

A DIAGNOSTIC TOOL TO ASSES THE PRAYER LIFE OF A CONGREGATION

The Purpose

It is our goal, that by properly utilizing this tool, the Holy Spirit will give you a clear sense of how successful you are in the quest to become a biblical House of Prayer.

The interactive process brings leadership and membership together in a vertical (prayer) and horizontal (prayer birthed discussions) conversation. This conversation is in itself a forward step in the prayer life of the congregation.

This is not a "scientific" survey capable of producing a computerized analysis nor is it like a contest in which the average rating of the judges determines the outcome. Each category and question is designed to expose the heart of the congregation for prayer and produce an accurate picture of how faithfully, practically and pervasively that desire is being expressed.

No congregation using this tool is in competition with any other. It is hoped that this tool will serve to increase the congregation's appetite for prayer while causing leadership to reevaluate programs and seek the Lord of the Church for His changes toward a reformation in the congregation producing a transformation in the community.

Just like prayer, you can utilize as much or as little as you want from this tool. Simply by reading through it you will allow the Holy Spirit to sensitize you to new thoughts and ideas. By inviting others to read it will do the same for them. However, to receive full value, you are encouraged to include and involve the entire congregation over an extended period of time.

The Process

- Begin in prayer, asking the Lord to prepare the hearts and minds of those who make the decision of how to implement this tool amongst your people.
- Make an appointment with the key leader(s) in your context, usually the Pastor. Make sure the Pastor is in public agreement as this is presented to any other board or committee or team that must decide on its use or steps of implementation.

- Employ a long-term strategy

.The leadership team prays together and commits to use the tool as a means of receiving wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit.

.The full leadership of the congregation hears first about the plan to assess the congregation's prayer life, are expected to personally support the plan, and to proactively encourage participation from those in their area of ministry.

.The diagnostic tool will be one ingredient in an overall assessment.

.Introduce the diagnostic tool to the congregation only after the appropriate leadership (team, council, board) has met to pray through their commitment to both the process and the action steps that result.

.Introduce the diagnostic tool only after the congregation has heard a biblical call to become refreshed, renewed, revived as a House of Prayer for all people. This may be accomplished through any or several of these means:

- a series of messages/sermons on personal and corporate prayer

- a Prayer Conference (all-church) with a guest speaker

- a Workshop (all-ministry leaders) with someone to teach on prayer

- a Retreat with a guest to facilitate prayer and coach discussion

The guide, Come to the Lord's Table by Claude King is an excellent resources for any of these activities. (Visit www.finalcommnad.org for details and ordering information)

.Set a start-date and a return-date to distribute and collect the completed worksheets If you mail the worksheets to the members at their home, please include one per adult and young person. Include a children's worksheet if appropriate.

.Or, set aside a month when the worksheets are the focus of every church ministry and activity. Ever class & committee; council & choir; group & gathering.

Before initiating the assessment process, set a date for the leaders to meet to discuss and discern what the Spirit is saying through the feedback as well as a date when the leaders will meet with the members to present their findings, seek further response, and set action steps. This is most beneficial if experienced in an interactive format (roundtable discussion led by a facilitator from outside the congregation)

.At the report session, announce the date of a "Follow-Through" meeting to assess how well the congregation has implemented the ideas and inspirations of the diagnostic assessment (6 - 12 months).

.Several types of questions are employed in an effort to assist you to think honestly from different perspectives. Avoid answers that "make us look good" and simply give a descriptive response.

.The answers/responses are just the beginning. After completing a review of responses in a category, use the questions below to assist you in discerning what the Spirit is saying...

- *"What?" - are our responses to the questions?

 - [Information]

- *"So What?" - are the implications of what we have said?

 - [Application]

- *"Now What?" - are we led to do again? Better? Differently?

 - [Implementation]

Diagnosing The Prayer Life of Our Congregation

Our History

What role did prayer play in the birthing / founding of your congregation?

At what point in your history has prayer been most visible? Powerful?

What was the context (circumstances, situations)?

Which persons have been champions for prayer?

How have we utilized prayer champions in the past?

When it comes to corporate prayer, have we been:

Fearful? Neutral? Supportive? Proactive?

Has the congregation been called to fasting and prayer (answer yes or no):

Yes No

If so, what prompted the call to fast and pray?

We have seen a correlation between prayer and spiritual milestones

(check all that apply):

- People responding to the Gospel
- Increase in baptisms
- Adults surrendering to ministry
- Young people surrendering to ministry
- Sending missionaries to other cities or nations
- New congregations planted
- Breakthroughs in healing (physical and/or emotional)
- (other) _____

Our reputation for prayer is (chose one):

- We do not know how others view our prayer life
- We are probably consider average; no special reputation for prayer
- We are probably known as a church devoted to prayer
- We are the church in our area someone would call to ask for prayer

Our Theology

Agree or Disagree:

"The prayer life of our congregation and our members is more a religious habit than an act of obedience."

Agree or Disagree:

"Our practice of prayer is based more on the biblical revelation of God's character than daily trials and troubles."

Agree or Disagree:

"The methods and styles of prayer we employ are informed more by our culture and popular teaching than the scriptures."

Our Vision

To what extent was our congregation's Vision Statement birthed in prayer?

How is prayer present (or could be) in our Vision statement?

What evidence can you cite to prove this statement:

"We are dependent upon God for the success of our vision."

Our Pastor

In the past twelve months, our Pastor (check all that apply)

- Preached a sermon on prayer
- Indicated a desire to increase and/or improve his prayer life
- Called the congregation to fervent prayer
- Taught a class or small group on prayer
- Empowered others to lead or facilitate prayer
- Participated or led an ongoing church prayer group
- Promoted a prayer training experience
- Distributed prayer resources for leaders and/or members
- Read a new book on the subject of prayer
- Has benefited from a Pastor's Prayer Support Team
- Identified and worked closely with intercessors
- Participated in a Pastors' Prayer Group
- Attended a Prayer Retreat
- Was involved in a community or city wide prayer initiative
- Involved our church in National day of Prayer (or other events)

Our Leaders

Do your leaders (staff, deacons/elders, council/board members):

(check all that apply)

- Attend the congregational prayer meetings?
- Express personal dependency upon prayer?
- Limit prayer in their meetings to a brief "opening" & closing" prayer?
- Provide financial support for prayer initiatives
- Understand the relationship between prayer and evangelism
- Participate in prayer training
- Consider prayer to be the job of the Prayer Team or intercessors
- Call the congregation to Solemn Assemblies
- Rarely pray in public

Our Members

As to the prayer life of our church, our members are:

- satisfied, curious, eager to learn, hungry for God

When it comes to changing the prayer patterns in our church, our members:

- initiate new ideas, welcome change, tolerate, resist

What percentage of your church members do you estimate:

- Participate in a prayer group or meeting? _____
- Pray at home with their family on a regular basis? _____
- Participate in some kind of prayer training? _____
- Request prayer (written or verbally) _____
- Pray for others who do not yet know Christ? _____
- Pray for (immediately) others who express a joy or a need? _____
- Have a prayer burden for another nation? _____

Our members experience prayer (list in order; most to least):

- Privately at a specific time and place
- Throughout their daily activities
- When they face a trial or trouble
- When someone else prays in a meeting or worship service
- In a small group
- (other) _____

Agree or Disagree:

"When we gather for corporate prayer, everyone participates verbally."

Our Worship Service(s)

When the congregation gathers for worship, our prayers are:
(check all that apply)

- At a preset time in the service
- Spontaneous
- Conversational
- Formal
- Informal
- An expression of ritual
- "Preachy"
- List (needs) focused
- Prewritten

When the congregation gathers for worship, our prayers are:
(check all that apply)

- Prayed by "clergy" (ordained, staff)
- Prayed by selected members (a few who rotate)
- Prayed by selected members (many are considered)
- Prayed by any member (anyone may volunteer)
- Prayed by all members (pairs or small groupings; pray in unison)
- Prayed by all members (prayer recited in unison)

When our congregation gathers for worship (check all that apply):

- We sing songs that encourage prayer
- We have banners reminding us of the power of prayer
- We sing songs that address God; we sing our prayers
- We weave praise and prayer together as we worship

Our Prayer Meetings

(Any gathering devoted to prayer)

We meet for prayer __weekly, __monthly, __quarterly, __annually

Percent of our congregation who attend:

- weekly
- monthly
- quarterly
- annually

What special need or circumstance prompts an unscheduled gathering?

When we gather for prayer (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> We are faith-filled | <input type="checkbox"/> We follow a routine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A few pray | <input type="checkbox"/> Everyone contributes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> We span the globe | <input type="checkbox"/> We follow typical lists |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Most prayers are need-based | <input type="checkbox"/> Many pray from scripture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> We sense God's presence | <input type="checkbox"/> We see prayers answered |

The purpose of a prayer meeting (according to our reality):

- To tell God what we need
- To praise God and honor Christ first
- To remind God of all who are sick or grieving
- To listen for discernment and wisdom
- To pray for our leaders; congregation and nation

Respond to this statement:

"Frankly, our prayer meetings are more boring than blessing..."

When we gather (check any that apply):

- We invite the Holy Spirit to facilitate and guide our prayers
- We ask for the mind of Christ so that our prayers echo Jesus'
- We desire most to serve God by praising and blessing Him

Our pray focus (list in order; most to least):

- Upward - Praise
- Downward - Confession
- Inward - Seeking God's will (personal)
- Outward - Neighbors & Nations
- Backward - Thanking God for past blessings
- Forward - Seeking God's will (corporate)

Our Small Groups

Prayer is a core value (list in order; most to least):

- Sunday School Classes
- Choir Rehearsal
- Fellowship Groups
- Study Groups
- Committees

Small Group prayer (list in order; most to least):

- The leader (chairperson, director, moderator, president) prays
- The leader asks someone to pray
- Everyone prays around the circle or table
- Prayer is conversational; people pray as prompted
- The leader prescribes a format or style

Small Group prayer (list in order; most to least):

- The group has a protected time for prayer
- Prayers tend to be general
- Prayers are based on stated requests of the members
- Prayers are based on the group's agenda

Our Age-Focus Ministries

Our ministries demonstrate a high value for prayer (list in order; most to least):

- Children's Ministry
- Youth Ministry
- Collegiate
- Singles
- Married Couples
- Families
- Seniors
- Other _ _ _

Our ministries provide prayer training (list in order; most to least):

- Children's Ministry
- Youth Ministry
- Collegiate
- Singles
- Married Couples
- Families
- Seniors
- Other _ _ _

Our Evangelism Ministries, Special Events & Holidays

We organize prayer preceding evangelistic activities:

- Always, Sometimes, Never

We schedule prayer during evangelistic activities:

- Always, Sometimes, Never

We assign names of new contacts for prayer after evangelistic activities:

Always, Sometimes, Never

We ask for the opportunity to pray for people (check all that apply):

- On our church website
- In each Sunday's bulletin
- In the Church Newsletter
- Through a "pew card"
- A weekly verbal invitation
- At a Prayer Table
- In the Prayer Room

We challenge our members to pray for their neighbors & coworkers
(check all that apply):

- In small groups (often called Lighthouses of Prayer)
- In Sunday bulletins
- In Sermons
- With inserts and information (bulletin; newsletter)

Our Missions

In what ways are missionaries and missions supported by prayer?

- Prayer partners as assigned from the congregation
- Various classes and groups adopt a missionary
- Our Missions Committee pray faithfully for our missionaries
- Mission Conferences include focused prayer for global evangelism
- We pray for missions and missionaries in Sunday services
- Prayer requests from missionaries are posted or published
- We offer Prayer Journeys to mission activity locations
- Teaching mission support prayer is part of our discipleship training

Our Equipping for Prayer

Throughout the year we offer (check all that apply):

- Workshops on various prayer topics
- Classes on the theology of prayer
- Studies on biblical praying and pray-ers
- Sunday sermon series on prayer
- Prayer retreats
- Financial assistance for leaders to attend prayer conferences

Training Resources (check all that apply):

- Prayer resources are purchased and made available
- Information on resources is posted in newsletters
(Pray! magazine, new book releases, websites, videos...)
- Free resources for Prayer Ministry Leadership
- Prayer materials are available in our library/resource center
- Our congregation provides budget to purchase resources

Our Prayer Ministry Team

Our Prayer Ministry Team (check all that apply):

- Requires completed training to participate
- Has a designated leader or coordinator
- Has two-way communication with the Pastor
- Is diverse (male/female; young/old)
- Promotes training to the members of the congregation
- Utilizes insights from spiritual mapping

Our Prayer Ministry Team includes (check all that apply):

- PrayerWalking
- Prayer Room
- Prayer Chain (phone)
- Prayer Network (e-mail)
- Prayer Shield (prayer for the Pastor)
- Prayer Journeys
- Prayer Drives
- Prayer Display Table or Resource Center
- Prayer Articles in Newsletters
- Altar Prayer (ministry to those responding after the sermon)
- Prayer Circle (prayer before the Worship service)
- Prayer during the Worship service
- Onsite prayer during outreach events
- Healing Prayer (by appointment or after the service)
- Prayer Vigils (hour-by-hour prayer; sign-up)
- Day of Prayer (everyone praying at home/work with same focus)

Our Prayer Partnerships

Our congregation (check all that apply)

- Prays for other congregations by name
- Participates in denominational prayer initiatives
- Participates in community/regional prayer events

Using Acts 1:8, what per cent are your prayers focused upon:

- Jerusalem (community; city)
- Judea (region; nation)
- Samaria (enemies; local issues of injustice)
- Ends of the Earth (international; unreached people; 10/40 Window)

We participate in (check all that apply)

- National Day of Prayer
- See You At The Pole
- Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church
- Seek God for the City (spring/Lenten prayer initiative)

Our congregation (or a class or a small group) have adopted in prayer:
(check all that apply)

- School
- Park (gang activity; children & families)
- Multi-Housing / Subdivision
- Local Business (office building; strip mall)
- Senior Center
- (other) _____

Our Congregation

Every congregation, large or small; independent or denominational; evangelical, charismatic, or liturgical, is unique.

What areas of your congregation's life have not been covered?

How would you rate the place and prominence of prayer in those areas?

Our Conclusions

Based upon our responses and the witness of the Holy Spirit in this process:

- We are best considered a Prayer Activity Church
(prayer is limited to traditional routines or rituals and events)
- We are a Prayer Ministry Church
(several or many prayer teams, opportunities, services offered)
- We are becoming a Prayer Strategy Church
Strategies are prayer-birthed, leading to...
Ministries that are prayer-based, resulting in...
Activities are all prayer-bathed

Our Plans

List Action Plans (goals with deadlines and assignments) for:

The Pastor

Leadership

Worship Services

Small Groups (classes, groups, teams)

Age-Level & Need-Focused Ministries

Prayer Ministry

Members

Prayer Meeting(s)

Equipping / Resourcing / Communicating

Acts 1:8 Praying

Other areas...

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