

Breaking the Cycle of Dysfunctional Prayer

For several years now, I've been shepherding a creative week by week 24-7 prayer experience called **Light the Fire**. A "torch" of prayer is passed between churches, colleges and missions organizations that participate throughout the year. Based on the Moravian Community of Herrnhut, which commenced a non-stop "prayer watch" in 1727 lasting over a hundred years, **Light the Fire** involves creative prayer stations that help to teach people how to engage with God in unique, kingdom-focused ways. Each community of believers sets up its own prayer experience which takes on its own creative life. The goal is to train God's people to pray what is upon God's heart for His kingdom ... raising up God's praying people to become what God Himself has named us (Isaiah 56:7, Mark 11:17) – a house of prayer for all nations.

I believe strongly that people must engage in a *lifestyle* of prayer in order to connect with God in ways that teach them the purposes and power of prayer. It is more than a devotional act that takes place in segmented silos such as "quiet time," mealtimes, or at bedtime. Of course, these are good practices to engage in, but most believers are left feeling vaguely dissatisfied with the state of their prayer lives when this is all they do.

Believers hear from the pulpit and through seminars that they ought to pray more, and sometimes get some good tips for improving their prayer lives; however, people only remember 20% of what they *hear*. There is a significant relevance to the activity of prayer that people remember 90% of what they *do*...even if some of the activity involves being still and listening!

Since our creative God has wired us all uniquely with

different gifts, talents, personalities and learning styles, it makes sense that He wouldn't expect us all to pray the same way. Yet, most of us have been molded into the prayer practices of whoever taught us to pray: our parents, Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, etc. Most of them experienced similar training ... and on it goes ... generations of dysfunctional praying people training up more generations to pray exactly the same. Many of God's people never actually step into the presence of God and experience the kind of intimacy with Him that unleashes powerful prayer focused upon His kingdom purposes and plans.

Giving people of all ages opportunities to learn to pray through creative, experiential means so they can discover ways that click with how God wired each of them is crucial. Can you imagine the church once again becoming the house of prayer God designed and Jesus left behind in Jerusalem?

Throughout Scripture, "fire" is used as a symbol of God's presence, power and purity. As His people learn how to seek His presence, He will demonstrate His power and fill us with it through His Spirit! As we recognize our sinfulness and turn from it He will purify us from all unrighteousness and transform us into holy people, set apart for His purposes.

So, **Light the Fire** is a prophetically powerful name for a week (hopefully leading to a lifestyle) of prayer that engages God's people with God's kingdom purposes. If you are interested in more information about **Light the Fire**, or want to explore the possibilities of engaging in a week of 24-7 prayer with your church, school or organization, feel free to connect with me: kim@.

By the way, 65 years after the beginning of the day and night Moravian prayer watch, this small community of believers had already sent 300 missionaries to the ends of the earth. Do it again God! Light the fire of Your presence in us! Engage us in Your work—in our homes, churches, communities ... and to the

ends of the earth!

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