in the heart of downtown Pikeville, a city located along the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River in the coal fields of Central Appalachia. The city is home to a population of approximately seven thousand people, with an estimated twenty-seven hundred households. The surrounding Pike County has experienced a steady decline in population since 2009, falling to just over sixty-five thousand people. For almost a century, the primary economic driver in the region was the coal industry. That industry began eroding rapidly in 2009, which contributed to the population decline and loss of jobs. Yet, the city of Pikeville has maintained stability through these hardships thanks to an economic growth strategy focusing on tourism and working to attract new industries. Recently, two major job providers have embarked on multi-million-dollar expansions projects: Pikeville Medical Center and the University of Pikeville. Both of these entities created new employment and educational opportunities in the region.

The Case for Revitalization at FBC Pikeville

At first glance, many assume FBC Pikeville is a healthy established church in rural America. However, a closer look at the church’s ACP reports over a ten-year period suggests the need for revitalization. The congregation has experienced a slow but noticeable decline in many of the common metrics used to evaluate church health. For

124 This information was collected from the 2010 United States Census.
example, membership and average worship attendance have trended downward for a number of years. There are a number of factors contributing to this. One is a pastoral transition from 2014 through 2015. Another reason is the church has not successfully attracted new members at a rate exceeding or matching those who have relocated or stopped attending. Figure 5.1 shows while the numbers have not sharply plummeted, there is a clear pattern that raises concerns:

![Figure 5.1](image)

**Figure 5.1**
**Resident Members and Worship Attendance**

An area showing noticeable decline is the total number of baptisms reported by the church each year. Baptisms are essential to the health of every church. A church may experience some growth apart from frequent baptisms, but such growth is not sustainable when compared to the growth experienced through the frequent baptisms of new converts. The SBC has reported declines in the number of baptisms performed nationally
for a number of years. FBC demonstrates a pattern that mimics the denomination’s trends. Figure 5.2 shows from 2008-2010 FBC Pikeville reported between thirty-five to forty-two baptisms per year. Since then, those numbers have declined to between sixteen up to twenty-five baptisms per year.

One of FBC Pikeville’s most enduring ministries to the community is Sunday School. The church offers small group classes to every age group, using them as a means to disciple believers in their faith. However, attendance in this ministry has declined over the past ten years as well. In 2009, four hundred and forty-one people were in attendance for Sunday School on an average Sunday morning. That number slowly began to drop over the next five years to just under three hundred persons in 2014. Attendance

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stabilized for the next five years, but the church did not experience noticeable growth. The author has witnessed new members regularly joining classes during his tenure. A challenge has been retaining current attenders while attracting new members as well. Another challenge has been starting new classes as a vehicle for growth. Figure 5.3 provides a glimpse at the trends in Sunday School attendance:

![Figure 5.3 Sunday School Average Attendance](image)

While the data thus far shows a significant drop over the past decade, the church’s giving has not demonstrated the same rate of decline. Giving is an important metric for a church because it indicates the level of commitment members have to the vision and ministries the church supports. Figure 5.4 shows the undesignated receipts for the church remained stable over the past decade. This communicates that the members who are most active in the life of the church believe in the mission and would likely desire revitalization to occur in their church.
The trends discussed above do not present encouraging patterns for the decade. The author believes it demonstrates why FBC Pikeville is a prime candidate to begin a work of revitalization. As Thom Rainer and Ed Stetzer point out, “We must not give in to the idea that the church will die. That idea is simply not biblical. And it certainly is not God’s plan.”¹²⁶ There is hope for churches facing these circumstances. FBC Pikeville is ripe to begin experiencing the most fruitful years of its existence, and it can begin by God granting renewal because His people choose to pray.

A Seven-Step Process for Implementing the “40 Days of Prayer”

A church only experiences revitalization when the Holy Spirit chooses to grant it. Yet, a congregation should not assume they are passive in the endeavor. Revitalization always requires planning, diligence and patience from church leaders to experience fruitfulness. The right foundation for initiating the process is imperative for the leader who desires the work to be successful. An intentional prayer strategy best positions a church to be in position for receiving the blessing of revitalization God gives His people.

The research used to assess the “40 Days of Prayer” demonstrated its value in mobilizing Christians to pray as a church seeks revitalization. Using the results from surveying the members of three congregations, as well as the insights gleaned from the interviews, the author developed a seven-step process intended to maximize the effectiveness of the prayer guide when employed at FBC Pikeville. Those seven steps are as follows:

- **Step 1 – Pray**
- **Step 2 – Recruit**
- **Step 3 – Plan**
- **Step 4 – Equip**
- **Step 5 – Launch**
- **Step 6 – Assess**
- **Step 7 – Celebrate**

While these steps are intended to be implemented at FBC Pikeville, they are also transferrable to other church contexts as well. The process requires a minimum of six months to be fully implemented.
Step 1 – PRAY

It may seem redundant to recommend prayer as the first step of an intentional prayer strategy. However, prayer is the natural and logical place to begin any endeavor requiring the Lord’s blessings. A pastor wanting to see his people pray must first devote time to intentional prayer. Mark Clifton and Kenneth Priest argue, “We should pray before we ever get started. The time to pray is before we even begin to plan. The time to pray is when you’re at the beginning, as soon as you realize your church needs to be revitalized.”¹²⁷ Unless a spiritual leader devotes himself to praying for revitalization early in this process, a church-wide prayer strategy is not going to experience success. Brian Croft adds, “If we truly believe that God is the one who breathes life into a dying church, not our own clever schemes in the church, we better make sure we find ourselves on our knees crying to the Chief Shepherd who loves our church more than we do.”¹²⁸ The pastor who wants his church to experience God’s hand of revitalization must begin with his own season of intentional prayer.

Sadly, pastors can be guilty of spending little to no time in prayer due in part to busyness. In a time of unprecedented advances in technology and productivity, church leaders are busier than ever before. Don Carson notes, “Faced with constant and urgent demands, they [Christian leaders] find it easy to neglect their calling to the ministry of the Word and prayer because they are so busy.”¹²⁹ He observes that while pastors know in


¹²⁸ Croft, 46.

¹²⁹ D. A. Carson, A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and his Prayers (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), 112.
their hearts prayer is vitally important, the burdens of their full calendars and responsibilities crowd out their ability to give prayer the attention it deserves.\textsuperscript{130} Bill Hybels makes a similar acknowledgment: “Prayer has not always been my strong suit. For many years, even as a senior pastor of a large church, I knew more about prayer than I ever practiced in my life. I had a racehorse temperament, and the tugs of self-sufficiency and self-reliance are very real to me.”\textsuperscript{131}

Pastors longing to see God bring revitalization to their churches must be disciplined to pray. At least two reasons exist as to why prayer is essential to this process. First, in order for a work of revitalization to be successful, God must bless it from start to finish. The pastor who sets out on the journey of revitalization without a deep and abiding dependence upon God in prayer is instead on a path that ends in failure. It is possible to experience numerical and financial growth occur solely on the shoulders of a charismatic and hardworking pastor. But it is impossible for true, spirit-led revitalization to occur apart from the favor of God bestowed upon a leader who prays fervently. The blessing of revitalization is available only through prayer, so a pastor must pray before and more than anyone else in the process.

Second, a pastor must live the example of intercession he desires to see his members. Prayer is caught more often than it is taught. A pastor should preach to his people about prayer often. But stronger results are produced in the prayer lives of his people when they know him to be a man of prayer. Jesus is the prime example of this truth. He often instructed his disciples about how to pray, yet they also remembered

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 112-113.

\textsuperscript{131} Bill Hybels, \textit{Too Busy Not to Pray} (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1988), 9.
seeing him model those teachings by spending much time in private communion with His Father.\(^{132}\) A pastor cannot fake a healthy prayer life. In order for the process outlined in these pages to succeed, a pastor must set the example of prayer before a watching congregation.

Therefore, this first step applies only to the author as senior pastor of FBC Pikeville. It begins with a scheduled time devoted to praying for revitalization each day. The author will devote forty days to work through the “40 Days of Prayer” with the goal of meeting with God for at least one hour each day. This step affords the author an opportunity to reflect on how the teachings of the prayer guide apply to himself, while avoiding the temptation to think of how it should influence others. The author will not use this time to plan or think about how to best preach these lessons. Instead, the focus is placed on pursuing God and allowing the Spirit to speak directly to the heart.

The author will keep a prayer journal to record reflections about how God uses the forty days to prepare him for the challenges involved in revitalization. The prayer journal entries shall include the specific verses to be read each day, observations, and applications for the author’s personal life and leadership at FBC Pikeville. Each entry will conclude with a list of prayer requests and a written prayer to chronicle his time with the Lord each day and how he is growing in his faith.

At the conclusion of the forty days, the author will schedule a one-day “Personal Prayer and Fasting Retreat.” This retreat will take place at a location away from his personal residence and office to enjoy uninterrupted time for prayer and fasting. No time on this day will be spent planning or building strategies, but instead it will be used to

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connect his heart with God’s heart in a time of personal renewal. The author will use Scripture readings, music, and books on personal renewal to enhance the time alone with God. The period of fasting will begin at bedtime the previous evening and shall conclude at sundown as the retreat comes to an end. It is assumed the pattern of prayer outlined in this step will become perpetual in the author’s life, not simply for the process of revitalization.

Step 2 – RECRUIT

The second step expands out to invite leaders within the congregation to join in constructing the intentional prayer strategy. An example to support this step is once again found in the life of Christ. In Matthew 4:18-22, Jesus called His first disciples to follow Him in an entirely new way of living. Up to this point in His ministry, Jesus travelled alone and had not invited any apprentices to learn under Him. However, He changed this pattern by inviting others to join Him in His ministry so He could train them in His ways. Four followers are mentioned by name in these verses, and later in his gospel Matthew provided a formal list of all twelve of the disciples. Jesus also had other followers traveling with Him for a significant amount of His ministry. They heard His teachings, witnessed His miracles, and learned to pattern their lives after His own. Yet, they did not have the same access to Jesus enjoyed by the twelve.

The principle to notice here is that while Jesus had many followers, He selected a smaller band to develop and train in His ministry. This is a great picture for how leaders

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133 Matthew 10:1-4.

should recruit the team they plan to train in sharing in the work of ministry. The author seeks to follow this pattern by choosing a small leadership team to work alongside him in developing and deploying an intentional prayer strategy.

The author believes Sunday School is the best place to begin selecting a leadership team to assist in formulating the prayer strategy. This team should be small to ensure adequate coaching can occur in a conversational setting. Five percent of FBC Pikeville’s average weekly Sunday School attendance equals fifteen persons, which is a sufficient number of members to train in a leadership cohort.

Recruiting the fifteen individuals will be initiated by the author. Three of the church’s paid ministry staff members will be asked to participate on the team. Preference will be given to those with the longest tenures and deepest relationships with church members. The current chairman of the deacon body and Sunday School director will be recruited because of their respective roles of leadership, as well as the level of trust they maintain with congregants. The remaining ten spots on the team will be filled with spiritually mature Sunday School teachers and lay members who demonstrate the gifts of leadership, administration, or encouragement.

Once the leadership team has been assembled, the author will provide each member a copy of the “40 Days of Prayer” so they can spend the weeks ahead working through it on their own in their personal quiet times. The author will also provide a journal to each member to record their insights and prayers as they work through each daily reading. This prerequisite will allow each of them to become familiar with the prayer guide and apply it to their own hearts before considering how to best expose the rest of the congregation to it. Each week, the author will schedule a day and time for the
full team to meet for sixty to ninety minutes. These reflection meetings will begin with discussions about the previous week’s readings and what personal insights have been discovered that are relevant to the process of revitalization. Each team member will be encouraged to share insights God revealed to them during the week and how the study guide impacted their personal prayer time. The rest of the meeting will be used to divide into smaller prayer groups and devote time to seeking God’s hand of blessing upon the work they are beginning. The author will provide specific prayer ideas to lead the groups in acknowledging true renewal comes through the Lord’s hand of favor.

At the conclusion of the forty days, the author and the fifteen team members will schedule a date and time to gather for an evening of worship and prayer. This prayer service will be planned by the author and FBC Pikeville’s worship pastor. The group will spend time singing to the Lord, sharing what He revealed to them through studying the prayer guide, and discussing their dreams of what they long for God to do in the days ahead. The author will preach a message to encourage continued focus on prayer and how God will use it to be the catalyst for revitalization. The service will close with a time devoted to prayer, allowing each member of the leadership team to petition the Lord to go before them in the work they are about to embark upon together.

**Step 3 – PLAN**

A popular maxim often attributed to Benjamin Franklin says, “if you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.” One of the steps overlooked by the churches surveyed for this

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project involved developing a strategic plan to implement the “40 Days of Prayer.” Not one of the three pastors who were interviewed indicated that they formulated a plan to implement the prayer guide. They also did not report inviting other leaders inside or outside the church to speak into the process. After analyzing the research, the author believes the forty-day study will be a stronger resource by developing a strategic implementation plan with the leadership team recruited in step two. This plan should include a clear process to guide the study from start to finish and supplemental tools used to enhance every member’s prayer journey.

In this step, the leadership team will begin gathering for weekly strategy meetings with the goal of developing a plan to introduce the prayer guide into the life of the church. In the first meeting, members will elect a team leader who will work with the author in planning, be responsible for assigning tasks to team members and track the progress of their efforts. The team will develop and vote to adopt a short mission statement to guide their efforts in recruiting as many church members as possible to participate in the intentional prayer strategy. This mission statement will be read aloud each time the team meets to reinforce their goal of uniting FBC Pikeville around praying for revitalization. Aubrey Malphurs explains why a mission statement is important for any team: “A well-focused mission statement provides a target on the wall for the archer and all else who might launch the ministry arrow.”

Early in their planning, the team should discuss inviting an outside consultant to travel to the church to provide coaching. The research argued for the inclusion of a

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136 Lawless, 30.

trained consultant to provide assistance when a church is praying toward revitalization. While most church consultants with experience in church revitalization will be qualified, the obvious choice for FBC Pikeville is a member of the KBC’s Church Consulting and Revitalization Team. The author will recommend the leadership team invite their KBC regional consultant to join at least one of their planning meetings in person, and then be available for other meetings as needed through video conference calls. He will also recommend they ask the consultant to visit FBC Pikeville while the church conducts the forty-day emphasis on prayer. He will be asked to preach the Sunday morning service, conduct a coaching session to train members on the best practices for using the prayer guide each day, and finally participate in a question and answer session with the church.

The leadership team will use the remaining planning meetings to develop a timeline for launching the “40 Days of Prayer,” along with the detailed steps necessary to complete before launching the forty-day emphasis. The team will receive a copy of the church’s calendar of events to ensure the launch will not conflict with any other events or ministries. These meetings should be marked by openness, so all team members feel comfortable contributing their viewpoints. Everyone will be encouraged to contribute their ideas to assist in building excitement around the intentional prayer strategy. The goal shall be to motivate as many members as possible to pray through the prayer guide for forty days. These meetings will benefit from collaboration because it will strengthen each team member’s trust in one another and give them a sense of ownership in the project.

The prayer guide will be used in the weekly adult Sunday school classes by temporarily replacing the current study program. The quarterly curriculums will be put on
hold so each adult class can work through the “40 Days of Prayer” together in small
groups. Each member of the leadership team will be assigned a cluster of classes to assist
during the forty days. The team will also work to develop a simple, six-week discussion
guide based on the prayer guide. These will be printed and distributed in place of regular
Sunday school lesson guides for classes to use during the prayer emphasis. While some
church members are likely to skip some of the daily readings in their personal time, this
strategy ensures that everyone who attends Sunday school is exposed to the prayer guide
and the nature of revitalization.

Step 4 – EQUIP

The greatest plans cannot succeed without the necessary resources to implement
them. One possible danger that could undermine the success of an intentional prayer
strategy is neglecting to properly fund the process. Leaders who desire God to grant a
work of revitalization must be prepared to invest in the process. These investments
include both the time and financial resources so church members are provided every
resource to enhance the usefulness of the “40 Days of Prayer.”

Once the plan has been developed, the author will work with the leadership team
to discuss how to best resource the project with all the necessary supplements. The team
will develop a project budget to cover the expenses related to the strategy. This budget
will be submitted for approval to FBC Pikeville’s finance committee, and upon approval
will be dispersed through the church office as needed. The team will continue meeting
weekly to monitor the progress as resources are collected and discuss any changes to the
plan. Team members will be broken up into groups and assigned specific tasks to make sure the workload is evenly distributed.

Many of the resources to be included in the budgeting process will be addressed by the team during their planning meetings. However, a few items are readily apparent. For example, the team will want to estimate of the number of copies of the “40 Days of Prayer” the church will need to purchase and make available. This total should include one for every adult who regularly attends a small group, as well as a set number of extra copies for members and guests who express interest in participating. It is critical for enough copies of the prayer guide to be available before beginning the forty-day study, so everyone receives one for their personal study.

Along with a sufficient number of prayer guides, the leadership team will select or design their own prayer journal. They shall need to request a quote from a distributor if they choose to use one already in print. If they design one as a team, they will need to contract a graphic designer and get a quote for printing a sufficient quantity. There will be some members who believe having a copy of the prayer guide is sufficient for their needs. But many members will appreciate the gesture of a journal and how it enhances their personal journey for the forty days.

Another item the team will want to consider is the compensation for the consultant they are inviting to work with them. Many consultants have a set rate they charge for their services, while others are flexible depending on the church’s size and financial abilities. The leadership team should ask for a quote covering all of the consultant’s services, or an hourly fee. The consultant’s mileage, hotel accommodations,
meals, as well as any other travel expenses should be included in the budget and communicated in advance to the consultant.

A final area to consider is the level of publicity the team wishes to use for promoting the intentional prayer strategy to the church family. There are ways to publicize the study that do not require a great deal of financial investment, such as a sermon series designed to promote it and regular announcements from the pulpit. Still, there are other promotional methods requiring a level of financial obligation from the church. The team may consider designing a flyer for a mass mailing canvas of the church membership roll. They might hire a graphic designer to develop media images and videos intended to creatively inform members about what to expect in the weeks ahead.

These are just a few examples of the conversations the author shall initiate during this step. The leadership team will want to explore every reasonable idea and work to maintain unity of direction while remembering their goal for the process. It is also important for the team to continue joining together for prayer to seek the Lord’s direction in every decision.

**Step 5 – LAUNCH**

At this stage in the process, the team will have completed the preliminary work so FBC Pikeville can begin the “40 Days of Prayer” initiative with their plans in place. Since the preferable day for members to begin the prayer guide is a Monday, the team should plan a launch service on the Sunday morning preceding the scheduled start. The leadership team will be asked to share testimonies during the service about their experiences with the prayer guide and how the Lord blessed their preparations leading up
to the launch service. Prayer will be the central theme during this service, including a
time devoted to corporate prayer inviting the entire congregation to join at the altar and
pray for God’s grace throughout the next forty days. The materials prepared in advance
shall be distributed at the conclusion of the service to members expressing a desire to
participate.

After this launch service, the Sunday worship services during the forty days will
focus upon three areas to enhance the experience as members pray through the study.
These support systems may also encourage other members or guests to participate along
the way. The three areas of focus for the forty days are preaching, groups and coaching.

- **Preaching**

Preaching is the primary means at a pastor’s disposal to communicate with church
members. It is reasonable to assume that during a prayer emphasis he would want to
leverage his sermons toward the topics of prayer and spiritual renewal. Many pastors plan
their sermons in advance so they can preach through a particular book of the Bible or a
theme they believe is timely for the congregation. The approach recommended here
devotes six or seven weeks of messages to guide listeners in grasping the concepts from
their daily readings in the “40 Days of Prayer.”

The author shall build a six-week sermon series beginning on the Sunday to
follow the launch service. The series will complement the prayer guide by incorporating
many of the same Scripture passages and exposit them more thoroughly. The series will
follow this outline:
Week 1 – Praying Like Jesus
Week 2 – Praying for Others
Week 3 – Praying with Others
Week 4 – Praying in the Spirit
Week 5 – Praying for Direction
Week 6 – Praying for Revitalization

The sermons will include illustrations of when God has granted renewal to His people in answer to their prayers. The messages will not aim at convincing the congregation of the value of the prayer guide, nor will they advocate for the author’s agenda in revitalization. The goal of the series will be to exposit the Word of God faithfully on the subjects of prayer and renewal while trusting Him to transform the lives of His people during the forty days.

- Groups

Small groups allow individual Christians to gather with other believers on a regular basis, study God’s Word interactively, and develop meaningful relationships. These groups also have flexibility in their structure that the worship service does not, so changes are possible without disrupting a group’s dynamic. These weekly gatherings afford an ideal atmosphere for participants in the “40 Days of Prayer” to discuss what they are learning about the principles of revitalization.

One of the reasons the adult Sunday School classes work well in this process is they are established and have developed trust with one another. There is no need to break up the existing classes to create new groups that are unfamiliar to them. Instead, they can remain with their current groups and only experience a change in the curriculum they study each week. This may be difficult for a few members who are accustomed to their
normal literature. The leadership team will work with class leaders to assist in the transition and to attend classes for more support. The regular class teacher will remain in their post and oversee the class. The leadership team members will attend classes to share insights they learned during their forty days with the prayer guide and provide suggestions for the week ahead.

- **Coaching**

The final component in the launch phase is to schedule the consultant to visit FBC Pikeville for a weekend of services. Pastors recognize that their members may grow accustomed to their voice and style, which is valuable for relationships and longevity in the ministry. However, the downside is that a church may unintentionally minimize a pastor’s expertise on a variety of subjects. Wise leaders leverage that by occasionally inviting outside voices into their pulpits. The consultant’s presence for a weekend of coaching highlights the importance of prayer during a work of revitalization in another voice besides the pastor’s own.

The author will agree upon a date with the consultant in advance and provide an overview of the weekend. The author will attempt to schedule the coaching weekend as early in the forty-day emphasis as the consultant’s schedule will allow. The consultant will be assigned the Sunday morning sermon topic from the series outlined above falling on the weekend he is visiting.

Because the consultant will have previously worked with the leadership team, they will all meet for dinner on Friday night of the weekend consultation for updates and prayer. The team will host a Saturday night workshop where the consultant will discuss
the benefits of the “40 Days of Prayer,” why it is advantageous for church members to work through it together, how it grows a Christian in their personal relationship with the Lord, and how it prepares them for revitalization.

On the Sunday morning of the visit, the sermon will be delivered by the consultant with the author presiding over other areas of the service. At the conclusion, the leadership team will come to the altar for prayer, along with other members who feel led to respond to the invitation. That evening, the service will be shifted away from its typical order of worship. Instead, a shorter selection of worship songs will begin the evening, followed by a question and answer session. The author and the consultant will take the stage to answer questions they agree upon in advance, and then take questions from the audience. The evening will conclude with another invitation to prayer, this time concentrating on the church’s health and a vision for reaching the community.

**Step 6 – ASSESS**

During the launch step, the author and the leadership team will want to evaluate how effective their strategies are working and whether adjustments need to be made. Their impressions do not need to be written in a formal report nor should they seek to scrutinize their process. Instead, the team will look for positive evidences of spiritual growth the “40 Days of Prayer” is making in the lives of church members.

The author will schedule assessment meetings with the leadership team during weeks three and five of the intentional prayer strategy. During those meetings, a number of questions will be used to assess how fruitful the prayer guide has been so far, as well
as discovering what changes are being observed from the congregation as a whole. The following questions should be discussed, in no specific order:

- Are members able to keep up with the five readings per week, or are some falling behind?
- Do they find the devotional readings to be helpful?
- Are members discovering a sense of what revitalization is and what a church needs to do to pursue it?
- Are the journals being used and are they helpful?
- Who seems to be growing spiritually and developing a desire for God to bring renewal?
- Are there indicators showing members are praying more, and are those prayers directed toward a work of revitalization?
- Are there areas needing to be changed, removed or added at this stage?
- What other issues should be discussed?

The team should devote time in prayer at the conclusion of these meetings. The author hopes the leadership team perceives God moving in a real, discernable way among the members of FBC Pikeville. As members devote themselves to reading and praying for God to bring revitalization, the Holy Spirit will bring clarity and unity to the vision and the leadership team will celebrate spiritual momentum toward renewal in the life of the church.

**Step 7 – CELEBRATE**

As the forty-day study draws to a close, members may assume they are finished and lose interest in church revitalization. The final step in this process is designed to capstone the church’s journey through the prayer guide, but also serve as an entry point into the broader church revitalization strategy to be launched in the months ahead. FBC Pikeville should remember their rich history of seeing God’s hand at work in the
community, while committing themselves to the work of revitalization they need God to grant.

This step is designed to be completed in a single evening with two specific components: a worship service devoted to prayer and praise, and a covenant for members to embrace as they move forward together. The author and leadership team will have invested significant time in the preceding steps. This will be an opportunity to reflect upon how the Lord used their efforts to ignite new hope into the church.

- *Night of Prayer and Praise*

At the conclusion of the forty-day study, the author will schedule a ninety-minute Sunday evening celebration service. Members who have completed the “40 Days of Prayer” will be encouraged to attend and participate in this service. It will include worship songs highlighting the themes of renewal and experiencing God’s presence. In preparation for this night, a number of tasks will be completed to make the service as biblically saturated and spiritually transforming as possible.

The author and the leadership team will begin praying for the service at the halfway mark of the forty days, asking the Lord to make the hearts of the members tender to His will for them. The author will begin promoting the night of celebration service beginning in week four of the study and ask members to commit to attending it. Members will be asked to complete the “40 Days of Prayer” in its entirety before the celebration service, even if they choose to catch up on the weekends. Fasting will also play an important role in the preparation for this service. Members will be asked to fast at least one meal, but preferably the entire day, of the Sunday of the celebration service. All other
activities will be cancelled for the evening and families will be asked to gather for the service. Below is a suggested outline for the celebration service:

- 5:30pm – Doors Open / Prelude
- 6:00pm – Praise and Worship Set
- 6:10pm – Scripture Readings and Corporate Prayer
- 6:15pm – Prayer in Smaller Groups
- 6:25pm – Praise and Worship Set
- 6:30pm – Testimonies from Leadership Team
- 6:45pm – Message from Pastor
- 7:00pm – Testimonies from Congregation
- 7:15pm – Revitalization Covenant
- 7:25pm – Corporate Prayer for Personal Renewal and Corporate Revitalization

-  Revitalization Covenant

Near the conclusion of the service, a “Revitalization Covenant” will be introduced to the congregation. This covenant is designed to unify the church family around the goal of pursuing revitalization for as long as it takes. One of the benefits of a covenant is it clarifies the church’s commitment for the revitalization strategy awaiting them. While the author and leadership team may become weary of the concepts of revitalization by this point, the majority of the congregation will have just discovered them and become excited by the possibilities for the future of their church. The covenant will increase their awareness of what lies ahead and commit them to the process. The author recommends the following covenant to conclude the night of celebration:

As the congregation of First Baptist Church in Pikeville, KY, we covenant together in asking the Lord to bring a work of revitalization into our church family that revives our hearts and leads many into a saving relationship with the Lord Jesus. As members, we commit to the following:

- We will pray for our pastors and leadership.
- We will love one another and seek unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- We will spend time each day in God’s Word and prayer.
- We will actively participate in worship services and be faithful in our attendance.
- We will give generously and joyfully toward the work of the church.
- We will sacrifice our preferences for the greater good of the church as a whole.
- We will not criticize decisions we disagree with or gossip about those whom we disagree.
- We will welcome and express love to all guests who attend our church.
- We will follow the example of Jesus by placing others above ourselves.
- We will serve in the areas of ministry matching our spiritual gifts.
- We will pray for the lost and share about our faith in Christ whenever opportunities arise.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to develop a practical application of the project’s research into the author’s ministry context. The author chose to build an intentional prayer strategy to serve as the catalyst for launching a revitalization effort at FBC Pikeville. A brief history recounted the congregation’s formative years of existence in the community. This was followed by an analysis of the current trends in the congregation’s health by examining the measurable data from FBC Pikeville’s ACP reports. Once the need for revitalization was established, a seven-step implementation process outlined how the author plans to utilize the “40 Days of Prayer” as the resource to guide an intentional prayer strategy.

The notion that prayer is an effective way to begin seeking revitalization is neither novel nor groundbreaking. Prayer has been the foundation of every great work of God in human history. Dave Earley argues this when he writes, “The difference between mild stirrings and deep breakthrough is prayer. The difference between temporary inclination and a lasting change is often prayer. The difference between mediocrity and greatness is
frequent prayer."\textsuperscript{138} Prayer is the life blood of an individual’s relationship with God, and it is the life blood flowing through a church empowered with the presence of God. Unfortunately, very little attention has been given to the impact an intentional prayer strategy can make in a congregation during the beginning stages of revitalization. Therefore, in the concluding chapter the author shall present the practical applications discovered through the course of this project and point to areas where additional investigation would be valuable.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

The introduction of this project noted the majority of churches in the United States are either plateauing or declining at an alarming rate. The small percentage of churches experiencing growth will not be able to keep the pace necessary for reaching the number of individuals without a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Likewise, church plants are not birthed or growing fast enough to change this either. It is imperative that a revitalization movement begins for established churches on the brink of disaster in hopes of reversing this downward trajectory.

The purpose of this project is to explore the value of beginning a church revitalization effort by launching an intentional prayer strategy uniting God’s people around a vision to witness their churches become healthy again and start reaching their community. The “40 Days of Prayer Devotional Guide for Church Revitalization,” created by the Church Consulting and Revitalization Team of the KBC, was selected as the instrument to assess how effective it is when utilized by a local congregation. Those results were then applied by creating an intentional prayer strategy to implement at FBC Pikeville, with the “40 Days of Prayer” as the tool utilized to accomplish this plan.

The results of this project led the author to a number of observations about faithful ministry within the local church. The results also revealed areas where this project might be strengthened by further investigation and research on the value of instruments such as the “40 Days of Prayer” when employed to launch a revitalization
process. Those ministry lessons and areas for further investigation shall be the subjects of this conclusion.

**Ministry Lessons**

This project has sought to accomplish three goals: examine the value of the “40 Days of Prayer” as an intentional prayer strategy for revitalization, assess this prayer guide’s effectiveness in three KBC churches, and construct a process for implementing the prayer guide during the launch of a full revitalization strategy at FBC Pikeville. In reflecting on these goals, the author observed a number of benefits to using it in this way.

Numerous prayer resources are marketed toward meeting these needs for a church. However, there are unique aspects to the “40 Days of Prayer” which position it to be one of the most reliable tools for an intentional prayer strategy when used within a well-developed strategic plan.

**It Builds Confidence**

Church leaders who select this resource will grow more confident in their own prayer lives and will notice a greater confidence among church members whom they desire to join in the vision for revitalization. This resource is designed for providing encouragement as much as it is for imparting information. Pastors often battle doubt and worry as they consider the monumental undertaking required during a revitalization effort. On top of this, they face the reality that many things within their churches must change if they are to begin advancing toward health once again. A benefit to using the
“40 Days of Prayer” uncovered in this project is how it assures leaders and members alike that God does indeed want their church to experience life and vibrancy once again.

**It is Sustainable**

Many programs and resources a pastor will introduce to his congregation are forgotten as quickly as they are introduced. This is not intended to be a criticism of those resources. Instead, it points to the fact that many times church members are exposed to the newest “fad” in church health, while previous resources they acquired only a few years earlier sit on a shelf in the church library. There simply is no instant fix or magic pill to elicit a genuine move of God that brings revitalization to His people.

However, prayer has always been the key to experiencing renewal and its importance cannot be overstated. Many resources underscore the importance of prayer, but the “40 Days of Prayer” is a resource training Christians in prayer as they begin the work of revitalization. Dr. Steve Rice noted a number of pastors developed long-term church revitalization strategies that included regularly returning to the “40 Days of Prayer.” They plan to lead their church members through it every three to five years to keep a fresh focus upon intentional prayer for church renewal.139 Because it is driven by prayer, the prayer guide is a sustainable spiritual resource which can be used repeatedly without becoming redundant.

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139 Interview, Rice.
It Fosters Unity

A church must be unified before the Lord will grant revitalization. Division among God’s people is the enemy of renewal. Yet, the congregation striving for unity will begin to experience God using them once again to reach their community for Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote to believers in Ephesus about unity in this way: “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” The Bible leaves no doubt that a healthy church is a unified church.

An area where the “40 Days of Prayer” shines brightest is by reminding Christians how true revitalization requires God’s people seek God’s face together. The devotional readings consistently highlight the importance of unity in order for God’s Spirit to move in His church. It motivates church members to unify around the common goal of spiritual renewal by having them study the same principles of revitalization and pray in the same patterns to experience His presence.

It Invites God’s Power

E. M. Bounds writes, “No amount of money, genius, or culture can move things for God. Holiness energizing the soul, the whole man aflame with love, with desire for more faith, more prayer, more zeal, more consecration – this is the secret to power.”

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140 Ephesians 4:1-3.

The secret to experiencing a move of God when a church needs revitalization is prayer.

Throughout this project, the author noted how prayer is the secret to every great move of God in the Bible and church history. Dr. Dave Earley observes:

The difference between mild stirrings and deep breakthroughs is prayer. The difference between a temporary inclination and a lasting change is often prayer. The difference between mediocrity and greatness is frequently prayer. The more we pray, the more God works. The more God works, the better everything will ultimately be. We fail to recognize the astounding way our omnipotent God has linked his activity to our prayers.¹⁴²

The story of Jim Cymbala and the Brooklyn Tabernacle recounted in chapter two illustrates how God will unleash His power by bringing renewal when His people pursue Him in prayer. The “40 Days of Prayer” was crafted on this premise, which is why the majority of its pages direct Christians to seek God’s power available to them when they pray for revitalization.

**It Builds Reliance**

One of the reasons a church might find itself in need of revitalization is because members develop pride and self-reliance, thus forgetting to depend on God in prayer. Until a body of believers turn to God in prayer and acknowledge they can do nothing apart from Him, there can be no true experiencing of renewal.

The churches surveyed in this project understand this principle. All had previously bought other resources, hosted revivals, and worked with outside consultants in their local association and state convention in hopes of experiencing revitalization. Yet, the “40 Days of Prayer” taught them the importance of turning to God in prayer.

¹⁴² Earley, 7.
before they turn to other sources for help. The devotional guide reminds its readers they
must be fully dependent on God alone to experience true renewal.

**It Encourages Preparation**

Satan hates the church because it is the means through which God has chosen to
advance His Kingdom in the world. True revitalization leading a church into a position of
health will also lead a church into spiritual warfare. The enemy always aims his attacks at
a church experiencing the blessings of God that come with renewal. The “40 Days of
Prayer” devotional guide not only acknowledges this reality but also directs Christians in
how to prepare for the spiritual obstacles they will face as they experience revitalization.
Readers are challenged to spend time in spiritual self-examination so they will be
prepared for the attacks of the enemy. They are also encouraged to pray for their spiritual
leaders because they may be more vulnerable to the enemy’s attacks and the
discouragements accompanying spiritual warfare. The prayer guide presents a clear
awareness of Ephesians 6:12 that “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against
the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness,
against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

**Areas of Further Investigation**

Along with these benefits uncovered during the course of the project, the author
also discovered areas requiring further study in the future. While none of these issues
damage the findings of this research, they do present important areas of consideration for
future projects. Should more research be conducted on the topic of intentional prayer strategies used to initiate revitalization efforts, the following considerations are offered.

Geographical Considerations

The sampling pool for this project’s survey was restricted to churches located within a specific geographical area, namely the regions of eastern and central Kentucky. Two of the three churches are situated in rural areas (Meta Baptist Church and Pinckard Baptist Church), while the third is positioned in a small city (Lexington Baptist Temple). A widening of the geographical area to recruit churches meeting all of the other criteria would diversify the results beyond those found in this project.

Participant Considerations

The sampling of church members who completed the survey for the research stage was lower than what the author anticipated. While the sample size was sufficient to meet common statistical standards, a larger number of participants would have strengthened the results and yielded more data from which to draw conclusions. The challenges in collecting data were typical for this type of study. For example, the majority of the churches meeting the parameters for revitalization to qualify for this project will naturally report smaller numbers in their average attendance. Because the churches are smaller in terms of attendance, a reduced sampling of individuals were available to participate in the survey, while others may not have been in attendance on the date the survey was administered. While the author does not believe a larger data set would alter the results of
the study, more participants sharing their perspectives would allow for a stronger evaluation of the prayer guide.

**Denominational Considerations**

The survey instrument for this project was only administered in SBC churches who are also in cooperative partnership with the KBC. Two of the churches are also members of the same local association (Central Kentucky Network of Baptists). While the results of this study will prove to be helpful for churches in these associations and across the KBC, it is less likely churches outside of those networks will find the same level of benefit.

**Survey Considerations**

The survey was designed to be completed in less than ten minutes. In doing this, the author hoped participants would not rush through the questions too quickly or leave any of them incomplete. However, additional questions may have provided a better understanding of how useful church members believed the “40 Days of Prayer” was in their personal lives and congregation as a whole. If open-ended responses were to be provided in a future survey instrument, participants may be inclined to provide more details about their views of the prayer guide’s effectiveness. While many of the questions afforded participants the chance to rate the effectiveness of the devotional guide’s prayer categories, allowing additional space for suggestions may have opened the door for church members to share what they would prefer to see more of in the study. Compiling
and analyzing this kind of feedback would be more time consuming, but it would yield
more nuanced results.

**A Final Word**

The author believes this project offers assistance to church leaders who want to
find a prayer tool to assist them in guiding their congregation toward revitalization. The
project evaluates the “40 Days of Prayer” by considering its impact when used by three
local churches, and then develops a model for implementing it as the central component
of an intentional prayer strategy for FBC Pikeville. In a time when many churches are
facing the threat of trying to survive or just trying to maintain status quo, the results of
this project present a plan offering hope to many congregations. If the Lord is gracious
enough to allow this project to be of service to His Kingdom in such ways, He alone
deserves all the glory for it.
Bibliography


_____. *What is a Healthy Church Member?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.


________. *What is a Healthy Church?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007.


Whitney, Donald S. *Praying the Bible.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.


Yates, George L. *Reaching the Summit: Avoiding and Reversing Decline in the Church.*
Appendix A: 40 Days of Prayer Survey Instrument

40 Days of Prayer Devotional Guide
Survey Questions

1. What role(s) do you serve in your church?
   - Senior Pastor / Ministry Staff
   - Deacon
   - Sunday School Worker (Director, Teacher, etc.)
   - Prayer Ministry
   - None of the Above

2. What is your age range?
   - Under 18 years old
   - 18-29 years old
   - 30-39 years old
   - 40-49 years old
   - 50-59 years old
   - 60-69 years old
   - 70 years or older

3. Did you participate in the “40 Days of Prayer” emphasis by reading and praying through the devotional guide?
   - Yes
   - No
4. How would you rate the effectiveness of the “40 Days of Prayer” devotional guide in your personal prayer time?
   - Extremely effective
   - Somewhat effective
   - Somewhat ineffective
   - Completely ineffective

5. What was the greatest benefit of the devotional guide to you personally? (You may choose more than one answer).
   - The Scripture Readings
   - The author’s meditations
   - The prayer ideas
   - The weekly reflections
   - Other __________________________________________________

6. Did your church have a regional consultant or KBC staff member come and speak before or after the 40 days of prayer?
   - Yes
   - No

7. If your church had a regional consultant or a KBC staff member speak, how would you rate the effectiveness of it in relationship to the 40 days of prayer?
   - Extremely effective
   - Somewhat effective
   - Somewhat ineffective
   - Completely ineffective
8. Did your church have any follow up meetings or small groups develop as a result of the 40 days of prayer?
   o Yes
   o No

9. Prior to participating in the 40 Days of Prayer, how often did you pray for your church and/or church leaders?
   o At least daily
   o At least weekly
   o At least monthly
   o Rarely
   o Not at all

10. After participating in the 40 Days of Prayer, how often do you pray for your church and/or church leaders?
    o At least daily
    o At least weekly
    o At least monthly
    o Rarely
    o Not at all

11. Prior to participating in the 40 Days of Prayer, how often did you pray for lost people in your community?
    o At least daily
    o At least weekly
    o At least monthly
    o Rarely
12. After participating in the 40 Days of Prayer, how often do you pray for lost people in your community?
   o At least daily
   o At least weekly
   o At least monthly
   o Rarely
   o Not at all

13. Do you feel like your church as a whole is healthier and more prepared for growth after completing the 40 Days of prayer devotional?
   o Strongly agree
   o Somewhat agree
   o Somewhat disagree
   o Strongly disagree

14. Has your church developed or enhanced a prayer ministry since completing the 40 Days of Prayer devotional?
   o Strongly agree
   o Somewhat agree
   o Somewhat disagree
   o Strongly disagree
## Appendix B: Survey Analysis

### Table 1.1
Survey Respondents Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry Position</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
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<td>Senior Pastor or Pastoral Staff</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Prayer Ministry</td>
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### Table 1.2
Survey Respondents Demographics

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<tr>
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### Table 1.3
Survey Respondents Demographics

**Church B**

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<tr>
<td>Senior Pastor or Pastoral Staff</td>
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<tr>
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### Table 1.4
Survey Respondents Demographics

**Church C**

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**Age of Respondents**  
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### Table 2.2  
**Age of Respondents**  
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<th>Age Range</th>
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### Table 2.3  
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### Table 3.1
**Effectiveness of Devotional Guide in Personal Prayer Time**

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<th>Response</th>
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Score = 65.9

### Table 3.2
**Effectiveness of Devotional Guide in Personal Prayer Time**

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**Effectiveness of Devotional Guide in Personal Prayer Time**

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Effectiveness of Devotional Guide in Personal Prayer Time

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<th>% of Respondents</th>
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Table 3.5
Effectiveness of Devotional Guide in Personal Prayer Time

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church B</td>
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<td>Church C</td>
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<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
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Table 4.1
Greatest Benefit(s) of Devotional Guide

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<td></td>
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Table 4.2
Greatest Benefit(s) of Devotional Guide

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<thead>
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<th>Church A</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
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<td>Prayer ideas</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scripture readings</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly reflections</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Author’s meditations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.3
**Greatest Benefit(s) of Devotional Guide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prayer ideas</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripture readings</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s meditations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly reflections</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4.4
**Greatest Benefit(s) of Devotional Guide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prayer ideas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripture readings</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s meditations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly reflections</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5.1
**Effectiveness of Speaker**

**Overall (Church A & Church C)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat effective</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Score** = 63.2

### Table 5.2
**Effectiveness of Speaker**

**Church A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat effective</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Score** = 68.0
### Table 5.4
**Effectiveness of Speaker Church C**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely effective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat effective</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score = 57.1

### Table 5.5
**Effectiveness of Speaker Comparison Among Churches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church A</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church B</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church C</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td><strong>63.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6.1
**Follow-up Meetings After Completion Overall**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6.2
**Follow-up Meetings After Completion Church A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.3
Follow-up Meetings After Completion
Church B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4
Follow-up Meetings After Completion
Church C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1
Prayer For Church And/Or Church Leaders
Before & After Participation

Overall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Before Participation</th>
<th>After Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of Resp.</td>
<td>% of Resp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least daily</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least weekly</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least monthly</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Score 82.6 90.3
### Table 7.2
Prayer For Church And/Or Church Leaders
Before & After Participation

**Church A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Before Participation</th>
<th></th>
<th>After Participation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of Resp.</td>
<td>% of Resp.</td>
<td># of Resp.</td>
<td>% of Resp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least daily</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least weekly</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least monthly</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Score**

80.0

### Table 7.3
Prayer For Church And/Or Church Leaders
Before & After Participation

**Church B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Before Participation</th>
<th></th>
<th>After Participation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of Resp.</td>
<td>% of Resp.</td>
<td># of Resp.</td>
<td>% of Resp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least daily</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least weekly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least monthly</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Score**

85.7

### Table 7.4
Prayer For Church And/Or Church Leaders
Before & After Participation

**Church C**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Before Participation</th>
<th></th>
<th>After Participation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of Resp.</td>
<td>% of Resp.</td>
<td># of Resp.</td>
<td>% of Resp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least daily</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least weekly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least monthly</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Score**

84.0
### Table 7.5
**Prayer For Church And/Or Church Leaders**
**Before & After Participation**
**Comparison Among Churches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Score Before Participating</th>
<th>Score After Participating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church A</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church B</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>97.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church C</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td><strong>82.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>90.3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8.1
**Prayer For Lost People in the Community**
**Before & After Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Score** 80.0 82.4

### Table 8.2
**Prayer For Lost People in the Community**
**Before & After Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Score** 82.9 82.7
### Table 8.3
**Prayer For Lost People in the Community**
**Before & After Participation**

**Church B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Before Participation</th>
<th></th>
<th>After Participation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of Resp.</td>
<td>% of Resp.</td>
<td># of Resp.</td>
<td>% of Resp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least daily</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least weekly</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least monthly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>100.0%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Score**

<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
<td>82.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8.4
**Prayer For Lost People in the Community**
**Before & After Participation**

**Church C**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Before Participation</th>
<th></th>
<th>After Participation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of Resp.</td>
<td>% of Resp.</td>
<td># of Resp.</td>
<td>% of Resp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least daily</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least weekly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least monthly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Score**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>80.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8.5
**Prayer For Lost People in the Community**
**Before & After Participation**
**Comparison Among Churches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Score Before Participating</th>
<th>Score After Participating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church A</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>82.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church B</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>82.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church C</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td><strong>80.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>82.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 9.1
Healthier Church After Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score = 61.4

### Table 9.2
Healthier Church After Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church A</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score = 60.0

### Table 9.3
Healthier Church After Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church B</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score = 60.0
### Table 9.4
**Healthier Church After Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church C</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score = 64.4

### Table 9.5
**Healthier Church After Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison Among Churches</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church A</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church B</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church C</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 10.1
**Developed or Enhanced Prayer Ministry After Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score = 55.7

### Table 10.2
**Developed or Enhanced Prayer Ministry After Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church A</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score = 58.2
Table 10.3
Developed or Enhanced Prayer Ministry After Participation
Church B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Score = 50.0

Table 10.4
Developed or Enhanced Prayer Ministry After Participation
Church C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answered</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Score = 57.8

Table 10.5
Developed or Enhanced Prayer Ministry After Participation
Comparison Among Churches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church A</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church B</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church C</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Team Leader Interview Questions

1. What led you and your team to produce the “40 Days of Prayer” as a component for church revitalization strategies?

2. What would you estimate is the number of churches that have used the prayer guide?

3. What has been the reaction of pastors and leaders who have utilized this resource in their local churches?

4. For churches considering a revitalization strategy, when would be the optimal time for them to use a tool like this?

5. What should pastors do to prepare their congregations for the devotional study?

6. Would you have recommendations for church leaders to implement in the months after the 40-day study to assess its effectiveness?
Appendix D: Pastor Interview Questions

1. What was the process that led you to choose the “40 Prayer Guide” as a tool for your revitalization strategy?

2. Were there any obstacles for you or your church in the days leading up to the 40 days of prayer?

3. What was the participation level in your congregation and how satisfied were you personally?

4. What (if anything) did you do to prepare your congregation for the 40 days of prayer?

5. Did you invite a consultant or KBC staff member to work with you or speak to your congregation? How do you think that affected the 40 days?

6. What were the results of the 40 days in your congregation? How has it helped your church in the process of revitalization?

7. Would you use this tool again or recommend it to other congregations? Why or why not?
IRB Approval

December 19, 2016

John A. Lucas
IRB Approval 2650.121916: An Evaluation of The “40 Days Of Prayer For Church Revitalization” Resource As a Method for Developing Healthy Church Prayer Ministries in Kentucky Baptist Churches

Dear John A. Lucas,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

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