



## **I'LL PRAY FOR YOU:** **ARE YOUR PRAYERS JUST SHALLOW HELP?**

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Why do we pray? Most churches pray during the service, but they have no prayer ministry. I have heard stories of vibrant revival because a team of people were praying every Sunday in the back room. I probably had the most resistance from pastors in regards to prayer. They shunned prayer ministry, they made it difficult, and they refused to give us the ability to pray for them. Why? I think it was because it would become personal. Their lives and insecurities would be exposed to the prayer team.

Prayer should be the backbone of the church. I know a church that prays as a staff twice a week. It is scheduled. That is awesome! I feel that most churches have money strife. I wonder if the lack of prayer ministry is measured to the lack of money. We tend to pray

from the pulpit for our agenda. Prayer should be about the kingdom first. Jesus in John 17 prays for anyone but himself. Prayer and agenda don't mix unless you're Santa Claus.

Praying for others should be thoughtful. I once prayed that God would humble me like Paul was humbled. That was very bad. God reduced me to mush within weeks. I became very humble, and very stressed. The humbleness was good in the long run, but... We need to consider prayer important enough to be careful with it. You know the saying "be careful what you wish for or pray for." God is not shy about giving us blessings and curses at the same time.

In the beginning of a church life it's all about prayer. We pray for money, a place to worship, and people to come. Once we're established prayer seems to take a back seat to planning, ministering, and many other things. I believe the success of a church is a church drenched in prayer. There is no compromise here. When things go wrong we tend to pray more. How about more prayer when things go well? Below are seven thoughts about prayer. How important is prayer really in your church if you were honest? I mean what is established in your church when it comes to prayer?

### **1. WHY DO WE PRAY?**

I wonder sometimes why people pray in a restaurant. Do they do it for show or because they are thanking God? I know you will say of course it's to thank God but is it? I know a staff of pastors that put our prayer ministry in a closet upstairs with the vacuum and brooms. They felt that people were uncomfortable seeing us pray in the sanctuary (true story). These same men pray in a coffee shop over a donut. There is something wrong with that isn't there? The question is why do we pray? I spent 2 years praying over

our church building and nobody but my wife joined us. I wonder if the actions we show about prayer say a lot about where we rank prayer.

## **2. PRAYER SHOULD BE THE BACKBONE OF THE CHURCH.**

Many pastors reject a prayer ministry over themselves? I have yet to go to a church that has an established prayer ministry. Sinder Christian is quoted as saying “prayer precedes revival.” I agree that the reason we don’t see revival is because of a lack of prayer. The church should be prayer first. Prayer is the way we let God know who is running the church. I wonder if we have forgotten who is running the church. In Exodus 17 Moses is holding his hands up during a war. The people came around him and held his hands up for him. Are we holding up the church? Moses held up his arms because he believed in the power of God. Isn’t that the same with prayer in a church? I wonder if we believe prayer is like bringing a wet noodle to a street fight. If you have no prayer ministry what is holding your church up?

## **3. PRAYER LIFE AND MONEY TROUBLES GO HAND IN HAND.**

When a church is planted they focus on prayer. As time goes on prayer is reduced as other things take over. That is a churches first mistake. So the communication with God is important when you have nothing, but as he provides you quit talking to him. I have yet to attend a church that does not have money troubles. As I said before, I have yet to attend a church that has a prayer ministry. Foolish Christians we are: prayer is your success and power. The problem is that we begin church plants with prayer to get established. We don’t begin prayer like the Ark of God. The Ark went before the people as a symbol of God going first. Our prayer needs to be looked as God going first. It’s so that all that is behind God is protected. Maybe we protect assets for God and that’s why our prayer is reduced.

**4. WE NEED TO BE PATIENT WITH OUR PRAYERS.**

Many times in the Bible Jesus says his time has not come yet. We are also asked to wait on the spirit to know what to say. People say we will pray for others but they do it too fast. Maybe waiting a bit for clarity is a good idea. When do we ask the Spirit first for what to pray about? I wonder if we pray for ourselves a little too fast. Prayer is much more than a list of requests off the top of our head. It is spiritual communication with God. Did it ever occur to you that God might have something to say to you as you think about praying?

**5. PRAYER SHOULD BE ABOUT KINGDOM WORK.**

Matthew 6 and John 17 are prayers by Jesus that put the kingdom first. What God did and God will do are put first in Jesus prayers. Jesus does not pray specifically for himself in these prayers. In John 17 Jesus prays that the Disciples are to remain here to do kingdom work. That says a lot about our prayer life. I have heard pastors give a sermon on money and then pray that the hearts of the people will be moved to give more. That is not good prayer. That is our own agenda prayer. Our prayer should reflect the kingdom and what God wants to see happen. I am sure a pastor is saying “wait a minute that is good prayer to ask for kingdom money.” Really? Jesus again in Matthew 6 says do not worry about tomorrow.” Do you pray for the stuff you need or that the kingdom will be advanced by Gods design alone?

**6. OUR PRAYER SHOULD BE ALL ABOUT LOVE FOR OTHERS.**

I know this seems like an insult, but we need to look closely at how we treat church on Sunday. The sermon can be at times; crafted months ahead; based on a theme; the music; and

what is considered appeasing the audience. We want to be entertained at church. Sermons are reduced to a joke, some wisdom, and many illustrations in our lives. The pastor leaves out certain words that offend. How is prayer for others supposed to happen when we are so concerned for our own comfort at church? How can we be looking for those in need when we are annoyed by the droning pastor or twangy guitar? I know a church that fired all their music people to go in a new direction. Was that smart considering to that point the church was growing? Prayer cannot happen when our minds are not on the love of others over the love of ourselves.

**7. A CHURCH THAT TRULY LOVES IS DRENCHED IN PRAYER.**

A busy church is using its whole facility during the week. Christians and non-Christians use the church for various reasons. Spiritually speaking people bring the demons that bother them into church. They don't check their demons at the door. Sunday sometimes can be a mess. Is that because that's how it goes, or is it because during the week something did not leave? Prayer can be a way of cleaning the church for the Sunday message. It would be hard to listen and love others if the demons we hold on to are not clobbered by prayer. Prayer can focus us on the kingdom, and on anyone else than ourselves. A church that is concerned for others is a great church. Are we there yet?