

# Six Foundations of a Dynamic Prayer Meeting

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The prayer meetings of the New Testament church brought down prison walls and led to thousands of conversions.

When was the last time you were part of a prayer meeting produced that kind of effect? Would it matter if your church canceled prayer meeting?

“What makes the difference between a live prayer meeting and a dead one? **The touch of the power of God**, says C. John Miller, author of *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church*. And **the expectation that God will be present, healing and changing those who come...**

“Structures... will not ensure a prayer meeting that is alive with God’s power. No structure can do that. Even the most well-planned structure cannot replace these essentials: **the conviction that prayer is the church’s lifeblood; the expectancy that God will be present with power and healing; a commitment to doing God’s will, whatever the cost; and the prayers of the leaders before the prayer meeting itself.**” <sup>1</sup>

Ellen White adds this: “We meet together **to edify one another** by an interchange of thoughts and feeling, to gather strength, and light, and courage by becoming acquainted with one another’s hopes and aspirations; and **by our earnest heartfelt prayers, offered up in faith, we receive refreshment and vigor from the Source of our strength.** These meetings should be most precious seasons and should be made interesting to all who have any relish for religious things.” <sup>2</sup>

## Six Foundations

### 1. Faith & Expectation

If we want to see God at work in our prayer meetings, then we must come with the expectation that He will be present and active. We must also teach our people to expect to meet God.

“I asked the angel why there was no more faith and power in Israel. He said: “Ye let go of the arm of the Lord too soon. Press your petitions to the throne, and hold on by strong faith. The promises are sure. Believe ye receive the things ye ask for, and ye shall have them.” <sup>3</sup>

### 2. God-Centered

“If we would see the transformation of our prayer meetings, we must line up with Acts... The first secret that unlocked the resources of heaven for them was this: they went from being on their own agenda to being on God’s agenda... If you lead prayer, you must grasp this one truth above all others: your primary job is to help the people of God be God-centered, to teach them that the primary purpose of prayer is a lifestyle of walking with God.” <sup>4</sup>

God must be the reason and goal of our prayer meetings. We desperately need to surrender all to Him, recognize what He is doing, and follow Him no matter the cost. Then the way is open for the Holy Spirit to move powerfully among us.

We also need to pray about the things that matter to God. Our prayer meetings will remain lifeless if we focus on ourselves and our wants. Too often prayer meetings become a place to share prayer requests for Aunt Jo's car, Ben's knee, and the Miller's marriage problems. While these are important to God, if they are the sum and substance of the prayer meeting, you are leading a dying program.

Prevent a self-focus by:

- 1) helping people see what God's priorities are (the salvation of souls, release of captives, victory over sin, etc.),
- 2) teaching them to pray scripture,
- 3) setting aside time early in the service to pray for kingdom needs,
- 4) not taking prayer requests (instead, have people simply pray their need and others can agree in prayer for that need), and
- 5) having people pray for personal needs in small groups.

### **3. Relationship Building**

The book of Acts reveals that loving fellowship went hand-in-hand with world-changing prayer meetings. See Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35, and 5:12-16, 41-42. When we prioritize ministering to each other, we too will see God's blessings abound in our prayer meetings.

Why? "Dynamic prayer follows dynamic fellowship because we pray best with those we love most... We must indeed seek first the kingdom when we pray, but if we haven't paid the price to build deep relationships with those with whom we pray, then prayer will always lack depth."<sup>5</sup>

Remember what Ellen White said, "We meet together to edify one another by an interchange of thoughts and feeling, to gather strength, and light, and courage by becoming acquainted with one another's hopes and aspirations..."

Provide opportunities in every prayer meeting for members to minister to the needs of each other in prayer and fellowship. See the post on [prayer meeting activities](#) for ideas of activities that will build relationships among members.

### **4. Leader's Relationship with God**

The most important thing you can do as prayer meeting leader is to nurture your own relationship with God. Knowing the foundations of a dynamic prayer meetings and having a whole list of activities to choose from will never do "what God reserves solely as His prerogative. If you want to see Him, seek Him. Seek Him desperately in secret. Cry out to Him; open your mouth and pant for Him. Constantly monitor your heart's desire for Him. Keep your finger on the pulse of desire to be with Him. Make sure your hunger does not wane. Only by seeking God fervently, intensely, continually will you walk with God. Then and only then will those whom you lead walk with God. Then and only then will you discern the activity of God and see His power consistently."<sup>6</sup>

### **5. Heart's Right with God**

The great revivals throughout history have all been marked by deep repentance and confession of sin. During the Welsh revival of 1904 "Every church was stirred to its depths. Strong men were in tears of penitence and women were moved with a new fervor."<sup>7</sup> The early Advent movement was also accompanied by deep repentance.

If we want to see revival power come through our prayer meetings, then we need to plead for deep repentance and provide time for private and appropriate public confession of sin.

“A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer.”<sup>8</sup>

## **6. Unity of Members**

The book of Acts often says the disciples were in “one accord” - united in passion and purpose. Throughout Acts, the apostles’ prayer meetings were often for a specific purpose (Acts 1, 4, 12, 13).

In order to thrive, a prayer group must have a purpose for meeting. Purpose in prayer comes from knowing God and understanding of His guidance. It also comes in response to specific needs and crises. We need a “clear understanding of what is at stake, willingness to take personal responsibility, plus belief that God will answer when we cry.”<sup>9</sup>

“We must not only pray in Christ’s name, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This explains what is meant when it is said that the Spirit “maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Romans 8:26. Such prayer God delights to answer. When with earnestness and intensity we breathe a prayer in the name of Christ, there is in that very intensity a pledge from God that He is about to answer our prayer “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” Ephesians 3:20.”<sup>10</sup>

## **A Strong Foundation**

Building a strong foundation for prayer meeting does not happen overnight. It is built through a growing, passionate friendship with God and consistently shepherding God’s people to understand and follow Him. It will take time to lay the foundations of a dynamic prayer meeting. So don’t be discouraged if progress seems slow. Just keep praying and following God’s lead. He will guide you and work mightily in people’s lives in answer to the prayer of faith.

“Thorough consecration, much prayer, an intense earnestness, will make an impression; for angels of God will be present to move upon the hearts of the people.”<sup>11</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> Vander Griend, Alvin. *The Praying Church Sourcebook*. Faith Alive Christian Resources. 1997. p. 103.
- <sup>2</sup> White, Ellen. *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2*. eBook Copyright © 2010, Ellen G. White. 1871. p. 578.
- <sup>3</sup> White, Ellen. *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen. G. White*. eBook Copyright © 2010, Ellen G. White. 1922. p. 127.
- <sup>4</sup> Franklin, John. *And the Place was Shaken*. B&H Publishing Group. 2005. p. 33, 35.
- <sup>5</sup> *ibid.* p. 40.
- <sup>6</sup> *ibid.* p. 43
- <sup>7</sup> Grubb, Norman. *Rees Howells Intercessor*. Christian Literature Crusade. 1952. p. 32.
- <sup>8</sup> White, Ellen. *Selected Messages, Volume 1*. eBook Copyright © 2010, Ellen G. White. 1958. p. 121.
- <sup>9</sup> Franklin, John. *And the Place was Shaken*. B&H Publishing Group. 2005. p. 50
- <sup>10</sup> White, Ellen. *Christ's Object Lessons*. eBook Copyright © 2010, Ellen G. White. 1900. p. 147.
- <sup>11</sup> White, Ellen. *Evangelism*. eBook Copyright © 2010, Ellen G. White. 1946. p. 150