Suggested Models and Opportunities for Prayer
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A key to cultivating a culture of prayer is to promote multiple and varied models and opportunities for prayer. Why “multiple and varied?” Multiple and varied because not everyone can relate to the same models. Multiple and varied because not everyone’s schedule can accommodate the same opportunities. Multiple and varied because the range of prayer needs is so broad and diverse, requiring a number of different approaches.

The following list of models and opportunities for prayer is offered:

1. **21-Days of Prayer and Fasting.** Start each year with twenty-one days of congregation-wide prayer and fasting. Give people the opportunity to sign up for half-hour prayer intervals to cover the twenty-one day duration. Individual participants are not asked to fast for the entire twenty-one day period; they are asked to volunteer to fast for portions of the prayer emphasis period. The combined result of all individuals involved will be that the congregation as a whole has prayed and fasted for twenty-one days. Introduce several or even many of the models suggested in this list during this period.

2. **E-mail Prayer Alerts.** Create a webpage or an email address where people can submit their prayer requests. Edit the prayer requests, print copies for in-house prayer groups, and periodically broadcast via email the edited prayer list.

3. **Focus Prayer Groups.** Organize small groups around particular prayer focuses: i.e., salvation, revival, missions, local evangelism, the pastor’s family, Sunday services, Israel, current events, government, etc. Make sure that the leaders placed in charge of these groups are trained in facilitative leadership.

4. **Worship and Intercession Services.** These are sometimes called “Harp and Bowl” services based on the imagery of Revelation 5:8. In these gatherings, as the name suggests, worship and intercession are intermingled.

5. **Pastor’s Prayer Partners.** These are people who have volunteered or have been recruited to pray for and with the pastor. This partnership can function in a number of different ways. In some churches with male pastors, thirty or thirty-one men have volunteered to pray for and/or with the pastor over the course of a month, each being assigned his own day to pray. When a man’s day to pray comes, he takes the initiative to call the pastor to pray with him on the phone.

6. **Prayer Walks.** Geographic areas are mapped out (i.e., a block in a neighborhood, a portion of the city, etc.), and prayer teams walk through the charted course interceding for the people and the issues associated with the designated area. Prayer walks can be conducted on an individual basis as well. A person may even choose to pray for an area during their morning jog.
7. **All-Night Prayer Gatherings.** These are sometimes called “Watch Night” or “Watch of the Lord” Services. Choose a suitable building in which your group can “set-up camp” for a night. Structure the time with different subjects for prayer, and be sure to integrate multiple and varied prayer models. All-Night Prayer Gatherings are good for particular situations, such as marking the beginning of a new year, or the beginning of a new ministry venture. A world crisis may also be a good time to use this approach.

8. **Neighborhood Prayer Visitation.** Once a month go door-to-door through a neighborhood taking prayer requests and praying with people regarding their needs. Keep a record of requests, and pray over them throughout the month. Return to the same homes the next month, asking about the matters for which you have been praying. Continue to pray with these individuals. As they sense Christ’s love through you and begin to experience answered prayer, their faith will rise. Opportunities to lead individuals to Christ will become obvious.

9. **“Bless the Bikes.”** Each spring at the beginning of biking season, promote a day when bikers can gather on the church grounds for the “blessing of the bikes.” Pray over the motorcycles as well as the motorcyclists, praying for a safe season on the road.

10. **Hospital and Nursing Home Prayer Ministry.** Visitation ministry accompanied by prayer should be an obvious option for believers. When conducting prayer ministry in hospitals and nursing homes, be respectful of the rules and guidelines established by those institutions.

11. **Pray through the Phone Book.** Tear pages out of a phone book, and give them to intercessors, asking them to pray through their page throughout the coming year. (It may be advisable to instruct the intercessors to not call the people on their page. Just pray.)

12. **Pray for a People Group.** The Caleb Project provides helpful resources for this purpose ([www.calebproject.org](http://www.calebproject.org)).

13. **Lighthouses of Prayer.** This model involves Christians praying for people within their “perimeter of faith” on a daily basis. A perimeter of faith could be either your neighborhood or your workplace. Start by asking God to help you determine the number of people, homes, etc. that He wants you to personally influence. Then start praying for them.

14. **Groundbreaking Prayer.** This approach to prayer involves entering the physical space where a worship service or ministry activity is about to take place and preparing the spiritual ground or atmosphere for the work that is about to occur there. Frequently this approach is taken on Saturday nights in the church sanctuary to prepare the way for the Sunday morning service.
15. **Family Prayer.** Resource the families in the church with devotional guides and instructions to help them start or upgrade the practice of family prayer in their homes.

16. **Personal Quiet Time.** In solitude apart from the noise and busy-ness of the day, spend a schedule portion of the day quietly before the Lord reading a portion of Scripture, praying, journaling, and listening for the voice of the Lord. For many, the morning is the best time for this approach.

17. **Meditative Prayer.** Meditative prayer mostly involves listening for the voice of the Lord at a set-apart place during a set-apart time, away from distractions.

18. **Spiritual Warfare.** While spiritual warfare does involve the intentional resisting of spiritual darkness, it is primarily an exalting of the Lordship of Jesus over people, regions, and situations. This approach to prayer is typically intensely vocal and prophetic. Care should be taken to not get caught up in faddish methodologies when it comes to spiritual warfare praying. Spiritual warfare should not be feared, but it does require a great deal of wisdom and sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

19. **Prophetic Prayer.** Prophetic prayer involves listening for the revelation of the heart and mind of God and praying according to what He has revealed. One application of this approach involves the following steps in the context of group prayer: (1) the group welcomes the Holy Spirit; (2) participants ask the Lord to impress on their hearts and minds the matters that He would want them to address in prayer; (3) after ten to fifteen minutes of waiting before the Lord, each person writes down the things that the Lord has impressed upon them (i.e., words, images, thoughts, Scripture passages, etc.); (4) the group comes together to share the “pieces of the puzzle”—the things that God has impressed upon them—in an attempt to discern how the Holy Spirit would desire them to pray; (5) finally, the group prays on the basis of the things revealed by the Spirit.

20. **Altar Ministry Teams.** These teams are groups of people (often in male and female pairs) trained to minister to seekers at the altar. The approach of these teams will vary according to the ministry priorities and preferences of the pastor.

21. **Healing Rooms.** Rooms are set aside specifically for the purpose of praying over the afflicted. More information is available at [http://www.healingrooms.com](http://www.healingrooms.com).

22. **Alphabet Prayer.** This approach has been used to expand one’s “vocabulary of praise” by going through the alphabet and thinking of a word of praise or thanksgiving to declare to the Lord: “Lord, I Adore you! Your Blessings
abound in my life! In you I am Confident!” and so forth. The same approach can be taken for thinking of themes for prayer.

23. **Prayer List.** Carry a card or piece of paper in your Bible on which you maintain a list of prayer requests that you use in your prayer time to bring petitions to the Lord. The same can be accomplished by means of a list file on a PDA.

24. **Personal Prayer Partners.** Personal prayer partners can be paired in several ways. Each individual may personally recruit his own prayer partner for whom he will pray on a daily basis. Another approach is to have all who want to participate to write their names on a card and drop it into a basket. Then the basket is passed and the same people draw out a card. Each person is to pray on a daily basis for the person whose name appears on his card. From time to time prayer partners should be in contact with one another taking time to pray together.

25. **Laying on of Hands.** In addition to using this approach in altar ministry times, pray-ers may also employ this method in small group prayer settings. As individuals make their needs known, stop and take time for the group to gather around them, laying hands on them and praying for them. The laying on of hands is often accompanied by anointing with oil.

26. **Praying in the Spirit.** When the human intellect is incapable of devising the prayer that needs to be offered, the Holy Spirit can enable the human spirit to pray. Praying in the Spirit is most often manifested through speaking in tongues,\(^1\) but it may also be manifested through groanings.\(^2\) Praying quietly in tongues is also a good way to pray unceasingly while driving, walking, running, or working (in some work settings).

27. **Concert Prayer.** Concert prayer, also known as praying in concert, involves everyone in a group praying out loud at the same time.

28. **Concerts of Prayer.** A concert of prayer is not the same thing as concert prayer. A concert of prayer is an organized event in which Christians unite to focus their prayers on specific biblical concerns such as spiritual awakening or world evangelization. Often designated individuals lead the larger group in assigned prayer themes. Concerts of prayer involve harmonious intercession and celebration as pray-ers blend their hearts, minds and voices. They submit to the Holy Spirit who "orchestrates" the meeting so that one prayer-theme builds on another.

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\(^1\) 1 Corinthians 14:2, 15.

\(^2\) Romans 8:26.
29. **Prayer Appointments.** With this approach, people make appointments for trained prayer teams to meet with them for prayer. Time is taken to listen to the person in need and to listen for the voice of the Spirit as well. Pray-ers seek to discern the root causes of issues. Insights gained are not used for giving advice; insights are used to inform the praying.

30. **Prayer Retreats.** Setting apart two to three days for prayer at an off-site location is a good way for individuals and groups to “jump start” a renewed focus on a lifestyle of prayer. Various prayer models can be included in the prayer retreat.

31. **God-Encounter Retreats.** These retreats have a specialized focus on personal cleansing and spiritual healing. Short talks presented on subjects pertaining to holiness are followed by times for personal introspection and confession. As sins and issues are voluntarily confessed, prayers are received for cleansing and healing. As the Holy Spirit moves upon participants, they receive spiritual strength and renewal.

32. **Prayer Center Ministry.** A prayer center is a designated place or building where trained personnel facilitate various prayer models and opportunities.

33. **Prayer Chain.** A prayer chain is an ongoing schedule of pray-ers committed to pray at specific intervals over a designated time period.

34. **Praying the Scriptures.** With this approach, selected Scripture passages are personalized and offered back to the Lord in the form of prayer. Putting on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:11-18) through prayer would be an example of praying the Scriptures.

35. **The Lord’s Prayer.** This prayer is also known as “The Disciples Prayer.” It is a prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray, and many have used it as an outline or structure for devoting an hour to prayer on a daily basis.

36. **Lectio Divina.** This approach involves these steps: (1) prayerfully reading a passage of Scripture, (2) pondering it in your heart and mind, and (3) responding to it in thought, word, or deed. It often includes praying the Scriptures.

37. **Prayer Bulletin Board.** Pin onto a bulletin board photographs and names of people or situations to remind you to pray for them.

38. **Arrow Prayers.** An arrow prayer is a quick prayer to God. It is a good way to pray a simple thought, especially in the middle of a busy situation. An example might be, “Lord, please help me be patient with this person!” or “Please let me know what to say in this situation right now!” Arrow prayers can
also be prayed for people as you see them alongside the street or across the room.

39. **Praying the News.** Rather than getting distressed over current events, start praying for each global and national crisis as soon as you hear about it on the radio or as soon as you see it on television.

40. **Prayer Walls.** The idea here is to build a ‘wall’ of prayer for 24 hours, 7 days a week by asking volunteers to sign up for one-hour intervals of prayer. The aim is to fill a week with wall-to-wall prayer for a particular event, situation, or person. Write hours of the day on each brick, and ask each person to sign his name on the brick corresponding with the hour of their choice. [Adapted from http://www.prayerrequests.co.uk/CreativeArchive3.html.]

41. **Letters to God.** Some find it helpful to express their hearts to God by writing a letter to Him. After writing the letter, it can be read to Him in prayer.

42. **Singing to God.** At times one’s heart may be best expressed to the Lord through a spontaneous or written song.

43. **The Shout.** The shout is a corporate exercise of worship and/or prayer before the Lord. It is similar to concert prayer; however, the shout intentionally involves everyone raising their voices loudly and simultaneously with declarations of praise or petition. At times the shout may be spontaneous in a congregation, or it may be orchestrated. When it is orchestrated, the prayer leader may ask the people on one side of the room to shout out a declaration and then have the people on the other side shout a responsive praise or petition.

44. **Musical Prayers.** This activity is similar to musical chairs, and it usually works best with teens. Spread pieces of poster board around on the floor with prayer or thanksgiving instructions written on them (e.g., shout a name for God three times, thank God for your best friend, sing one chorus of a song, be silent for 30 seconds, pray for missionaries in Africa, tell God about your day, etc.). Then play lively worship music, encouraging participants to move about (even bounce or dance) in the room. Stop the music (just like in musical chairs). Wherever each individual is standing at that point, they are to follow the prayer instructions nearest to them.

45. **Praying with a Map or Globe.** Place the map or globe prominently in the prayer area. Place sticky notes and photographs on relevant locations conveying specific information pertaining to the prayer need. Be sure to keep it up-to-date.

46. **Praying with Stones.** We are to cast our burdens on Jesus because He cares for us. Have pray-ers hold a stone while praying for burdens they have carried. When they have completed the prayer, have them place the stone at the foot of a large wooden cross in the center of the prayer area.
47. **Telephone Prayer Ministry.** Offer a 24/7 toll-free prayer line staffed by trained prayer ministers.

48. **Prayer on the Spot.** As people let you know about their problems and concerns, ask them, “May I pray with you right now?” If in public with an unchurched person, it may be best to pray briefly, conversationally, and with your eyes open to avoid embarrassing them.

49. **Instant Messenger / Text Messaging / Chat Room Prayer.** Some have testified to the Holy Spirit powerfully coming upon them as they have joined in prayer in this manner.

50. **Prayer Request Envelope.** Pass a large sturdy envelope through the congregation inviting people to place in it prayer requests for the unsaved or the afflicted. Allow the envelope to be continually passed through the duration of the service. As each person holds the envelope, they are to pray for the requests that the envelope already contains. Pass the same envelope each Sunday giving the same instructions: pray, place your request inside, and pass it on. During the week the contents of the envelope should be prayed over by a prayer group.

51. **Request Box.** Provide a box at the altar or in the foyer of the church where prayer requests may be placed. A prayer group should pray over the requests at some point during the week.

52. **Prayer Request Cards.** Prayer request cards can be placed at the seats of worshippers. At some point during the service, invite them to write down their prayer requests. They can be invited to come forward with the card to give it to an elder and to receive prayer for the need, or they can drop it in the offering plate when it is passed.

53. **Parting Prayer.** Make it a habit to pray with every person before you part company with them—before they leave your house, office, or place of business.

54. **Rat Race Prayers.** Pray for stressed-out drivers in your morning or afternoon commute.

55. **Bedtime Prayer.** Establish a habit of praying with every family member at the close of the day.

56. **Mealtime Prayer.** Be more intentional and thoughtful about mealtime prayers. Let it be a time for blessing all who are present.
57. **Restaurant Prayer.** Of course, mealtime prayers should be offered even when eating in public, but why not ask the waiter or waitress if he or she has any needs for which you may pray?

58. **Prayer Diary.** In a prayer diary you write about your daily experiences in the form of prayer: “Dear God,…” instead of “Dear Diary,…”

59. **Circle Prayer.** After opening in prayer, the leader lightly squeezes the hand of the person next to them indicating that he or she is finished praying. That person can choose to pray or else lightly squeeze the hand their neighbor. This continues until everyone has had an opportunity to pray, at which time the leader will end the prayer time.

60. **Popcorn Prayer.** Anyone is encouraged to jump in with a brief prayer of thanksgiving or request. A theme of what people are thankful for could be used throughout this prayer.

61. **Prayer around the Altar.** Give an opportunity for people to kneel or stand for one-on-one time with God, and allow them to stay there as long as they want. You may also ask individuals to turn to pray for the person next to them.

62. **Prayer Clusters in the Congregation.** Ask people in the congregation to raise their hands if they would like someone to come to them at their seats to pray with them. Worshippers may then turn to those near them whose hands are raised and pray with them concerning their needs.

63. **The One-Minute Prayer.** Pray for one minute at one o’clock for one person until Christmas.

64. **Spirit-Enabled Prayer.** Spirit-enabled prayer may include many of the approaches already mentioned. Any approach to prayer that intentionally relies on the leading and empowering of the Holy Spirit is Spirit-Enabled Prayer. The manifestation gifts of the Spirit are major components in this model.

*For more information on establishing or renewing the ministry of prayer in the local church, contact Dr. J. Randolph (“Randy”) Turpin at rturpin@cogts.edu.*