

Intercession

Prayer Tool: How to Run a Non-Boring Prayer Meeting

What?

Joining together in corporate prayer is powerful and can bring about transformation. This prayer tool contains practical tools for engaging a community in prayer and intercession

Why?

“O for thousands upon thousands, divided into small bands in their respective cities, towns, villages, and neighbourhoods, all met at the same time, and in pursuit of one end, offering up their united prayers, like so many ascending clouds of incense before the Most High.” John Sutcliffe

Bible reference:

“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” Matthew 18:19

A quick introduction to Non-boring Prayer Meetings

There is a particular power that is unlocked when we come together to intercede. The first Christians regularly prayed together in this way, and concerted prayer has marked church life ever since.

On one occasion, as they prayed, the room in which they were meeting shook with the power (Acts 4:31). Another time, Peter was miraculously released from prison by their prayers (Acts 12). Jesus had told them that when they came together in His name, He would attend, and that when they agreed together in His name, He would hear their prayers and perform miracles. No wonder the instinct of the early church, whenever they faced trials, was simply to raise their voices together and intercede.

Do it: How to Run a Non-boring prayer meeting

Your number one aim when leading a prayer meeting is to allow the Holy Spirit to be the ultimate leader. And your number two aim should be to ensure that it is never boring!

With a little planning and imagination, it's easy to fill an hour with dynamic intercession.

A healthy framework or flow for a time of corporate prayer includes the three dimensions – **Up / In / Out**.

Up

We should begin our prayer meetings in worship encouraging everyone to lift their eyes up unto King Jesus. Our opening songs should 'point upward', declaring Jesus' victory and the character of God.

We are told to bring our petitions before the Lord with thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6) and to enter His courts with praise (Psalm 100:4)

Worship helps lift our eyes from the problems we're addressing in prayer, to the possibilities of God's power.

Teaching people the often ignored Biblical principle, 'our worship is our warfare' is really important. As we sing songs, in an atmosphere of prayer, that declare the victory of Jesus over our lives and the principalities and powers: this is intercession.

Seeking to combine sung worship with spoken intercession, ebbing and flowing from one to the other during your prayer meeting, is great way to release faith.

In

Through the flow of worship, you may become aware of God speaking to you corporately.

Listen well and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading as He may be gently leading you corporately into a response: through a scripture, an impression or a word of prophecy.

This could be a call to fresh surrender, an invitation to confession and repentance, a stirring up of renewed passion, a revealing of new direction or vision, or simply a tarrying in His presence that He wants you to enjoy.

While you may lead people to personally respond to any of the above, this time also might flow quite naturally into some 'body-ministry' – allowing people to pray for

one another in twos or threes, concerning the things the Lord is speaking to you about.

Out

It is important to move the flow of corporate prayer into an 'outward focus'.

Some of the things you pray for in this area may be a response to what has been revealed by the Spirit during the flow of the worship, but it is also good to be prepared beforehand, thinking through some creative ways you could lead people to pray for issues within your local community.

(If you are leading the prayer time, it's worthwhile saying most of your praying needs to be done before the prayer meeting, discerning the things God is putting on your hearts to pray for within your community when you come together. Then you can carry these things into the prayer meeting itself while still being sensitive to the Spirit about how it all flows together.)

During this part of the prayer meeting, it is helpful to alternate between different models of prayer and break into sections. This will enable you to maintain momentum while keeping everyone fully engaged.

Some of the following models might be helpful:

ABC - a great way to actively engage everyone in prayer is to split the room into groups of three, asking each person to allocate themselves 'A', 'B', or 'C'. Having done this, give three prayer pointers relating to the issue you are addressing, allocated to each of the three letters. This simple model multiplies the prayer and engages everyone, providing them with clear guidance. Invite everyone to draw their prayers to a close as soon as you see the first group finishing. Don't wait for the last group to run out of steam!

Zones - try splitting the room into zones, according to the size of the prayer meeting, around particular themes. Provide written prayer pointers for each one, or allocate different people to lead the prayers in each zone while the rest of the people spend a few minutes in each one.

Crying Out - we know that Jesus sometimes prayed in a loud voice and that the early church also 'raised their voices together in prayer to God.' This model of simultaneous corporate intercession is a mark of revival contexts around the world.

Praying in this way is efficient because God hears every single voice, and it's more engaging than listening to one person at a time praying a long prayer. It also helps us stir ourselves to get passionate about the things that really matter.

If a group is not used to this model of prayer, it is important to explain it to them first and to allow them a few moments to work out what they are going to pray.

At first you may just manage a minute or two, and it's important to stop as soon as voices begin to trail off, but gradually you'll be able to go for longer.

Kingdom Come

Kingdom Come prayer meetings combine free-flowing worship, intercession and listening to God. When this model was introduced at a church called HTB in London, the prayer meeting grew from 40 people to 700, and the average age halved.

Kingdom Come prayer meetings are now spreading around the world.

Books on Running a Non-boring Prayer Meeting

- A Humble Attempt – Jonathan Edwards
- Only a Prayer Meeting – Charles Spurgeon