

How Can You Make Sure Your Prayers Are Effective?

We had a team of college-aged young men and women come to Revolution Church for Mission Manitou, a spiritual warfare missions experience. It was an amazing week. The highlight of the week was 'prayer in a cave.' From time to time we'll have prayer teams join us for four hours of non-stop worship, prayer, prophecy, intercession and passion.

We are literally in a large cave, in perfect darkness with no sense of time. It's an experiment in *Revelation Driven Prayer*, or *100 Percent Effective Prayer*. This particular night was a night I'll never forget. For nearly a year I had suffered from a severe pinched nerve in my right shoulder. My right arm and fingers would either tingle or go numb continually. My shoulder, at times, hurt so badly I could barely stand it. I had been to a chiropractor and a massage therapist. Neither worked.

Prior to entering the cave, we had a powerful prayer and worship event at the church. Near the end of that service, I had asked one of the prayer missionaries from Michigan to pray for my shoulder. This particular girl had been pressing so hard the entire week as God was healing her, touching her and shaking her. She craved breakthrough in her life. She prayed for me for quite some time, and then it was time for all of us to enter the cave. I didn't experience a healing, though I was blessed that she took the time to pray for me.

In the cave, we experienced four seasons that the Lord established as a part of the *Revelation Driven Prayer* training program.

Step 1: Elimination

First, we repented. We eliminated everything from the depths of our heart. Complete surrender. Remember, it's perfectly dark in the cave. You can't see your hand in front of your face. People's cries were echoing thorough the cavern. People who never had the confidence to cry out or to pray out in public were wonderfully released to do so. There was such a presence of the Holy Spirit as people wept and repented and released past hurts.

The stronger the Holy Spirit stirs the more we crave to eliminate and repent deeply. The groanings of a broken and humbled person simply overwhelm people who are pressing intentionally and passionately into the place where God is moving.

"When I shut up the heaven and there is no rain, or when I command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence on My people, if My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer of this place'" (2 Chr. 7:13-15).

This season is often difficult for some to press through, but it's the most critical time we'll spend. The reason many people's prayer life is so frustrating is because the necessary sacrifice of time hasn't been made. Pressing into a place of repentance results in a lot of time being made undone before our Father. If we humble ourselves, pray and seek we'll discover God's favor. Seeking takes time. Lengthy prayer simply must be a normal reality on a continual basis if we desire to break through to the heart of God.

"The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the broken-hearted, and saves the contrite of spirit" (Ps. 34:17-18).

This is what we found in the cave—people crying out! If we go to a deeply expressive place of repentance, desperation, desire and longing for our Lover, our Lover will hear us! If our heart is broken, He is near to us! That is one amazing Scripture!

However, so often our prayers are thrown up to heaven almost in passing without any brokenness at all, and we wonder why God isn't responsive to us in the way the Word of God describes.

We'll often hear people yelling at the top of their lungs, "God I need You! Jesus, come into my life like never before! Please, fire of God, burn my flesh!"

We'll also hear people repenting of anything from apathy to mocking to abuse. People want to be free from their unwitting alliance with the enemy. They don't want to be lukewarm, arrogant, insecure, suspicious or defeated in any way. This season of elimination causes us all to be emptied. Deliverance happens at times in this phase. People of all types, ages and maturity find themselves craving to have every hindrance removed from their lives so they can actually see God, right there in a place of perfect darkness.

On this particular cave experience, after an hour or so of pouring our hearts out to God we moved into the next phase—Consecration.

Step 2: Consecration

This is a time of adoration, worship and becoming aligned as perfectly as possible with Christ Jesus. It was beautiful to hear the raw worship sounding off the walls of the cavern. After finding themselves empty after the previous season, people were longing to be full of a supernatural fire. God was closer than ever!

"I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, that

you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

This second season is critical if we are to clearly hear God in the next season. As we find ourselves emptied of past sins, issues and mindsets, we can now simply say, "Father, here am I, send me!"

Instead of desiring to warm our flesh by the fire of God's presence, we lay our bodies, as living sacrifices, directly on the fire and cry out, "Consume us God!"

We tell God that our lives are in His hands. If He desires for us to be martyred for His cause, then that's what we want. If He wants us to step into a certain mission, then that's what we need to do. Our lives are no longer our own, but we are surrendered to God. We are consecrated to Him. We're excited about what God can do through a completely yielded vessel.

This season is marked by a lot of excitement and wonderful freedom. The result of eliminating all of our baggage is a bunch of extra room for God to operate in our lives. The Spirit of God literally fills us up to overflowing, and we are suddenly putty in His hands.

We may go on for a couple of hours in this season. We'll worship, weep, experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit, pray boldly in tongues, continually break in His presence and fall deeply in love with Him. It's simply amazing. Now, with the old man crucified and the Spirit of God blowing like a wind in and through us, it becomes very easy to hear His voice. We capture His dreams and desires for our lives.

The next season is critical to the process of Revelation Driven Prayer—hearing God.

This article was excerpted from John Burton's book, Revelation Driven Prayer. For part 1, [click here](#). Tune in Wednesday for Part 3 of this series.

John Burton has been developing and leading ministries for over 20 years and is a sought-after teacher, prophetic messenger and revivalist. He has authored nine books, has appeared on Christian television and radio and directed one of the primary internships at the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City. Additionally, he planted two churches, has initiated two city prayer movements and is currently directing a prayer- and revival-focused ministry school in Detroit called theLab University. John also has a web- and graphic-design business and is continually developing new and exciting ventures. He and his beautiful wife, Amy, have five children and live in the Detroit area. He can be reached via his website at .