

Guidelines for Praying Together

The Purpose of Praying Together

Everything in the Kingdom of God is a matter of God first, others second, and self last. So the **main** reason we pray is that God longs to have intimacy with us, and we pray to satisfy His heart. We pray together because God wants us to pray not just individually, but corporately as well, and he has promised much power to be released when we agree together in prayer (Matthew 18:19). The Scripture symbolizes this power by telling us that one man would chase a thousand and two would put ten thousand to flight (see Deuteronomy 32:30). So if a dozen people agree together in prayer, the power of God in the unseen realm that is released as a result is far greater than that of a nuclear bomb going off in the physical realm.

What could possibly be more important in the life of God's family than the prayer meeting? In the early church, the priority of the people in leadership was clear: 1) prayer, and 2) the ministry of the word (see Acts 6:3-4). Others were given the responsibility of administrative matters so that the apostles could spend their time in these two areas, which were **most** important.

So God's people should view themselves as powerful warriors in prayer, who are agents of great change. As we gather together and cry out to **The Almighty**, he hears our requests and as a result he changes people and circumstances from what they are into what he wants them to be. Because his will is perfect, this is always a vast improvement. Because God's people who join together in prayer are powerful agents of godly change, we should view our participation in the prayer meeting as an opportunity to give rather than receive. As we give, it will be given unto us, granted. (We get to know one another better; we get to have our hearts enlarged by the prayer burdens of the other warriors; we get to learn how better to talk to God by both the positive and negative examples of other prayer warriors; we get to be changed by the presence of God; and much more.) But our focus should be on the God who is grieved over situations not lining up to his will, the great power he has invested into us to see those situations reversed, and the people who will be powerfully impacted by his grace as a result of our prayers. It's not about us. It's all about God and his Kingdom.

When Someone Else Is Leading Out in Prayer

If ten warriors gather to pray for an hour, a full 90% of the enormous spiritual power that is released as a result of that prayer meeting is not due to the one person at a time who is leading out, but the nine people who are praying in harmony with the one leading out. **90 percent!!** This shows us that what we do when someone else is leading out in prayer is of the utmost importance. Jesus called this agreement (see Matthew 18:19). Agreement in prayer is a matter of everyone in the room always being of **one** heart and mind, and it is characterized by...

listening attentively - We cannot afford to let our minds wander. We must refuse, by the grace of God, to be distracted. Our attention must be riveted to the request going up before **The Almighty**. If we don't focus on what is being prayed, we cannot be in agreement, and vital prayer power is lost.

caring deeply - We must allow the request being voiced to grip our hearts. If we don't care about that situation, why should God respond? It's the effectual **fervent** prayer of a righteous man that avails much.

praying fervently - Listening attentively and caring deeply alone do not accomplish anything. We must lift that request up to God. As we do that, we need to have just as much focus and concern as we would if we were leading out, it's just that we are using someone else's words.

When You Are Leading Out in Prayer

When we pray privately, using clumsy language or being unclear makes very little difference, because God knows exactly what we mean regardless of our language. But when we pray corporately, our fellow prayer warriors only know what we mean by the words we use. So, in love for them, we need to be more careful in the way we talk to God. In a prayer meeting, we should be concerned about loving God first, and loving our fellow prayer warriors second. To this end, when you lead out in prayer, please...

Speak loudly enough so that everyone can hear comfortably - It's not necessary to yell, but we need to be careful not to frustrate our fellow prayer warriors by speaking so softly that even when they strain to hear, they cannot make out all that is being prayed. Love them enough not to do that.

do your best to submit to the Holy Spirit - What God wants us to pray cannot be improved upon. If you have clear direction from the Lord, ***always obey***.

realize who you are talking to - Many well-meaning Christians talk to ***The Almighty*** as though he were a human being in need of information, which is not the case at all! If it helps you, try picturing God arrayed in glory and power on his throne and speak to him with that vision in mind.

pray about matters of mutual concern - Even though your great-uncle's hangnail is important to God, in a prayer meeting it is best to stick to those topics that everyone has connection to.

pray about only one thing at a time - Before you lead out in prayer, have a clear picture in your mind of the one thing you want God to change from what it is to what it should be if His will were carried out. Pray that one thing, and then give someone else a chance. Covering multiple topics can frustrate the other prayer warriors, since someone could have wanted to pray something similar on the first topic that you covered. "Wandering" prayers that cover multiple topics are much harder to agree with.

keep your prayer to about one minute - The longer you lead out in prayer, the more difficult it will be for the other prayer warriors to continue to agree with you. Love them enough not to make it difficult for them to agree.

always be clear who "us" refers to - Prayers like, "*Lord, help us love our enemies,*" can be quite frustrating to agree with because they are so unclear as to who is to receive this help from God. Does the "us" in that prayer refer to the people in the room at the time? all the people of the church family? all the believers in the city? or someone else? Again, we should be loving our fellow prayer warriors enough so that we make it as easy as possible for them to agree with our prayer.

allow plenty of time if you want to change the subject from the previous prayer - When someone is finished leading out in prayer and you have the burden to lead out in prayer on a different topic, allow plenty of time, perhaps about ten seconds, before you lead out. This gives everyone in the room the opportunity to lead out in prayer for a matter closely related to what has just been prayed.

always pray the solution, not the problem - If someone prays, "*Lord, we pray for the West Overshoe Fire Department. They are not handling their finances properly, and there is so much sexual immorality among the members. And Lord, they are so slow to put out fires*" that person has made several serious mistakes. 1) They have not asked God for anything. 2) They have gossiped. This can be avoided by praying, "*Lord, we pray for the West Overshoe Fire Department. Bless them in handling their finances with integrity and transparency. Bless them with uprightness in all their relationships, and we ask that you help them put out fires with speed and excellence.*"

resist being too inward-focused - Of all the prayers in the New Testament, only about 18% are for or about self. Even a church family can be too focused upon its own needs and struggles.