

How to Get the Whole Church Involved in Prayer

Many churches struggle with helping people to connect with kingdom ministry when they are unsure of what God wants them to do. Training the church in the intercessory ministry of Jesus can help most people gain a crucial connectivity to the power of God no matter what life stage or circumstance they are in. We are called to live like Jesus.

In Romans 8:34, the one thing we know for sure Jesus is currently doing on our behalf is interceding. He is ministering to His people by coming to God continually on our behalf! Should we not also pray for one another as He prays for us? Intercession for people, nations, situations and churches can reach far beyond what many will ever know in their own lifetimes. The key is training people to see the kingdom impact of intercession and how praying for others is powerful and effective ministry.

It is vital to encourage and train different populations of people in the ministry of prayer:

Seniors – So many elderly have one of two mindsets as they age. First, they feel they have put in their time and served and now it is time for the younger people to take their places and it is their time to rest. Or, they feel their time of usefulness is past and are unsure what, if anything, to do for the kingdom of God. Leaders should enlist and engage this powerful army of intercessors and show them how their usefulness to the kingdom extends far beyond their physical abilities.

Gather your senior saints together and share with them how vital the ministry of prayer is, and personally invite them to accept prayer assignments from the leadership. Seniors can

pray for pastors and families, for missionary partners, for the nations, for the children of the church, for the activities and outreaches of the church and more. Then, give them specific prayer points for these things. Likely, you will need someone in leadership to put some time into coordinating this prayer effort by training where it is needed. Even those who have been believers for a long time don't really know how to pray for others effectively. Teach seniors to pray the Word of God over people and situations. Train them to send prayers via email or personal notes to encourage others. You will be amazed at how prayer ministry can give new life to a group of people who no longer feel needed or useful. Another benefit is that by engaging your seniors in this way, some who might have a tendency to be critical, to gossip or to fall away from the church altogether can be recaptured by the power of the kingdom of God at work in and through them! Kingdom usefulness gives new life.

Now that you have the idea using the example of seniors, here are some other populations within your congregation to engage in the ministry of prayer:

Disabled/Health Fragile – In our churches today are many people who could be encouraged and trained in the ministry of prayer, but they are marginalized. We are setting aside some prayer warriors who just need to be pointed in the right direction and set free!

Children and Youth – Paul said to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12: “Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.” Our children and youth do not have junior Holy Spirits, and they should be encouraged from the earliest ages how to seek the face of God and intercede for others as Jesus did and still does today. Children are some of the most powerful kingdom intercessors in the church because they are filled with faith! Rather than entertaining our young ones, we should be connecting them to the Vine and

training them to minister in and through prayer!

Congregational Intercession – Our church prays corporately for another congregation and pastor in our city each week, as well as one of our ministry partners (missionaries). This is kingdom ministry! Can you imagine what God might do as many people focus on interceding for God to move in the lives and work of other churches and ministries in our area and across the world? Rather than being dependent upon one prayer leader speaking a prayer over these needs each week, if everyone took this focus to heart and continued to intercede daily, God would respond in some astonishingly powerful ways in the lives and ministries of many pastors and missionaries.

Small Groups – Training small-group leaders to lead effective times of prayer is crucial. Otherwise, the short and automatic inclusion of praying will be secondary and focused mainly on health needs alone. We do this as a trained automatic response rather than from heartfelt desire to minister to peoples' needs. Teach leaders how to help groups see the time of intercession as powerful ministry. Perhaps each small group could adopt an unreached, unengaged people group or a nation where Christians are being persecuted.

Prayer is the lost doctrine of the church, and its lack is likely the cause of our collective powerlessness for the sake of the kingdom! Much good is being done in the name of Christ, don't misunderstand me; however, the power of intercessory prayer as modeled for us by Jesus Himself as He actively intercedes at the right hand of God for us has been put on the back burner of spiritual activity. If every ministry was energized by prayer rather than human effort, and if every person in each of our churches was actively trained to engage the Father by seeking His presence, and as a result, if they started interceding, imagine the fuel that would be poured upon the fire of the work of God in our churches! {eoa}

Kim Butts is the co-founder of Harvest Prayer Ministries. (C)

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