

# BECOMING A PRAYING CONGREGATION



It was very dear to Jesus' heart and also a command from Him that the Church should be a house of prayer (Matthew 21:13). He quotes Isaiah 56:7 and so confirms that God's plan with His 'Church' (Old Testament) is also His plan with the Church in the New Testament. It is still one of the greatest challenges for churches to be houses of prayer.

The following are a few guidelines that churches can use to give more momentum to prayer in the congregation:

## **1. A praying congregation starts with individuals who pray**

The most important focus of spiritual leaders is helping believers to pray with greater boldness and more faith. People need guidance on how to enter into a deeper and more intimate and personal relationship with God.

## **2. Continuous, uncomplicated and practical instruction in prayer is necessary**

Although sermons and books on prayer give wonderful spiritual content, they often lack practical guidelines on how to plan a daily quiet time. It is important to teach believers how to use a prayer journal. Also, give them a general layout of what to pray for, how to listen to God and how to pray the Word.

## **3. Establishing prayer groups in the congregation is of the utmost importance**

Encourage existing prayer groups and also start new prayer groups. For example, businessmen can meet in more than one group. Young people, children, women and other specific interest groups can also start their own prayer groups. Different ministries within congregations can be encouraged to pray together on a regular basis for their own work and ministry. One prayer group alone should not carry the prayer burden of every activity within the congregation.

## **4. All are called to pray**

Although every congregation may have an intercessory group that watches over the congregation, every individual member of every congregation is equally responsible to stand before the Lord in prayer for themselves, the specific ministry in the congregation in which they are involved, as well as other matters of concern (Mark 14:38; Luke 6:28, 10:2, 11:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 22; James 5:13).

## **5. Spiritual leaders' commitment to prayer**

The example of spiritual leaders in prayer encourages others within a congregation to do the same. Also encourage the leaders of different ministries within the congregation to both join and encourage prayer activities.

## **6. Equip believers to pray**

People will learn to love prayer when they understand more about prayer. Regular preaching on different aspects of prayer will certainly help. Also take special effort to share testimonies and real-life stories of answer to prayer from the pulpit and other gatherings. You may consider presenting a prayer seminar twice a year, perhaps a Friday night and Saturday morning. Another way to encourage believers in prayer is to choose a book on prayer to work through in home groups.

## **7. Join in a week of prayer**

There is nothing that stretches the spiritual muscles as much as engaging in a week of prayer as a church family. Try to do this at least once a year. If possible, set up a prayer room on the premises of the church, and invite individuals to each take a prayer slot during that week. This provides opportunities to pray for the sick, for felt needs, as well as keeping before the Lord the matters of concern in your specific community. To join in a week of prayer with other churches, become part of the [7 Days on the Wall initiative](https://jwipn.com/7-days-wall/) (<https://jwipn.com/7-days-wall/>).

**More resources:** [Video teachings on various aspects of prayer](#)