

Does Your Church Present a Culture of Prayer or a Program of Prayer?

I heard one of my mentors from afar, Daniel Henderson of Fellowship 6:4, say something that I wanted to pass along.

He was talking about the importance of building a culture of prayer in your church rather than a program of prayer. I have been thinking about it, and it is a very important distinction. It is also very helpful as well. Here are just a couple of the reasons.

1. A culture of prayer affects everyone rather than just those in the “prayer ministry.” This means that you are looking for ways to grow prayer in your men’s ministry, youth group and children’s ministry. This can be empowering especially if you are in a smaller church because you don’t need to create a whole new program than needs to be maintained.

As I travel around speaking at churches, one of the things that I find too often is Christians intimidated by prayer. I often speak about the fact that prayer is not just for super Christians. Part of the reason for this intimidation is the result of people thinking that there are people who pray and then there are the rest of us. There are reasons to have a prayer altar workers team—like being able to train them on the salvation follow-up process. But it is important to communicate that one of those reasons is not that not every Christian can pray for needs.

2. This allows all sorts of opportunities to be moments to grow the culture. Taking some extra time in the board meeting to model the life of prayer is helping you build a leadership that is praying. When you are already doing an outreach, connecting the life of prayer to that event is natural and

life giving. Your goal becomes to have leaders of your men's ministry who spontaneously take time to pray for each other in a group not just to have an "elite group of prayers." Now you are multiplying rather than just adding to your churches prayer life.

One way to think about this is as connected to the "spiritual" fire of your church. If prayer is just a program we are containing that fire to one area of the church. By creating a culture of prayer in the church we are spreading that fire everywhere. Ministry begins to happen in different areas of the church at a new level and ultimately spills into the streets.

If you are a pastor or leader, what is one way that you could help build the culture of prayer in your church today? If you are not yet a leader in your church, let me encourage you to not be afraid of the life of prayer, but dive right in and see how it changes your life. {eo}

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