



*A Quick
Start*
GUIDE

PRAYER
MINISTRIES
COORDINATOR

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Table of Contents

Why Prayer Ministries?.....	1
The Prayer Coordinator	3
Getting Started	5
The Praying Church	9
How to Spend a Day in Prayer	11
Making Your Prayer Life Effective	15
Group Bible Study	17
Prayer Evangelism	23
Family Worship	25
In Preparing the Man and the Church—What We Should Pray for	31
Resources.....	35
The Lord's Prayer.....	35

Why Prayer Ministries?

The story is told of a man who traveled to a certain city one cold morning. As he arrived at his hotel, he noticed that the clerks, guests—everyone—was barefooted. As he entered the restaurant, he questioned a middle-aged man, "Why aren't you wearing shoes? Don't you know about shoes?"

"Of course I know about shoes," the man replied.

"Then, why don't you wear them?" the visitor asked.

"Ah, this is the question," the man replied. "Why don't I wear shoes?"

After breakfast, the visitor walked out of the hotel and into the snow. Again, every person he saw was barefooted. Curious, he asked a passerby, "Why doesn't anyone here wear shoes? Don't you know that they protect the feet from the cold?"

The passerby said, "We know about shoes. See that building? It's a shoe factory. We are so proud of the plant that we gather there every week to hear the man in charge tell us how wonderful shoes are."

"Then why don't you wear shoes?" the visitor persisted.

"Ah, that is the question," the passerby replied. "Why don't we wear shoes?"

When it comes to prayer, many Christians are like the people in that city. They know about prayer, they believe in its power, they frequently hear sermons on the subject, but it is not a vital part of their lives.

This resource guide has been compiled with the hope (and prayer) that the ideas and suggestions will encourage you to make prayer the top priority in your church. Some have asked, "Why does our church need a prayer ministry?" Here are a few reasons to encourage you:

- A prayer ministry makes it possible to develop and organize other prayer programs within the church.
- Christ said that in the last days—in the days of the harvest—we should be praying. This provides a specific avenue for obedience of this Scripture.
- When there is a special ministry and a designated person is responsible for the development of prayer programs and activities within a church, more people can become involved, more families reached, and more intercessors become actively praying for others.
- More power is promised to the praying church, as individuals, families, and church groups.
- More prayer is needed in the church, intentional prayer for pastors, teachers, church leaders, and every member.
- A separate ministry provides an opportunity for the church to be more intentional about prayer.
- A separate prayer ministry doesn't get lost among the other programs of the church.
- A prayer ministry can be the undergirding of other ministries and programs.

Most importantly, an active prayer life will carry people into a deeper relationship with Christ and with one another.

It is our prayer that the ideas and organizations presented in the next few pages will provide the necessary spark to ignite a prayer fire in your church and community.

The Prayer Coordinator

The prayer coordinator is an essential element for a praying church. He or she is a person who will help to integrate prayer into the total life of the church—at the conference level, and in the local church.

Qualifications

The person (or persons) appointed to this position should possess the following traits:

- Strong personal prayer life
- Spiritual maturity
- Gifts to organize, encourage, and give leadership in prayer emphases
- A good reputation in the church and the confidence of church leaders
- Enough time to attend key prayer events

The Work of the Prayer Coordinator/Team

One of the first places to begin will be to identify those people in the church who have indicated an interest in intercessory prayer. This can be done by placing a survey in the bulletin. Another means is to note those who volunteer for prayer during church services, then approach each one to find out their interest in this type of ministry.

Prayer Coordinators

To be involved in prayer ministry as a prayer coordinator is a calling and gift from God. Ellen White said, "One worker may be a ready speaker; another...may have the gift of sincere, earnest, fervent prayer. And each gift is to become a power for God because He works with the laborer" (9T 144).

If you are not yet involved in this ministry, but sense this gift or calling, discuss the matter with the pastoral team of your church.

Send and Receive Prayer Requests Online

Using Adventist Church Connect, the North American Division's free website system, you can send and receive prayer requests through your church's website.

Here's how it works:

Visitors click on the "prayer" link on your homepage
They enter their request
They select who can view it—the pastor or prayer coordinator, prayer team, or the entire church

In addition, ACC offers:

Free hosting
Free set-up
Free content management software
Free design options
Free support
Unlimited space
Select the modules your church needs
Adventist content that is updated daily
Easy text editor

Visit www.adventistchurchconnect.com for more information or to sign up.

Next, the coordinator should research and evaluate the church's current prayer ministries—both at the conference and local church levels. Contact other churches to see what they are doing in this area.

Once you have found individuals who show an interest in intercessory prayer, meet to decide who will pray, plan, and communicate prayer initiatives.

The **conference** coordinator will work with the pastors in the identification and selection of a respected person in each church to serve as the local church prayer coordinator.

Provide for training, suggestions, materials, and networking.

Help in the implementation of plans for prayer partners and/or individuals committed to daily prayer for specific people—by name—pastors, teachers, publishing and medical workers, and church leaders at the conference, union, division, and General Conference.

Some avenues for exploration could be: Prayer in the Worship Service, Family Prayer, Prayer Telephone Ministry, Prayer Emphasis Week, Prayer Chains, Prayer Partners, Prayer Meetings, Senior Intercessors, Evangelism Prayer Groups, Prayer Retreats, and Day of Prayer Activities.

Getting Started

When people pray, things happen! With the exception of God's grace, prayer is the most abundant—and underused—resource available to the church. Where prayer has been emphasized, the church has grown.

"Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened." —Matthew 7:7, 8

Prayer is a resource available to the church at all times. A prayer ministry will make use of this resource to provide strength, guidance, and blessings to the church staff and members, the community, and the world.

Begin with Prayer

Churches that want to start a prayer ministry need to **begin with prayer**. God is eager for us to ask for help. He wants us to ask—and to keep asking. The more time we spend in prayer at the beginning, the stronger the prayer ministry will be. God gives confirmation to people through a sense of peace about a decision, and by His leading in circumstances.

We need to pray for God's timing. Waiting on God's timing makes the job easier.

Seek a Vision

A vision provides a sense of purpose, direction, and motivation for prayer ministry. A lasting vision is not just a human idea.

Many people, when they have seen a vision, feel inadequate to carry it out. When we see the need and how great it is, we might very well feel inadequate to meet it. Many people in the Bible who received a vision from God and saw the task placed before them felt just this way. God assured Paul, as He assures us today, that His grace is still sufficient for us, and His power is still made perfect in our weakness (paraphrased from 2 Corinthians 12:9).

Communicate the vision to the group's members. The vision needs to be lifted up for others to grasp and follow. It isn't enough to share the vision once; it needs to be done repeatedly. Ask God to give clear direction. Seeking the heart of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit can take some time. We don't need to be in a hurry. It is God's ministry. He will provide all we need.

Explore Resources

What resources are available for starting a prayer ministry?

At the early stages, you might look especially for these resources:

- A handbook or manual giving principles, ideas, and methods. You can also search the Internet.
- A resource person with experience in prayer ministry and prayer ministry organization.
- At least one person who is willing to pray regularly for the planning, development, and implementation of the new prayer ministry.

How to Start a Prayer Ministry

1. Wait on the Lord. Luke 24:49
2. Enlist others to pray with you. Matthew 18:16-20
3. Set a side a place to pray. 2 Chronicles 7:12-15, Luke 11:1
4. Make time to pray. Psalm 32:6
5. Intercede for others. Isaiah 59:16, Ezekiel 22:30
6. Make a budget. Romans 14:12, Luke 16:2
7. Train others to pray. Matthew 28:20
8. Hold each other accountable. Matthew 16:27, Romans 2:6

- It might also be helpful to attend a conference or seminar on prayer, especially one that deals with organizing prayer ministry.

Planning a Prayer Ministry

Schedule a time for **planning**. A plan is a flexible tool. Remember that a good ministry plan is dynamic, not static. Things change. A good plan grows out of the vision.

Decide on key values. There are a variety of possible values that could be highlighted through prayer ministry. A church might be most concerned about in-depth study and discipleship programs, versus a focus on reaching new pray-ers. Individual prayers, group Bible study with prayer, and ministry have become central values in many places.

Develop a strategy. We need to ask God what form the ministry needs to take. Be sure church leaders understand and approve of the prayer ministry. Better yet, make sure the ministry has enthusiastic leaders who will lead by example. Recognize that people have different backgrounds and levels of Christian maturity, as well as varying schedules and commitments. Design ministries that will be suitable for people at several levels of maturity and prayer times that will accommodate a variety of schedules. There are many creative ways that large and small churches can offer a variety of prayer experiences.

A Workable Ministry Plan

A useful, workable ministry plan includes the following elements:

- A compelling mission statement
- Practical goals
- Clear objectives
- Specific action plans
- Adequate job descriptions for key responsibilities
- A basic organizational chart showing who is responsible to whom
- A simple budget, if money will be spent

Try to state the mission in one clear sentence. Stating the mission this way helps the ministry to be focused and valuable to the church family. Here is an example statement: The mission of the prayer ministry is to pray, teach others to pray, to study the Scriptures together, to provide prayer and ministry opportunities, and to participate in the fulfillment of our church's vision and mission as we are inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Goals provide some details about the mission plan. For example (and in fulfillment of the above statement) some goals might be:

1. To encourage people to pray and/or pray more.
2. Teach church members and others to pray.
3. Develop opportunities for people to become more involved in prayer, Bible study, and ministry.

How to Recruit People to Pray

1. Recruit from the pulpit.
2. Don't allow prayer emphasis to conflict with other major church events.
3. Print the purpose of prayer in your bulletins or newsletter.
4. Get groups to sign up for specific prayer times.
5. Put up a sign-up board in church foyer.
6. Orient new members to your prayer commitment.
7. Have people commit to a certain term of prayer.
8. Emphasize special considerations (i.e. convenient times, praying together or alone).
9. Have "Prayer Captains" be in charge of prayer for a certain day or week.
 - a. Pick up the sign up sheet
 - b. Call to encourage people to pray
 - c. Thank members for their faithfulness in praying
 - d. Keep request and answer information up-to-date
10. Make public the results of prayer.

Objectives will further define the ministry. They highlight the steps needed to carry out a goal. Objectives describe a cluster of activities that contribute to a goal. Too many objectives can be difficult to monitor. They need to be reviewed regularly.

Action plans will outline the specific steps needed to fulfill each objective.

Job descriptions let people know what is expected of them. They may be able to help in the development of their own job description. Identify the key positions, and describe the responsibilities. Try to make the job descriptions brief and simple.

Share the plan. Ask for suggestions for improvement and/or confirmation of the plan. Share the plan to seek endorsement. Pray for God's wisdom and timing and for God to prepare the hearts of the presenters and the listeners to receive and embrace the prayer ministry.

- Begin with the people and groups who will give the greatest support. This will build both confidence and momentum.
- Next, share the plan with the church leaders. If the leaders do not endorse the plan, do not present it to the church. Return to prayer, revise the plan, and/or try a different approach for winning support.
- Finally, when the leaders have given their support, present the plan to the rest of the church so everyone has a chance to learn about and support it.

Present the plan. The actual presentation could incorporate the following:

- Lay out your plan, beginning with the vision.
- Ask for the group's input and listen to what they have to say.
- Assuming no strong objections have surfaced, ask for the group's support of the vision and plan.
- If objections have been raised, try to clarify what needs to happen before the plan can be adopted.
- Ask for the group's involvement in the new ministry.
- Finally, pray that all who are touched by this ministry will be receptive to it and ultimately transformed by it.

Avoiding Pitfalls

When we begin to think about implementing a prayer ministry, we will most likely face a number of challenges. Challenges are not all bad. They often bring us to our knees in prayer. There are, however, some things we can do to avoid the worst pitfalls when we begin.

Set an example. The example of a church's leaders is key to starting a prayer ministry. People who are not church leaders can act to bring about a vision for prayer ministry. Pray for the leaders and enthusiastically support whatever ministry God is doing in the church. Wait patiently for God's timing.

Start with the basics. The way to begin learning about prayer is to pray. There are a number of simple ways to teach beginners to pray:

- Silent prayer
- Sentence completion prayers
- Short sentence prayers

Keep it short. Short prayers are often the most effective. When we pray, we want to use everyday words. Use language that is meaningful.

Choose a focus. As in other groups, a prayer group needs a focus or purpose. A focus helps keep a prayer group motivated and organized. If a church has more than one prayer group, groups can be organized around demographics. Even groups that have a focus can benefit from selecting specific topics for prayer.

Report positive results. Both those who pray and those who ask for prayers need to hear about how God answers their prayers.

Prayer as a Ministry

Our objectives include the development of the following:

1. "An intense desire...for a favorable opportunity to witness for Christ,
2. An intense desire to express gratitude and devotion to Him, and
3. A burning desire to be like Christ" (OHC 105).

Prayer is exciting and offers many opportunities for ministry. Choose the ministries that suit your church.

Help people grow. Start with something easy. Adapt ideas to fit your needs. Look for ideas from other places.

Start-Up Ministries

- Staff Prayer
- Prayer Outreach
- Prayer Cards
- Prayer Calendar
- Prayer List for Special Needs
- General Prayer Chain
- Day of Prayer Activities
- Praying Leaders
- Prayer in the Worship Service
- Teaching Children to Pray
- Prayer Triplets

Intermediate Ministries

- Prayer Coordinator
- Prayer Tape Ministry
- Prayer Vigil
- Prayer Retreat or Seminar
- Open Prayer Meeting
- Prayer Small Group
- Membership Intercession Ministry
- Prayer Walking
- Prayer Breakfast
- Prayer Emphasis Week or Month
- Prayer Care Program
- Prayer Chapel
- Family Prayer
- Prayer Cells
- Church Prayer Support Groups
- Prayer Groups for World Missions
- Pastor's Prayer Support Groups
- The Prayer Room

10 Ways the Holy Spirit Works in the Lives of Unbelievers

1. It woos or draws people to Jesus.
2. It sends witnesses to testify to an unbeliever.
3. It convicts of sin and guilt.
4. It convinces unbelievers of truth.
5. It opens the heart to believe in Christ.
6. It regenerates or changes.
7. It seals us in Christ.
8. It gives new believers assurance.
9. It develops the character of Jesus in the new believer.
10. It incorporates people into the body of Christ.

Advanced Ministries

Prayer Team Ministry
Ministry of Intercession
Healing Prayer Ministry
Prayer Partnership Ministry
Intercessory Support Ministry
Prayer Telephone Ministry
Concert of Prayer
School of Prayer
House of Prayer
The School of Prayer
Prayer Guides
Senior Intercessors

"Here are my directions: Pray much for others; plead for God's mercy upon them; give thanks for all He is going to do for them...This is good and pleases God our Saviour, for He longs for all to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:1, 4, LB).

"I thank God...[for you] as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day" (2 Timothy 1:3).

"Every time I say your name in prayer—which is practically all the time—I thank God for you" (Paul about Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:3, Message).

"The greatest victories to the church of Christ or to the individual Christian are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power" (PP 203).

—From *Face to Face with God in Your Church*
Bjorn Pederson, Phoenix, Arizona

#Ideas for Prayer Ministries

1. Develop a prayer hedge around yourself by getting at least one person to pray for you.
2. Develop a prayer hedge around your pastor.
3. Start a prayer request and answer book for your church.
4. Start secret prayer partners.
5. Encourage the members of your church to find a prayer partner and pray together on a regular basis.
6. Develop a telephone prayer chain for your church.
7. Plan a prayer room for your church.
8. Plan a prayer retreat/seminar for your church.
9. Plan a prayer breakfast for your church or community.
10. Plan a prayer potluck.
11. Plan prayer concerts/vigils.
12. Have a prayer walk for your community and as you walk pray for
 - a. Leaders in your community
 - b. Famous or influential people
 - c. Underprivileged
 - d. Single parents
 - e. Young mothers
 - f. Children
 - g. Families

10. Study the Bible with your children

"Parents, set apart a little time each day for the study of the Bible with your children. Let the more important passages of Scripture be committed to memory, not as a task, but as a privilege. Through this habit of daily Bible study, your children will gain strength by exercise, truth, and after a time you will see the fruit of their study." (CC 512)

"Do not think that the Bible will become a tiresome book as you read it, or that the Word will become more and more desirable. It will be as desirable to you as it is to the child, and it will never grow old. There is in it a freshness and beauty that are renewed and renewed in a child's youth and youth." (CG 514)

NOTE: Probably the worst enemy of Bible study in many homes is the television. Turn off the TV when you are studying the Bible. The Lord will love to fill the hearts of your children with His Word. He is always ready to be a blessing to you and your children. He is always ready to be a blessing to you and your children. He is always ready to be a blessing to you and your children.

11. Keep family devotional time

"I thank God, for you are without ceasing I remember you in my prayer night and day." (1 Thess 5:17)

- Steps for Prayer Ministries**
1. Devotion time should be at least one hour long.
 2. Devotion time should be at least one hour long.
 3. Devotion time should be at least one hour long.
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Advanced Ministries

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The Praying Church

What can YOUR church do to grow strong in prayer? Here are the keys to having a praying church:

1. Praying leaders are essential.

The church's greatest deficiency today is in prayer—not in programs, strategies, materials, or ideas. The power for ministry can be released only through prayer.

2. Give prayer high priority in the church's life and ministry.

It is impossible to explain the power and effectiveness of the New Testament church without reference to prayer. Prayer is the most important work in God's kingdom. It is a labor that has no substitute.

3. Correct thinking about prayer is important.

God rules the world through the prayers of His people. Christ actually meant prayer to be the great power by which His church should do its work.

4. Clear communication of needs and answers to prayer is vital.

If we expect our prayers to make a difference, it is important to watch for the answers. A simple way to increase the amount of effective prayer within a congregation is to effectively communicate prayer needs and answers.

5. Prayer should be linked to ministry.

Ministry without prayer becomes work in the power of the flesh. Prayer without ministry is complacent Christianity.

6. Make times, ways, and places for people to pray together.

This encourages consistency in prayer. Praying with others expands our prayer life. As we listen to others pray, we learn from them things that will strengthen our own prayer life. Praying together not only strengthens our faith, but mutual praying makes the large task of prayer more manageable.

7. Encourage personal devotions.

Private prayers are an indispensable part of every Christian's life. It is the highest activity in which any soul can engage.

In personal prayer we dare to look into our hearts to discern those most private problems and issues we need to place before the Lord.

8. Encourage family devotions.

If family worship is neglected, other attempts at prayer are like sprinkling the foliage of a plant with water while leaving the roots dry. Family devotions should be part of every Christian family's experience.

Why Do We Need Prayer Centers?

1. It makes it possible to schedule prayer in a systematic way.
2. It promotes agreement in prayer.
3. It provides a place to register deeds of God in the life of the church.
4. It shows ownership of the church's vision to win the city for Christ.
5. It gives advantages to evangelism.
6. It provides a place to practice prayer.
7. It has an inclusive impact on the church.
8. It provides a quiet place to hear the voice of God.
9. It provides a place for prolonged periods of prayer.
10. It provides a place where people can make a commitment to Jesus Christ.

Biblical Perspectives on Prayer

- God's answer is never a forced response. It is purely a gift of grace.
- You seek for God's will in your prayer—and in doing so you marvelously find your needs fulfilled, your purposes achieved, and your desires responded to.
- God takes into account every prayer ever offered and is forever involved with us in charting the course of history.
- Here is the hope of our prayer: the kingdom of the enemy will fall and all its false pride will be exposed.
- The more we pray, the more our horizons expand and the more we come to expect from a supernatural, miracle-working God.
- When we short-circuit prayer, we give our lives and ministry a secularistic or humanistic framework to work with.
- Prayer is giving focus to the mission of the church.
- Does God exist to help fulfill our plans, or do we exist to fulfill the plans of God?

God has chosen PRAYER as the key by which His church does its work. Through PRAYER we impact the world for God.

—*The Praying Church SOURCEBOOK* - by Alvin J Vander Griend with Edith L. Bajema
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