

Creating a Praying Community

Why should we devote ourselves to creating praying communities?

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.” Col 4:2

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” Romans 12:12

“Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints” Ephesians 6:18

How prayer at Woodlands is connected to our purpose and priorities- “We aspire to be a Christ centered community helping people faithfully follow Jesus both locally and globally.”

- **Grounded in the word of God and prayer-** “Prayer is powerful and essential in the pursuit of God and his purposes. Therefore we will engage in widespread and consistent prayer at all levels of church life.”
- Creating a praying community contributes to every area of group life: it is relational, transformational, and missional.

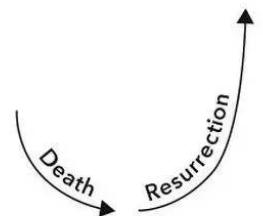
Yet in reality, we face many obstacles to prayer in our groups, and we all suffer for it!

The priority of prayer as modeled by Jesus is an invitation to saturate our lives in prayer.

- Gospels are full of examples of Jesus praying, inviting others to join him in prayer, and teaching about prayer.
- Paul Miller’s conviction that the church must harness the power train of prayer:

Prayer → Spirit → Jesus → Power. We unfortunately are existing in a fuel deprived state when we fall back to prayerlessness.

- J Curve - the path of dying and rising with Jesus. Understanding our lives in this way roots our hope, centers our love, and tethers our faith to Christ. Prayer is hard work!



“Prayer is the way to experience a powerful confidence that God is handling our lives well, that our bad things will turn out for good, our good things cannot be taken from us, and the best things are yet to come. You should not begin to pray for all you want until you realize that in God you have all you need.” Tim Keller

Pillars of a Praying Community



Praying for
yourself as a
leader



Prayerful
Preparation:
planning for group,
meeting & members



Praying
Together: with
the saints



Praying
beyond the
meeting

What is prayer all about?

- What it is: work, word, balance
- What it requires: grace, fear, helplessness
- What it gives: perspective, strength, spiritual reality
- Where it takes us: self-knowledge, trust, surrender

Prayer Ideas

Borrow Prayers:

- Praying scripture (Psalms, Paul's prayers, the Lord's Prayer)
- Praying through the lyrics of a hymn or worship song
- Lectio Divina (pick a passage to read, reflect, respond, rest)
- Prayers of Lament (Psalms 6, 10, 13, 22, 38, 88)

Sharing Concerns in Prayer:

- Creating prayer cards with scripture for people
- Swapping a short written prayer request between members
- 1 + 1 prayer requests (for someone else AND yourself)
- Starting a prayer request journal and marking (and sharing) answers to prayer
- Assign a prayer coordinator who gathers prayer requests and sends them out

Praying with the Saints:

- Split into smaller groups or subdivide men and women
- Lead a guided prayer time- leader introduces a topic and group prays silently or aloud, then moves onto another topic and so on.
- Go on a prayer walk together
- Spend an evening in prayer and ditch the curriculum (or flip the time to put prayer at the beginning and curriculum at the end)
- Pray immediately when a concern arises, stopping curriculum to pray and invite the Lord to move through the Spirit of Jesus
- Attend a concert of prayer together as a group

Prayer Practices:

- ACTS in Prayer (adoration, confession, thanksgiving, seeking) Go beyond just asking!
- Prayer Structure by Thomas Cranmer
 1. The address - a name of God
 2. The doctrine - a truth about God's nature that is the basis for prayer
 3. The petition - what is being asked
 4. The aspiration - what good result will come if the request is granted
 5. In Jesus' name - this remembers the mediator role of Jesus
- Centering prayer on a word, attribute of God, or desire for growth in godliness
- Breath prayer- breathe in an attribute of God's character and breathe out a request
- Pray through God's attributes and connect praise and requests
- Pray using the [prayer menu](#) from SeeJesus
- Prayer of Examen

*A final encouragement from Tim Keller: "The teaching is that **our prayers matter**- 'we have not because we ask not' and yet God's wise plan is sovereign and infallible. These two facts are true at once, and how that is possible is a mystery to us... If we believed that God was in charge and our actions meant nothing, it would lead to discouraged passivity. If on the other hand we really believed that our actions changed God's plan- it would lead to paralyzing fear. If both are true, however, we have the greatest incentive for diligent effort, and yet we can always sense God's everlasting arms under us. In the end, we can't frustrate God's good plans for us."*

Let's pray!

Resources

- Books by Paul Miller - A Praying Life, A Praying Church, J Curve - Dying & Rising with Jesus in Everyday Life
- How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People Pete Greig
- Prayer - Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God by Tim Keller
- Praying the Bible by Donald S. Whitney
- [Practicing Prayer](#) from Practicing the Way (John Mark Comer)