

CONNECTED THROUGH PRAYER



There are many *churches that pray* but there are few *praying churches*. We desire to be a *praying church* where prayer *saturates* every aspect of individual and corporate church life. Being a house of prayer is more than simply believing in prayer. Being a house of prayer means that our primary identifying mark is prayer.

Jesus quoted the prophet Isaiah when he said, “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations”.

The Bible doesn’t say exactly what it means for a church to be a house of prayer. But we can assume that a house of prayer is a church where prayer is considered the means to access God’s power and the real work of the ministry that is integrated into every facet of the life of the church.

To be a house of prayer, we must proclaim a passionate call to prayer. We must be intentional and relentless in our efforts to teach believers to pray. Prayer must be the expression of our hunger for divine companionship, of our desire for intimacy with our Creator, of our need to build a deeper relationship with our Lord.

The ultimate mark of a praying church is that God’s presence fills His house. Perhaps the single most distinguishing characteristic of a “house of prayer” is that it is filled with the tangible presence of God. A lack of spiritual appetite in the congregation is replaced by spiritual hunger. Unbelievers’ hearts are converted by the life-giving messages preached from the pulpit. The spiritual objectives of the church begin to move forward, not so much by human ingenuity and hard work as by the supernatural assistance of the Holy Spirit.

We refer to these powerful movements of God as *Something Only God Can Do* answers to prayer. We want to be a church that is fully dependent on God for all things. If our purpose as a church were simply to socialize and build friendships, we could thrive on our strength and abilities. But the church is tasked with the greatest mission the world has ever known. In addition, we have a relentless enemy trying to destroy us at every turn. For these reasons and many more, we must be *Connected Through Prayer* as members of God’s family.

In Ephesians 6:10-17, the apostle Paul exhorts believers to put on the full armor of God and to stand strong in His mighty power as we engage in the spiritual battle. Verse 18 may be the key to activating and empowering this metaphor of the armor when he says ...

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

This is a call to a ministry of intercession for not only those in our church but across the larger body of Christ. There are opportunities daily and weekly to pray in this way as members of our Sunday Morning Prayer Team, Encouragement Team, and daily email Prayer Chain.

In addition to praying for the spiritual needs of the church, the apostle Paul often asked for prayer for himself. As members who are *Connected Through Prayer*, we are committed to intercede for our pastor and church leaders.

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord’s people there, so that I may come to you with joy, by God’s will, and in your company be refreshed. The God of peace be with you all. Amen. (Romans 15:30-33)

Paul asked the people to strive, struggle, battle together in their prayers for him. “Struggle together” literally means “to contend with adversaries.” It means to fight, or to strain. It is the kind of prayer that is described in Ephesians chapter 6 as “warfare”. Jesus modeled this intense spiritual prayer life. Like Him, we must agonize or wrestle in pray on behalf of our spiritual leaders. As followers of Jesus Christ, we plead for the supernatural unleashing of the power of God in their lives, and in our churches and homes and throughout our country.

If you are interested in praying for one of our pastors on a daily basis, contact pastor Mike to get more information about our Pastor Prayer Shield. God is calling His people to become that mighty force to bring healing, encouragement and fresh power into the pulpits and leadership boards of our churches.

The New Testament is clear that the local church is to be led by a plurality of godly leaders under the oversight and watched care of Elders. The Elders are given ultimate responsibility and authority to see that the church remains focused on Great Commandment and Great Commission priorities, that its members are shepherded appropriately, that the body is being fed through accurate biblical teaching and that the life of the church is well managed with godly leaders.

Our 2016-2017 Elder Board welcomes your prayers as well as they shepherd the flock that God has placed under their care for this season. (Matt Chiodi, Brad Jackson, Stan Nagahashi, Paul Smith, and Lee Wiggins)

Let's strive, by God's grace, to be so much more than a church that prays but rather a praying church, a church devoted to prayer.

Additional Resources:

The Hour That Changes The World by Dick Eastman
Alone With God by John MacArthur
On Earth As It Is In Heaven by Warren Wiersbe
Transforming Prayer by Daniel Henderson
With Christ in the School of Prayer by Andrew Murray
Prayer by Tim Keller

Devoting Ourselves to Prayer

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. (Colossians 4:2)

Father, as I come before You now, I'm so very aware of my own prayerlessness. I think and worry about so much, but pray about so little in comparison. Forgive me, Lord. By the work of the Holy Spirit within me, teach me to pray and to do so continually. *(Be still before the Lord. Pray as the Holy Spirit leads you.)*

I ask also, Lord, for my church family. May my brothers and sisters in Christ be full of joy as they wait on You in the midst of trials that they are experiencing, and may they be faithful in prayer. *(Pray for those in our church who are in difficult circumstances. Ask God to strengthen their faith.)*

Remove from our lives all things that hinder our prayers, unbelief, sin that we have not turned from, unforgiveness and, may we respond to every prompting of the Holy Spirit that we might be unfettered and pray with all of our hearts.

Father, I ask that fervency in prayer and intercession be released on us that we might become a true "house of prayer for all nations." Replace any prayerlessness within our church with a passionate longing to see Your Church revived. May prayer become the fuel of the Holy Spirit among us.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I ask that we at Calvary Fellowship would become those who always pray and never give up. May we be found faithful when You come, Lord Jesus! May we be those that you call upon by the Spirit to watch on the walls for Your Church, for cities and even nations!

I ask that You stir our hearts with and urgency to pray and give us full-of-faith, God-sized dreams and requests. Teach us to pray Your heart. Teach us to pray Your Word. May the men of our church lead their families on their knees in prayer. May our women humble themselves before You and be self-controlled so that they can pray with greater boldness. Raise up intercessors among the youth of our church. Grab hold of their hearts, I pray, and fill them with great faith. May our hearts and minds be set on the things of Your kingdom. Teach us to pray, Lord! From youngest to oldest, teach us to pray! Do these things I ask so that we, Your Church, might come alive by the Spirit and be allowed the privilege of participating in the harvest that is coming. Even this day, O God, call Your people to humility to turn from sin, to seek Your face. Wake us up from our slumber, O God, for surely time is short!

In the name of Him who lives and intercedes for me, Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Luke 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:2; James 1:6-8; Matthews 6:14-15, 5:23; Psalm 66:18; 1 Peter 3:7; Isaiah 56:7; Mark 11:17; Luke 18:1-8; Isaiah 62:6-7; 1 Peter 4:7; Hebrews 11:13-16; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Romans 13:11-12; Hebrews 7:25)

Pray The Word for Your Church by Teice L. King

