



PRAYER MINISTRY HANDBOOK

Covenant Church Altar Ministry

LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS

What qualifies a person for Covenant Church Altar Ministry?

1. **Godliness**

- a. **Saved** – Those who participate in altar ministry should have an active, growing, personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- b. **Believe the Bible** – They should acknowledge the Bible as the written Word of God and as the final arbiter in matters of faith and morals.
- c. **Spirit-Filled** – Altar ministry team members should have a vital, ongoing relationship with the Holy Spirit. This involves an understanding of the filling of the Holy Spirit, the gifts and fruit of the Spirit, and His role in our lives today.
- d. **Godly Living** – Their lifestyles—public and private—should be consistent with a believer’s profession of their faith in Jesus Christ and commitment to His ways. We do not expect perfection, even the godliest are challenged and sometimes fall short. However, the Bible implies that we are to expect a higher degree of godliness, maturity, and responsibility on the part of those who minister His Word. This involves an intentional effort by the individual to grow more deeply in their relationship with God and move toward spiritual maturity.

2. **Unified Vision with Covenant Church**

The Bible instructs us to be *“one in spirit and purpose”* (Phil 2:2). Altar ministry candidates are those individuals who desire to integrate the vision and values of Covenant Church with their personal relationships to God and others.

In order to maintain a unified ministry heart, altar ministry candidates at Covenant Church must complete the following:

- a. Covenant Connection: class that shares the vision & purpose of Covenant Church
- b. A recommendation for altar ministry from a ministry leader or pastor.
- c. Altar Ministry Training (class attendance or video)
- d. Altar Ministry Mentoring (supervised on-site experience)
- e. Foundations of Freedom and Forgiveness on-line classes (within 1st year of Altar Ministry activity)

3. *Emotional and Relational Health*

We never outgrow our need for further emotional and spiritual healing. If our emotional needs are too great or have gone unattended, the focus of our ministry will be on self, rather than the needs of those receiving ministry.

4. *Teachability*

Altar ministry candidates minister under the authority of Covenant Church elders and pastors. Regardless of our ministry experience, we are always growing in our skill and person. We must be open to correction without becoming offended. The Holy Spirit is speaking to all of His people—those serving on pastoral staff as well as those serving as lay ministers—so feedback is welcomed and encouraged. A desire to improve as a minister is a healthy attitude.

5. *Compassion*

Congregants approach altar ministry with their wounds, fears, and traumas because they are hungry for God’s intervention. Altar ministry candidates must be mature believers who are able to offer God’s compassion to the hurting. Compassionate people are quick to listen, but slow to speak and slow to judge. Compassionate ministers speak prayers of blessing and renewal; and always avoid condemning or shaming words. Compassion transfers love from us to them by the Spirit of God.

6. *Discretion*

Some people who come forward for prayer do so with great need and trust in their hearts that what they are about to share will be valued and respected. Therefore, ministering at the altar requires giving respect toward those receiving prayer and using discretion when additional ministry is needed. It is essential that we avoid gossip and strive to become effective stewards of the lives God has entrusted to us at the altar.

7. *Faith (in God’s Character and Nature)*

Altar ministry requires faith in God’s character and nature as depicted in the Bible. Throughout the Bible, God shows us that He is good, loving, and faithful. He wants to heal us, bless us, and redeem us. He wants to fellowship with us, speak to us, and train us in obedience. God is sovereign and loving. Because we trust in God’s character, we minister from a place of rest. While praying in faith for the miraculous, we can rely on His timing and His sovereign plan.

Covenant Church Altar Ministry

MINISTRY OVERVIEW

Why is Altar Ministry vital to Covenant Church?

- 1) “First Touch” Ministry: Altar Ministry often functions as a “first touch” ministry for both visitors and regular attendees of Covenant Church. To these individuals, altar ministry represents the type of ministry offered by Covenant Church as a whole.
- 2) Fishers of Men: Covenant Church prioritizes evangelism. Altar ministry is the main avenue by which we lead people to Christ during the weekend services.
- 3) Free People, Free People: As God sets us free into healing and fullness of life, He works through us to minister to others. In altar ministry, we become disciples who discover the power of prayer to transform lives.

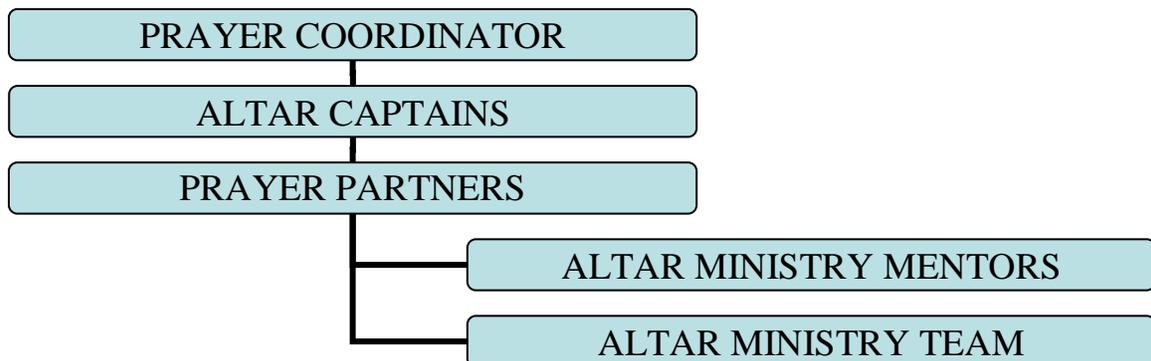
Leadership Structure

Prayer Partners: Facilitates the Great Exchange through Prayer and Referral.

1. Pray with people at the altar according to their request.
2. Complete Altar Ministry Card as needed.
3. Adheres to Altar Ministry protocol and procedure.
4. Attends additional Altar Ministry team meetings.

Altar Captain Role: Oversees flow and function of Altar Ministry time.

1. Observe the big picture and facilitate ministry accordingly.
2. Serve Prayer Partners during prayer/ministry time.
3. Disperse and collect altar ministry supplies.
4. Provide covering and support to Prayer Partners.
5. Disciple Prayer Partners in prayer ministry.
6. Help train and launch Altar Ministry Trainees.
7. Functions in this role weekly.



Covenant Church Altar Ministry

VISION & VALUES

VISION

TO FACILITATE THE GREAT EXCHANGE IN LOVE

VALUES

1) Focus on God

God is the author of the great exchange. A Kingdom paradigm honors God as the source of blessing, renewal, and hope. We bring a person's need to the Father, and He creates the great exchange. As individuals, we have nothing to offer. Our self-sufficiency lacks depth, but God's ability is the fullness of truth and life.

Our ministry paradigm involves a Kingdom Theology & Hearing God. People will encounter God during altar ministry. We value how other people hear God and encourage them according to the Bible-based truth He is already speaking to their hearts.

2) Discipleship

How do we steward altar ministry?

In staying relationally connected and committed to spirit-led growth, we honor God and steward our God-given responsibility.

- Pastors join with Prayer Partners to encourage and facilitate growth.
- Pray in teams of two when possible.
- When praying alone; women pray with women and men pray with men.
- Mentoring required prior to launching into altar ministry.

In the context of community, we allow God to speak to our hearts about things which can be taught, but which are better caught.

3) Caring for People

We assume that due to our diverse life experiences, we possess differing ideas about how to love and care for people in the context of Altar Ministry. For this reason we have identified two core principles for loving others and fulfilling our vision:

- **Personal Health and Wholeness**
- **Respect and Protect the person receiving ministry**

Covenant Church Altar Ministry
CARING FOR PEOPLE: Personal Health and Wholeness

CARING FOR PEOPLE DURING ALTAR MINISTRY

1) PERSONAL HEALTH AND WHOLENESS: “FREE PEOPLE, FREE PEOPLE.”

We minister to others out of the fullness of our personal relationship with God, and within the limits of our own level of wholeness and emotional health:

1. We ask Prayer Partners to maintain personal intimacy with the Father.
2. We ask Prayer Partners to pursue spiritual-emotional health/wholeness.

How does personal health and wholeness apply to loving people?

1. We are YOUR church. We love and care for you as a unique and valuable individual.
2. In wholeness, you function as your most authentic self. You are never more anointed than when being yourself. In authenticity, we are able to minister by faith from a place of rest and security.
3. LACK of personal health leads to prayers that are under-girded by insecurity, hurt, or fear. When we minister from wounds – we wound others!
4. While we are here to support and guide you, the only person who can truly guard your heart is the Holy Spirit. We recommend Jack Hayford’s, “Maintaining Integrity of Heart” from Living the Spirit Formed Life.

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CARING FOR PEOPLE: Respect and Protect

CARING FOR PEOPLE DURING ALTAR MINISTRY

2) RESPECT AND PROTECT THE PERSON RECEIVING MINISTRY

In a loving environment, we create a safe place for vulnerability by offering the utmost respect to the person receiving care.

How do we faithfully respect and protect people during altar ministry?

a. Perspective: Others First!

In the person of Jesus Christ, God becomes human flesh. In **humility**, God prioritizes our need for rescue.

An **incorrect** perspective: *I am the prayer partner. I am inviting the person in need into my ministry and I will help this person.*

A humble perspective: *The person receiving ministry is inviting me (Prayer Partner) into their hurt, wound, or trauma. God, give me the grace to be compassionate and sensitive as I intercede for this person.*

b. Confidentiality:

People approach the altar with tremendous needs, trusting that any personal information shared will be handled with value and discretion. Avoid any and all forms of gossip as a faithful steward of the lives being influenced at the altar. When additional ministry or assistance is needed, use discretion.

c. Referral

Referral in altar ministry refers to making people aware of the various ministries available at Covenant Church which *may pertain* to their particular situation. Familiarize yourself with the ministries of Covenant Church. Refer people to the Events Center where they can obtain information about Life Groups, Ambassadors Training Course, Age-Appropriate Ministries, etc. Engaging with the ministries of Covenant Church is an essential part of a person's spiritual and emotional healing and growth.

d. **Prioritize Follow-up:**

Caring for people involves an awareness of their need for on-going pastoral nurture and Christian community. Remain faithful to completing the tools that help us with pastoral follow-up.

e. **Always Pray, Never Counsel:** People have different levels of comfort. They will address you at their particular comfort level. God will work through you to meet a person's need – it is not necessary to know intimate details.

1. Ask questions when you need clarity to understand the person's request.
2. Do **not** ask questions about a story's details. It is not necessary.
3. Do **not** transition into counseling or giving an opinion.
4. Hear the person's request, stand in the gap, and bring the person to the Father.

f. **Always assume the best in others:**

We all possess a natural tendency to attach assumptions to dilemmas and problems. For instance, when an individual asks for prayer for a physical healing, ask yourself, 'Am I assuming that this is due to a flaw in personal character or the person's spiritual life?' Challenge yourself to assume the best in others. Altar Ministry is not the place for confrontation ministry.

If you feel that a person needs confrontational ministry, refer the person to the Pastoral Staff. Confrontation refers to "pointing a finger" at a person's character or spiritual life as lacking or problematic. We all possess a natural tendency to attach assumptions to dilemmas and problems. Challenge yourself to assume the best in others

g. **Encourage people to Hear God: Ask "What is God saying to you?"**

Discerning Prayer Partners may be able to easily identify various areas of a person's life which would benefit from ministry. Learn to be patient with each person's spiritual growth process. Rather than attempting to meet every perceived need, ask the person, "What is God saying to you?" Encourage the person to listen to God and trust God in the midst of their circumstance.

Example: ***What do I do if someone approaches the altar with prayer for one area, and in the process admits to a sin (but with an unrepentant heart)?***

Ask: ***What is God saying to you about this area?***

h. **Follow the 'Prayer Deliver Guidelines':**

The guidelines are designed to respect the physical & emotional boundaries of the person receiving care. Please adhere to the prayer guidelines as you grow in your prayer ministry.

Covenant Church Altar Ministry

MINISTRY DELIVERY

PRAYER DELIVERY GUIDELINES

1. THE BASICS:

- Dress modestly and be well-groomed. Invest in breath mints! 😊
- Wear your Prayer Partner badge.
- Respond immediately to the call to prayer. Come forward quickly when called.
- Disperse evenly across the front.
- Always pray in teams of two when possible.
- When praying alone; women pray with women and men pray with men.
- Avoid unnatural public behavior (spitting, screaming, blowing on people)
- Maintain an open, accepting, and receiving posture as people come forward ~ communicating confidence and support.

2. ALWAYS PRAY, NEVER COUNSEL (see page 5)

3. ALWAYS ASSUME THE BEST IN OTHERS (see page 5)

4. ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO HEAR GOD (see page 5)

5. PRAY WITH YOUR EYES OPEN: This is wisdom

Be alert to signals that the Holy Spirit is moving upon a person. Concentrate on the person and do not look around. Maintain eye contact.

6. REMAIN CONSERVATIVE WITH TOUCH:

Not everyone is comfortable with touch. Ensure that you are not distracting or intrusive.

- Ask permission before laying hands on someone.
- Lay hands gently on the shoulder or head: Do not push.
- Keep your hand still: ***Avoid rubbing or patting people.***

7. USE A COMFORTING TONE:

Most people who come for prayer are in need of nurture and comfort. Maintain a calm, steady voice. Be aware that an aggressive tone may make a person feel nervous and unreceptive. Allow God's Spirit to function through you in a natural, calming way.

Covenant Church Altar Ministry

FOLLOW-UP PROCESS & PROCEDURES

FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

ALTAR MINISTRY CARDS:

- 1. HAND DELIVER COMPLETED CARDS TO THE ALTAR CAPTAIN**, or place the card on the altar for pick-up. Never place a card in the offering box. Never take a card with you.

- 2. COMPLETING THE CARDS**
 - A. **Write your name** & service time on the Altar Ministry Card.
 - B. Always complete a card for the “Growth Steps”
 - Receiving Christ
 - Membership
 - Filled with Spirit
 - Water Baptism
 - Volunteering
 - Life Groups

PASTORAL CARE & ALTAR MINISTRY:

- A. If there is a threat of harm to self or others, immediately invite a Pastor or Altar Captain into the situation. After the ministry time, be sure the Captain is aware of the situation.

- B. Encourage people to contact the church offices regarding their personal situation.

SAFETY:

For your safety and well-being, please adhere to the following:

- A. NEVER take a person's personal information home with you.
- B. NEVER give a person your personal information.

Covenant Church Altar Ministry

SPECIFIC TYPES OF PRAYER & MINISTRY NEEDS

*Sample prayers referenced from “Freedom Ministries: Session Guide.”

EMERGENCY & CRISIS SITUATIONS:

An emergency or crisis situation is one in which there is a threat of harm to self or another:

1. Threat of Suicide
2. Spousal Abuse
3. Child Abuse
4. Sexual Assault
5. Physical Assault
6. Criminal Activity

If you encounter any of these areas, or another area indicating a threat of harm to self or others, IMMEDIATELY CONTACT A PASTOR OR ALTAR CAPTAIN. While acting immediately, please use a calm demeanor and maintain discretion. Pastors and Altar Captains are trained to handle these situations.

ANOINTING WITH OIL: (James 5:14-15)

Anointing oil is most commonly used for healing ministry; but, you may anoint with oil as led by the Holy Spirit.

1. Ask the person for permission before anointing with oil.
2. Explain what you are doing and how you will use the oil.
3. In the context of altar ministry, anointing with oil is typically done through placing a small drop of oil on your finger and touching your finger to the person’s forehead or hands.
4. Do not touch a person’s clothes after you have place oil on your hands.

PRAYING IN TONGUES: (Jude 1:20)

For Prayer Partners who have the gift of praying in tongues, please use great discretion and only exercise this gift in your head or very quietly under your breathe. The primary function for this gift during altar ministry is to help tune into the Spirit.

SALVATION: (Romans 10:9-10)

God is not asking anyone to pay for their sins, nor to become religious. He is however, asking us to believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. When we put our trust in Jesus and accept His forgiveness, then God gives us the gift of His righteousness. This is the context for right relationship with God that ultimately results in eternal life for those who will believe.

Sample Prayer:

Almighty God, I come to you in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. I recognize my separation from You and the brokenness in my life. I repent of my sin and unbelief and ask for Your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus die for me and rose from the dead, so that I could be reconciled back to You. So, I now accept Jesus into my heart as Savior of my life. Thank You for hearing my prayer in Jesus Name. Amen!

BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT: (Ephesians 5:18-19)

The Holy Spirit empowers people with the gifts of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit, and the ability to witness the gospel. In altar ministry, it is not our intention or goal to identify immediate evidence for being filled with the Spirit; but rather to pray in faith and encourage the individual:

1. Ensure that the person has received salvation.
2. Clarify the person's expectations regarding being filled with the Spirit.
3. Pray for the person to receive the infilling of the Spirit.
4. Encourage the person to grow in the Spirit's fruit & gifts.
5. Invite the person to fill-out an Altar Ministry Card.

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION & REPENTANCE: (1 John 1:9)

The Holy Spirit may convict people to repent of a specific or general sin. When God convicts people, He does so lovingly and with great compassion. If people confess a sin, please show great compassion as you lead them in prayers of repentance and renewal.

PROPHETIC PRAYERS: (1 Corinthians 12:7-10)

If you believe that you have a prophetic prayer for someone, please remember that prophecy is intended to exhort and encourage. In altar ministry, we do not use prophetic ministry as a means for counseling or giving directive advice for the future. The following guidelines will help:

Avoid the following phrases: "Thus saith the Lord"

"God says"

"The Lord wants you to know"

"I believe the Lord wants you to ..."

Practice the following phrases:

"I feel impressed to tell you ..."

"I sense that you ..."

"It seems like ..."

"I believe you are about to ..."

PRAYERS OF HEALING AND WHOLENESS

Acts 10:38 “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him”

Luke 4:18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me . . . He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind.” – Jesus

Because Jesus lives in you, you become the incarnational presence of Jesus to others. The same Holy Spirit that anoints Jesus for ministry, also anoints you to facilitate the on-going work of His same ministry.

PHYSICAL HEALING: (I Peter 2:24)

Prayer for healing is a prayer of faith and trust in God’s good character and nature. Assume the following when praying for healing:

1. Assume the pain or sickness is NOT a result of sin. NEVER address the situation as such, never “investigate” further.
2. Assume that healing will occur in God’s perfect timing. If the results are not immediate, encourage the person to trust in God.
3. If the person desires/needs extended ministry for the healing in terminal situations, refer them to the Pastoral Staff.

MARRIAGE & FAMILY: (Ephesians 5:25-6:4)

Families carry many complex dimensions. In prayer, it is important to be sensitive to the various dimensions within a family structure. For instance, family members have differing expectations and desires for one another. Many of these *desires are opinion-based*, rather than scriptural.

Be sure to pray the will of the Father, rather than the will of a person. This is most easily identified when one member of the family has a desire for another family member that involves decision-making: who to marry, where to move, what job to take, etc. **Recommend families to the Pastoral Staff for critical matters.**

FORGIVENESS: (Ephesians 4:32)

For excellent guidance on praying with someone for forgiveness, *please* attend Freedom Ministry’s topical class “Forgiveness.”

Forgiveness: Forgiveness is God’s provision for releasing us from the power and pain of sins committed against us.

Sample Prayer:

Dear Lord, I choose to forgive [name of the person] for [name of the offense]. But Father, when they did these things it made me feel [describe the effects of the sins]. Please take these emotions and effects from me and place them on the cross. Thank you for healing the effects of these sins in my soul.

Other common emotional needs include: Insecurity, Grief, Regret, Fear, etc. For these emotional needs, pray a prayer of exchange. In exchange, we release the ungodly emotion and in turn bless the person with God's heart. For more information, please attend Freedom Ministry Topical Classes.

FINANCES: (Matthew 6:25-34)

People experience financial strain for various reasons. For some the situation is a result of bad habits and lack of education. Others are well educated, highly proficient individuals who are experiencing a financial struggle due to uncontrollable circumstances. Please consider the following when praying for financial healing/breakthrough:

1. NEVER ask people if they are tithing. This is a diagnostic question, and we are not equipped to offer financial advice. This question also presumes that those who tithe are automatically free from financial hardship – true life is much more complex.
2. Pray God's blessing and ask for a financial break-through.
3. Encourage the people with God's love and faithful provision for life.
4. Refer the person to **Financial Peace University and The Blessed Life**. Do this with great care ~ finances are a very personal part of a person's life.

Say something like: *The church has resources available to help people grow in the area of handling finances. Is this something that would interest you?*



FACILITATING AND PARTICIPATING IN SPIRIT-LED CORPORATE PRAYER

Matthew 18:19

“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask; it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.”

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Introduction.....17
 - a. Healthy Prayer.....17
 - b. Why God Wants Us To Pray.....17
 - c. Why God Needs Us To Pray.....17
- II. Corporate Prayer.....18
 - d. Personal Prayer Fuels Corporate Prayer.....18
 - e. Benefits of Corporate Prayer.....18
- III. Corporate Prayer Leadership.....19
 - f. Characteristics of a Prayer Group Leader.....19
 - g. What a Leader Does.....20
- IV. Leadership Responsibilities.....20
- V. Participant Responsibilities.....20
 - h. Qualifications.....20
 - i. Conduct During Meetings.....21
- VI. Dynamics of a Corporate Prayer Group.....21
 - j. Agreement in Prayer.....22
 - k. Variety of Expressions in Prayer.....22
 - l. How to Quench the Spirit.....23
- VII. Activation.....23
 - m. Instruction.....23
 - n. Debrief.....24
- VIII. Practicing Leadership.....24
- IX. Appendix.....25
- X. Dynamics of Corporate Prayer.....26

INTRODUCTION

HEALTHY PRAYER

These guidelines are designed to produce a healthy, dynamic and effective time of prayer that releases “His will on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10)

When praying, we present our **bodies** as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). We submit our **body and soul** (will, mind and emotions) to our **spirit**. We submit our spirit to the **Holy Spirit** and follow His leading in prayer in the following ways:

- Word (Hebrews 4:12)
- Worship (Psalm 100)
- Will (Matthew 6:10)

We pray to the **Father**, through the authority of **Jesus** and the power of the cross being led by the **Holy Spirit**.

WHY GOD WANTS US TO PRAY

Relationship

Personal prayer is the foundation to our relationship with God. Within this intimate relationship, we learn who God is and how we can partner with Him in prayer.

We:

- Know God and **draw** near to Him in an intimate relationship
- Hear the will of God and **His strategy** for prayer
- **Partner and agree** with God to pray His will, plans and purposes into being

WHY GOD NEEDS US TO PRAY

Partnership

- God gave humankind dominion over the entire earth (Genesis 1:26-28)
- That dominion was given away to the enemy at the fall (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11)
- Christ took back that dominion with his death on the cross (Col. 2:15, Rev. 1:18). However, He won't exercise full dominion on the earth until He returns again. For now, those who are His children receive back personal dominion.
- God chose, from the time of the Creation, to work on the earth **through** humans, not independent of them even at the cost of becoming one. He limited Himself concerning the affairs of the earth, to working **through** human beings. (Ezekiel 22:30-31, Matthew 6:10)

CORPORATE PRAYER

Personal Prayer Fuels Corporate Prayer

When we come together in corporate prayer, we link our personal prayer relationship with God. Something powerful happens when we do!

*“For where two or three are gathered together in my name,
there am I in the midst of them.”*

[Matthew 18:20]

Benefits of Corporate Prayer

God’s plan is for us to **represent Him on earth through prayer**. As we yield to the Holy Spirit, He will **guide us as we pray**.

While our individual prayers are powerful, that power increases when we pray corporately. Together **“synergy” is produced**. Synergy means that when a group of individuals come together to pray corporately, it increases the prayers’ power and effectiveness.

One of the greatest benefits of corporate prayer is that we **hear the Holy Spirit uniquely reflected through each person in the group**. One person may hear a scripture while another may see a “picture” in their “minds eye” of what God wants prayed. It is the Holy Spirit’s diversity that makes corporate prayer so unique and powerful.

God will give the leader the direction the group needs to begin in prayer. As the team prays together, others on the team may sense a direction to pray by the leading of the Holy Spirit. **The Holy Spirit will confirm this with the prayer group leader. It is then the leader’s responsibility to facilitate the prayer time on the topic and keep the team focused on the direction the Holy Spirit is guiding the group to pray.** As the group follows the Holy Spirit and their leader, God’s purposes are birthed through the prayer team for people and situations on God’s heart.

As an individual, we may have an understanding of a particular person’s need or situation. But when we come together in corporate prayer to seek God’s understanding, wisdom and strategy for a person or situation, **we multiply the opportunities to hear God through the entire prayer team**. As we agree and partner together with the Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus, we will see the authority and power of God in our prayers.

“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” [Rom 8:26-27]

CORPORATE PRAYER LEADERSHIP

Characteristics of a Prayer Group Leader

- A **personal relationship with Jesus**
- Being **yielded to the Holy Spirit's leading** to accomplish His will
- No **known** sin
- Member of Covenant Church

Character will **always** be more important than gifts.

A leader is called to:

- **Love God**
- **Love the People They Lead**
- **Love the People They Pray For**

Love God

The leader will:

- Encourage and empower the prayer team to greater love of and faith in God and His Word
- Seek God for His strategy to effectively pray to bring His will, plan and purposes into being – “prays to pray”
- Honor the Holy Spirit by following His leading keeping the group focused and in agreement with the guidance of the Holy Spirit

Love the People They Lead

The leader will:

- Love those he/she leads
- Use discernment to recognize the difference between rebellion or immaturity in a team member and pray to know the appropriate way to mentor/correct in kindness
- Create a safe and loving environment for participants in the group

Love the People They Pray For

The leader will:

- Encourage the team to pray positively and lovingly for people and situations
- Remind the team that behind every issue or situation there are people involved who need prayer whether or not they are behaving appropriately or making wise decisions
- Assure the team seeks God's strategy and wisdom to pray for people and situations with grace as the foundation for all prayers

What a Leader Does

Leadership carries with it a responsibility to facilitate both the meeting and growth in the team.

The definition of facilitate is *“to make easier or less difficult; to help forward (an action, a process, etc.)”* A leader **yields and is sensitive to the direction of the Holy Spirit** Who is the Leader of the prayer meeting and through His direction keeps the group focused and on track during the prayer time.

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

A leader:

- Keeps his/her eyes open during the meeting to discern movement of the Holy Spirit
- **Assigns a scribe** to capture prayer topics, scriptures and prayer content
- **Facilitates a short discussion** with the prayer team on prayer direction
- **Gives prayer assignments if the group is large** so the team is strategic and focused in prayer
- **Stays in tune with the Holy Spirit** to discern and stop any intrusion of the enemy or flesh into the prayer meeting
- Leads in a manner that **allows everyone to pray** and does not do the majority of praying
- **Models and allows silence** and stillness in corporate prayer
- Keeps prayers focused **on the topic by:**
 - **Redirecting prayer if someone is causing a distraction** or is out of the flow of the prayer meeting
 - Assuring that **prayer expressions are in alignment** with and not disruptive to the flow of the Holy Spirit
 - Helping the prayer team **avoid teaching or preaching** while praying
 - Honoring the scheduled time frame of the meeting
- At the close of the meeting the leader:
 - Affirms that God has partnered with the team in prayer
 - Prays blessing and protection over the team
 - Asks the Holy Spirit to seal what has been accomplished

PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Qualifications

- Come hungry for God
- Pray the Word
- Be submitted to the group leader and team

Conduct During Meetings

There are “rules of behavior” or “ground rules” within a corporate prayer time – a type of “prayer etiquette” for intercessory prayer group participants.

Prayer participants are to:

- **Wait on the Holy Spirit and yield** to His leading
- **Pray until the Holy Spirit gives definition and direction** to the prayers
- Follow **the Holy Spirit** and identify His flow within the group
 - There is a time for praying aloud, and a time for stillness and silence
 - There is a time to focus on a specific topic or person
 - There is a time to pray fervently and a time for relaxed trust
 - There is a time to pray and a time to just listen for the Spirit
 - The Holy Spirit, like wind, can change direction quickly, and the prayer team should learn to move with the Spirit
- Follow the chosen leader who is following the Holy Spirit
- Stay focused, engaged and constantly aware of the presence of God
- Be open to receiving pictures, scriptures and impressions from the Holy Spirit
- Submit anything received to the leader and the group
- Show respect to other team participants
- **Listen, agree with and affirm** each other’s prayers
- Pray **believing**
- Maintain **right motives while praying**; seek God’s will not your own
- Use tongues appropriately
- Focus on what is being prayed vs. thinking about what you are going to pray

DYNAMICS OF A CORPORATE PRAYER GROUP

A Corporate Prayer meeting team should:

- Be in **agreement**
- Operate in the **power of the Holy Spirit**
- Welcome a **variety of appropriate expressions** of prayer

“Again I tell you, if two of you on earth agree (harmonize together, together make a symphony) about – anything and everything – whatever they shall ask it will come to pass and be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

[Matthew 18:19-20] AMP

Agreement in Prayer

When we pray corporately, we are to be in **agreement** with God and be in **one accord with each other**. The word “**agree**” in **Matthew 18:19** not only means being in one accord, but also according to Strong’s Concordance, is defined as **sumphōneō** which means to be harmonious or agree (together, with).

The word *sumphōneō* is the root of our modern English word, *symphony*. Symphony means “**harmony of sound**” such as one **would** experience when an orchestra plays a composition.

The term “**one accord**” means having *the same mind*, or being in *agreement* mentally about the same thing. It can also mean to be of “**one passion.**”

Agreement brings unity between the prayer team and God because we are in alignment with His will, plan and purposes.

Operate in the Power of the Holy Spirit

There is great power in prayer:

*“One man could chase a thousand
or two put ten thousand to flight.”*
[Deuteronomy 32:30]

Variety of Expressions in Prayer

There are various expressions that can occur within a Corporate Prayer meeting. Every expression should depend upon the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Some expressions are:

- Worship and praise
- Tongues
- Singing
- Joy
- Weeping that stems from an identification with the prayer need
- Travail
- Declarations
- Scripture prayers
- Visions | Pictures

*“Pray at all times – on every occasion, in every season –
in the Spirit, with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty...”*
[Ephesians 6:18] AMP

It is the role of the prayer leader to assure that all these expressions are done in an appropriate manner that is not disruptive to the flow of the Holy Spirit within the prayer meeting.

How to Quench the Spirit

Avoid the following when praying corporately:

- Emotionalism – it is faith that moves the heart of God, not emotion.
- “Weird” Behavior – “weird” or inappropriate activity in the prayer meeting can either be the flesh or demonic. The Holy Spirit will not control you, you must control yourself. The leader should be alert to dealing with either of these manifestations.
- Teaching – a prayer meeting is not a Bible Study or a counseling session.
- Preaching – a prayer meeting is not an opportunity to practice preaching skills. We are praying to a holy God not giving a message to the participants.
- Speaking – speaking should only occur when the team needs to clarify direction or present a scripture or “vision” to the entire group. There should be no personal or extraneous conversation during the prayer meeting.
- Rabbit Trails – “rabbit trails” are when a pray-er goes off topic and does not follow the flow of the prayer meeting.
- Dominating – the leader is the one who facilitates the group. Any participant that tries to usurp that position, tell another team participant what to do or attempt to redirect the prayer time is out of alignment with the Holy Spirit and leadership of the group.
- Gossip – do not disguise gossip and criticism as prayer.
- NOTE: Always recognize the difference between rebellion and immaturity and handle each accordingly.

ACTIVATION

Instruction

Select a leader and a scribe. As the team begins, it is important to take time to worship, praise and thank God for Who He is. Yield to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to guide you in this time.

Sit quietly and wait upon the Lord. When you sense something – as scripture, a word or a picture of something in your mind’s eye – ask the Lord if you are to pray about it. If you sense it is “yes”, then begin to pray. The Holy Spirit will guide you throughout this process and each of the team participants will begin to pray as the Holy Spirit leads them.

Debrief

The instructor will debrief this corporate prayer time and each team will have an opportunity to share what they experienced.

PRACTICING LEADERSHIP

Scenario 1

You have been meeting for several weeks and the prayer team is bonding well and flowing with the Holy Spirit. A newcomer, Ann, joins the prayer team. After you worship, you begin to notice that as Ann joins the group in prayer she is not praying in the flow of the group but praying her own topics.

How would you handle this situation?

Scenario 2

You are praying for a situation that is very volatile in the news. John, a participant of your team, is “calling down fire” on the government leaders involved in the situation. His attitude is becoming increasingly hostile.

How would you handle this situation?

Scenario 3

You have been praying for three weeks together and you’ve noticed that Sara has a tendency to jump in before another team participant has finished praying. You can tell that the other team participants are getting frustrated and it is impacting the flow of prayer.

How would you handle this situation?

Scenario 4

You have been praying for about 20 minutes and nothing seems to be moving in prayer. You are trying to figure out what is causing the “brick wall.”

How would you handle this situation?

Scenario 5

As the group is getting ready to worship and pray, Rita says she has an urgent prayer request. As she begins to describe the situation, you recognize that it is simply gossip disguised as a prayer request.

How would you handle this situation?

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Intercessory Prayer | Dutch Sheets | ISBN: 0-8307-4516-5

In this book, pastor and teacher Dutch Sheets explains the nuts and bolts of prayer with wisdom, gentleness and humor. This book will inspire you, give you the courage to pray for the “impossible.” and help you to find the persistence to see your prayers to completion. Discover your role as a prayer warrior – it can mean the difference between heaven and hell for someone you know!

Authority In Prayer | Dutch Sheets | ISBN: 0-7642-0172-7

Who is in charge? The question is at the heart of all conflict on earth. In this powerful book, Dutch Sheets reminds believers that God is in charge and He intends for His people to be overcomers. You don't need to allow sin, Satan, or the circumstances of life to keep you from God's amazing promises. *Authority in Prayer* shows you how you can take hold of God's promises and change your world through prayer.

Praying Together | Stormie Omartian | ISBN: 0-7369-1007-7

Each week you'll have opportunities to think about connecting with others – with a prayer partner, in a prayer group, or through corporate prayer at church. By making your heart and will available to the leading of God's Spirit, you will find yourself on an exciting road to powerful moments interceding with and for others.

The Beauty of Spiritual Language | Jack Hayford | ISBN: 0-7852-7268-2

There are few other topics on which Christians are so divided. And a large majority of believers are unclear about what spiritual language really means. This is a balanced, biblical approach for anyone wanting to make an honest inquiry into the nature of speaking in tongues. Hayford debunks common myths surrounding the practice of tongues and shares with readers the beauty and the order of spiritual language that he has discovered during his times of private communion with God.

Face To Face With God | Bill Johnson | 1-5997-9070-X

In *Face to Face With God*, Bill Johnson helps readers pursue God for greater measures of His presence than they have ever known before.

The Helper | Catherine Marshall | 0-8007-9297-1

In *The Helper*, Catherine Marshall gives you a revealing introduction to the Holy Spirit. She shares forty inspirational readings which contain pertinent Scripture, a prayer, and insight into this mysterious Person of the Godhead.

Praying the Scriptures | Evan B. Howard | ISBN: 0-8308-2201-1

Although Christians are lovers of the Bible, not all have learned and followed the venerable Christian custom of praying directly from Scripture. In this thoroughly readable and helpful book, Evan Howard shows Christians how to recover and reap the rewards of this vital practice.

DYNAMICS OF CORPORATE PRAYER

You may experience all or some of the following “types” of prayer in your prayer group:

- ***Casting Care / Gathering Prayer*** – Taking your cares and concerns to the throne of God and leaving them there, in complete confidence that He is utterly able and trustworthy to take care of it all. Living carefree and full of faith in His faithfulness.
 - 1 Peter 5:6-7
 - Isaiah 54:13
 - Philippians 4:6-8
 - Luke 21:34
 - Psalm 34:10
 - 1 John 5:14-15
 - Hebrews 13:5

- ***Prayer of Consecration*** – This is when we come before the Lord with the desire to be possessed by Him. We actively die to ourselves and exchange ourselves for Him. Humbling ourselves before Him.
 - James 4:13-15
 - Galatians 2:20
 - 2 Timothy 4:7
 - Matthew 26:36
 - Hebrews 12:1
 - John 5:30
 - John 6:38
 - Acts 20:24

- ***Prayer of Praise, Thanksgiving and Worship*** – This kind of praying opens the floodgates of God to your life, as well as gives you access to His courts and benefits.
 - Hebrews 13:15
 - John 1:1-5
 - Psalm 112:1
 - Luke 24:50-53
 - Exodus 23:25
 - Philippians 4:6
 - 1 Corinthians 1:4
 - Ephesians 1:16
 - Philippians 1:3-4

- 1 Thessalonians 1:2
- 1 Thessalonians 2:13

This prayer actually changes us.

- ***Prayer of Faith | Praying the Word*** – Every prayer is prayed in faith but when we speak of the prayer of faith, we are speaking of declaring in prayer based on our rights and privileges in the Word of God because of the finished work of Jesus.
 - Mark 11:22-24
 - John 16:23-27
 - Matthew 7:7-11
 - John 15:7
 - James 4:2
 - Matthew 21:22

- ***Waiting on God | Drawing*** – This is when we just wait before the Lord, drawing on not only Who He is but What He is, and allowing His promptings in the process to change us.
 - Psalm 41:1
 - Psalm 130:6
 - Psalm 33:20
 - Proverbs 8:34
 - Isaiah 30:18
 - Isaiah 40:31
 - Ecclesiastes 5:1
 - Psalm 73:28

- ***Prayer of Intercession*** – In the Old and New Testaments, the Bible speaks of “a Man” who will stand in the gap. In the New Testament, moved on by the Holy Spirit, Pilate says, “See, ‘the Man’”. [John 19:5] Our High Priest, Jesus, is the Man standing in the gap, and often His precious Holy Spirit will move on us in compassion to cooperate with His intercession. When this happens, the love of God so possesses you that you literally lay your life down for another in the place of prayer, while working with the one true Intercessor.
 - Isaiah 59:14-16
 - Jeremiah 5:1
 - Ezekiel 22:29-32
 - Hebrews 9:23

- ***Prayer of Agreement*** – This is different from united prayer as it is often a small group, two or three. Being united in prayer is necessary to change nations, (if my people, not person) but agreeing prayer changes things, circumstances and

pressures. Pathways open for life changes and we begin to walk in the benefits of salvation.

- Matthew 18:19-20
- Deuteronomy 32:30
- Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- **United Prayer | Agreeing Prayer** – When we, as believers, come together in one united voice, heart and mind, as the Holy Spirit moves among us and through us it produces a corporate anointing of Jesus. It is powerful prayer that can change nations, governments, cities and groups of people. It clears a way for God to move freely.
 - Acts 4:24
 - Mark 1:9-10
 - Acts 4:25-32
 - Genesis 28:13-14
 - Joel 2:15-17

- **Prayer of Supplication | Travail | Petition** – The prayer of supplication is not just a request from God, it is asking with all your soul, mind and spirit, with such intense desire, one might feel as though one might die if the outcome of God was not seen. This kind of praying is initiated by the Holy Spirit and is subject to our yielding. A desperate asking of God, knowing He already has it worked out, planned out and He is faithful.
 - 1 Timothy 2:1-2
 - Ephesians 6:16
 - Philippians 4:6
 - Psalm 27:1-4
 - Zechariah 10:1
 - Luke 22:41-45

Supplication defined: Heart-felt fervency involving not only spirit, but soul.

- **Watching in the Spirit** – “Watch and pray” is one of the most common admonitions in the Word for end-time prayers, which we are in...watching is praying to pray, tuning in to God and purposely searching out the promptings of His Spirit, looking for His leadings so you can follow them and pray for things you don’t know, but He knows and desires. This praying often includes waiting on God. The Holy Spirit is eager to assist in this kind of praying because He is the Great Watchman.
 - Mark 13:33-37
 - John 16:13-14
 - Isaiah 62:6-7
 - Daniel 4:12-16

Some would call this kind of praying prophetic, for often the Holy Spirit will have you pray about things in the future.

- ***Prayer of Binding and Loosing*** – The prayer of binding and loosing is simply using what Jesus paid for to attach people, places or things to His plan and design while making sure enemy forces stay at bay.
 - Matthew 18:19-20

Note: We are only to bind and loose what is in heaven. For example, there is no sickness in heaven, so we would bind sickness from our bodies and then we would loose the benefit of salvation and healing to our bodies. We could even bring people to the will for God, which we see Jesus do to Peter, so after he fell he could strengthen his brothers.

- ***Pauline Prayers***
 - Romans 1:8
 - Philippians 1:5-6
 - Ephesians 1:14-20
 - Ephesians 3:14-21
 - Colossians 1:3, 9-11
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:17-23

“Even them I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”
[Isaiah 56:7]