MAKING PRAYER THE CORE FEATURE
OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

MAKING PRAYER THE CORE FEATURE OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008
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The purpose of the research is to bring to light the scriptural history of prayer and discipleship in the early church. Based on surveys sent to pastors, ministerial students, and church workers, facts and assumptions are derived about the priority of prayer in the individual and corporate life of the church. A practical plan is set forth to correct the deficiency of prayer in the local church.

Abstract length: 67 words.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Being a practitioner of prayer for about sixteen years and learning to experience the resource that prayer affords has created an acute awareness of the need for prayer, personally and corporately. Prayer is the essential foundation for a healthy and effective Christian disciple-making Church.

Across our country, many pastors are disillusioned. They are coaxed by their peers into the mode of offering many programs to build the church. In not too many years, those pastors have burned out, some to the point of despair and loss of faith. Many faced with this cycle try to find another new technique or exciting new seminar, which usually only compounds the problem. The stories of disillusionment in the ministry are without number. Many ministers in America are well trained but remain spiritually ineffective.

Participating for ten years in a “cyber fellowship” with several hundred other pastors has been an eye-opening experience. This e-mail format discusses current issues and challenges churches, pastors, and their families face. Discussion topics range from “How to do a baby dedication” to “Where to find professional counseling” for the pastor whose wife has just left after twenty years of living in a glass house. Ministers are crying out for help. Many times their cries are diagnosed incorrectly, and the proposed solutions are less than effective. Eugene Peterson articulates the current state from his perspective:
American pastors are abandoning their posts, left and right, and at an alarming rate. They are not leaving their churches and getting other jobs. Congregations still pay their salaries. Their names remain on the church stationery and they continue to appear in pulpits on Sundays. But they are abandoning their posts, their calling. They have gone whoring after other gods. What they do with their time under the guise of pastoral ministry hasn’t the remotest connection with what the church’s pastors have done for most of twenty centuries. They talk of images and statistics. They drop names. They discuss influence and status. Matters of God and the soul and Scripture are not grist for their mills. The pastors of America have metamorphosed into a company of shopkeepers, and the shops they keep are churches.¹

Pastors need to get back to their calling. They need to get their eyes back on God through prayer and Bible reading to discover the spiritual direction that will reshape their ministry. It is the matter of prayer that will be addressed in this thesis.

**Motive of Study**

One of the events that contributed to a desire to do a thesis on prayer was an experience this writer had at a Massachusetts Baptist Bible Pastors’ Fellowship meeting several years ago. One of the younger ministers who had labored for years in a very ethnic area of Boston shared how God led him to see the need of prayer in his life and ministry. He explained how for years he had distributed thousands of pieces of Gospel literature with very little visible result in building the church. After years of frustration and soul-searching, he decided he would resort to prayer. He gathered some of the other men of the church to meet with him for prayer. It was not long after that spiritual activity began to take place in the church, God began to answer their prayers. James says, “You

do not have because you do not ask” (James 4:2b NKJV). This young pastor was living proof. When we pray, God does respond.

In America in recent years, the church has been a testimony to the ingenuity of man. It produced teachers who are hooked on success, programs, feelings, and the latest Christian fads and trends rather than believers who are intoxicated by God; hungering to grow in Him and see His mighty power form the church into His image, a glorious church. Powerful prayer has not been a common occurrence. Eugene Peterson said, “It continually puzzles me that so much prayer sounds so limp, that prayer is often so utterly banal. The limpness and banality may be no more common in pastors than in lay people, but they are more conspicuous in pastors, who are more often on public display.”

Peterson likens the prayers that are being offered today to cut flowers and table decorations – short-lived and without substance, “uprooted from the soil of the Word of God.”

The twenty-first century church is aspiring to something spiritually higher than its twentieth century predecessors. Some churches have currently called for a moratorium on the church growth emphasis. The momentum is building and the mighty power and presence of God is producing spiritual rest and growth. This is what is needed to propel God’s people as they carry out God’s will.

The twenty-first century church is also made up of the next generation of leaders trained from the beginning of their Christian experience to grow deep in God in

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3 Ibid., 45.
dependence on him for spiritual fruit. In some places in America, the church has turned the corner to a prayer-driven church paradigm. Peterson writes, “If we are out to recover our original integrity, it is going to be through a recovery of prayer. If we skip the prayer, or allow ourselves to be stampeded into activities other than prayer, we end up in the tragic impasse.”

The need of experiential Christianity is the need of the hour. The purpose for this thesis, “Making Prayer the Core Feature of the Evangelical Church,” is to integrate prayer that produces power in the lives of church leaders and members at large and to propel ministry to new heights of effectiveness. In some respect, this new step forward is a step back into history. The heritage of the church in prayer is great and should not be overlooked. The Publisher’s Preface to E.M. Bounds *Prayer & Praying Men* states:

> For almost a century Edward McKendree Bounds’ books on prayer have been classic works, stimulating and inspiring Christians to become prayer warriors. A forceful writer and very deep thinker, Bounds spent the last seventeen years of his life reading, writing and praying. He rose at 4 a.m. daily for many years, and was indefatigable in his study of the Bible.

> As breathing is a physical reality to us, so prayer was a reality for Bounds. He took the command, “Pray without ceasing,” almost as literally as animate nature takes the law of the reflex nervous system, which controls our breathing.

> Because Bounds so diligently practiced what he preached, he was able to capture the essence of prayer, and his works live on to call today’s Christians to higher discipleship and an energetic prayer life.

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Definition of Terms

Prayer Infrastructure: The people who are organized to support through prayer particular ministry leaders and projects for spiritual growth and fruitfulness in ministry.

Disciple-making Church: A church that passionately pursues the making of disciples as commanded in Scripture through mentoring opportunities.

Local Church: A group of called out believers who are gathered together for the purposes stated in Acts 2:42 NKJV, “And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine [Word] and fellowship [fellowship], in the breaking of bread [worship], and in prayers [prayer].”

Core Believer: This is a person who is committed to the church physically, financially, and spiritually.

Staff Team: This is the current staff of Library Baptist Church that works in harmony to support and encourage each other as we all work for the common goal which is defined in our Vision Statement.

Statement of Limitations

This is not an attempt to produce an exhaustive explanation of the problem of a lack of prayer in the church. Nor is it an exhaustive solution for the church to use as a model to achieve the status of the prayer-driven church. This study will be a beginning; a look below the surface to see the reality of the need and an effort to suggest the first steps toward a workable, spiritual solution. This thesis is limited by its concentration on the North American spiritual culture and would not be applicable for the total Body of
Christ. The analysis will not be a picture of all Bible-believing denominations. It will be focused only on the conservative, evangelical element of the Body of Christ.

**Biblical Basis**

This pursuit of the praying church is rooted in Scripture. The church was birthed in prayer and the church spread by prayer, as recorded in the book of Acts. The biblical basis is at the crux of the impetus to implementing prayer as the core feature for each ministry in the disciple-making church. The word “prayer” and its derivations are used 32 times in the book of Acts. The church was birthed in a prayer meeting. Acts 1:14 NKJV says, “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.” It was out of this atmosphere of prayer and unity that a new replacement was found for Judas. Acts 1:24 NLT says, “Then they all prayed for the right man to be chosen. ‘O Lord,’ they said, ‘you know every heart. Show us which of these men you have chosen.’”

The church had appointed times of prayer. Acts 3:1 NKJV reads, “Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.” This aspect of appointment is one of the elementary features for the church today. Jill Briscoe has stated, “May I suggest that you take your calendar at the start of the week and pencil in time with the Lord every day. To see that appointment there in black and white sometimes helps you to keep it.”

are indispensable. Their history is rooted in Old Testament Scripture. This fact will be elucidated.

Prayer and the ministry of the Word are the two great priorities for ministers. Acts 6:4 NKJV says, “but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.” It is prayer that prepared Christ’s followers to speak the Word with boldness. Acts 4:31 NKJV reads “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness.”

It is interesting that the people with ministries that are long remembered are those whose priority list descended from prayer and the ministry of the Word. Missionary David Brainard is constantly referred to as a spiritual role model. Brainard died at age 30 but the legacy of his life is still being felt. These two elements of spiritual discipline would sweep David Brainard through his short life. In the beginning of his journey, he said, “My manner of life was now exceeding regular and full of religion, such as it was; for I read my Bible more than twice through in less than a year, spent much time every day in prayer and other secret duties, gave great attention to the Word preached, and endeavored to my utmost to retain it.”

The verses below further accentuate the biblical basis for “Prayer as the Core Feature of the Evangelical Church”:

Acts 6:6 - Prayer over the Deacons.

Acts 9:11 - “Praying” Saul begins his ministry of prayer.

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Acts 9:40 - Prayed before God worked a miracle (raising the dead).

Acts 10:9 - Early leaders were committed to certain prayer times.

Acts 10:30 - God gave direction in prayer.

Acts 11:5 - God speaks in prayer.

Acts 12:5 - The Church prayed and God delivered their members out of trouble (Peter).

Acts 13:3 - Missionaries were chosen in prayer.

Acts 14:23 - Elders were appointed in the Church by prayer and fasting.

Acts 16:25 - Prayer is always appropriate (even in prison).

Acts 27:29 - In the most desperate time they prayed for deliverance.

Acts 28:8 - People were healed by God’s response to prayer.

The book of Acts is an unfinished diary of the early church as it began to obey the command of our Lord to make disciples of all nations. This diary is still being written by each assembly and individual congregants that purpose to obey His words and follow His steps. We are still trying to focus on God’s original plan and to make it the future plan.

**Statement of Methodology**

First, the paper will explain the problem by polling cyber fellowship participants; current D. Min. students; graduate school students at Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri; ministry leaders at Library Baptist Church and telephone interviews with pastors for their concerns and suggestions.
An analysis of current efforts in place will be given, a new strategy devised, and finally, all information distilled into a workable plan of implementing prayer as the core feature of each ministry in the disciple-making church.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter 1 - Introduction
This chapter will be an extended version of the motive, purpose, limits of the study, and the need for prayer-driven church leaders as they develop prayer-driven churches. This section will set the stage for a contemporary approach to an age-old problem--ministry without prayer.

Chapter 2 – The Biblical Description of the New Testament Church
This chapter will define the biblical description of the New Testament church. The disciple making process as designed by Jesus to evangelize the world and edify the body of Christ will be explained with Jesus’ emphasis on prayer.

Chapter 3 – The Reality Confronted (Collecting the Data)
This chapter will delineate the research gathered through surveys from outside sources, such as prayer leaders in churches, church staff members, missionaries, and others from various Bible Colleges.
Chapter 4 – The Reality Crystallized (Writing the Research)

By using research to demonstrate current trends, both positive and negative, this chapter will be an attempt to explain the research and accent the strengths and weaknesses of church leaders’ organization relative to prayer.

Chapter 5 – The Pastor’s Commitment to Spiritual Transformation

This chapter explains how a pastor can grow into the spiritual prayer leader that he needs to become. He will then be the catalyst that the church needs to develop a comprehensive prayer infrastructure.

Chapter 6 – The Challenge of Transition

The church and its ministry methods are constantly and rapidly changing. Being able to minister to four distinct generations with their unique learning characteristics is imperative while successfully teaching each to grow in God.

Chapter 7 – The Plan to Make Prayer the Core Feature of the Evangelical Church

This chapter will present a workable plan to begin to implement prayer as the core feature in a church. Prayer emphases will be suggested that have the spiritual potential to launch the church into being a prayer-driven ministry.
Review of the Literature

The major current literature related to the topic includes books, theses, journal and magazine articles. There are many books written on the subject of prayer. One of the most renowned authors is Andrew Murray. He lived from 1828 - 1917. He will go down in history as one of the most prolific authors and one of the greatest proponents of prayer. He first wrote for his congregation but soon there was a great demand for his writings from around the world. His book, *Andrew Murray on Prayer*, has 650 pages. It could be called an encyclopedia of prayer. This quotation appears in the introduction of the book: “For Andrew Murray, prayer was considered our personal home base from which we live our Christian lives and extend ourselves to others.”

A contemporary example of an experiential book on prayer is *A Passion for Prayer*. This book is written by Tom Elliff, a former missionary to Zimbabwe and former President of the Southern Baptist Convention. In this book he seeks to help Christians to develop a prayer habit which leads to a more effective prayer life. This book opens with a brutal admission, “I just don’t pray.” The experiential way he begins the book immediately connects with the twenty-first century believer.

Women who are Bible teachers are very much in vogue in today’s culture. Jill Briscoe entitled her book, *Prayer That Works*. She is an internationally known speaker.

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and writer. She is on a mission to equip believers for Biblical living. In Chapter One she opens with a striking illustration of unanswered prayers. She writes,

Ever since I was a little girl in war-torn England, sitting on a three-legged stool in front of my house waiting for the bombs to fall, I have wanted my prayers to work. I remember praying, “Oh, God, please stop the war.” He didn’t, and I remember feeling very disappointed with Him. Maybe you have prayed that God would stop the conflict raging around you or in your own life, and He hasn’t, and you feel disappointed with Him too. This book is all about prayer that makes a difference. It is about prayer that works.  

A current book that will be mightily used by God is by Beth Moore, *Praying God’s Word*. This book is an attempt to tear down strongholds in our lives by learning to pray with the power of God’s words. This book is a practical prayer guide that addresses fourteen common strongholds and what Scripture reveals about each of them.

There is a resurgence of spirituality in the American Church and prayer is leading the Church back to God. Magazines about prayer are becoming popular. *Pray! Encouraging A Passion For Christ Through Prayer* is a sample.

One of the most frustrating areas for church prayer leaders is motivating people to pray together. Even the healthiest praying churches struggle to get and keep members involved in group prayer opportunities. Despite the frustration, prayer leaders keep plugging away in that area because they know that praying together is the most powerful and significant thing a church body can do. God’s power is unleashed in much greater measure when believers pray together.  

The topics dealt with in this issue are “Campaigning for Revival;” “Prayer Ideas;” “Are You Praying With a Limp?” and “Dealing with the Sin That Cripples Our Prayer.”

*Discipleship Journal* is published by the Navigators. It has been published for twenty years and has made a significant contribution, especially in prayer and discipleship. Both

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11 Jonathan Graf, “Editor’s Column,” *Pray* 29 (March / April, 2002), 5.
of these subjects are integrated into the thesis title, “Making Prayer the Core Feature of the Evangelical Church.” The articles are deep and thought provoking. One recent article which appeared in Issue 121 - January / February, 2001, was “The Mystery of Unanswered Prayer.”

*Ministry International Journal for Pastors* is published by the Seventh Day Adventist Ministerial Association. This publication is very professional and provocative. *Preaching, The Professional Journal for Preachers* is mostly about preaching but does touch on prayer and discipleship.
CHAPTER TWO
THE BIBLICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

The disciple-making process and prayer emphasis as designed by Jesus to evangelize the world and edify the body of Christ is at the heart of “Prayer as the core feature of the evangelical church.”

A Clear Understanding of the Church is Important

The word “church” comes from the Greek word *ekklēsia* meaning “out,” and *kalein*, “to call.” In pre-Christian history, the word *ekklēsia* was used to describe a “called out” body of citizens as they assembled together. The translators of the Septuagint used *ekklēsia* to render the Heb. rew *kāhāl* denoting the congregation. “But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly” - (Acts 19:39 NKJV) is a good example of *ekklēsia* being used in the pre-Christian setting.

In Matt. 4:17, Jesus first began to claim the purpose of His coming. He said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” This statement was rooted in Messianic expectations. As these Messianic expectations and realizations began to fade, He employed another term, *ekklēsia*, to describe His future plan. The Apostolic writers increasingly accented the word “church.” This new version of what Jesus was about to
do in the world would now take on a word with a much larger world understanding. “In essence, therefore, the church, the ekklēsia, is a body of people, not so much assembling because they have chosen to come together, but assembling because God has called them to Himself; not so much assembling to share their own thoughts and opinions, but assembling to listen to the voice of God.”

The first mention of the word, ekklēsia is found in Matt. 16:18, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” The church will be built on a rock. Jesus is making a play on words, “You are Peter” (petros - a piece of rock.) “And upon this rock,” (petra - a mass of rock.) The difference between this small rock and the large rock is a figure of how vital it will be to have an immovable foundation for the church. Christ is the “Rock” upon which the church is built. “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11 NKJV).

It is also a possibility that Jesus is referring to the foundation of the church as Peter’s confession received by Divine revelation. Matt. 16:16 says, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Upon this profession of faith in Christ as Diety, Dr. Charles Ryrie says, “He does not say, ‘Upon you, Peter,’ or ‘upon your successors,’ but ‘upon this rock.’ — upon this divine revelation and profession of faith in Christ.” In other words, Peter’s faith was the prototype faith.

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Jesus had found a man full of faith. This type of faith was the foundation Jesus was looking for. This kind of church-founding and church-building faith was more than intellectual assent. This was a person trusting completely in a personal Savior that resulted in a new creation, a new person.

There are various theories about where and when the church really started. The minority position propounds that the church began with Jesus and his Apostles. This position was promoted by S. E. Anderson on page 5 of his book *The First Church*. He lists 27 functions of the New Testament *ekklesia* before Pentecost as follows:

1. Christian believers before Pentecost had the gospel (Matt. 4:23; Mark 1:1; Matt. 9:35; 11:5; 24:14; 26:13; Mark 1:14, 15; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 16:9, 15; Luke 4:18; 9:6; 20:1, etc.).

2. They were converted (Matt. 3:5-8; 18:3; Luke 19:1-10).

3. They were baptized after conversion (Matt. 3:6; Acts 1:22).

4. They had Christ as Head (Matt. 23:8; Mark 1:1; John 1:29).

5. They were instructed in church truths. (Matt. 18:15-20.)

6. They were called to obey Christ. (Matt. 4:18-20.)

7. They were ordained. (Matt. 10:1-5; John 15:16).

8. They were commissioned (Matt. 28:18-20).

9. They were organized enough for their needs (John 13:29).

10. They had a missionary program (Matt. 10:1-11; 1).

11. They had a teaching program (Matt. 4:23; 10:1-42).

12. They had a healing program (Matt. 10:1; Luke 9:1; 10:9).

13. They were promised a permanent church (Matt. 16:18).
14. They had church discipline (Matt. 18:15-17).
15. They had divine authority (Matt. 18:18; 28:18-20).
16. They had essentials of church life (Matt. 4:19; 18:20).
17. They had true church democracy (Matt. 23:8-12).
18. They had qualified pastors (John 15:16; 21:15-17).
19. They had the Lord’s Supper (Matt. 26:26-28).
21. They had divine power to do Christ’s work (Luke 9:1).
22. They sang “in the midst of the church” (Matt. 26:30; Heb. 2:12).
23. They had prayer meetings (Acts 1:14).
24. They had business meetings (Acts 1:14-26).
25. They had a membership roll (Matt. 10:2-4; Acts 1:13-15).
26. They were united and “added unto” (Acts 2:1, 41).
27. Christ was their corner stone (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20).

This position is summarized by Dr. J. H. Melton, this writer’s theology professor:

(3) That the church of the New Testament was established by the Lord Jesus Christ and that the record of the beginning of the church is found in Luke 6:12-16. A study of the etymological meaning, usage, function, and history of the church of the New Testament prove conclusively that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself established His *ekklesia*. The first members were the apostles (I Cor. 12:28), and Luke 6:12-16 does indeed record the point in time at which the Son of God constituted the twelve apostles the first local, Scriptural Baptist church.

Others believe that the church began on the day of Pentecost. This belief was popularized by the Scofield Study Bible.

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The Sixth Dispensation: the Church. A new age was announced by our Lord Jesus Christ in Matt. 12:47-13:52. The Church was clearly prophesied by Him in Matt. 16:18 (cp. Matt. 18:15-19), purchased by the shedding of His blood on Calvary (Rom. 3:24-25; 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:18-19), and constituted as the Church after His resurrection and ascension at Pentecost when, in accordance with his promise (Acts 1:5), individual believers were for the first time baptized with the Holy Spirit into a unified spiritual organism, likened to a body of which Christ is the Head (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col. 2:19). Because of the emphasis upon the Holy Spirit, this age has also been called “the dispensation of the Spirit.”

G. Campbell Morgan, in his book The Birth of the Church says that the first four verses of Acts 2 “gives the historic account of the first day of the Christian Church.”

The word, disciple (mathetes), a learner or a pupil, is used 27 times in the New Testament. The plural, disciples, is used 233 times. The verb form of the word disciple (matheteuo) is used four times. The significance is arresting. The following Biblical citations are taken from the New King James Version: “Then He said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe instructed [matheteuo] concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old’” (Matt. 13:52). “Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple [matheteuo] of Jesus” (Matt. 27:57). “Go therefore and make disciples [matheteuo] of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19). “And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples [matheteuo], they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch” (Acts 14:21).

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The Great Commission is to “Make Disciples.”

The greatest disciple maker was Jesus, Himself. Jesus chose just a few to be His close companions, a select group, His traveling companions in all His wanderings, witnessing and ministry. “And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him” (Mark 3:13 NKJV). This was an apprenticeship. They would see the Lord in every setting. In some professions, observation is called on-the-job training. They would learn by watching, participating and listening. The selection of His disciples was the paramount step. Robert Coleman states:

His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes but with men whom the multitudes would follow. Remarkable as it may seem, Jesus started to gather these men before He ever organized an evangelistic campaign or even preached a sermon in public. Men were to be His method of winning the world to God.7

There were many more candidates for discipleship than twelve. Twelve were chosen for symbolic reasons. It hinted that Jesus came in His Messianic role as King of Israel. “So Jesus said to them, ‘Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel’” (Matt. 19:28 NKJV). “It is possible that the apostles were only too well aware of the mystic significance of their number, and found in it an encouragement to the fond delusive hope that the coming kingdom should

be not only a spiritual realization of the promises, but a literal restoration of Israel to political integrity and independence.”

The variety of our Lord’s apostles is telling. Consider, for example, Simon Zelotes or Simon the Zealot. This epithet, Zelotes, links Simon to the party of rebellion under Judas in the days of taxing. “After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed” (Acts 5:37 NKJV). Simon left Judas for Jesus. The party under Judas was crushed but the fire was not completely extinguished. It eventually was the cause of the destruction of the Jewish capital and the dispersion of the Jewish people. Simon, an ex-Zealot, would pose a risk to Jesus. His selection as an Apostle could have sounded the alarm of political suspicion. Jesus took the risk to create the future pattern. The moves of Jesus were planned for duplication by His disciples in future generations.

Simon, the Zealot, and Matt., the publican, were two people coming from opposite extremes — the tax-hater and the tax-gatherer. One was a Jewish patriot and the other an unpatriotic Jew. This would be a foretaste of things to come. The twelve would be a microcosm of the New Testament Church on the horizon, an amalgamation of extreme diversity with an unexplainable unity in the Person of Jesus Christ. The type of men Jesus chose were “a band of poor illiterate Galilean provincials, utterly devoid of

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social consequence, not likely to be chosen by one having supreme regard to prudential
considerations.”

Like their Master, their formal education likely consisted only of what was taught in the synagogue schools. Most of them were raised in the poor section of the country around Galilee. Apparently the only one of the Twelve who came from the more refined region of Judea was Judas Iscariot. By any standard of sophisticated culture then and now they would surely be considered a rather ragged aggregation of souls. One might wonder how Jesus could ever use them. They were impulsive, temperamental, and easily offended, and they had all the prejudices of their contemporaries. In short, these men selected by the Lord to be His assistants represented an average cross section of the lot of society in their day. They were not the kind of group one would expect to win the world for Christ.

**Twelve Men Were Chosen**

The obvious question raised is why would Jesus choose these type of men? These men possessed the supreme quality for blessability — humility. These, His Apostles, had none of the advantages thought needed for such world changing high calling. Little is really known about the Apostles. As A. B. Bruce said, “The writers of the Gospels were not afflicted with the biographic mania.” Their focus was Christ. They would tell His story.

The making of a disciple entailed hearing and seeing. “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our

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10 Billie Hanks, Jr. and William A. Shell, 40-41.

11 Ibid., 39-40.
fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3 - NKJV).

Watching and listening would be an important feature in the making of a disciple. Jesus affirmed the benefit of what they were seeing and hearing with the word “blessed.”

“[23] Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; [24] for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it” (Luke 10:23-24 - NKJV).

3107. μακάριος makários; fem. makarία, neut. makárion, adj. A prose form of the poetic mákar (n.f.), blessed one. Blessed, possessing the favor of God, that state of being marked by fullness from God. It indicates the state of the believer in Christ (Matt. 5:3-11, “Blessed . . . for my sake”; Luke 6:20-22, “Blessed . . . for the Son of man’s sake”), said of one who becomes a partaker of God’s nature through faith in Christ (2 Pet. 1:4). The believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit because of Christ and as a result should be fully satisfied no matter the circumstances. Makários differs from the word “happy” in that the person is happy who has good luck (from the root hap meaning luck as a favorable circumstance). To be maάkarios, blessed, is equivalent to having God’s kingdom within one’s heart (Matt. 5:3, 10). Aristotle contrasts makários to endeēs, the needy one. Makários is the one who is in the world yet independent of the world. His satisfaction comes from God and not from favorable circumstances.12

Jesus reached into history and implied they were blessed above prophets and kings, the generations of Israelites that had seen awesome miracles, such as the Exodus, the parting of the Red Sea, and the miracles that surrounded the ministries of Elijah and Elisha. A picture is worth a thousand words. “One living sermon is worth a hundred

Mentoring involves primarily hearing and seeing. There is a profound distinction made between hearing and listening.

Reading Scripture is not the same as listening to God. To do one is not necessarily to do the other. But they are often assumed to be the same thing. Pastors, who spend more of their time reading the Scriptures than most Christians do (not because of their devoutness but because of their job), make this unwarranted assumption with alarming frequency.\textsuperscript{14}

Listening and reading are not the same thing. They involve different senses. In listening we use our ears; in reading we use our eyes. We listen to the sound of a voice; we read marks on paper. These differences are significant and have profound consequences. Listening is an interpersonal act; it involves two or more people in fairly close proximity. Reading involves one person with a book written by someone who can be miles away or centuries dead, or both. The listener is required to be attentive to the speaker and is more or less at the speaker’s mercy. For the reader it is quite different, since the book is at the reader’s mercy. It may be carried around from place to place, opened or shut at whim, read or not read. When I read a book the book does not know if I am paying attention or not; when I listen to a person the person knows very well whether I am paying attention or not. In listening, another initiates the process; when I read I initiate the process. In reading I open the book and attend to the words. I can read by myself; I cannot listen by myself. In listening the speaker is in charge; in reading the reader is in charge.\textsuperscript{15}

Jesus did not ignore the masses. The Christian Church is easily polarized into two camps. The first camp are those who want to reach the masses and constantly talk about hundreds, thousands, and even millions of people being reached with the Gospel.

Jesus did all that any man could be asked to do and more to reach the multitudes. The first thing He did when He started His ministry was to identify Himself boldly with the great mass-revival movement of His day through baptism.


at the hands of John (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22), and He later went out of His way to praise this work of the great prophet (Matt. 11:7-15; Luke 7:24-28). He Himself continuously preached to the crowds that followed His miracle-working ministry. He taught them. He fed them when they were hungry. He healed their sick and cast out demons among them. He blessed their children. Sometimes the whole day would be spent ministering to their needs. In every way possible Jesus manifested to the masses of humanity a genuine concern. These were the people He came to save—He loved them, wept over them, and finally died to save them from their sin. No one could think that Jesus shirked mass evangelism.  

In the second camp of the Christian Church are many who avoid the masses and just minister to a few under the banner of “true discipleship.”

The results of the ministry on the day of Pentecost could be termed “mass evangelism.” There have been times of mass evangelism that have been greatly used by God. However, the underlying theme of discipleship since Jesus orchestrated it, i.e., the reproduction of one life into another life, has been God’s primary method to build the church. In this manner, the ministry could be one of reproduction and multiplication. A comparison between the effects of evangelism and discipleship can be found in Appendix A. Discipleship or the reproduction of one life into another life is called by some “follow-up.” Gary W. Kuhne stated:

Studies have shown that fewer than one percent of evangelical church members are involved in personal follow-up. For many years I thought the lack of personal evangelism was one of the greatest problems facing the church. I have not changed my mind as to the seriousness of this problem. But I now believe the lack of effective follow-up being done in the local church today constitutes an even more dangerous problem for the church at large. 

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Discipleship is **Always** Connected to Prayer

The first thing that Jesus wanted them to see and hear was His prayers. God sent His Son, the Son of Man, into the world praying. There are thirty different instances of prayer taught and modeled in our Lord’s earthly ministry. He said, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21 NKJV).

Beginning early in the life of Jesus, He was taught to worship at the Temple, to observe the hours of prayer. “Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice” (Ps. 55:17 NKJV). The Jewish youths in the Old Testament, like Daniel, were fearless and habitual in their commitment to prayer. Daniel epitomized this prayer habit. “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days” (Daniel 6:10 NKJV). This was Daniel’s custom and the custom of every other Jewish boy.

The prayer life of Jesus so captivated the sight and hearing of the disciples it provoked their request, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1- NKJV). They saw in our Lord’s prayer habits what they, too, needed to learn.

The Apostolic church made prayer one of their foundational practices. “They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42 NKJV).

Our Lord’s growing up years as described in Luke 2:40-52 can imply an early training in religious customs, familiarity with the Temple and its three times to pray. His obedience to His parents also seems to imply submission to religious training.
The first time to pray coincided with the morning sacrifice at the third hour of the morning. Acts 2:15 NKJV says, “For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.”

The second was at the sixth hour or noon and may have coincided with thanksgiving for the chief meal of the day. Matt. 15:36 says, “And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude.” Acts 27:35 says, “And when He had said these things, He took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when He had broken it He began to eat.”

The third time to pray coincided with the evening sacrifice at the ninth hour. Acts 3:1 says, “Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.” Acts 10:30 says, “So Cornelius said, ‘Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing’.”

Jesus’ baptism record states He prayed.

[21] When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. [22] And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, ‘You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.’ [23] Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age (Luke 3:21-23 NKJV).

The story of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness states He fasted. Prayer and fasting are linked in the New Testament. Mark 1:35 gives us one of the most insightful accounts of our Lord’s prayer practice during His first tour of Galilee -- “Now in the
morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.”

One of the predominant features of our Lord’s prayer life was privacy. This was achieved by getting up before others and finding a solitary place. His mind was uncluttered. Ps. 63:1 NKJV accents this need: “O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.” Mark 1:37 NKJV records that when the disciples found Him, they said to Him, ‘Everyone is looking for You.” Those emulating our Lord’s practice will be hard to find at certain times throughout the day. Our Lord’s response was “Let us go into the next town, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth” (Mark 1:38 NKJV). He had come for the purposes of praying and preaching. Any attempt to preach without praying is doomed to failure. Jesus set the example. His ministry was powerful; His priority was fixed. This was done often. “So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed” (Luke 5:16 NKJV).

All night prayer is recorded in Luke 6:12 NKJV: “Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” The stakes were high. The next day He would choose twelve disciples whom He named as His apostles. These men would form the foundation of the church.

“Every major event in His life was accompanied by prayer.”18 Jesus was modeling praying for workers when He further emphasized in Matt. 9:35-38 NKJV:

[35] Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and

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every disease among the people. [36] But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. [37] Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. [38] Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

The ministry of the church is a working ministry. All aspects of our humanity and spirituality are tested in the crucible of the stress and strain of the ministry. We work with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. There is not any fiber of our existence that is not engaged in the spiritual warfare that awaits each disciple of the Lord.

Jesus urges the twelve to pray because the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. It is to this harvest work that He tells them to pray. The word pray, deomai, means to beg, beseech, plead. This is the Greek word for passionate prayer. It is the same word that the Septuagint translates the type of praying Moses did when he stepped between the anger of God on Israel and their future existence. Then "Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, and said: 'Lord, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand'" (Exodus 32:11 NKJV). This is the kind of prayer that made the difference. In our culture, praying for workers would be considered a novel idea to produce the people the church needs to carry out its mission. But Jesus mentions it here as the foundational premise. This is one of the greatest reasons for discouragement in the church — the lack of workers. Matt. Henry said, "When things look discouraging, we should pray more, and then we should complain and fear less."19 It is always our work to pray. It is God’s work to send out laborers. Ministers should pray for an increase of ministers.

Our Lord’s teaching on prayer was expanded in His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. 

"[43] You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' [44] But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Matt. 5:43-44 NKJV). Jesus introduces a radical use of prayer. Donald A. Hagner explains:

43. The first element of the OT tradition, ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σον, "you shall love your neighbor," is drawn verbatim from Lev. 19:18 (this passage is quoted again, more fully, in 22:39). The words "as yourself" ὡς σεαντόν are probably omitted here in order to form a more exact parallel with the second member, μισήσεις τὸν ἐτρόν σον "you shall hate your enemy." The latter, though not taught in the OT, is an inference that was commonly drawn, for example, from such passages as Pss. 139:21-22; 26:5; or Deut. 7:2; 30:7. On the basis of such passages, the Qumranites explicitly taught hatred of those regarded as enemies (1QS 1:4, 10-11; 9:21-26). Clearly, neither Jesus' listeners nor Matthew’s readers would have been surprised by the added words, since the traditional interpretation had become regularly associated with the text. The "neighbor" meant fellow Jew; the "enemy" meant Gentile.20

This unheard-of command shockingly introduces prayer into Jesus' Sermon on the Mount discourse. The standard of the world was to return good for good. Jesus' paradigm was revolutionary and there was no exact parallel of teaching in Jewish history. An unrestricted love that must be displayed finds its highest expression in praying for one's enemies.

This action reflects the attitude of God and His kingdom. Paul calls his readers to this standard: [1] "Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. [2] And walk in love,

as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma" (Eph. 5:1-2 NKJV). We are to imitate our Heavenly Father.

Jesus compares the praying of the hypocrites to His followers' style. Hypocrites love the enjoyment of public attention. They wanted the glory that public religion elicits. "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly" (Matt. 6:6 NKJV). In the verse, the Greek word "αὐτόν" translated “you” (singular), in this strong adversative sentence is emphatic: "but when you pray . . ." (cf. the same formula in v 17) to Γαμείων refers to an inner room of a house (cf. Matt. 24:26). This prayer is to be directed to God. A true reward will only be gained when prayer is God-oriented and genuine.

Learning to pray as Jesus prayed is the goal of the church. Learning to mentor in prayer as Jesus mentored is crucial for healthy discipleship. Luke, the Gospel writer, gives us specific events as Jesus taught His disciples to pray. First, He prayed alone as seen in Luke 5:16. Second, the disciples watched (Luke 9:18). Third, the disciples questioned (Luke 11:1-4). Fourth, the disciples were involved (Luke 22:40, 46). Fifth, the disciples initiated prayer (Acts 1:14).

Jesus modeled prayer first alone. “So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed” (Luke 5:16 - NKJV). “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed” (Mark 1:35 NKJV). “Uninhabited place” (ἔρημον τόπον) is one of Mark’s five

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references (1:35, 45; 6:31, 32, 35) to a place of solitude. After the activities of healing and exorcisms in the evening, Jesus withdrew to be alone. Dealing with the needs of the people was physically and emotionally draining. To be re-energized was in order. “But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings. They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31 NKJV). The word about Jesus’ ministry was spreading. “However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction” (Mark 1:45 NKJV). There were so many people desiring His attention, Jesus had to become less accessible to the masses and so He emphasized places of solitude. As His ministry gained momentum and severe persecution ensued, Jesus suggested a deserted place, away from the crowds. This is demonstrated in Mark 6, “[31] And He said to them, ‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’” For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. [32] So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. . . . [35] When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late.”” “Jesus clearly ministers as the one in whom God is at work, the bringer of the new age of salvation (cf. 3:22-27). Yet one finds no hint that anyone (1:22, 27, 37) apart from the demons (1:25, 34b) actually recognized him for who He was.23


23 Ibid., 71.
Jesus already taught His disciples by precept (Matt. 6:7-15) and example (Luke 9:29). But it is His practice of prayer that precipitates His followers’ desire to learn. Jesus then prayed in private with His disciples with Him: “And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, ‘Who do the crowds say that I am’” (Luke 9:18 NKJV)?

It was the sight of the Master in the act of prayer that had impact on the disciples. This is seen in the events of Luke 11. Jesus is praying and is overheard. It appeared to them—no doubt, as they caught here and there a word and expression as he prayed, perhaps partly alone, partly to Himself—as though a friend was speaking to a friend; they would pray like that: would not the Master teach them His beautiful secret? In reply, Jesus repeats to them, in rather an abbreviated form, what, at an earlier period of His ministry, He had taught to the multitudes and the twelve. It was very likely one of the seventy who made this request, who had not been present on the first occasion, when the Lord gave His prayer of prayers to the people.24

Again, our Lord repeats the Lord’s Prayer which was previously given in Matthew’s account in the Sermon on the Mount. “It was a usual practice among the more famous rabbis to give prayer-formulas to their pupils.”25 They saw that Jesus depended on prayer in His ministry and wanted to follow His lead. “While Jesus was here on earth, He offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the One who could deliver Him out of death. And God heard His prayers because of His reverence for God” (Heb. 5:7 NLT). His disciples wanted the connection to Heaven that Jesus had through the medium of prayer. They asked Him to teach them to pray. “Didaskō has inherent in it


25 Ibid., 300.
the calculation of the increase in understanding of the pupil.”26 It is only here in the
Gospels that His disciples request teaching from Jesus.

The disciples are involved in prayer in Luke 22:40, 46. This insight gives us a
window into human nature and prayer. He asks His disciples to pray but found them
sleeping. This is an example of Matt. 26:4 NKJV, “Watch and pray, lest you enter into
temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” It is a precursor of things
to come.

Jesus started His ministry in prayer and ended it in prayer. The impact on the
centurion looking on was great. “So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw
that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, ‘Truly this Man was the Son of
God’” (Mark 15:39 NKJV).

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CHAPTER THREE

THE REALITY OF THE NEED (RESEARCH DATA)

The questionnaire is the connecting link between the core challenges facing the new millennium church and the solution to the problem of a prayerless church. As the questionnaire was developed, three elements were paramount: personal demographic information, personal prayer life information, and information regarding the prayer life of the church.

Personal Information

This part of the survey will allow an assessment if age, educational status or position in life has a bearing on prayer habits. We will get an indication if older believers have a more balanced prayer life. Will results of the survey imply that those making more money have more time to spend in prayer because they are more financially comfortable? Does the degree of education mean more discipline in prayer? Questions included are:

Present Position in Life? Answer options are College Student, Seminary Student, College Staff Member, and Senior Pastor;

Age? Age divisions offered are Under 25, 26-35, 36-50, and Over 50;

Total Annual Salary? Salary divisions offered are Under $10,000, $10,000-$15,000, $16,000-$18,000, $19,000-$25,000, $25,000-$49,000, and Above $50,000.

The question about Education offered three answer options: High School Diploma, Bachelor’s Degree, and Master’s Degree.
Personal Prayer Life

This is the most critical of all sections. It is the gauge of the minister’s spiritual life. It should provoke tremendous introspection relative to the personal prayer life. It is assumed that there are few mentors in prayer. It is suspected that mentoring & discipleship may be the weak link. The following questions are included in this part of the survey:

“Has anyone ever mentored you in prayer?” This responders’ answers to this question will indicate if a lack of mentoring could be a major source of the problem of lack of prayer in people’s lives. It will also uncover if mentoring is lacking in the prayer lives of our churches.

“What are the hardest elements of prayer for you?” The results of this question will give a guide to focus on the hardest obstacles of prayer, to deal with the major barriers that need to be overcome. Where should the greatest effort be brought to bear? Eight of the key elements in prayer are used in this question beginning with the most elementary and continuing to include the ACTS prayer model. These elements are: 1) Starting 2) Consistency, 3) Organization, 4) Variety, 5) Worship, 6) Confession / Repentance 7) Thanksgiving and 8) Supplication / Asking. Do older ministers have the same barriers as younger ministers?

“Do you feel close to God?” We know that the Christian experience is not a feeling but peace and joy are basic emotional components. A simple yes or no is asked.

“What could you do to feel closer to God?” Answer options are 1) Pray more; 2) Attend church more; 3) Be more submissive. I left this question open-ended for
further response by including the fourth option:  4) Other _________. The “other”
category will give us a variety of valuable insights.

“How many days a week do you have a quiet, devotional time?” This question
deals with consistency. Is it impractical to think that an everyday routine in prayer is
possible? Consistency is crucial. Answer options are 1) almost never; 2) 1 - 2 days;
3) 3 - 5 days; 4) almost every day.

“What do you do in your devotional time? (Check all that apply.)” This
question will give insight into the variety of the devotional time. Indications of strong and
weak points may surface. Answer options are: 1) Read the Bible; 2) Reflect and
meditate on the Bible reading; 3) Memorize Bible verses; 4) Use a devotional guide;
5) Talk to God; and 6) Listen to God.

“How much time do you devote each day for a quiet time?” Time alone in quiet
time is not the sole gauge of spirituality but it speaks volumes about discipline. Answer
options are 1) Less than 10 minutes; 2) 10 to 29 minutes; 3) 30 to 50 minutes; 4) 1
hour or more. To know that it is possible to quantify our devotional experience will
challenge us for more quality time with God.

“Have you ever tried to increase your devotional time?” Spending more time in
devotional time is important. Is the Holy Spirit leading us to more fellowship?

“Do you have personal goals for prayer; for ministry; for spiritual
development?” Each part of this question allows for a “yes” or “no” answer to be given.
The answers to this question can be used to see if the spiritual aspects are considered on a
par with ministry aspects. Which one of these elements will have the greatest priority?
“If God were to grant you three requests that relate to your personal prayer life, what would you ask?” This question strikes at the desire that is the minister’s heart for prayer. The answers to this question will divulge further areas to explore in prayer.

**The Prayer Life of the Church**

This is the third aspect of the survey. Answer to the following questions will give insight about how prayer integrates into the life of the respondent’s local church:

“Do you have a corporate prayer meeting?” The answer to this question shows whether a church has given up on prayer or has chosen another venue thought to be equally productive.

“How important do you think a corporate prayer meeting is?” Answer options are 1) Very important; 2) Important; 3) Of little importance 4) Please explain. This question is designed to see the passion for church prayer. If the answer is “Of little importance,” there may be another explanation or alternative prayer time that is effective.

“Please explain” opens the door for creative avenues for prayer.

“What are the goals of your corporate prayer meeting?” This is an essay question to discover any proactive thinking about corporate prayer time.

“Do you have someone who leads the prayer effort in your church?” Answer options are 1) No; 2) Yes, I do; 3) Yes, a staff person 4) Yes, a lay person. Leadership is vital. This question simply identifies who is in charge. The answer to this question may also imply that there is discipleship in play.

“Is there an organized prayer effort in each of your church ministries, such as Sunday School, Men’s Ministry, Women’s Ministry?” This question probes the deeper
issue of a prayer infrastructure in the church. It also provokes thought on the vision for the future.

This next question moves from the corporate prayer meeting to the corporate worship service. “Does prayer hold a prominent place in the church services?” Besides the yes or no answer option, an explanation is also requested. Creative ideas to expand prayer in the services should be forthcoming.

“List three reasons why many people have an ineffective prayer life.” The answers to this question will come from the prospective of the pastor as he looks at the flock. Identifying the problem is the first step toward a solution.

“What is the secret of the successful prayer lives of members of your church?” This is a hard question and probably can only be answered on a limited basis. It could provoke thought for a disciple to inquire insight from seasoned pray-ers.

“If God were to grant you three requests that relate to the corporate prayer life of your church, what would you ask?” The pastor’s heart’s desire will be divulged here. It will be interesting to note the common threads of desire.

“Have you ever had a strategy to implement prayer as a church priority?” Besides the yes or no answer option, an explanation is also requested. There is a move to make prayer a priority in churches across the country.

The final question on the survey is a general one about priorities in ministry. If you could prioritize your ministry from the following list, what would it look like? On a scale (with “1” being of greatest importance and “10” being of least importance) fill in the column at the left of the list and rate EACH of the needs of ministry as you see them. The left column allows the responder to indicate his own priorities for ideal ministry.
The responder is then asked: **From the same list, fill in the column at the right** and indicate how your ministry actually lines up today. **PLEASE DO NOT USE ANY NUMBER MORE THAN ONCE.** The answer options are not comprehensive but are as follows: 1) Good records and organization; 2) Good location; 3) Well-trained staff; 4) Biblical knowledge and application; 5) Personal prayer and Bible study; 6) Current technology (video screen, computer, Powerpoint, etc.); 7) Prayer meeting for corporate prayer; 8) Staff and Deacon accountability for spiritual growth; 9) Evangelism emphasis; 10) Time away for meditation. This question is structured in a manner to allow the responder to indicate their own priorities for ideal ministry and then contrast the actual reality of their present situation.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE REALITY CRYSTALLIZED

It was interesting to note that most respondents to the survey indicated they spend between 10 and 29 minutes in devotional time.

The data indicates that those age 50 years and older lead the other ages in praying one hour or more. With age comes more responsibility, such as children, grandchildren, and health issues. The older pray-er assumes responsibility for those in the family. It is also likely that age has brought with it a spiritual maturity born from experiencing the faithfulness of God in response to prayers. As faith grows, dependence and trust in God throughout changing circumstances becomes easier. If there is diligence
in spending time with God, the pray-er experiences many different aspects of prayer that can make the prayer time more meaningful and enjoyable.

The age group of 36-50 year olds came in second in the one hour or more range with 21%. No respondent in the age category between 26 – 35 broke into the one hour or more range. Age does make a difference in prayer habits.

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<th>10 - 29 minutes</th>
<th>30 - 50 minutes</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Educational status answers to the survey indicated that those holding Bachelors and Masters Degrees contributed to the norm of spending 10 – 29 devotional minutes, yet were also ahead in the 30 – 50 minute and 1 hour or more ranges.

Although 57% of seminary students spend the norm of 10 – 29 devotional minutes, 29% of them have moved up to the 1 hour or more category. Pastors’ responses were very similar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>less than 10</th>
<th>10 - 29 minutes</th>
<th>30 - 50 minutes</th>
<th>1 hour or more</th>
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<tr>
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<td>57%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>29%</td>
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</table>

Does salary affect one’s prayer life? In the responses received from the survey, the ones earning between $25,000 - $49,000, 22% indicated they pray one hour or more.
It is assumed that the position one holds in life at this stage gives more opportunity for time in prayer.

The question was asked “Have you ever tried to increase your quiet time?

The 91% figure shows there is a positive effort occurring toward spending more time with God.

It was assumed that there were few mentors in prayer. Yet 48% of those polled had been mentored in prayer. This percentage was not expected to be that high.
The question, “Do you feel close to God” was asked. 86% of those polled said they did. This is significant in light of the purported disillusionment with ministry.

When asked, “What could you do to feel closer to God,” 52% of the respondents chose the answer, “pray more.” Many volunteered other ideas that included Love Him & Fellowship with Him; Be more aware of His Presence; Practice God’s Presence more continually; Simply spending more time with Him; Fasting; Praying Scripture; Delight in Him; More Bible Study; Being led by the Spirit, Understand He must increase, I must decrease; and Quietness before God to listen to His leading.

Forty eight percent of the respondents indicated that they had devotions seven days a week. Consistency is very important. Eighty percent in the age 50 or older group said they had devotions everyday. It is not impractical to think that an every day routine in prayer is possible. But older people are more consistent.

When asked what do you do in devotional time, the two main spiritual disciplines of prayer and Bible study came in with the highest scores. The surprising figure was the 70% meditation. This discipline is not publicized yet had a strong showing. There was great room for improvement in memorization and journaling.
The question that asked respondents to rank the hardest elements of prayer gave options of starting, variety, thanksgiving, consistency, worship, supplication / asking, organization, and confession / repentance. Interestingly, the chosen top four hardest elements of prayer were consistent across age groups. These four are consistency (top choice of 3 out of 4 age groups); variety; starting; and organization. Organization was chosen as the hardest element for the over 50 age group. Consistency ranked fourth hardest for this group.

It looks like the church has not given up on the corporate prayer meeting with 84% saying they have such a gathering.
Eighteen percent of respondents said the corporate prayer meeting was important, and seventy five percent said this effort is very important, making a strong 93% showing.

Explanations of why corporate prayer is important included promotes humility before God; promotes unity as God’s Spirit works; teaches us intimacy with God; allows people to see and hear answered prayer for themselves and others; and without prayer, the church will not develop the vision nor experience the power that God intends. It is wonderful when the entire church unites in agreement as they intercede for the same purposes, goals, desires and direction.

Fifty six percent of respondents said that another person besides the Pastor leads the corporate prayer effort in their churches. This is a good sign that mentoring in prayer is also resulting in more leadership positions. When a lay person takes on the responsibility, it is a good indication that they are growing in their own spiritual lives and are being taught and encouraged to do the work of the ministry.
Three fourths of those polled said that prayer took a prominent place in the public services of the church. Many offered creative ideas to expand prayer in the services. Some of these ideas were to begin services with an “open altar” prayer time. Intercessory prayer for the lost and church needs could be included during the worship service. One church dedicates one Sunday morning service each year to pray for the persecuted church. Sometimes sick people are invited to come forward, church people surround them, lay hands on them and pray. This process could be repeated with missionaries leaving for the field or young people going on short term mission trips.

When asked if there was an organized prayer effort in each ministry, over half said “no.” This definitely could be improved upon. This answer has implications as to the church’s prayer infrastructure and future vision.

Why do many people have an ineffective prayer life? Answers included unconfessed sin; lack of discipline; lack of faith; wrong motivation; too much self reliance; lack of intimacy with God; lack of understanding of the importance of prayer; being too busy; not making prayer a priority; seeing few answers to prayer; and simply not knowing what to do.

When asked what the secret of success is in some people’s lives, ideas offered were true dependence on the Lord; a recognition of personal neediness; a fervent love for God; a passion to see God work in their own life and the lives of others; a belief that God answers prayer; consistency; matching prayers with God’s Word; a passionate worship life with God and writing down prayer requests and praises.

Common threads were revealed in the answers given to the question, “If God granted you three things relating to the corporate prayer life of your church, what would
you ask?” These were a better understanding of the power and purpose of prayer; a desire to see and feel God move in our lives; to see specific answers to prayer; and a desire to have more people – men – become involved in spending more time in prayer.

Most respondents said their church did not have a strategy to implement prayer as a church priority. Those that did gave these ideas: prayer partner ministries, concerts of prayer, prayer summits, prayer chains, and one church that started a prayer hour instead of having a Sunday School hour.

The final question compares priorities in ministry between the ideal and the reality of the ministry as it actually presents. Ten choices were offered. The answers showed that the highest priority ideally would be given to personal prayer and Bible study. Top choice of actual ministry was Bible knowledge and education.

The second ideal ministry choice in importance was Biblical knowledge and education. The actual ministry priority was personal prayer and Bible study.

Evangelism ranked third and corporate prayer ranked fourth in both the ideal and actual ministry categories. That outcome is not surprising. Evangelism always rates high on the priority list and is viewed as something that must come after personal prayer and Bible study and Biblical knowledge and education. This aligns well with scripture.

Time away for meditation ranked fifth in the ideal category. This discipline is desired to move up in priority. There is a hunger for intimacy with Christ. Yet time away ranked seventh in actual ministry. Location was chosen as number five in actual ministry.

Number six ideal was a well-trained staff. Actual ministry ranked staff and deacon accountability.
Number seven ideal was staff and deacon accountability with time away for meditation in actuality.

Location ranked number eight as an ideal. Good record keeping and organization was chosen as number eight in actual ministry description.

Good record keeping and organization ranked ninth as an ideal with a well-trained staff chosen in actual ministry.

The ideal and actual selections match on the final ministry priority. It is significant that technology is rated last.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHALLENGE OF TRANSITION

User-friendly Christianity is losing its youngest group of worshipers. "'User-friendly’ was first used to describe software and hardware that is easy for the novice to operate. Applied to the church, it describes churches that offer a decidedly benign and non-challenging ministry model. In practice, it has become an excuse for importing worldly amusements into the church in an attempt to attract non-Christian "seekers" or the "unchurched" by appealing to their fleshly interests.”¹

The disenchantment of God has been no accident. For the last 25 years, a whatever-works, felt-needs theology has all but obscured the Three-in-One, veiled-in-flesh God of the Grand Narrative. What we have left in the God-of-the-bare-grey-box is nothing less than baptized Unitarianism–God Generic, sprinkled with just enough Christianese to justify the pastor’s seminary education, the congregation’s fading denominational affiliation, or simply the word church on the marquis. What’s worse, it is the mono-God gone utilitarian . . . the great Whatever on-call to make your life whatever you want it to be. If historic worship is first and foremost about God, then disenchanted worship is about human units in their individual padded seats. As a recent rental car commercial intones, “It’s all about you.” Worship of the disenchantment takes that phrase seriously.²

The trend of the user-friendly church is now viewed as passing away to give place to a dawning spiritualized culture.


In addition, understanding the various generations comprising our congregations is paramount as we try to minister to everyone and craft a format where all can learn to pray and grow in Christ in unity. Because the practice of prayer is such a challenging discipline, it is imperative to know how to best capture the attention of each generation for maximum impact. A comprehension of differing learning styles and mind sets will be part of the tools we need so we can successfully respond to an all important statement, “Remember who you are talking to” [emphasis mine].

The Builder, Baby-Boom, and Generations X and Y are all in need of the Gospel. They each have their unique ways of understanding information. It is critical that we communicate with them in their specific language style. Note the differences:

1. The Builder Generation – people born between 1923 - 1945. They grew up reading books and listening to radio. The learning style that marks most of this group is visual. They feel very comfortable doing what they have learned to do, such as holding the hymn book and reading the words and notes. A lost feeling creeps over them if they can’t hold something and read it.

2. The Baby-Boom Generation – This segment was born between 1946 and 1964. The “Me Generation” is a term often used to describe this group. They grew up watching television. Their learning style “appears to be auditory, with a mixture of visual thrown in.”

3. Generation X – This segment was born between 1965 and 1983. They were impacted by Sesame Street, MTV and the early stages of computer technology. This group enjoys a hands-on approach to learning. “Their involvement with technology creates a desire in them to learn through experimentation.”

4. Generation Y – This segment was born between 1984 and 2002. They are Internet savvy, using high speed computers, I-pods, and other forms of current technology. Generation Y are active learners. Their action-oriented, multitasking approach to life creates a kinesthetic style of learning. They need to be highly involved in the learning process. Verbal lectures are not helpful with this generation.³

The above explanation shows that when various generations are present together for worship, the planning of the worship time needs to be successful in devising a service that will impact and encourage the participation of all segments. This is a monumental challenge. Just some of the changes that are happening are fresh God-encounters, collaborative worship planning, and preaching that is not the centerpiece of the service but just one of the pieces. “Effective communication with these generations will likely involve use of art, music, poetry, media, the Internet, drama and lots and lots of stories.”

Brian McLaren says, “The way we traditionally expressed Christianity may be in trouble, but the future may hold new expressions of the Christian faith every bit as effective, faithful, meaningful, and world-transforming as those we’ve known so far."

There is anticipation in the evangelical world that vintage Christianity is on the way to our towns. The term “vintage Christianity is defined by Dan Kimball, pastor of Vintage Faith Church in Santa Cruz CA, as follows:

“Vintage Christianity . . . unapologetically focuses on kingdom living by disciples of Jesus. A post-seeker-sensitive worship gathering promotes, rather than hides, full displays of spirituality (extended worship, religious symbols, liturgy, extensive use of Scripture and readings, etc.) so that people can experience and be transformed by the message of Jesus. This approach is done, however, with renewed life and is still “sensitive” as clear instruction and regular explanation are given to help seekers understand theological terms and spiritual exercises. (Melinda, Stand to Reason Blog, comment posted February 27, 2006)"

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In his book, *The Emerging Church – Vintage Christianity for New Generations*, Dan Kimball makes the following observation:

The unspoken motto of the seeker-sensitive movement has been a line from the Kevin Costner movie, *Field of Dreams*, “If you build it, they will come.” And they came. Hundreds of thousands of people now attend churches which used the strategy of producing a seeker-sensitive service with great preaching, great music, great dramas, and using great modern facilities. Some leaders shifted much of their evangelistic focus in the church to putting on a production-heavy worship service, believing that if one produces a relevant, quality service, seekers will come. However, this evangelism strategy, which works great for a modern mind-set, will need to be rethought when it comes to reaching emerging generations.\(^6\)

Almost every pastor who remains in ministry any length of time either becomes a participant or a spectator in the emerging church. The various ways pastors are responding are:

- **Spectators** – Those who know that changes are taking place inside and outside the church, but seem frozen in time. Because they are unable to relate or respond, they are willing to view it at a distance.

- **Agitators** – They know changes are “in the air” but choose to rise up against the changes; attempting to hang on to the “good old days.”

- **Instigators** – This group is not afraid of change & want be on the leading edge. They urge on new propositions.\(^7\)

There are also many who fall into the category of being cautious and yet open to change. Their transition time would be much slower.

The title of Chapter Two in Kimball’s book is “How I Moved from Being Seeker-Sensitive to Post-Seeker-Sensitive.” Kimball explains that his teen / young adult seeker-sensitive model of ministry stressed the importance of removing ‘religious barriers’ by


using rock bands, videos, special lighting, even a disco ball hanging from the ceiling in an attempt to create a non-church, non-threatening environment. Each week, they taught strong messages on sex, self-esteem, and all the typical issues that teenagers face. God used this strategy and many teens came to Christ. His group grew from eleven teens to several hundred.

This seeker-sensitive strategy was looked upon as “contemporary”-- but contemporary does mean “temporary”. Kimball notes: “Little by little, I began to recognize that non-Christian students, who had once been impressed by all of our programming, dramas, media clips, and topical messages, were showing less and less interest.”

Teenagers that are bombarded with accessible technology, special effects in video games and a fast-paced life, “coming to church for yet another fast-paced experience was losing its impact.” The glitter was losing its glamour.

The first waves of change from the emerging post-Christian generation are coming to our towns everywhere. The term “pluralism” stands out in our post-Christian and post-seeker-sensitive world. As immigration increases and various new ethnic pockets sprout up in towns across America, we will experience that pluralism is not just a word to describe the religious makeup of New York and California. Buddhism, Wicca, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, etc., all compete for the hearts of young people.

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9 Ibid., 33.
One of the men of this writer’s church was expressing his desire to reach a Bosnian enclave about ten minutes from our church. This writer asked, “What God do they worship?” The towns of America are becoming a missionary frontier.

Everywhere, it seems, the message of “God loves you” is being met with the reply, “Which God are you talking about?”

The question that many are wrestling with is “Why aren’t young people coming to my church anymore?” Tom Klegg and Warren Bird in their book, Lost in America, claim that “the unchurched population of the United States is now the largest mission field in the English-speaking world, and the fifth largest globally.”

Kimball says, “The missional church is sadly forgotten amidst the programming, preaching and pleasing.”

The church has become a provider of all kinds of religious services and goods. People have become consumers, moving from one religious store to another for the best deal in town. Their deciding factor is, “Which church can meet my needs today?”

Three very positive trends in the emerging church are precursors of things to come: 1) **Worship is becoming the core feature of spiritual life.** Worship in the emerging church is less about looking out for what is on the cutting edge and more about moving back into our spiritual center with Jesus as our sole focus. We are simply going back to a vintage form of worship which has been around for as long as the Church has been in existence.”

Experiential worship as opposed to spectator worship meets the

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deepest need of our heart. The focus of this style worship is not the precision of the band or the quality of the singing or the flow of the service. The focus is on the One worthy to be worshiped. Rev. 4:11-NKJV says, “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for You have created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.” A. W. Tozer stated “Worship is the missing jewel of the evangelical church.” Churches have been plagued by spectator worship. “Spectator worship” is an oxymoron. The Scripture states that if an unbeliever experiences true worship that is convincing, they will be drawn to worship God and will also testify that God is really in that place, as illustrated in 1 Cor. 14:24-25 (KJV). Hungry hearts are attracted to Christ by genuine worship. Across the country this is becoming a reality for those who are experientially worshiping God. Some churches are leading worship from the rear of the sanctuary to underscore that worship is not about us — it is about the Lord - our Audience of One. The “missing jewel” is being rediscovered.

2) **Worshipers are becoming spiritual self-feeders instead of spiritual consumers, whose stamina does not depend on whether they attended a “top-notch service” last Sunday.** Dallas Williard, in *Renovation of the Heart*, states, “We must flatly say that one of the greatest contemporary barriers of meaningful spiritual formation in Christlikeness is overconfidence in the spiritual efficacy of ‘regular church services,’ of whatever kind they may be. Though they are vital, they are not enough. It is that

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Regular participation in church services is vital for a healthy spiritual lifestyle but if that is all there is, sickness will soon set in. Many are spiritually ill and don’t know why. Self-feeding on God’s Word is a repeating theme throughout the Bible. Self-feeding is best taught in one-on-one discipleship. If this is not happening, there is not a church service anywhere that can make up the difference.

3) **The focus of evangelistic efforts is shifting from “events” to taking Christ out into the community.** Churches work very hard to produce events that cannot be duplicated when the visitor comes back to check out the church on a regular Sunday. What a let-down! Taking Christ out into the community, rubbing shoulders with people and working with them in such efforts as the local Volunteer Fire Company and other local organizations or sports programs, is on the rise. Acts of service help to build a stronger community and build relationships between the church and the people of our area. Our churches should be bodies that contribute to the vitality of community life.

Dr. Blackaby said, “When you see the Father at work around you, that is your invitation to adjust your life to Him and join Him in that work.”\(^\text{15}\) There is no doubt that God is already at work in the hearts of the emerging church. This new generation is learning to be true worshipers, self-feeders, and is intentionally connecting with their community. As these trends imply, the emerging church that is fast approaching our

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towns is not only leading us into the future, but is also taking a refreshing step back to the past -- where vintage Christianity manifests the passion and power of the early church.

One of the things most feared in churches is change, but it is one of the things most needed. It is resisted and craved all at the same time. There is a delusion that the church is young if there are not too many grey-haired persons in the congregation. The people ages 18 through 35 are the ones most lacking and most needed. There are a few of them but they either grew up in the church or transferred from another church. Even the small number of the “Y” generation that frequents evangelical churches are restless. They want more.

More and more emerging generations who were raised in the church are saying that there must be something more to “church” than what they have experienced. The systems we use to teach them how to be disciples of Jesus are not connecting with them like they did for generations past. Emerging generations say it just doesn’t “feel right” or “fit right” anymore. They want to be disciples of Jesus, but how we approach disciple-making needs to shift right alongside their shifting values.\(^\text{16}\)

Some of these restless ones are leaving the traditional church to discover how to be a follower of Jesus, to find a way that feels good to them. I talked with a young mother who told me that she and her husband recently left their evangelical megachurch even though they didn’t want to. She felt that in many ways she “outgrew” what her church offered her to participate in. She couldn’t even put her finger on exactly what she was looking for. She said that being in her church’s worship services was like watching a rerun of a 1980’s TV show over and over again. It didn’t challenge her because it felt so programmatic, constrictive, and limiting.\(^\text{17}\)


\(^{17}\) Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2003), xii.
There are many who are hoping that the emerging church, with its emphasis on the past (vintage Christianity) will bring about a genuine revival of worship, prayer and the spiritual discipline that the seeker church and the static churches (traditional, reformed, liturgical, and charismatic) have been unable to bring to fruition.
CHAPTER SIX
THE PASTOR’S COMMITMENT TO SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

Without the Pastor’s commitment and spiritual transformation, the plan to make prayer the core feature in the evangelical church has little chance to succeed. Prayer must be the core feature in each ministry leader’s life. The personal prayer life of the leader is paramount because it forms the foundation of spiritual transformation and consequently effective ministry. The highest goal of each minister is godliness and the path to godliness is discipline. “[7] But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. [8] For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:7-8 NKJV).

Paul’s habit of instruction is both negative and positive. First, he encourages his understudy in ministry, Timothy, to resist the temptation to waste time over godless ideas and old wives’ tales. Then he tells Timothy to take his time and “exercise yourself” toward godliness. The word exercise (gumnazō), to train, is a present imperative verb. “The present imperative only occurs in the active and middle voices in the New Testament. In the active voice, it may indicate a command to do something in the future which involves continuous or repeated action, or, when it is negated, a command to stop
doing something.\textsuperscript{1} The command is absolutely essential. Disciplined training is the path over which godliness is achieved (toward \textit{(πους)}, in the direction of, godliness). This command indicated that godliness training is each believer’s responsibility.

The synonyms of godliness are varied in the New Testament, either stated or implied. They are: (1) righteousness - “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21 NKJV); (2) growth - “but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen” (2 Pet. 3:18 NKJV); (3) holiness - “For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness” (Heb. 12:10 NKJV); (4) Christlikeness - “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18 NKJV); and (5) transformation - “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2 NKJV). Training in the spiritual disciplines that lead to godliness is a lifelong pursuit. Its product is the transformed (Godly) life.

God’s eternal plan ensures believers that each one will ultimately experience Christlikeness. We “shall be like Him” (1 John 3:2). Christ will grant Christlikeness to us when Jesus comes again, but until then, He commands us to grow toward Christlikeness. It is to be our passion. “Make every effort to live in peace with all men

and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord’” (Heb. 12:14  NIV).

Disciplining ourselves for the purpose of godliness is the goal. Donald Whitney states,

Godly people are disciplined people. It has always been so. Call to mind some heroes of church history — Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Bunyan, Susanna Wesley, George Whitefield, Lady Huntingdon, Jonathan and Sarah Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, George Muller — they were all disciplined people. In my own pastoral and personal Christian experience, I can say that I’ve never known a man or woman who came to spiritual maturity except through discipline. Godliness comes through discipline. ¹

Dallas Willard observed,

First, it [the church] must take the need for human transformation as seriously as do modern revolutionary movements. The modern negative critique of Christianity arose in the first place because the church was not faithful to its own message—it failed to take human transformation seriously as a real, practical issue to be dealt with in realistic terms. Fortunately, there are today many signs that the church in all its divisions is preparing to correct this failure. ²

This transformation is possible as we become like Jesus, following Him and practicing the kinds of activities that characterized His lifestyle. His activities were solitude, silence, prayer, sacrificial living, the study and meditation of God’s Word, and serving others. Our Lord’s example is a life of preparation that was spent out of the public eye. Willard describes it this way:

In spite of the auspicious events surrounding his birth, He grew up in the seclusion of a simple family in lowly Nazareth. At the age of twelve, as Luke 2:45 tells us, He exhibited astonishing understanding “in the midst of the doctors” in Jerusalem. Yet He returned to His home with His parents and for the next eighteen years was subject to the demands of His family. Then, after receiving baptism at the hands of


His cousin, John the Baptist, Jesus was in solitude and fasted for a month and a half. Afterward, as His ministry proceeded, He was alone much of the time, often spending the entire night in solitude and prayer before serving the needs of His disciples and hearers the following day.\(^4\)

The culture of our time is not suited to Christ’s road to godliness. Psychiatrist M. Scott Peck observes:

There are many people I know who possess a vision of [personal] evolution yet seem to lack the will for it. They want, and believe it is possible, to skip over the discipline, to find an easy shortcut to sainthood. Often they attempt to attain it by simply imitating the superficialities of saints, retiring to the desert or taking up carpentry. Some even believe that by such imitation they have really become saints and prophets, and are unable to acknowledge that they are still children and face the painful fact that they must start at the beginning and go through the middle.\(^5\)

The only way this spiritual culture can achieve the expectations of Christ is through spiritual transformation. The most radical of our Lord’s commands, “Go the second mile,” and “Turn the other cheek,” can only be achieved by a person who has been radically transformed. The present hunger for the transformed life is a result of the failings of the untransformed life. Our current spiritual culture has seen what they can do and they are not happy with what they see. It always was a well-known fact that “True character transformation begins . . . in the pure grace of God and is continually assisted by it.”\(^6\)

We are just turning the corner from seeker-sensitive to post seeker-sensitive.

The transition is addressed by Dan Kimball, “Little by little, I began to recognize that


non-Christian students who had once been impressed by all of our programming, dramas, media clips, and topical messages were showing less and less interest. Bombarded with accessible technology, special effects in video games and a fast-paced life, “coming to church for yet another fast-paced experience was losing its impact.”

In 1978, Richard Foster published his *Celebration of Discipline* and reported that his research could not turn up a single book published on the subject of fasting from 1861 to 1954. Books on fasting are now plentiful.

Throughout church history there were always some of God’s prophets who could see clearly the bankrupt church.

They are well-illustrated in a story--probably apocryphal--that is told about one of the great thinkers of the Roman Catholic church, St. Thomas Aquinas. The story goes that, while walking amid the splendors of Rome, a friend said to St. Thomas, “We Christians certainly no longer have to say to the world, ‘Silver and gold have we none.’” To this St. Thomas replied: “But neither can we say to the lame man, ‘In the Name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk’” As the shift settled in, the power diminished, just as St. Thomas Aquinas saw it. The church of his time could profess to dispense forgiveness but could not command a healing life force.

Dallas Willard lists his version of the spiritual disciplines by dividing them into two categories: “Disciplines of Abstinence - solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, secrecy, sacrifice” and “Disciplines of Engagement - study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, and submission.”

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8 Ibid., 158.

and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11 NKJV).

Explaining the Disciplines of Abstinence, Willard continues:

Reminding us that the word “asceticism” is the correlate of a Greek word for *training*, as in athletes training for a race, W. R. Inge notes that disciplines of abstinence should be practiced by everyone, leading to a sober & moderate use of all God’s gifts.\(^{11}\)

If we feel that any habit or pursuit, harmless in itself, is keeping us from God and sinking us deeper in the things of earth; if we find that things which others can do with impunity are for us the occasion of falling, then abstinence is our only course. Abstinence alone can recover for us the real value of what should have been for our help but which has been an occasion of falling. . . It is necessary that we should steadily resolve to give up anything that comes between ourselves and God.\(^{12}\)

Thinking of spiritual discipline as spiritual exercise is vital. Retreating to the study and prayer place is like going to the gym to use a weight machine. As the physical workout produces strength, so does the spiritual.

The role of spiritual disciplines can be illustrated by the story in Luke 19:1-10. Zachaeus placed himself in the way of Jesus and he was changed. “Think of the Spiritual Disciplines as ways we can place ourselves in the path of God’s grace and seek Him much as Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus placed themselves in Jesus’ path and sought Him. As with these two seekers, we will find Him willing to have mercy on us and to have

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communion with us. And in the course of time we will be transformed by Him from one level of Christlikeness to another (2 Cor. 3:18).”\textsuperscript{13}

Solomon’s counsel in Prov. 23:12 (NASB) is “Apply your heart to discipline.”

Donald Whitney explores this idea further:

Consider the people who will work hard at learning to play an instrument, knowing that it takes years to acquire the skills, who will practice hard to lower their golf score or to improve their sports performance, knowing it takes years to become proficient, who will discipline themselves throughout their career because they know it takes sacrifice to succeed. These same people will give up quickly when they find the Spiritual Disciplines don’t come easily, as though becoming like Jesus was not supposed to take much effort.\textsuperscript{14}

William Barclay illustrated the danger in neglecting the Spiritual disciplines. Commenting on the difference between being disciplined and undisciplined, he stated,

Nothing was ever achieved without discipline; and many an athlete and many a man has been ruined because he abandoned discipline and let himself grow slack. Coleridge is the supreme tragedy of indiscipline. Never did so great a mind produce so little. He left Cambridge University to join the army; but he left the army because, in spite of all his erudition, he could not rub down a horse; he returned to Oxford and left without a degree. He began a paper called \textit{The Watchman} which lived for ten numbers and then died. It has been said of him: “He lost himself in visions of work to be done, that always remained to be done. Coleridge had every poetic gift but one--the gift of sustained and concentrated effort.” No one ever reached any eminence, and no one having reached it ever maintained it, without discipline.\textsuperscript{15}


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 19.

Watching an accomplished guitarist or pianist gives an impression that they have talent not achievable to others, when in reality their skill has been achieved through extreme disciplined practice. Discipline brings freedom. In sports, woodworking, counseling, even parents who manage a home enjoy a level of freedom and expertise because they have been disciplined. Elton Trueblood discusses the relationship between discipline and freedom by saying,

We have not advanced very far in our spiritual lives if we have not encountered the basic paradox of freedom . . . that we are most free when we are bound. But not just any way of being bound will suffice; what Matters is the character of our binding. The one who would be an athlete, but who is unwilling to discipline his body by regular exercise and abstinence, is not free to excel on the field or the track. His failure to train rigorously denies him the freedom to run with the desired speed and endurance. With one concerted voice, the giants of the devotional life apply the same principle to the whole of life: Discipline is the price of freedom. 16

From the list of disciplines, Bible assimilation and prayer are of primary importance because they lay the groundwork for all the other disciplines. In his book Donald Whitney explains, “No Spiritual Discipline is more important than the intake of God’s Word.” 17

A diet of the milk and meat of the Word is crucial. Bible assimilation begins with hearing God’s Word. “He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the Word of God and obey it" (Luke 11:28 NIV). The purpose of hearing is obedience and consequently - Christlikeness. “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message

16 Elton Trueblood, Leadership, vol. 10, no. 3 summer 1989, page 60.

is heard through the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17 NIV). Hearing the Word in the church is a most common way to develop faith. But other methods are extremely effective, as well, such as radio, television, tapes and shortwave radio. “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching” (1 Tim. 4:13 NIV).

Preparing to hear the Word of God is practiced in different ways. Whitney tells of a congregation of Korean Christians that used his church building for their midweek service:

I was impressed by the way they entered the worship center. Whether they were first to arrive or came in after the service had already started, they immediately bowed in prayer for several moments before arranging their belongings, unbuttoning their coat, or acknowledging the presence of anyone else. This served as an effective reminder to their own hearts and to everyone else of their main purpose for that time. Most churches I’m familiar with could stand more of this kind of thing.  

Jesus would often question people about the Bible by saying, “Have you not read . . .”. He said, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’” (Matt. 4:4 NIV). The Apostle Paul added, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16 NIV). “Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near” (Rev. 1:3 NIV). Those who read & heed will be blessed.

British preacher John Blanchard writes,

Surely we only have to be realistic and honest with ourselves to know how regularly we need to turn to the Bible. How often do we face problems,

temptation and pressure? Every day! Then how often do we need instruction, guidance and greater encouragement? Every day! To catch all these felt needs up into an even greater issue, how often do we need to see God’s fact, hear His voice, feel His touch, know His power? The answer to all these questions is the same: every day!\(^{19}\)

Reading the Scripture is not our final destination, it is just the start toward assimilation. Eugene Peterson states,

Reading Scripture is not the same as listening to God. To do one is not necessarily to do the other. But they are often assumed to be the same thing. Pastors, who spend more of their time reading the Scriptures than most Christians do (not because of their devoutness but because of their job), make this unwarranted assumption with alarming frequency.\(^{20}\)

There has continued to be an exhortation to read the Word of God. With the proliferation of many versions of English Bibles there is always the hope held that an easier to read new version will help the reader’s spiritual life and so the Bible quest goes on. Peterson continues,

Listening and reading are not the same thing. They involve different senses. In listening we use our ears; in reading we use our eyes. We listen to the sound of a voice; we read marks on paper. These differences are significant and have profound consequences. Listening is an interpersonal act; it involves two or more people in fairly close proximity. Reading involves one person with a book written by someone who can be miles away or centuries dead, or both. The listener is required to be attentive to the speaker and is more or less at the speaker’s mercy. For the reader it is quite different, since the book is at the reader’s mercy. It may be carried around from place to place, opened or shut at whim, read or not read. When I read a book, the book does not know if I am paying attention or not; when I listen to a person, the person knows very well whether I am paying attention or not. In listening, another initiates the process; when I read I initiate the process. In reading I open the book and attend to the words. I can read by myself; I cannot


listen by myself. In listening the speaker is in charge; in reading the reader is in charge.\(^{21}\)

Reading over listening is much preferred. Reading does not increase our capacity to listen. In the pre-Gutenberg world, Scripture was read publicly so that non-readers, who were a majority of the hearers could listen to God. Reading was an oral act and a community gathering. People read to King Ahasuerus to prepare him for sleep. “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near (Rev. 1:3 NRSV). Today, nearly all reading is silent with no connection to a living voice. Peterson explains,

Pastors must not only notice; they must counterattack. Given the circumstances, this is not easy. Gutenberg gave me an inexpensive book that I can own and carry with me wherever I go, encouraging the illusion that I have its contents in my pocket or purse, a possession over which I exercise control. My schooling gave me an authoritative text in which I can look up reliable information regarding the furniture of heaven and the temperature of hell. My consumerism gave me a best-selling manual that I can use to make life better on gloomy nights and to whip my congregation into a shape fit for eternity. I live, am educated, and make my living in a world that treats all books in this way and makes no exception for a book just because it is blessed with the adjective “holy.” And so the speaking voice of God and the listening ear of the human — the very things that led to the writing, reading, copying, and translating of Scripture in the first place — are given a quiet and decent burial. Paul was right: “the letter kills” (2 Cor. 3:6 NIV).\(^{22}\)

To many, the Word has become dry, lifeless and disappointing. We must listen to God speak as we read. “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of


\(^{22}\) Ibid., 100.
Do not expect to master the Bible in a day, or a month, or a year. Rather expect often to be puzzled by its contents. It is not all equally clear. Great men of God often feel like absolute novices when they read the Word. The apostle Peter said that there were some things hard to understand in the epistles of Paul (2 Peter 3:16). I am glad he wrote those words because I have felt that often. So do not expect always to get an emotional charge or a feeling of quiet peace when you read the Bible. By the grace of God you may expect that to be a frequent experience, but often you will get no emotional response at all. Let the Word break over your heart and mind again and again as the years go by, and imperceptibly there will come great changes in your attitude and outlook and conduct.  

Memorizing God’s Word must also be a part of our growth in Godliness. When the Scripture is stored in the mind, it becomes available for the Holy Spirit to take and use as it is needed.

The Holy Spirit is faithful to bring the verse to the mind as the sword of the Spirit is about to be used. “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph. 6:17 NKJV). There is a great illustration in Matt. 4:1-11 about Jesus using the sword of the Spirit. Each time a temptation was hurled at Jesus, His response was a quotation from the Word of God.

“Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And apply your mind to my knowledge; For it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, That they may be ready on your lips. So that your trust may be in the Lord, I have taught you today, even you” (Prov. 22:17-19 NASB). “Keep them with you” certainly pertains to Scripture memorization.

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Memorization and witnessing go hand in hand. Peter was inspired by the Holy Spirit to preach in Acts 2:4-10. Much of what he said consisted of quotations from the Old Testament.

Recently, while presenting the message about Christ to a man, he said something that brought to mind a verse I had memorized. I quoted that verse and it was the turning point in a conversation that resulted in him professing faith in Christ. The same kind of thing happens frequently in counseling conversations. But until the verses are hidden in the heart, they aren’t available to use with the mouth.  

When Dawson Trotman, founder of the Christian organization called The Navigators, was converted to faith in Christ in 1926, he began memorizing one Bible verse every day. He was driving a truck for a lumber yard in Los Angeles at the time. While driving around town he would work on his verse for that day. During the first three years of his Christian life he memorized his first thousand verses. If he could memorize over three hundred verses a year while driving, surely we can find ways to memorize a few.  

Dallas Willard said in this regard:

As a pastor, teacher, and counselor I have repeatedly seen the transformation of inner and outer life that comes simply from memorization and mediation upon Scripture. Personally, I would never undertake to pastor a church or guide a program of Christian education that did not involve a continuous program of memorization of the choicest passages of Scripture for people of all ages.

Reading, listening, memorizing and applying the Word of God is the foundation of a strong prayer life.

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25 Ibid., 40.

The second feature of the leader’s growth into Godliness is a plan to commit to a Divine appointment with the C.E.O. of our life and ministry. This plan begins by not charting a new course, but by emulating an old one.

“Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice (Ps. 55:17 NKJV). “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know” (Jer. 33:3 NKJV). We need to follow the practice of our Lord as stated in Mark 1:35, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.”

Set a time to meet the Lord before meeting people. An exact time will work for some; a general time (such as the first appointment of the day) will work for others. This practice shows the Lord His priority in our life. In this way, Matt. 6:33, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” becomes more than lip service.

This appointment can be structured in several ways. A notebook is vital. The motto, “The right way to pray is to write it all down” may be used. Developing the prayer notebook into categories can be the impetus that is needed to encourage the beginner that prayer is actually possible.

The category of PRAISE is sure to become a favorite of the one who prays. By encouraging the prayerful person to record at least three things each day for which they are thankful and want to praise God for, this category will soon require more and more space in the prayer notebook. Praying these praises back to God on the subsequent days will enable the person to apply God’s Word to his / her life and experience the most thrilling spiritual experiences. “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His
courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His Name” (Ps. 100:4 NKJV). Praise enables the prayerful person to join the throng around the throne. “But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel” (Ps. 22:3 NKJV); following in the tradition of the Levites: “to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at evening” (1 Chron. 23:30 NKJV).

Praise enables the praying person to love God back. He is the One who has initiated love (“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” Rom. 5:8 NKJV) but has asked for love in return (“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. [6] "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. [7] You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” Deut. 6:5-7 NKJV).

Praise categorizes the one praising as a “seeker” and this, too, is an act of love; showing God that He does not have to seek us for worship, but He is being sought for the purpose of worship. “Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near” (Isaiah 55:6 NKJV). “The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing” (Ps. 34:10 NKJV). “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarer of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6 NKJV).

The category of CONFESSION is vital for a healthy prayer life. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9 NKJV). The forgiveness spoken of is the cleansing of the
conscience. The sins of all believers have been forgiven on the cross and they have now been given the righteousness of Christ. This 1 John 1:9 verse also refers to the deepest cleansing; the release from the guilt of the sins of the day. The goal of the believer each day is to serve the Lord with a clear (pure) conscience. The Apostle Paul said, “Timothy, I thank God for you. He is the God I serve with a clear conscience, just as my ancestors did. Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers” (2 Tim. 1:3 NLT).

The believer is commanded to keep his conscience clear: “Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak evil against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ” (1 Pet. 3:16 NLT). This is done by confession.

The Old Testament atonement never accounted for this provision. “For the gifts and sacrifices that the priests offer are not able to cleanse the consciences of the people who bring them” (Heb. 9:9 NLT). But now, the believer’s conscience is cleansed; the guilt is removed; and the confidence in the presence of God is available for powerful prayer. “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

[22] And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (1 John 3:21-22 NKJV).

Believers lose the ability to pray effectively if confession is not a part of their daily routine. It precipitates an eagerness to face God in humble prayer. Confession is an expression of humility, and humility is vital for prayer.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PLAN

Once the spiritual discipline of the leader has been established, proliferation of the prayer habit in the church is ready to begin. Introducing the “Divine Appointment” to the church is a much easier task when the pastor is keeping his own “Divine Appointment.” The simplicity of the program is the secret of its user friendliness.

Messages, lessons and scriptural exhortation produce much guilt without a plan of action or a very practical application.

Receiving, reading, researching, remembering, and reflecting on the Word are all useless if we fail to put them into practice. We must become “doers of the Word” (James 1:22 KJV). This is the hardest step of all, because Satan fights it so intensely. He doesn’t mind you going to Bible studies as long as you don’t do anything with what you learn.

Jesus said, “Everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matt. 7:24 NIV). Jesus also pointed out that God’s blessing comes from obeying the truth, not just knowing it (John 13:17 NIV).

God’s Word exposes our motives, points out our faults, rebukes our sin, and expects us to change. It is human nature to resist change, so applying God’s Word is hard work. This is why it is so important to discuss your personal applications with other people.¹

Introductory Message to Congregation

The message for the congregation’s inspiration and instruction is entitled, “Developing a Prayer Habit to Last a Lifetime.” There are three main principles that are the foundations of this prayer habit.

The first principle is Developing an Intentional Appointment with our Chief Executive Officer. This introduction stresses the need of fellowship with Jesus in prayer and how the fruit of prayer will be developed. John 15: 1-7 is a key biblical section on how one can be transformed by “abiding in the Vine” and must be clearly understood by the church. Jesus analogizes the believer’s experience to the fruitful vine. Many trees are planted for beauty. The vine is planted for fruit, prolific fruit. There is no beauty in the Vine. This is an analogy of the vine and Christ.

Verse 1: “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.” No one cares for the vineyard like the gardener. He watches over his vineyard with meticulous care.

Verse 2: “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away, . .” . The branch that does not choose to bear fruit, loses the opportunity to bear fruit. Fruit bearing is a choice. The power to bear fruit is available to every believer equally. This is stated in Eph. 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, . . “.

Verse 2 - Every branch that chooses to bear fruit “ . . He prunes that it may bear more fruit.” Prunes, (kathariō) -- purifies: “For then would they not have ceased to be offered” (Heb. 10:2 NKJV). For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.” More fruit is predicated by cleansing. “If you keep yourself
pure, you will be a utensil God can use for His purpose. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21 NLT).

One of the means of cleansing is the Word. Verse 3 - “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.” “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth.”

In effect, in verse 4 Jesus says you must be intentional — “Abide in Me.” Abide (meno) remain, continue, beseech, i.e., spend time with me. Abide is an aorist imperative. The branch has no power to produce spiritual fruit. It can produce activity and religiosity, but not spiritual fruit.

Verse 5 - “I” is emphatic and so is “you”. Jesus is emphasizing that the role of the branch is not the role of the vine. The vine produces life. The branch demonstrates and exhibits that life to the world. The branch is the fruit hanger. The emphasis of the verse is “. . .without Me you can do nothing.” The design or position of the branch makes no difference. It is the Lord Who is the Life Source. “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4 NKJV).

“The vine is one of the noblest of all trees, and produces the most abundant fruit; but it is one of its peculiarities that all its strength is spent on the fruit, and that its branches are utterly valueless for all other purposes.”

Verse 6 - the branch is separated from the vine, the branch withers. The beauty and vitality is lost because of the break in the flow of life reaching into the branch.

Verse 7 - “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” Jesus says this is the promise of prayer if you spend...
time with Him and His words spend time with you. Your desire becomes the sanctified desire of Ps. 37:4, “Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” This pertains to a desire that has been sanctified through delighting oneself in the Lord or spending time with Him.

Jesus is the supreme example of prayer. “While Jesus was here on earth, He offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the One who could deliver Him out of death. And God heard His prayers because of His reverence for God” (Heb. 5:7 NL T). Jesus also had His “Divine Appointment.” “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed” (Mark 1:35 NKJV). He, as the Son of God, subordinated Himself to His Heavenly Father. And in the morning sought the will of His Father Who sent Him.

This early morning practice was something He had been taught by his devoted parents. “Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice” (Ps. 55:17 NKJV). It is well documented in Scripture. “O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water” (Ps. 63:1 NKJV).

This intentional plan of prayer can be remembered by three things: 1) Set a time – appointments are made by setting a time and meeting place at that appointed time; 2) Record the time – This feature is a way to quantify and track progress; and 3) Increase the time – Time spent at the Throne of Grace produces a strong relationship and a strong relationship produces confidence in prayer.
Prayer takes initiative and priority and meeting at a specific time in the morning demonstrates initiative and priority. “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33 NKJV).

The second principle in developing a prayer habit to last a lifetime is Sustaining a Passionate Enthusiasm to Make a Difference. Luke 22:31-32 says, [31] “And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. [32] But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." Jesus explains to Peter that Satan has requested that he have Peter back under his control to neutralize his effectiveness as a follower of Jesus. The response of Jesus to Satan’s request is, “But I have prayed for you that your faith should not fail.” “I have prayed,” deomai, to beg, plead, beseech. If Jesus responded to this emergency by passionate prayer, then this is the prayer model for the church.

Moses also pleaded (deomai,LXX) with the Lord his God and said: “Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand” (Ex. 32:11). God was moved by the passionate prayer of Moses. “So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people” (Ex. 32:14 NKJV).

32:14 the Lord relented from the harm. Moses’ appeal for God to change His mind, to relent, succeeded because God had only threatened judgment, not decreed it. A divine intention is not an unchangeable divine decree. Decrees or sworn declarations (cf. Gen. 22:16-18; Ps. 110:4) or categorical statements of not changing or relenting (cf. Jer. 4:28; Ezek. 24:14; Zech 8:14, 15) are unconditional and bind the speaker to the stated course of action regardless of the circumstances or reactions of the listeners. Intentions retain a conditional element and do not
necessarily bind the speaker to a stated course of action (cf. Jer 15:6; 18:8-10; 26:3, 13, 19; Joel 2:13; Jon. 3:9, 10; 4:2).\(^3\)

Moses did make a difference when he passionately interceded for Israel. Jesus made the ultimate difference when He prayed for Peter.

Growing a Comprehensive Agenda, Targeting All Areas of Life is the title of the third principle for developing a habit of prayer that will last a lifetime. Stated simply, “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done” (Phil. 4:6 NLT). This present imperative, “Pray about everything” means to continually be praying about everything. Obeying this command will take much time and enable us to obey another clear command found in 1 Thes. 5:17, “Pray without ceasing.” Because the leaders of spiritual ministry are to give themselves to intercession for the flock as well as their own needs, the fulfillment of this command will take large segments of time.

**The Prayer Journal for Leadership**

A good way to begin is first to purchase an inexpensive notebook for distribution for the leadership of the church. Gather them together and challenge them to begin to use the notebook in their own quiet times. Then, after a few weeks, introduce this concept to the entire church. Have a large enough supply of notebooks available for purchase.

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Implementing the “Blue Book” Prayer Journal Churchwide

The presentation of the “Blue Book” to people is to give a tool that assists in the development of the habit of prayer. This prayer journal is a place in which to write down prayers to pray back to God.

This journal is organized by suggesting categories for seed thoughts such as: Praise & Thanksgiving; Confession; Sunday School Class; New Believers; Family Needs; Missionaries; Other Believer’s Needs; Physical Healing; The Lost; Church Ministries; Full-time Christian Workers; Community leaders; My Personal Growth; “Wisdom” for Decisions; Character Changes, My Personal “Mission Statement,” “My Spiritual Goals,” “My Giving Goals,” and “Divine Appointments.”

Beginning with Praise and Thanksgiving, write three items of praise in the category each day. Then on subsequent days, pray these written praises back to God.

Praise and thanksgiving are the book ends of the life of the Old Testament Levites according to 1 Chron. 23:30 (NKJV), “to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at evening.” This practice of praise and thanksgiving counteracts the innate propensity toward negativity. “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His Name” (Ps. 100:4 NKJV). The scripture records that angels praised God in Isaiah 6 and again in the book of Revelation. “The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come" (Rev. 4:8 NKJV).
“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thes. 5:18 NKJV). The praise and thanksgiving category is the foundation of the journal. We love God back by adoring Him in praise and thanksgiving. “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created” (Rev. 4:11 NKJV).

**Confession** - “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9 NKJV). Confession produces the cleansing required for confident prayer.

**Conviction** is produced by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer. “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8 NKJV). “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-13). God, working in us to give us His desires, prompts us to agree with Him.

**Confession / Repentance** - confession, *homologeo*. In real confession, repentance is always prevalent. Confession is not just to unload the burden, it is also to change the lifestyle. This connection between confession & repentance is made by John the Baptist in Matt. 3:6-8, “[6] and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. [7] But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ‘Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? [8] Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.’” Repentance means a change of mind that leads to a
change of action. One must be willing to not only agree with God about the issue but have every intention to turn in God’s direction and accept His forgiveness by faith.

Cleansing is the forgiveness that is critical — the cleansing of the conscience. The great sustaining fact of Job’s stamina in his troubles is stated in Job 27:6 NLT: “I will maintain my innocence without wavering. My conscience is clear for as long as I live.” The cleansing of the conscience was the goal the Apostle Paul tried to live by. “Because of this, I always try to maintain a clear conscience before God and everyone else” (Acts 24:16 NLT).

It is the believers’ goal to live with a clear conscience. 1 Tim. 3:9 NLT says, “They must be committed to the revealed truths of the Christian faith and must live with a clear conscience.” The cleansing that I John 1:9 refers to is the cleansing of our conscience. “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:22 NKJV). This cleansing has dramatic impact on the believer’s ability to pray. This cleansing leads to the goal of confidence in prayer. "Dear friends, if our conscience is clear, we can come to God with bold confidence” (1 John 3:21 NLT). “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 John 5:14 NKJV).

As the categories in the prayer journal are developed, the prayer book grows and consequently another goal for developing a powerful prayer life is realized: “Increase the Time.”

Various suggestions to keep the prayer journal in the forefront of the congregation are 1) A bulletin announcement each week entitled “The Blue Book Entry;”
2) On a regular basis, have testimonies from various members about the experience of making progress in their journals; 3) After two months into implementation, having ten testimonies from the pulpit, three minutes each, builds even greater enthusiasm.

**Using the “ACTS” Model in Developing Corporate Prayer**

The corporate prayer meeting has proven to be the most difficult service of the week to maintain and be effective in propelling the ministry forward. The church prayer meeting needs structure and leadership. Some person or persons need to be planning, guiding and, most of all, praying for its success. The orchestrator is vital. In most churches this would be the Pastor. As awareness grows, this could be passed on to someone else.

The ACTS Prayer model is a good guide to launch the mid-week prayer service. The four elements of the model are **Adoration**, **Confession**, **Thanksgiving** and **Supplication**.

**Adoration** is the pinnacle of relationship. It opens up a world of fulfilling worship when we have the verses in our heart. The Lord not only seeks us to save us but also seeks us to worship Him. “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for he Father is seeking such to worship Him” (John 4:23 NKJV). Worshiping God for Who He is and what He does in prayer is so much more God honoring than only asking Him for the many things we think that we need. Out of this reservoir springs praying in the will of God. The very premise of the mid-week prayer service is to “seek” God. To seek Him and to worship Him is the thrust
of the first fifteen minutes of the session. Begin with humility. The signature verse can be James 4:10 from the NLT, “When you bow down before the Lord and admit your dependence on Him, He will lift you up and give you honor.” “Oh Lord, we come to humble ourselves in Your Presence and join the throng around the throne in praise.” People can be encouraged to read worship verses to God or to quote them as they pray. When quoting them back to God, personalize them as follows: “We enter Your gates with thanksgiving and come into Your courts with praise” based on Ps. 100:4. Another example is, “We love your Word because it is very pure, oh God. We are your servants” based on Ps. 119:140.

Confession is the power of agreement and a vital part of prayer. It is submitting to Divine inspection. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9 KJV). Homologeo (confess) is to speak agreeably to the fact and truth. It is our agreement with God that what He said is right and it is our desire to repent in areas we have breached. This frees us from the burden of a guilty conscience and creates a wide open door for courageous prayer. “Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, (our conscience is clear) then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight” (1 John 3:21, 22 KJV). This part of the session can be offered on bended knees and in silence. The facilitator can suggest certain areas of confession that are needed, such as church, personal, or family issues. One person can be prepared to end the session in verbal prayer.

Thanksgiving is the pleasure of gratitude. It is thanking God in every situation for His presence and blessing and is one of the most exciting elements in the ACTS model.
Thanksgiving counteracts negativity. It is the antidote of selfishness. It was designed to be the bookends of our day. “...stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at evening” (1 Chron. 23:30 NKJV). Thanksgiving was also designed to be the pervasive attitude for the believer. “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (I Thes. 5:18 KJV). Thanksgiving can be offered in prayers or in an open testimonial forum.

Supplication is the pursuit of fruitfulness. It is supplicating the names and needs of those who need a supernatural touch. It is what we do best. In this prayer action we go to battle for those in bondage. Beth Moore, in her book, Praying God’s Word, writes, “one of the most effective approaches to the liberated life in Christ that God has ever taught me: praying Scripture to overcome strongholds.” We sometimes get overwhelmed with those in spiritual need and we should. Jesus was moved with compassion as He saw the multitudes. Praying for people, not things, should dominate our supplication. Supplication can be meaningful, especially if intercessors are praying over the needs of the congregation. Receiving prayer requests on a weekly basis is most effective. Request forms that are placed in the bulletins will be used. (See Appendix B) These forms can be distributed among those who come for the mid-week prayer service. Praying at the altar is especially effective. Give each person four filled-in request forms and then after a period of time, ask them to pass the forms to their left (they will receive four new forms). Doing this five or six times will enable the intercessors to wrestle with the needs of the congregation.

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This supplication time may also include the functions of the church for the following Sunday. Assign different ministries to people, such as Sunday School Teachers, parking lot attendants, greeters, the offering, worship music, etc.

**Prayer Walking on the Property**

After the supplication time, this is a supplemental element that can be employed. Divide men and women into groups and send them to various places on the property. In the Sunday School Class rooms, prayer walkers can pray for teachers who use the room and the students (by name) who meet in the room. The group moves from room to room. One group ends up in the Pastor’s office to stand in the presence of the Lord for the Pastor’s needs.

The Circle of Unity is the concluding time of corporate prayer. Gathering the group in this circle, holding hands and “seeking” God again is a good way to end this hour of prayer. In each of these sections, Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication, the Orchestrator can lead the congregation verbally to prayer under the topics he suggests.

J. Pengwern Jones said of his experiences of Praying John Hyde,

The first time I met John Hyde was at Ludhiana in the Punjab (India) where he lived at the time. I had been invited to speak a few words on the revival in the Khassia Hills (India) to the Conference of the United States Presbyterian Mission, which ad their annual session at the time there. I had traveled by night from Allahabad to Ludhiana and reached there early in the morning. I was taken to have a cup of tea with the delegates and others. I was introduced across the table to Mr. Hyde. All that he said to me was, “I want to see you. I shall wait for
you at the door.” There he was waiting, and his first word was, “Come with me to the prayer room. We want you there.” I do not know whether it was a command or a request. I felt I had to go. I told him that I had traveled all night and that I was tired and had to speak at 4 o’clock in the afternoon, but I went with him. We found half a dozen persons there and Hyde went down on his face before the Lord. I knelt down and a strange feeling crept over me. Several prayed, and then Hyde began, and I remember very little more. I knew that I was in the Presence of God Himself and had no desire to leave the place. In fact, I do not think that I thought of myself or of my surroundings, for I had entered a new world and I wanted to remain there.  

This is precisely the goal of the corporate prayer meeting – that those who come would enter the Presence of God and want to remain there.

Prayer Shepherding System

This system has five main documents that are related to this ministry:

1) Friendship Folder;  2) Master Attendance List; 3) Individual Shepherd Notebook; 4) Pastoral Shepherd Review Notebook; and 5) Shepherd Accountability. A copy of these documents can be found in Appendix C.

The Friendship Folder is a tool that is used each week to take attendance in all services. There is one folder placed in each pew. The Friendship Register sheets are collected after the service and brought to the church office. Each sheet allows places for ten people to fill in the following information: 1) Name; 2) Address / Zip Code /

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Telephone;  3) Regular Attender  4) Wish to Join This Church; 5) Desire A Call; 6) E-Mail Address.

The Master Attendance List is alphabetized. Each sheet of the list allows space for the first & last name of the attendee; their home phone number and tracks their attendance for nine weeks. On Monday, a volunteer takes the Friendship Register records of who was in attendance at the services and transfers that information to the master list. The goal is to know where each person is on Sunday. Codes assist in recording not only attendance, but also if a contact was made by a staff person or one of the ministries of the church. Codes that are available are:

0 = Nursery  1 = 1st Service  2 = 2nd Service  4 = Sick
5 = Away   6 = OK  7 = Work  8 = College
9 = Saturday  C = Call  NA = No answer  SW = Sweet 60
F = Food Bank  D = Discovery  M = Message  N = Note/Card
S = Sunday School  T = Thursday  W = Wednesday  V = Visit
MP = MOPS

Individual Shepherd Prayer Notebook - The green Shepherding Ministry

Summary sheet is the tool the Prayer Shepherd will use to keep track of his / her flock.

At the top of the page, there are 7 blocks - one block per day. (A different cycle can also be used, 2 weeks, 4 weeks, etc.) Each day that the Shepherd prays over the need of the flock, an “x” is recorded. There will be days that are missed. The goal is peer care, not perfection. The sheet has places for 14 names. A contact is made sometime during the week. The conversation is for care and prayer is our target method. Any prayer requests are noted on the Summary sheet. The types of contacts are:  P = Phone call;  N = Note/Card;  V = Home Visit;  H = Hospital Visit; and  F = Face to Face, (not in
church). The key is to make an intentional relationship. The green sheets are handed in to the secretary on Sunday.

**Contact Profile** - Each prayer shepherd makes up a white Contact Profile on each member of his / her flock. Besides name, address & phone number, this profile lists other information such as Best Time to Call, Special Interests, Workplace, Spouse Name, Spouse Workplace, and Children’s Names. The bottom of the sheet is used to record the date of each contact, a summary of the conversation and any comments or prayer needs expressed by the person being contacted. These sheets are kept in the back of the notebook and provide a personal record of each member of the flock and their spiritual victories.

**Pastoral Review Notebook** - After the secretary gathers all green sheets, she places them in a notebook for the pastors to review. One lady wrote: “This family needs help. I will take food and sit down with them to see what I can do.” (This was a godly elderly shepherd helping a young couple with three little babies, struggling to pay their bills.)

**Shepherd Accountability** - Accountability has been defined as me, helping you keep your commitment. Every week, when the Shepherds hand in their green sheets, the secretary logs who has reported in. She then calls the shepherds who have not reported and kindly reminds them. The Prayer Shepherds are encouraged to come together once a month for sharing, encouragement and helpful instruction.

Answers to specific questions regarding the Prayer Shepherding Ministry can be found in Appendix B.
Localized Prayer Meetings

Localized prayer meetings are “Points of Prayer” gatherings that meet before the service or meeting time to declare dependence on God. The signature Scripture verse of this time is James 4:10 NLT - “When you bow down before the Lord and admit your dependence on Him, He will lift you up and give you honor.” For Bible class leaders this accomplishes several purposes:

1) The most powerful purpose is to declare dependence on the Lord for the task at hand. This declaration of dependence produces humility in the heart of the believer. Humility is the supreme characteristic of bless-ability. A graphic illustration of humility is Moses. “Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth” (Num. 12:3 NKJV).

This characteristic of humility was also exhibited by Solomon when God appeared to him as recorded in 1 Kings 3:7-14 NKJV:

[7] Now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. [8] And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. [9] Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" [10] The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

When God appeared and said, “Ask! What shall I give you?” Solomon answered “. . . I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in . . .”, “. . . Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?
God was pleased that Solomon had asked these things. Solomon gave a confession of his limitations. This pleases God. Paul also states this thought in 2 Cor. 3:5 NKJV, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.” The believer is incompetent with his own resources but competent as he leans on the Lord and utilizes His competency.

2) Teachers will be on time to greet their class. Being punctual is important.

3) Teachers will be mentored and unified by prayer.

Summer Prayer Emphasis

One of the most challenging times for church ministry is summer. Church leaders must meet the challenge by attempting to unite the congregation around common goals. The Summer Prayer Emphasis meets this need.

The first feature of this emphasis is to solicit prayer requests throughout the entire church family for the summer months.

1) Prayer Request Forms are placed as bulletin inserts each week so congregants can add prayer requests & document answers to prayer. Completed request forms are returned to the church office and then placed in a Prayer notebook located in the prayer room. Throughout the week, members can come at their convenience and support others in prayer by praying through the Prayer notebook.

2) Canvassing the congregation via telephone and asking “What prayer request can we help you with this summer?” also assists in caring for the congregation. This
element of the Summer Prayer Emphasis acknowledges the most important things, such as:

1) The church gives more than lip service to prayer;
2) The church is making a major effort to support each family throughout the summer months;
3) The church is making a contact with each family at the beginning of summer.

Staying connected with families is a major part of the emphasis; 4) Produces a blessing for all who will come to help lift the burdens in prayer.

**The second feature of the Summer Prayer Emphasis is focusing the congregation on the needs of the church.** The success of Summer ministry can be determined by the prayerful dependence of the congregation.

Print up a list of needs such as:

- √ That God would mold our church into a “Christ-like, worshiping community through the power of prayer;
- √ That our church’s purposes - Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry & Evangelism will be our passion;
- √ That our vacation will be a vacation FOR GOD; & that He will use us as His ambassadors as we travel;
- √ That God, our Source, will provide financially through tithes & offerings throughout the summer;
- √ That our school property will sell;
- √ For Manhattan Teen Ministry’s protection & spiritual impact June 14 - 22;
- √ For Vacation Bible School, June 21 - 25;
√ For Junior High EQUIP Trip to Cedarville, July 23-26;

√ To protect our “Quiet Time” (prayer & Bible reading);

√ For an outpouring of spiritual blessings on our Church family;

√ For a beautiful spirit of unity to permeate all ministries;

√ That prayer will be the core feature of all ministries;

√ For God’s protection & maximum spiritual impact in ALL our local public & private schools;

√ For maximum enrollment in the Sonshine Tree Preschool;

√ For the unreached people groups living in the “10/40 Window.”

When believers make the commitment to become a part of the Summer Prayer Team by turning in a commitment form located on the bottom of the list, the pastor adds their name to his personal prayer list with the promise to ask the Lord to “protect their quiet time” throughout the summer.

There are basically three kinds of churches as it relates to prayer:

1) Churches that pray little. Prayer is outside the orbit of services and ministries. Only lip service is given to prayer.

2) Churches that include prayer as a ministry among its many ministries. This church gives a place for praying people to belong; giving them recognition. Few comprise this group.
3) Churches that believe that prayer must be the core feature of each ministry. This church strives to teach and involve all members to develop their personal prayer life. Ministries are birthed in prayer, bathed in prayer and blessed by prayer.⁶

The Pastor’s Ministry Prayer Agenda for the New Year

Setting goals, writing things down and praying about them can be mightily used by God. The first of each year is a great time to think about future church ministry. This idea does not infringe on the Pastor’s ongoing prayer journal material but is a special emphasis on ministry goals for the new year.

Choose a passage of Scripture that will inspire you for the year. A classic passage is found in Matt. 9:36-38 NKJV, “[36] But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. [37] Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. [38] Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." This will be a Scripture that is memorized and prayed to God when the Pastor prays over his Ministry Prayer Agenda.

Some other examples are as follows:

1) Pray that the new Deacon Board will be more effective than ever. (We must give the ministry away.) Add two new Deacon Assistants before the February Deacons’ meeting. (List the names of the men you will call.)

⁶ John Arnold, “Preparing the Church for the Summer Months,” The Baptist Preacher’s Journal, Volume 14, Number 1, (Spring / Summer 2004), 9.
2) Courage to face uncomfortable situations. “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you” (Deut. 31:6 KJV). “Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord” (Ps. 27:14 KJV). Visit with someone who has “issues” that need to be dealt with. (Fear is selfishness; fear is lack of faith.)

3) Track the people who need to be saved. “Lord, give us Your plan.”

4) Music in the church. Our goal is to pray and sing. “Lord, please give our Worship Leader wisdom and a plan of what can be done. Please give us the people You want in our new Worship Choir.”

5) Finances. “Lord, please bless this new year’s stewardship emphasis. Please give us a gift to take the pressure off.”

6) Ladies’ Ministry. “Lord, please bless our Ladies’ Monday evening Bible Study.”

7) Calling visitors each week.

An actual Ministry Prayer Agenda can be found in Appendix D.
Deacons’ Prayer Ministry

There are prayer needs in every church that are critical. They cannot be announced from the pulpit, they are sometimes too futuristic and sometimes too confidential.

It is the opinion of this writer that the Deacons (Elders) as spiritual leaders of the congregation are spiritually qualified to lift the heavy prayer burdens to God in a confidential manner. This emphasis is mentioned in Acts 6:4, “...we will give ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word.”

The frequency of this special Deacons’ Prayer List needs only be determined by the new goals (practical and spiritual) and current, pressing needs. The types of requests can range from praise for previous request answered to something so simple as “Give me courage to invite people to church. This Deacons’ prayer can be the unveiling of the soul because it is confidential.

A review of two recent Deacons’ lists revealed fifteen spiritual requests and twenty physical requests. The ministry of the church is comprised of both elements. Actual copies of two of our Deacons’ Prayer Lists can be found in Appendix B.

40 Days of Focused Prayer at Christmas With Devotional Guide

The Christmas season is one of the most difficult and distracting times of the year for church ministry. The pressures are enormous. There is a very real temptation to drop the things that are vital to a healthy spiritual life and replace them with the sheer activity that it takes to get through the holidays.
For this reason, a 40 Days of Focused Prayer Devotional Guide can be offered to the church family to help them stay on course. In this way they can actually use the season as a spiritual opportunity rather than being used by the season and taking a spiritual step backwards. The 40 Day devotional guide may be produced by the church in order for it to be personalized.

The features of this manual are designed to promote the spiritual needs of the church as the church reaches out to the community and the world with Christ’s love. Suggested prayers are printed for all who commit to the 40 Day spiritual devotions. Key daily prayers requests are:

“O God, please create in me a worshipful heart today. I present my life as a living sacrifice to Your will (Rom. 12:1 NLT).”

“Lord, since You created me for worship, help me to delight in being immersed in You today (1 Pet. 1:8).”

“Help me, O God, to declare Your praises throughout the day as I trust in Your promise to direct my paths (1 Pet. 2:9).”

“Jesus, as You reveal more of Yourself today, help me to desire more of You and less of this world (Phil. 3:18).”

“Jesus, please help me to rejoice as You strengthen me through tribulations. Give me courage to completely trust You and depend on Your caring wisdom (Rom. 5:2-5 NLT).”

“Jesus, You alone have the right to determine worth. Please create in me a passion to value only what You deem worthy (Col. 1:15-18).”
For each week of the devotional time, a special purpose of Christ is emphasized: Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, and Ministry.

Each day throughout the week, the theme for that week is developed by a thought for the day, such as, “Loving Jesus needs to be my highest priority.” A Scripture passage is used to support the thought: “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. [31] And the second, like it, is this: ’You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30-31 NKJV). Several questions are asked to promote thought about the passage. Each day there is an opportunity to record how God is blessing and working in the participant’s life.

Many churches have a special community outreach during the month of December, such as a musical presentation or dinner theater. On each devotional page there is a place to write names of family or friends who are in need of Christ for the purpose of praying for them and then inviting them to the Christmas outreach.

Reaching around the world with Christ’s love is also a feature in the 40 Day Devotional. Each day a different picture of a missionary family with a small amount of biographical information plus ways to communicate with them is placed in the guide.

The devotional time will focus attention on personal spiritual growth, the blessings and guidance of God in the believer’s life and missions at home and abroad. Beginning in late November and ending on January 1, it is a good companion for the Christmas season. A complete page of the devotional can be found in Appendix B.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

All the prayer emphases included in this thesis have been used in the church the writer has pastored for forty years. Some of the particular prayer projects are annual, such as the Summer Prayer Emphasis, which has been featured in the Baptist Preacher’s Journal.

The Summer Emphasis has had the greatest affect on the ministry of the church. This is accomplished by keeping all who choose to participate focused on what the church is doing throughout the summer while also keeping the pray-er focused on a consistent time each day with the Lord. The main reason the plan continues to work is the unrelenting priority that prayer has in the lives of the pastor and staff. Without this component, effectiveness would be minimal.

Prayer is taught (as the disciples requested, “Teach us to pray” Luke 11:1) and caught. The writer has been a practitioner of prayer for 16 years, learning, implementing and sharing the results with others. He has shared his findings with the students of Liberty University, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, and Baptist Bible College in Boston, Massachusetts. In addition, he has shared with missionaries on the field, at Church Planter gatherings and Pastors’ Fellowships.
Developing a prayerful church will take many years and will be opposed in every way possible. But the impact will be lasting in the lives of those who pray because they will enjoy much fruit; one of the grand purposes for which we are spiritually born again.

The results are always forthcoming, both seen and unseen. One of the finest results is to be able to pass the torch of authentic spirituality concerning prayer to the next generations and then see them excel in this spiritual discipline, which has been largely lost to America.

No one has captured the essence of the purpose of prayer in the church like Greg Laurie, Pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship located in Riverside, California. He said, “In the long run, if we train people to be consumers instead of communers, we’ll end up with customers instead of disciples. It might fill up an auditorium, but it’ll never turn the world upside down for Christ.”¹

A Comparison of Evangelism and Discipleship

(Assuming the evangelist reaches one person a day, and a discipler trains one person a year -- and they can reproduce themselves.)

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Dear Pastor,

I am in the process of writing a thesis entitled “Making Prayer the Core Feature of the Evangelical Church.” This thesis is to be presented to the Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia as the concluding project for the Doctor of Ministry degree.

I would like to enlist your help as a fellow pastor in Christ’s ministry for some important research on the subject: “Our Personal Prayer Life and the Prayer Life of the Church.” The results of this survey will enable me to get a cross-section of helpful information as I develop the need for prayer and a workable plan for personal and corporate implementation — to develop ministers and ministries empowered by prayer. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer, but your complete response will greatly increase the usefulness of the information.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at (724) 348-1620 or by e-mail at jarnold383@aol.com.

Thank you very much.

Pastor John H. Arnold
SAMPLE SURVEY

PERSONAL INFORMATION: (Check the areas that apply)

Present position in life:
- College student
- Seminary Student
- College staff member
- Church staff member
- Senior Pastor

Gender:
- Male
- Female

Age:
- Under 25
- 26-35
- 36-50
- Over 50

Marital Status:
- Single
- Married

Total annual salary:
- Under $10,000
- $10,000 - $15,000
- $16,000 - $18,000
- $19,000 - $25,000
- $25,000 - $49,000
- Above $50,000

Education:
- High school diploma
- Bachelor’s Degree
- Master’s Degree
Ministerial Status:
  Licensed? _______
  Ordained? _____

YOUR PRAYER LIFE:
Has anyone ever mentored you in prayer?
  _____Yes
  _____No
Please briefly describe the mentoring process.

What are the hardest elements of prayer for you? (From the following list, please rate EACH of these aspects, using a scale from 1 to 8, with “1” being the hardest and “8” being the easiest).

PLEASE DO NOT USE ANY NUMBER MORE THAN ONCE.

  _____ Starting  _____ Consistency  _____ Organization
  _____ Variety  _____ Worship  _____ Confession / Repentance
  _____ Thanksgiving  _____ Supplication / Asking

Do you feel close to God?
  _____Yes
  _____No

What could you do to feel closer to God?
  _____ Pray more
  _____ Attend church more
  _____ Be more submissive
  _____ Other __________________________________

How many days a week do you have a quiet, devotional time?
  _____ Almost never
  _____ 1-2 days
  _____ 3-5 days
  _____ Almost every day

What do you do in your devotional time? (check all that apply)

  _____ Read the Bible
  _____ Reflect and mediate on the Bible reading
  _____ Memorize Bible verses
  _____ Use a devotional guide
  _____ Talk to God
  _____ Listen to God
How much time do you devote each day for a quiet time?

______ Less than 10 minutes
______ 10 to 29 minutes
______ 30 to 50 minutes
______ 1 hour or more

Have you ever tried to increase your devotional time?

______ Yes
______ No

Do you have personal goals?

For prayer ______ Yes ______ No
For ministry ______ Yes ______ No
For spiritual development ______ Yes ______ No

If God were to grant you three requests that relate to your personal prayer life, what would you ask?

(1)

(2)

(3)

YOUR CHURCH PRAYER LIFE:

Do you have a corporate prayer meeting?

Yes ______
No ______

How important do you think a corporate prayer meeting is?

______ Very Important
______ Important
______ Of little importance

Please explain:
What are the goals of your corporate prayer meeting?

Do you have someone who leads the prayer effort in your church?
   _____ No
   _____ Yes, I do
   _____ Yes, a staff member
   _____ Yes, a lay person

Is there an organized prayer effort in each of your church ministries, such as Sunday School, Men’s Ministry, Women’s Ministry, etc.?
   _____ Yes
   _____ No

Does prayer hold a prominent place in the church services?
   _____ Yes
   _____ No
   Please explain:

List three reasons why many people have an ineffective prayer life:
(1)
(2)
(3)

What is the secret of the successful prayer lives of members of your church?
If God were to grant you three requests that relate to the corporate prayer life of your church, what would you ask?

(1)

(2)

(3)

Have you ever had a strategy to implement prayer as a church priority?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If yes, please explain.

If you could prioritize your ministry from the following list, what would it look like? On a scale (with “1” being of greatest importance and “10” being of least importance) fill in the Column at the left of the list and rate EACH of the needs of ministry as you see them. 

PLEASE DO NOT USE ANY NUMBER MORE THAN ONCE.

From the same list, fill in the Column at the right and indicate how your ministry actually lines up today. PLEASE DO NOT USE ANY NUMBER MORE THAN ONCE.

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<tr>
<th>IDEAL</th>
<th>ACTUAL</th>
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<td>_____</td>
<td>Good records and organization</td>
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<td>Good location</td>
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<td>Well-trained staff</td>
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<td>Biblical knowledge and application</td>
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<td>_____</td>
<td>Personal prayer and Bible study</td>
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<td>_____</td>
<td>Current technology (video screen, computer, Powerpoint, etc.)</td>
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<td>_____</td>
<td>Staff and Deacon accountability for spiritual growth</td>
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<td>_____</td>
<td>Evangelism emphasis</td>
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<td>_____</td>
<td>Time away for meditation</td>
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THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY. IT WILL HELP ME A LOT. PLEASE RETURN IT TO ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

PASTOR JOHN
APPENDIX B
BLUEBOOK PRAYER JOURNAL INFORMATION

HOW TO DEVELOP A HABIT OF PRAYER THAT WILL LAST A LIFETIME

God is using the "Blue Book Prayer Journal" to revolutionize the prayer lives of many people. The small, spiral bound, single subject notebook has replaced the haphazard scraps of paper that people often use to jot down prayer requests and has organized the prayer lists and prayer lives of believers who have long struggled with this area of their Christian life.

We began the program at LBC by giving a "Blue Book" to all the Sunday School teachers at the church. Inside, attached to the cover, was a list of suggested categories that could be used to set up the "Blue Book Prayer Journal". These categories are:

- Praise & Thanksgiving
- Confession
- Sunday School Class
- New Believers
- Family Needs
- Missionaries
- Other Believer's Needs
- Physical Healing
- The Lost
- Church Ministries
- Full-time Christian Workers
- Community leaders
- My Personal Growth
- "Wisdom" for Decisions
- Character Changes
- My Personal "Mission Statement"
- My Spiritual Goals
- My Giving Goals
- Divine Appointments

I then preached a message in the Sunday morning service entitled, "Praying the Price." Holding up the "Blue Book", I described the way it was set up and encouraged the congregation to purchase a notebook, set up the categories, and "pray through your 'Blue Book' every day with eyes open and pen in hand." I stated that, at first, it would probably take about 10 minutes but we could expect that--as the list grew--we would find we will easily spend more time in prayer.

We are encouraging each new person that comes into the church now to develop a prayer journal. A member came to me and said that since beginning this prayer discipline, his time with God is now one hour a day.

THREE PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE YOU
1) Set a time to pray;
2) Record the time spent in prayer;
3) Increase the time spent in prayer.

This prayer emphasis continues to gain momentum. People are constantly saying, "This 'Blue Book' really works." Please join us in this ministry of prayer.

John H. Arnold  jarnold383@aol.com  Library Baptist Church   P.O. Box 18011  Pittsburgh PA 15236
APPENDIX C

PRAYER SHEPHERDING INFORMATION

Friendship Register

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<tr>
<th>PLEASE PRINT Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<th>Wish to Join This Church</th>
<th>Desire A Call</th>
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MASTER ATTENDANCE SUMMARY

2007 LBC Attendance Summary

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J = Jim, A = Alicia, B = Betty
P = Pastor, D = Dane, L = Al, K = Ken, C = Carol, W = Staff, R = Rhonda
Jr. = Josh
April 9, 2008

Dear Ron,

We have been giving much thought lately to the shepherding or care-giving aspect of our ministry. As the years have gone by the number of people involved with Crossroads Ministries has increased tremendously.

To help me try to watch over the people God has entrusted to our ministry, I have enlisted the help of our Deacons and other faithful individuals. In the very near future you will be contacted by a member of our prayer team. They will faithfully keep in touch with you as a Prayer Shepherd. They will also be supporting you and your family in prayer and asking for the blessings of God on your life.

I am excited about this additional help. I trust that you will be patient with us and continue to pray for God’s wisdom in all that we do.

You are very important to our church. I believe our Prayer Shepherds are a wonderful answer to my prayers concerning the proper care and adequate support for our people.

Thank you. We love you in Jesus Name.

Sincerely yours and His,

Pastor John

Matthew 28:19a “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...”
Here are some ideas:

Remember, the people have received a letter informing them that they will be receiving a call by one of the members of our Prayer Team. I‘ve enclosed a copy of the letter so you can see it.

If you do not catch anyone at home the first time you call, please do not leave a message. Try again at a different time of day. On the third attempt, if no one is home, you may leave a message.

“Hi, my name is ___________ and I’m a member of the Crossroads Prayer Team. I’m the one that will be supporting you and your family in prayer. I’m sorry I missed you today. If you have any specific prayer requests, please feel free to call me at ___________________. God bless you.

When you do actually connect with somebody, try to speak to your contact, rather than carrying on a conversation with their husband.

“When would be a good time to catch ‘Sally’ in?”

“Hello,

My name is ___________ and I’m the one that will supporting you and your family in prayer. Do you have any specific requests?

*** If it is a bad time to talk –

‘May I call you back? When would be a good time to call?

*** If people can’t think of anything you could suggest:

Vacation Dates (safety as you travel)
Physical Needs
Names of friends & family members who need the Lord.

If someone were to bring up a gossip-like problem. Please do not discuss it with them. Tell them, “I’m not the person to talk to about that. But if you call one of the Pastors I’m sure they would be happy to help.”

Be sensitive to the person you are talking to and let them control the time on the phone.

If you must end the call, you could ask them if they would like to pray with you on the phone right then.

“It sure has been nice talking with you. If you think of anything else, feel free to call me. My number is __________________ God bless you!”
Contact Profile
(Shepherd keeps for own information)

Name _______________________________ Phone Number (______) ________________________
(Best time to call) ______________________ ________________________________________

Address
(Street) _______________________________(City) ___________________________(State & Zip)
Workplace _______________________________ Special Interests: __________________________

Spouse Name _______________________________ Spouse Workplace ________________________

Children’s Names & Ages:
A. ____________________ (______) C. ____________________ (______)
B. ____________________ (______) D. ____________________ (______)

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<th>Prayer Needs / Comments</th>
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SHEPHERDING MINISTRY SUMMARY – June, 2007

SHEPHERD'S NAME - ____________________________

YOUR PERSONAL APPOINTMENT WITH GOD:  Mark with (X)

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* TYPES OF CONTACTS  (Examples)
  P = Phone Call
  V = Home Visit
  F = Face to Face  (Not in Church)
  N = Note Card
  H = Hospital Visit
PRAYER SHEPHERDING MINISTRY

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Question: Describe how the Prayer Shepherding Ministry is implemented.
Begin with Deacons, Sunday School Teachers, Ministry Leaders, etc. In addition, pray about what families you would like to be shepherds. Shepherding takes modeling and encouragement. Some people, even Teachers and Deacons, find this very difficult. Sit down with them privately, explain the purpose, explain the plan, and ask them to pray about it for a week or two. Then have a second sit down. Finally, start them off according to their ability (some can do one or two families, most can do 5 - 7 families, some can do 8 - 12 families.) Keep it simple as possible.

Question: Does caller speak to husband and wife individually or just to the one that answers the phone?
We generally speak to the person that answers the phone.

Question: Do you divide congregation up amongst the number of phone shepherds?
We sit down with each individual shepherd and ask them who they would like to care for. We then make additional suggestions. Remember, it is OK if a person has two or three shepherds. If they really care for someone . . . two or three is awesome!

Question: Do you divide by alphabet?
No, make it as personal as possible. Do not split up natural care groups. A Sunday School teacher would naturally have his class as his/her shepherd group. A worship leader would have his worship team. A parking lot crew chief would have his parking lot helpers.

Question: How do you keep phone shepherd list of member current?
They get 17 or 18 green sheets with names already typed. If you hand one in every three weeks, that adds up to 17 or 18 a year. Each green sheet has a “report to office” date (ours is every 3rd Sunday).
Question: Do you call them to give additions?
This does not happen often. However, we have done this. They can add names as they feel necessary. They pencil them in. Our secretary will monitor this.

Question: Do you print a new list for them when needed?
Our plan gives the shepherd 17 or 18 new sheets each year. Our secretary reviews names with the phone shepherd at that time.

Question: Do your phone shepherds keep the same list or do they swap?
We keep the same list. Remember, this is about relationship and prayer, not about calling. I’m not saying you should never ever change. But always remember the purpose is modeling the same care we see in Jesus.

Question: Are there any guidelines as to which prayer requests the phone shepherd prays for and which ones get passed to Pastors?
We try to keep as much as possible away from the Pastors. We want to give this responsibility to our lay people. I have gone to hospital visits with shepherds and the people did not connect with me, they connected with the shepherd. The shepherd has shown love and care. If something is serious and beyond their comfort zone, they will call the Pastors. The Pastor needs to help model what to do for the shepherd so he does not call you the next time, unless it is warranted.

Question: Is there a proper understanding of confidentiality?
I believe we have a decent understanding. However, our administrator keeps reviewing the proper guidelines of confidentiality. That can be dangerous in sensitive areas. I am sure this will be an ongoing training as we all learn together.
APPENDIX D

SUMMER PRAYER EMPHASIS INFORMATION

Sunday Bulletin Prayer Request Form

Summer Prayer Emphasis

Date ______________

Name __________________________

Phone __________________________

My requests are: __________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

I have an answer to prayer that Pastor Arnold may share with the church.
It is:

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Please place completed form in offering boxes on the wall in the foyer or rear of auditorium
Telephone Summer Prayer Canvass Information – Woman Caller Script

If you do not catch anyone at home the first time you call, please do not leave a message. Try again at a different time of day. On the second attempt, if no one is home, you may leave a message. **Try to speak to the woman of the house rather than carrying on a conversation with the husband.**

“Hello,

My name is ___________________ and I am calling for Crossroads Ministries’ Summer Prayer Emphasis. We want you to know that we care about you and your family and would like to pray with you about anything that might be on your heart. Do you have a specific request that we can enter into our Prayer Notebook? (These requests are prayed over during the by staff and people attending our Wednesday Prayer & Worship meeting.)

(Take down the request – please print - black ink reproduces best) [please, no pencil]

*** If it is a bad time to talk –

“May I call you back? When would be a good time to call?

*** If people can’t think of anything you could suggest:

- Vacation Dates (safety as you travel)
  - Physical Needs

- Names of friends & family members who need the Lord

If people really can’t think of anything for you to write down, just give them the church phone number (724) 348-1620 or email address – office@crossroadsministries.com in case they think of something later.

If someone were to bring up a gossip-like problem, do not discuss it with them. Tell them, “I’m not the person to talk to about that. But if you call one of the Pastors I’m sure they would be happy to help.”

Be sensitive to the person you are talking to and let them control the time on the phone.

“It sure has been nice talking with you. If you think of anything else, please call the church office (724) 348-1620 or email us at – office@crossroadsministries.com and we’ll include it. God bless you!”
Standing in the Presence of God
For Our Church - Summer 2007

Our Motto:
Focusing on Christ and the Church.

PRAY:
✓ That our vacation will be a vacation FOR GOD & that He will use us as His ambassadors as we travel;

✓ That our church’s prayer emphasis will grow throughout the summer months;

✓ That our mid-week Worship & Prayer will be blessed as new pray-ers join us; (One person recently said “I love our Wednesday Evening service.”)

✓ That God, our Source, will provide financially through tithes & offerings throughout the summer;

✓ To protect our “Quiet Time” (Prayer & Bible Reading) Give God the Quality.

✓ That God would mold our Church into a “Christ-like worshiping community through the power of prayer;”

✓ That our people will make our services an important priority for their family throughout the summer. Matt. 6:33 - “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

(Please turn over)

(Detach & sign - place in offering plate or offering boxes on wall)

Yes, Pastor, With God as my Helper, I will participate by Standing in the Presence of God for Our Church & praying over the items on this list (5) days out of each week as God leads me throughout the summer.

Name ________________________________
Preparing the church for the summer months

Summer is always a challenging time for the church. People are coming and going constantly from June through August. Sometimes people drop out of church circulation for the entire time and sometimes it is for good. It is imperative that we prepare the church for this onslaught of disconnections.

The emotions of pastors run the gamut from hurt and anger — “Why don’t others have my level of commitment throughout the summer?” to the other end of the pendulum — “If this is the way it is, I don’t care either.” Both of these attitudes are wrong. We need to care and not surrender to hurt or anger. Leading the church to focus on the advantages of summer can lead to spiritual success and our change of attitude.

A VACATION FOR GOD. When I was growing up, our family never went anywhere. We had no money, so we had no car. We were content to enjoy our little corner of the world. This has not been the case for a long time. Travel is in. Our culture thinks “frequent flyer miles.” Let’s spread the word that a vacation is not just for God but for him. Let’s see what God will do through us as we travel. To support this premise, let’s lift up each other on a string of prayer.

SOLICIT PRAYER REQUESTS THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE CHURCH FAMILY FOR THE SUMMER MONTHS. Canvas the congregation via phone, asking, “What prayer request can we help you with this summer?” The first year we launched an e-way family prayer solicitation, we had many comments like, “No church has ever called us to help with our prayer concerns before.”

These compiled prayer requests are compiled in a journal and placed in a special room that is accessible throughout the day for members to come and go for intercession. Prayer request forms are also placed in bulletins each week through these months so congregants can add additional items as the summer wears on. This journal is growing. Several of these journals may be placed in various locations. The items of prayer...
There are basically three kinds of churches as it relates to prayer:

(1) Churches that pray little. Prayer is outside the orbit of services and ministries. Only lip service is given to prayer.

(2) Churches that include prayer as a ministry among its many ministries. This

CHURCH NEEDS ARE FOCUSED ON BY ALL. Print up a list of needs for concentrated prayer by all with tear off commitment form to join this effort. Here is ours:

SUMMER PRAYER FOCUS
Praying for: God's power in the Church
- That God would be advertised and worshipped in all ministries
- For an outpouring of spiritual presence on our church
- To protect our "quiet time" with Jesus
- For Vacation Bible School, July 6-12
- For Manhattan Tenn. Ministry's protection and spiritual impact, June 28-July 1
- For wisdom and strength for church staff, deacons and teachers
- For needed workers for church ministries
- For the spirit of openness and purpose among all ministries
- For financial needs
- That God will use us as Ambassadors as we travel
- For South Hills Christian School's maximum enrollment
- For unchurched people groups living in the "10/40 Window"

YES, PASTOR.
With God as my helper, I will participate in the Summer Prayer Focus, Praying for God's power in the Church, by praying over the items on this list (3) days out of each week as God leads me throughout the summer.

NAME ___________________________

When commitments are made they are given to the pastor, who promises to pray each day for them by name that God would protect their "quiet time" through the summer.

Last summer John and I were spending time on Lake Cyprus Springs, Mt. Vernon, Texas. In the morning we were sitting out on the porch with a prayer list and Bible and as I prayed through the list, I felt so connected and envisioned our members all across the country thinking and praying about their church back home. This was not just a vacation, but a vacation for God.

church gives a place for pray-ers to belong, giving them recognition, but few comprise this group.

(3) Churches that believe prayer must be the core feature of each ministry. This church strives to teach and involve all members to develop their personal prayer life. Ministries are birthed in prayer, bathed in prayer and blessed by prayer.

The summer prayer emphasis challenges the disconnectedness of summer, creating a wave of prayer that could create the impetus leading to a prayer-driven church.
THE PASTOR'S NEW PRAYER AGENDA

The New Year is a good time to add a different dimension to our prayer habits. Categorizing our prayer issues can help us chart fresh territory, keep us focused, and reap spiritual fruit. This agenda is about church and personal ministry goals.

First, choose a Scripture passage to lay the foundation for this emphasis. Last year I chose Matt. 9:36-38 and it has served me well. [36] "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. [37] Then saith He unto His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; [38] Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.’"

It led me to my first ministry goal: GIVING THE MINISTRY AWAY. This is imperative. Our aim is to equip the church for the work of the ministry. We do this, not by strategizing or plotting, but by praying, "God give us workers who will take part of this labor for their own." The workers He has given us are our Deacons. In the Jerusalem church the Deacons had to step up and do the work of ministry. The workload demanded it. Jesus gave us the method of praying in workers for the Kingdom cause. Even the most gifted and energetic pastor in the smallest church can not bear the load alone. The work is too demanding for a "one-man show."

INTEGRATE THE YOUNGER GENERATION IN HANDS-ON MINISTRY. This is accomplished through praying for young men to step up and to be part of the action. Giving them a taste of ministry and decision making is important. Last year we formed a missionary focus group and invited five young men to participate. Through the course of our sessions, two stepped up to be used prominently. We were looking for FAT candidates: Faithful, Available, and Teachable. In our breakneck culture it is hard to find people who are available. The two men who stood out have joined the ranks of ministry. Prayer drew them out.

COURAGE IS NEEDED. I'm amazed at how much courage it takes to be a Pastor. The Scripture does abound with exhortations to be courageous. We have conversed and read via email of Pastors facing insurmountable obstacles. The faint-hearted cannot survive. We are all faint-hearted sometimes. That is why we must make this a major prayer issue. "Lord, I need courage to confront____________. Give me your strength." Church ministry is about confrontation and confrontation is about courage. The slow way to solve problems is to wait them out. Seldom does this work. The bitterness grows as time wears on. The power of humble confrontation reaps a better result. Last year I made a list of people that needed to be confronted. To look at that list was daunting,
just plain scary. After prayed through the list and initiating these appointments, I was surprised that some just needed the Pastoral touch rather than avoidance. Some situations got better and some didn't. I felt a lot better because the net result was good.

WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH. "Give us your vision, Lord." It is my opinion that we need to make PRAYER THE CORE FEATURE IN EACH MINISTRY. From within the church worship leaders with a heart to pray have stepped up and are now leading, first in prayer, and then in music. Children's choir, adult choir, and orchestra are now going to the throne of grace first.

THE PASTOR'S PERSONAL MINISTRY OUTSIDE THE CHURCH. Most pastors are called to minister in outside-the-church settings. A friend in Ohio is on call for a local funeral home to do services for those without a church home. It is a wonderful opportunity to get the good news out. Others travel and speak at youth camps, banquets, and seminars. Some write. These are all terrific opportunities to share in a broader ministry what God has given us. Leonard Ravenhill, in his book Revival Praying, writes, "Most of us have enough grace to scrape through the day, but we have nothing over. We are conquerors but not "more then conquerors." We can fight off the enemy but we cannot take any prisoners. Ours is a defense action, not an attacking power." I wish I could say that my last year's ministry prayer agenda reaped all that I expected, but I cannot. It did keep me focused and I did record some powerful answers. I'm inspired to continue on so I'm drafting a new list for 2007 and invite you to join me. LET'S TAKE PRISONERS THIS YEAR.

Pastor John H. Arnold  
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(724) 348-1620
Pastor’s Ministry Prayer Agenda Model

Church Ministry

Claim: Philippians 4:19 (NKJV)
19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

1. Develop the most comprehensive and secure prayer covering (prayer shepherding)
2. Build our Worship and Prayer Service into the epicenter of our church.
3. School property would sell soon.
4. The lost will be attracted to our church so we can follow up and bring them to Christ.
5. A consistent stewardship program.
6. Workers for the harvest.

Matthew 9:36-38 (NKJV)
36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

7. Summer prayer emphasis.
8. To experience Your presence in my life each day.
9. Pour out Your blessings on the church.
10. Increase our finances.
11. Provide extra income for our people so they can give more for Your work.
12. Sell house owned by the church.
13. The Township will take over our access road.
DEACONS’ PRAYER LIST – 2006

➤ That the Lord will guide us to shepherd our church through contacting and prayer.
➤ That each Deacon will have a great year of spiritual growth and a passion to develop a friendship with God.
➤ That the Lord would build our Worship & Prayer Service.
➤ Local candidates for supervisors in Union Twp.
➤ That God would lead us in His direction for the School property.
➤ That God would attract the lost to our church so we can follow up and bring them to Christ.
➤ That God would make us “seekers” of Him
➤ That God would help us develop a consistent stewardship program
➤ That God would give us workers  

Matt. 9:36-38- “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’”

➤ That God would give us a tremendous Summer Prayer Emphasis. That He would be laying on the hearts of all our people to become involved.
➤ Does God want us to use this motto throughout the summer to focus our attention on His calling on our life:  
Motto:  Our desire is to grow closer to God and be more devoted to the church as we work together to make Jesus known in our community and around the world.

➤ PRAISE YOU, LORD for your Presence in our midst.
DEACONS’ PRAYER LIST – 2007

➢ That the Lord will guide us to shepherd our church through contacting and prayer.

➢ That God will help us develop the most comprehensive & secure prayer covering.

➢ That each Deacon will have a great year of spiritual growth and a passion to develop a friendship with God. Ex. 33:17 "Then the Lord said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name."

➢ That the Lord would build our Worship & Prayer Service into the epicenter of our church life.

➢ Local candidates for supervisors in Union Twp.

➢ That our school property would sell soon.

➢ That God would attract the lost to our church so we can follow up and bring them to Christ.

➢ That God would make us “seekers” of Him. Is. 55:6; Ps. 34:10; Ps.119:2; Heb. 11:6.

➢ That God would help us develop a consistent stewardship program

➢ That God would give us workers. Matt 9:36-38- "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

➢ That God would give us a tremendous Summer Prayer Emphasis. That He would be laying on the hearts of all our people to become involved.

➢ Lord, I want to experience your Presence in my life each day...to experience events that can only be attributed to You.

➢ PRAISE YOU, LORD for your Presence in our midst.
➢ Lord, pour down Your blessings upon our church.
Focusing on the Purposes of Christ

Sunday, December 7, 2003

His Purpose For My Life: FELLOWSHIP - Loving God’s Family

Thought for the Day:
Thank You, Dear God, that You made me to be a part of Your family forever!
What a privilege it is to be included!
Help me to never take Your church for granted.

Matthew 16:18 - “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
Ephes. 1:5 - “His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave Him great pleasure.”

The church is God’s headquarters on earth. It has been said many times, “There is no such thing as a little church.” All churches are big in God’s eyes. They are places where His family meets together. Let’s thank God for all Bible-believing churches. Let’s thank God for OUR church.

Please Pray for our Christmas Dinner Theater Outreach

TONIGHT - December 7

Pray that God will use this time to bring people a step closer to the Savior.

Praying for my Family & Friends Who Need Christ (list their names)

Dalton & Paulette WALKER
Andrew, Benjamin & David

A Missionary “Minute”

Please Pray for our Missionaries to NEW ZEALAND

JOURNAL: How has the church been a blessing to me & my family?

Consider sending a couple notes of encouragement to those God has used in your life!
BIBLIOGRAPHY


