

Guidelines for Effective Corporate Prayer

by Tami Skarin

“Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.” Isaiah 56:7 (KJV)

Corporate Prayer is one of the most powerful gifts the LORD has given to His Church. The essence of the early Church was their daily corporate prayer. The fruit of their prayers were the numbers who were daily being saved. He promises to act when His people pray together! **2 Chron. 7:14; Acts 1:14; 2:42-47; 6:4; Matt. 18:19-20; Rom. 15:30**

COME WITH A PREPARED HEART: Always be aware that you are coming to the Throne of God. Come to the group with heart cleansed and prepared to meet with God, maintain a soft heart that is ready to receive from Him. Ask God to show you if there is any sin that would hinder your prayers from being heard. **James 4:7-8; Ps. 139:23**

BE ALERT: The enemy will do all that he can to prevent us from praying. He will try to either hinder us from coming to the prayer group, or distract and sidetrack us in the place of prayer. **Eph. 6:10-11, 18**

BE COMMITTED: Ask the Lord if He wants you to participate in the prayer group. If you feel certain you are called, be diligent and persistent in your attendance in the group. **Acts 1:14; 2:42; Col. 4:2**

AVOID EXCESSIVE DISCUSSION: Avoid conversation and keep sharing time as brief as possible. It is easy to turn intercession time into visiting if all members of the group are not disciplined to keep focused on prayer. **Prov. 10:19**

BE READY TO START ON TIME: Be careful to keep your “appointment with God.” Do not let the time devoted to prayer get robbed by being late. You also do not want to distract the rest of the group by coming in late. **Eph. 5:15-17**

DO NOT LEAN ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING: Ask the LORD to show you how to pray and to share His heart with you. Ask Him to give you wisdom and guide you in the direction of your prayers. Follow the example of the disciples and ask the LORD to teach you how to pray. **Ps. 62:5; Isa. 55:9; Ezek. 22:30; Rom. 8:26**

KNOW THE PRAYER FOCUS Seek to remain within the boundaries established. For example, if your group’s focus is intercession for your city, do not introduce personal prayer needs during the group session. Instead, ask members to pray for you after the meeting.

HOLD EVERYTHING SHARED IN THE GROUP IN COMPLETE CONFIDENCE: Trust is built within a group when one knows that everything prayed will be kept confidential. Do not share what is discussed outside of the group. The Lord may bring insights or directions that are meant only for those who are praying. (**Matt. 6:5-6** “enter your prayer closet...pray in secret.”)

BEWARE OF TOUCHING GOD’S GLORY: Never take credit for answered prayers or brag about what it is you have prayed. (For example, “we prayed....and look what happened.”) **Matt. 6:1**

KEEP YOUR PRAYERS IN THE GROUP SHORT AND SPECIFIC: It is poor prayer etiquette to monopolize the prayer time. Take turns!

REMAIN ON ONE TOPIC: Do not change topics until everyone in the group has had the opportunity to pray on the current focus and the Holy Spirit indicates that it is time to move onto another topic. This allows the Holy Spirit to develop the prayers and take you into deeper levels of intercession, rather than touching lightly upon one topic after another.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT HOW YOUR PRAYERS SOUND TO OTHERS: The Lord is not impressed by great eloquence or many words, but with the attitude of your heart. The Lord understands us and hears the prayers of our hearts. He knows what we are saying even without a word. Choose not to be "self" conscious, instead focus on God. **Rom. 8:26-27**

BE THANKFUL: Prayer should always be accompanied by thanksgiving. Prayer is breathed in of God Himself and is breathed forth in thanksgiving. Praise causes us to look unto the Father and see things from His perspective. **Col. 4:2; Phil. 4:6; Eph. 5:20; 1 Thes. 5:18**

KEEP A DIARY OR PRAYER JOURNAL: Keep notes of your prayer requests, scripture meditations, and answers to prayer along with research notes or a list of prayer needs. The Lord may have you return and pray more deeply through these notes again. You can also make notes of prayers that are answered this way. **Hab. 2:2,3**

DO NOT LET YOURSELF BECOME OVERWHELMED OR DISCOURAGED: When we begin to pray, we often suddenly see the enormity of the needs in the place of prayer. Continue to master one step at a time and trust the Lord to complete that good and perfect work which He has begun. **Phil 1:6; Isa. 28:9-10; Isa. 61:11; Zech. 4:6, 10**

FASTING: puts the cutting edge to our prayers. God's people have always fasted when times were desperate. Fasting should not be done under compulsion but the leading of the Holy Spirit. As Campbell McAlpine taught, God always hears our prayers but when we pray with fasting, it is as though the volume is turned up and those prayers are often answered more quickly. **Isaiah 58**

CAREFULLY GUARD THE UNITY OF THE GROUP: Endeavor to walk in love for each person in the group and toward others, lest our prayers be hindered. Ask God to search your heart before you come and quickly resolve any offenses or unforgiveness that He shows you. Oneness does not mean simply agreeing about what to pray, it means total forgiveness in the group and in all of our relationships. **John 17; Phil. 2:2-4; Col. 2:2; Mark 11:25**

KNOW WHO GOD HAS APPOINTED AS LEADER IN THE GROUP: Be sensitive to their leadership and guidance. A prayer group will always have difficulty functioning if there is not a clear understanding of who God has chosen to lead the group. **Heb. 13:17 Amplified**

BREAK INTO SMALL GROUPS: If your group is large, it may be more effective to break into groups of 3-5 people so everyone can participate more effectively. At the end of the smaller group prayer time, appoint one person from each group to come and briefly share what they prayed. This person can lead the larger congregation in a brief prayer of agreement.

PRAY THE WORD: The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is the only offensive weapon he gave us in the Christian's spiritual armor. God's Word is powerful and active, sharper than a two-edged sword. Meditate on His Word and let Him show You His heart. **Eph. 6:10-20; Heb. 4:12**