Building an Altar Prayer Ministry Team

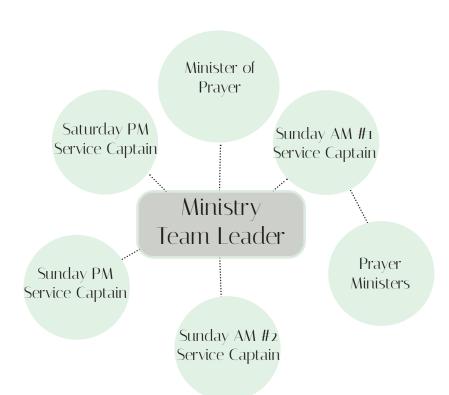
By: Anita Hensley

"... serve one another in love." Galatians 5:13 "Each one should use gift he has received to serve others, Faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10

Your prayer ministry team will be different than mine. And it should be! Your prayer ministry team, to be successful, must reflect the philosophy and style of your church and your pastor. I have outlined the model that I developed at Word of Grace Church to show you how the prayer ministry team model worked for us.

- 1) Elicit the Church's Support. The first thing that I did was talk over this concept with my pastor and express my vision for having a ministry team explaining how that would benefit our church in fulfilling its call to minister to the people God has sent to us. I obtained his permission to put together a strategy.
- 2) Examine the Needs. I put together a series of classes that trained people in the areas that I felt most people needed preparation. This was key to our success. Most people don't feel qualified to pray for others one on one. I wanted to have a safe place for people to learn and to be able to practice praying for others. I gathered together some people who had the same heart that I did and we brainstormed about what we thought we needed to teach a prayer ministry team. Some of the topics we cover in our training are:
- The Heart of a Minister. Teaching on servanthood, having a heart of integrity, Christian maturity and manners. You are not the answer to someone's problem--Jesus is.
- Listening Skills. How to really listen to people, discerning the real issue behind what is being said, and how our perceptions influence our judgments about people.
- Hearing God to Minister. A class on listening to God as we pray, not just praying rote prayers, waiting on God as we pray, praying the Word.
- Healing Prayer. Learning how to pray for healing in all areas--physical, mental and spiritual. Practical pointers including advising someone not to quit a medication without their physician's approval. We also address deliverance prayer and breaking bondages that hold us back.
- The Role and Power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who is facilitating the ministry that we are doing. Learning to trust Him to work. A study on His character and nature.
- How to do a Visitation in the Hospital or Home. Practical tips on ministering outside of the church setting including what not to say!
- Intimacy with Jesus. Class on your relationship with Jesus. You need to be filled up as you prepare to give out.
- Ministry Do's and Don'ts. The importance of personal hygiene, being sensitive to gender and touch, confidentiality, not having a personal agenda, etc.
- Overview on Church Classes and Policies. This is a class that makes the prayer ministry team aware of the classes that we can refer people to for follow up care. We also go over the church/state policies on child/sexual/ domestic abuse and what needs to be reported and to whom. We also discuss where to refer people who have practical needs like food boxes, financial help, etc. Included is a listing of church position papers on the Holy Spirit and deliverance.
- 3) Training. We began to train those who we knew were interested and qualified to minister. We initially offered an 8 week series of classes and quickly modified that to a weekend seminar that meet Friday evening 7PM-9 PM and Saturday 8AM to 2PM. This included lunch and a notebook for the price of \$15.00. Currently we offer this class 4 times a year and train people in all of the departments of the church, including small group leaders, to minister to their people. The youth and children's ministry have a modified version to meet their specific needs. Many people take the classes who aren't interested in being on the ministry team; they just want to learn how to pray for others or perhaps they want to be on a visitation team.

- **4). Becoming a Ministry Team Member.** We have a ministry team application form and statement of faith to fill out to apply to be on the ministry team. We then have an interview with the perspective member (we strongly encourage spouses to minister together) and get to know them and give them a chance to ask questions. We require that they:
- Be a member of the church for at least 6 months
- Take the membership class to understand church culture and philosophy
- Have their spouse's blessing to be a part of the team (this sounds archaic but it is important; ministry often extends 15 to 20 minutes after each service.)
- Attend pre-service prayer meeting for the service they will attend. These are scheduled 30 minutes prior to each service.
- Fulfill any other volunteer requirements at our church that may apply.
- **5). Organization.** Our church has four weekend services and each service has a prayer ministry team captain. They are responsible for leading pre-service prayer, interviewing prayer ministers for their service, developing community within the team, providing service information and further training to their team members. The prayer ministry captains will also pray over the new recruits and determine who they will apprentice with for their first few months. The leader over the prayer ministry team will coordinate with the captains and give them information such as special speakers coming up, special times of ministry in the service itself, and any instructions from the pastor or service coordinator.



6). Prayer during the Services. We offer ministry team prayer at the end of every service that we have at Word of Grace. We often have ministry times in the service itself if the person leading the service senses that is needed. The ministry team captain for the service sits in the front row so he or she can be available to help administer prayer whenever it is needed in the service. At the end of every service people are invited to come to the front of the church for prayer if they need it. Because we have several people who want prayer for salvation each week, we actually have 2 ministry teams: one specifically to pray for people who want to make a commitment to Christ and another to pray for needs. Both teams are cross trained to help the other team.

We do not have an altar per se at Word of Grace. We do have a prayer room behind the stage and if we have someone who is very emotional we will take them to the prayer room for privacy. Otherwise we pray in pairs at the front of the Worship Center. One person is the leader and the other one will be praying for the situation. We ask that for the most part men minister to men and women to women. If we have a married couple seeking prayer we try to have a couple pray for them. The service captain for that service will be watching and directing ministry. They are also available to help out

7). Handling Problems. You will have some problems! Just be prepared to deal with them quickly and when you find yourself in need of good advice, seek it out. I highly recommend that the prayer ministry team coordinate with the other ministries in the church. For example: You should know who the Youth Pastor is and how and when he wants to be contacted. Does your church refer people out for counseling or does the Pastor handle that?

You will find that you will have some people who regularly need prayer for the same issue over and over each week. They may need to be referred to a pastor or a support group so they can realize the source of the issue in their life. Be gentle but firm as you refer them; they may be taking time from someone else who really needs help and is ready to let the Lord help them.

You will also find that some people want to be prayer ministers just because they feel they have good advice for everyone. They will want to counsel people on "what they would do if they were in that situation." One strategy to overcome that is having the people pray in pairs. If I run into someone who is becoming a problem, I suggest that they be my prayer partner. Then I can regularly remind them what we are here for and correct them privately and gently if necessary and eventually that prayer minister will either shape up or realize that this is not the ministry for them.

Please don't let the potential for problems outweigh the incredible benefit and blessings that a prayer ministry team can add to your church.

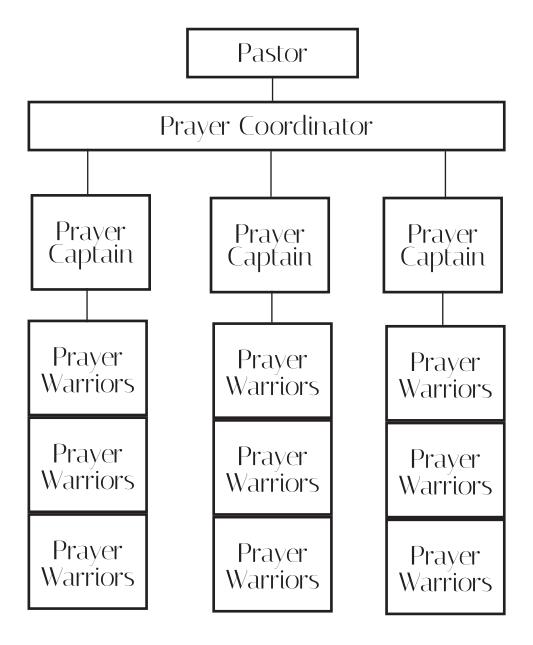
Go get started!!

should something need extra attention.

Tips and Guidelines for Ministering

- 1. Prepare your heart beforehand through prayer, fasting, Bible study, confession of sin, repentance, worship, etc.
- 2. Check your motives. Are they servanthood and humility? Philippians 2:3-11
- 3. Review your notes on the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts.
- 4. Stay under authority; follow the pastor's or ministry team leader's directions.
- 5. Wear your prayer minister name badge.
- 6. Put the people at ease. Greet them with a smile and encourage a lot.
- 7. Dress appropriately—modestly and non-distracting.
- 8. Personal hygiene—check your hair, breath, fingernails.
- 9. Pray in pairs, whenever possible. If not possible, men pray for men, women for women. If you feel uncomfortable praying for someone for whatever reason—don't be afraid to ask for help.
- 10. Ask permission to put your hands on people and then don't violate the "head and shoulder rule." (Only touch the head and shoulders of the person—not the chest, stomach, lower back. Exceptions can be made when praying for physical healing, but only after obtaining permission and then no touching by member of the opposite sex. Many people have been violated by wrong touch.)
- 11. Avoid counseling—listen and pray. If they are talking too much, gently say "What I am hearing you say is you need prayer for ______; let's pray about that" and then start to pray. Many people really just need someone to listen to them. Help redirect them to the Lord.
- 12. Anoint with oil when you are praying for healing. James 5:14
- 13. Pray the prayer of faith: be bold, confident, expectant, but don't strive. James 5:16-18
- 14. Pray in the Spirit, with eyes open. Be prepared to catch them if they fall.
- 15. Pray Biblical prayers such as:
- Come Holy Spirit
- Ask for a deeper revelation of the Father's love
- Healing of the heart, mind, and emotions
- Freedom from strongholds and addictions
- Pray blessings over their life, family, ministry, work
- Ask God to fill them with His Power
- Ask for the refreshing presence of God (Acts 3:19)
- Pray Bible verses that come to mind
- 16. If you come over to help a fellow prayer minister, be sensitive to the direction in which they have started praying. Be there to support, and don't try to change the direction of the ministry focus. You may not have all the facts the original hearer has been given. You can discuss ministry techniques after the ministry has been completed!
- 17. Don't ever push anyone over! Suggest they sit down if they are swaying.
- 18. Record special prayers and prophetic ministry.
- 19. Evaluate your time afterwards, give brief report to leadership; alert them of problems.
- 20. Rejoice in the Lord! (Luke 10:17-20)

Sample Diagram of A Prayer Chain



As you can see from the above diagram, a powerful prayer chain involves serious focus and commitment. It definitely takes time and attention to call the chain members and send monthly (or quarterly) updates on ongoing requests. Though the process is simple, it requires a deep commitment. Though the flesh and the devil will fight prayer more than anything else, the results are definitely worth the battle! Indeed there are many advantages of a powerful church prayer chain.

Role: Intercessory Prayer Captain

Department: Fountain of Life Corporate Prayer Ministry

Mission and Summary: Prayer Captains strengthen Fountain of Life's prayer ministry by releasing intercessors into their destiny in God. Prayer Captains provide the number one source of corporate prayer communication and encourage, mentor, and affirm Fountain of Life intercessors.

Communication Goals:

- Receive, process and forward communication on corporate prayer issues from intercessors. Inform your team of urgent corporate prayer agenda.
- Provide quarterly communication to the Corporate Prayer Council regarding answers to prayers, consistency of participation, and spiritual advancement by your team members.

Mission Goals:

- Enlist and engage a team of 10 intercessor volunteers.
- Encourage team participation in prayer, training events and recognition programs.
- Provide positive accountability for intercessors.
- Affirm intercessors through love and encouragement and positive relational interaction.
- Provide additional layer of prayer coverage for team intercessors.
- Enlist and mentor additional prayer captains as candidates for future prayer leadership.
- Encourage corporate prayer participation from all FOL Members.
- Mentor and disciple intercessors into Christlikeness.

Contact the Prayer Council When:

- Three of your intercessors have the same corporate prayer issue.
- Two of your intercessors have a strong feeling about a corporate prayer issue.
- One of your most mature and discerning intercessors is burdened with a corporate prayer issue.









Prayer Triplets



What is a prayer triplet?

A group of 3 Christians committed to praying together regularly for the lost.

For whom should we pray?

- 1 Each person in your triplet chooses 3 people who do not know Christ as personal Savior and Lord, making a total of 9 for whom all of you are praying.
- 2 Select a country or people group that is unreached with the gospel of Jesus. (Get this from your mission committee or use the one God has laid on your own heart.)

How do I choose my 2 triplet partners?

Ask God in prayer to show you 2 Christians friends, relatives or church members He wants in your triplet. They should live, work or worship close enough to you to allow your actually getting together weekly to pray. Look for others who are burdened for the lost also.



How often should we pray?

Once a week.

How long should we pray at our weekly triplet meetings?

At least 15 minutes—or as long as God burdens you to pray.

What do we pray?

- Limit your praying to the salvation of your chosen 9 and your unreached country or people group. (Other important prayer requests should be covered in other prayer meeting, not here.)
- 2 Pray for each other through the week as you each seek to interact with your chosen 3 to show them Jesus' love in action

What should we not do in a triplet prayer meeting?
Don't spend time chatting or

Let God burden your heart for the ones you want to win to Jesus.

having food or beverages. It is not a social gathering with prayer at the end, but a deep, disciplined time to pray for those needing Jesus.

Questions

& Answers

When to pray?

Anytime you can meet with yoru triplet partners.

Where to pray?

Anywhere—such as church, home, work, school, auto, and so on.

How long do we sign up for?

- 1 Decide in advance how many months you will promise to pray together.
- ? Renew your commitment at the end of that time.

Share naturally in your personal contacts with them.

What will God expect of how I live?

Remember that God's Word says that your godly lifestyle will determine whether or not God will answer your prayers. Live 1 John 3:22 that tells us: "Whatever we ask [of God] we receive from Him because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight."

then what? praying accepts the Lord, If one for who you are

- discipled in his or her walk with fellowship, making sure he or she is If possible, incorporate him or her into your church, Bible study and/or
- ωΝ Don't stop praying for him or her.
- Jesus into reaching friends and Channel his or her new zeal for for those who don't know Christ yet. Encourage and help that new family who are without Jesus Christian to get into a triplet to pray
- 4 give you 9 again for your triplet Add another person who doesn't know Christ to your prayer list to

with other triplet pray-ers? How should we cooperate

- Report to the Triplet Coordinator keep track of who is praying in (Tricia Hudgins) so that she can
- 2 coordinator. Report all decisions for Jesus to the
- ω Come together occasionally to program and each other. praise God and pray for your triplet

How to Pray for the Lost

Ask God people. Rom. 9:1-3:10:1 to give us a burden for lost

Laborers

for the harvest. Matt. 9:38

Receive

in Praise the promise of fruit. Jn. 15:16

Believe God

for conviction of sin. Acts 2:37-38

Jesus' Name the force of doubt veiling their minds. 2 Cor. 3:14-16; 4:3-4

for their hearts to be opened to

Pray

believe. Acts 16:14

Remind God

the Holy Spirit for wooing them to the Father. Jn. 6:44; 16:7-11

in humility of His desire to reward our faith with souls. Heb

Invite God

the lost. 2 Cor. 5:17 to change your life as a sign to

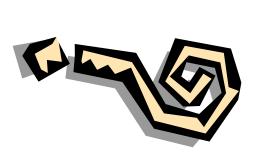
Trust God

for a shepherding spirit to converts. Ps. 37:3, Ezek. 34 disciple and care for the new

Anticipate

in prayer a reaping for what we have sown. Gal. 6:7-10

Prayer Triplet Questions & **Answers**



of pre-evangelism powerful method Triplet praying

24/7 Intercessory Prayer Watch Captains

Evening Watch

Vacant 6 pm to 9 pm 555-3204

Jerry White 9 pm to 12 am 555- 1062

Midnight Watch

Joan Elkins 12 am to 3 am 555-4521

Annabel Johnson 3 am to 6 am 555-2302

Morning Watch

Mary Brown 6 am to 9 am 555-8700

Sally Wills 9 am to 12 pm 555-3200

Afternoon Watch

Karen Mueller 12 pm to 3 pm 555-9122

Barbara Jones 3 pm to 6 pm 555-8601

General Guidelines

Recruit new intercessors as needed.

Ensure a minimum of 5 intercessors is praying in your designated 3-hour segment.

Contact each of the intercessors in your watch regularly to encourage them and verify the accuracy of their prayer times.

Give all changes to (prayer watch coordinator name).

Mobilizing Prayer for a Conference

Three levels:

Conference host pastors and leaders: Pastors hosting the conference should commit to pray for the conference themselves. If the leaders themselves are not praying, how can they expect God to move.

Inner circle: Small group of mature intercessors who are highly committed to the conference and will pray fervently. They will pray on their own and meet together on a regular basis.

Outer circle: A larger group of people who will pray through a conference prayer guide. These can be the prayer groups in individual churches and people in churches with an interest to pray for the conference.

People to pray for:

- Speakers, worship leaders, administrative team: See that every speaker, worship leader, and person on the administrative team is adopted by at least three intercessors and/or prayer groups
- (Develop a detailed prayer agenda on how to pray for each group of the above.)

Organizational details of conference to pray for:

- Registration of the people
- What you want to see accomplished through the conference
- Offerings and the budget to be met

Other ideas:

- Hold a prayer rally about a week prior to the conference and ask the major churches involved to participate.
- Schedule a prayer meeting at the conference site the day the conference starts and do a prayer walk through the rooms
- Set up a prayer room during the conference and announce times it will be open before services. Have a leader to offer a guided time of prayer.

P. S. This is not an exhaustive list of conference subjects or ideas.



Writing PrayerGrams

The PrayerGrams are located on the table with the file box of prayer requests. Please send a note of encouragement to anyone you have prayed for during your time in the prayer room. Make your PrayerGram uplifting and include a written Scripture, not just a reference.

Each PrayerGram will be read by the Prayer Ministry coordinator to ensure that, for instance, someone who has just died is not sent a PrayerGram praying for healing.

Please be sure to address your PrayerGrams. PrayerGrams will be picked up daily and mailed from the church office.

Dan,

You were remembered in prayer today. God loves you and yourfamily very much. With His blessings..

Sam

I John 5:15, "And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

If you need prayer, call (602) 555-1234

Postcard Size 425" x 550" Microsoft Publisher has many easy to use postcard templates for developing your PrayerGram

Praying through the Worship Service

Our purpose is to come boldly before the throne of God to uphold our pastor, worship team and the entire worship service this morning. We want to pray as the Holy Spirit leads us. In particular, the following areas will be covered. Please follow the pattern of intercession as outlined below. Please do not move on to the next topic until the leader directs you to as the goal is for saturation prayer as the Spirit leads. Please continue to pray protection for these leaders following the service—pray for God's peace and no harassment of the enemy.

Worship

For the worship leader/team to be filled with a fresh anointing of God's Spirit
For the choir and special music to be filled with God's grace and power
That the leader/team would lead the congregation into higher praise and deeper worship
For a spirit of praise and worship to be released in the hearts of the people
That the Lord would be pleased and glorified through the true worship of His people

The Offering

For the one receiving the offering to be prepared and have God's direction For the congregation to give joyfully and liberally their tithes and offerings For all the financial needs of the church to met For the financial needs of the people to be met ("Give and it will be given to you." Luke 6:38)

The Pastor/Sermon

That the pastor's mind be at peace, centered upon the Lord, and free of distractions The pastor would speak the Word boldly in the power of the Holy Spirit The Word that he preaches would go forth unhindered, reaching its appointed goal

The Congregation

The minds of the people will be attentive and their hearts open to receive God's Word That the people will not only hear the Word but put it into practice in their lives That the needs of the people will be met (encouragement, healing, direction, instruction) For commitments to Christ

Overall Service

A fresh flowing of the Holy Spirit's activity working in and among His people God's agenda over man's agenda Sound equipment to work without hindrances All parts of the service to flow together proclaiming what God wants to say to His people

Simultaneous Children Youth/Activities

For children and youth workers to be prepared, encouraged, and directed by God's Spirit For protection of children and youth during their classes
That children and youth would learn to love and serve God faithfully
That their special needs would be met
That God's truths would be instilled their hearts and minds

Setting Up a Prayer Room

Establishing a special place for prayer in your church is important for some of the following reasons:

- Establishing a prayer room will help make prayer more of a visible priority in your church.
- Launching the prayer room will bring excitement to the prayer ministry and elevate the level of prayer participation in the entire church family.
- Providing a special place where people can pray will give greater opportunities to pray and to learn to pray more effectively.
- Establishing a place to pray for family crisis, marriage problems, financial difficulties, and other needs will raise the awareness that you are a caring church.
- Maintaining a prayer room will offer the opportunity to synchronize the prayers of your church with other church prayer rooms in the city, state, and nation.
- Providing a prayer room with prayer stations targeting the needs of the community will promote ownership of the church vision to win the community to Christ.

Location and Lav-out

The first thing to do when setting up a prayer room is to find a location. If possible, select a room set apart from church activities that might intrude upon an intercessors' time with God. However, if your church is short on space, find a classroom, an unused office, a storage room, or a portable building. One congregation put up a tent in their foyer. What your original space looks like is not important. Primary considerations are security, access, and functionality.

Consider using a room with an outside entrance. This affords access to the prayer room 24-hours a day without requiring the entire building to remain open. If the prayer room is open past office hours, it will need a bathroom, telephone, and a combination door lock. Churches in certain locations may need to hire a security guard as well.

Furnishings

The way in which your prayer room is set up and furnished will depend upon its size, times of operation, and type of prayer room. Use the following to help you create a prayer room that suits your church's needs: desk, small tables, lamp, comfortable chairs and or couch, bulletin boards, bookcase, storage space, closet, or cabinets, trash can, pictures, scripture plaques, dry erase board, computer.

Ideas for Supplies

Prayer guides, Bible, concordance, books on prayer, CD player with bluetooth capabilities for worship music, Prayer room policies manual, Pens, pencils, dry erase markers, Notepads, Push pins for bulletin board, paper clips, tissues, Prayer requests/praise reports file box, PrayerGrams, Calendar, Clock

Specialty Items

If open after office hours: rest room, security viewing hole in door, security door lock with pass code, security light outside.

Prayer Stations

A possible format for the prayer room is the use of prayer stations. A prayer station is a section of the room that focuses upon one prayer target. These may be set up around the perimeter of the room (a small table and chair set at each station), or they may be set up through the room, separated by room dividers. The use of prayer stations greatly increases the consistency, specificity, and depth of prayers offered by those in the prayer room. Some of the stations might include:

Personal preparation

Prayer guide for personal preparation

Bible

Bible promise book

Communion table and communion supplies

Prayer for pastor and staff

Permanent prayer guide on how to pray for a Christian leader

Updated prayer guide of specific staff requests

Pictures of pastor and staff

Cassette/CD player with tape of word of gratitude and requests from senior pastor

Prayer for the ministries of the church

Prayer guide for praying through a worship service

Prayer guide for upcoming church events (missions fair, prayer conference, new believer orientation class, etc.)

Prayer guide for departments of the church and their mission

Prayer for needs of church family

File box with prayer requests/praise reports

White board with urgent requests: the sick, hospitalized, bereaved, backslidden, urgent needs

General prayer guide for youth and children

General prayer guide for families

Prayer grams for writing notes to those prayed for

Prayer for those without Christ

Prayer guide on how to pray someone to come to Christ

Bulletin board with pictures (red heart signifies prayers are answered)

Prayer cards with confidential requests (not posted)

Prayer for missionaries

General prayer guide on how to pray for missionaries and their families

Prayer requests from the church's missionaries

Pictures of missionaries, maps of countries where they live

Prayer grams for writing notes to missionaries

Prayer for government leaders

General prayer guide of how to pray for a governmental leader

Prayer requests for specific leaders

Pictures of city, state, and national leaders

Prayer legislative issues

Prayer guide of requests for elections, bills, and appointments Newspaper clippings of issues which need prayer Related pictures

Prayer for the city

General prayer guide for the city
Map of city/community
Specific requests for the following:
List of pastors and churches
List of schools and principals
List gangs, poverty areas, crime areas

Prayer for global concerns

General prayer guide Maps of other countries Globe or world map Pictures of world leaders

Recruiting and Training

It will take considerable time and energy to recruit and train church members to make certain that the prayer room is filled with intercession.

It is important to get a number of committed prayer leaders and church members involved in the planning and set up of the prayer rooms. An example of this is to ask those involved in missions to be in charge of setting up and updating the prayer station which targets missionaries and missions. Church members involved in government or interested in current events could be in charge of maintaining the local government station by providing newspaper clippings, gathering pictures of local officials etc. Those involved with parenthood ministries could supply information regarding the schools in the area.

The idea is to draw people into the prayer room who have never spent more than 15 minutes in prayer at any one time in their lives—as well as those faithful intercessors and prayer leaders who always show up. By praying through the prayer stations, people discover that an hour passes very quickly and that they have had a wonderful and invigorating experience with the Lord.

Many churches plan a number (perhaps quarterly) messages on the power of prayer with recruitment for people to sign up to pray in the prayer room. However the first people to sign up to pray in the prayer room should be the pastors and church staff followed by the lay leaders. Unless the leaders model prayer the congregation usually doesn't follow and God seldom honors a prayer ministry when the leaders give only "lip service" to the endeavor.

Launching the prayer center can be an exciting time for the church. Consider having an open house for the prayer room or prayer center when it is completed. Include a tour of the prayer room as a part of new member orientation. One church passed out birth announcements. It would read something like "Announcing the birth of . . . the (church name) Prayer Center, time, date, location, etc. with invitation to attend." Orientation classes to familiarize people with the prayer center and training in how to use the prayer stations must be on-going so that new people can come on board continually.

Staffing

A volunteer or staff person must be assigned to oversee scheduling, recruiting, training, and maintaining of the prayer room. Organizationally this person would answer directly to the church prayer coordinator, director of prayer, or pastor of prayer.

Prayer Room Sub-stations (For Youth and Children)

If there is any place that God is moving today, it is in the youth and children's prayer movement. With very little cost, time, and space, the church can provide special places of prayer for youth and children.

Some churches have separate prayer rooms for the youth while others take one wall in the youth room and allow the youth to paint and decorate it with prayer targets: posters of rock stars, schools with names of principals and Christian campus club leaders, names of gangs they are adopting in prayer, maps with identified areas of Satanic involvement, personal prayer requests of other teens, names of friends who need the Lord in their lives.

Children's classrooms can contain prayer stations much like those in the main prayer center. Children love to bring pictures of their moms, dads, friends, and teachers to pray over.