

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER AND PRAYER CARDS



Training Resource of:



Central Canadian District
Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada
155 Panin Road
Burlington, Ontario
L7P5A6

Unit to be used by:

Leader or Leadership Teams
Team Members

Table of Contents

Whether you have chosen to use the six month training program or the 12 week or the modular training, the essence of your time spent together is prayer. “No prayer No Power,” as a good pastor friend of mine always likes to say. Prayer paves the way for all of the work you are planning and will do. Prayer unites a team so you are of like mind and spirit. Prayer will compliment what you are doing in connection with the fasting element of your training. Most importantly the prayer and fasting elements of the training are vital in the area of spiritual formation.

I would suggest that from the moment you commit to leading a mission, begin looking for a book study that incorporates incorporate prayer. Use this as a team study but encourage your team to use it for personal devotion times throughout the week. I have been using the book (for years) “Talking with My Father”, by Ray C. Steadman. It is an excellent book.

Included in this Module...

Discussion Points

Prayer

The Importance of Prayer in the Bible (for leader)

Prayer: The Power that Wields the Weapon (article)

Prayer Cards form

Discussion Points

1. Print page on prayer. Review as a team.
2. Read Article together. Discuss.
3. Make team commitments to prayer.
4. Fill in your prayer card forms. Take pictures at the same time or have members submit their own photos. Have the prayer cards printed as soon as possible and distribute to family, friends, church family and the church you are visiting.

As a Leader, I can incorporate prayer by...

1. Always open and close your sessions in prayer.
2. As you progress in your training, lengthen the amount of time devoted to prayer.
3. Encourage every team member to be doing daily devotions during the training.
4. Encourage group members to meet to pray together between sessions.
5. Every training program should include a bible study. We recommend *Praying With My Father* by Ray Steadman.

A. Prayer

As you go on your ministry project, prayer may be one of your biggest joys—and one of your biggest struggles. Here are three reminders on short-term prayer with long-term effects.

1. The purpose of prayer

In our eagerness to get things done for the Lord, we often lose sight of the point that God wants us to love Him forever. You can't love someone that you don't spend time with. Don't let the pressure of activities or the demands of ministry crowd out time for personal communion with God. Take time to listen and talk with this Friend and to tell Him how you feel about yourself, about your relationship with Him, and about the world around you. Let Him tell you how He feels about you, what He has done for you, and what, with His help, you may do for Him. Prayer is essential to do the work of God. In fact, prayer allows God to do His work through us. As we see Him answer our prayers, we see that He is an active, living, and loving God.

2. The priority of prayer

To take time for prayer is never easy. You need to schedule regular time with God each day of your ministry trip. It is often best at the start of the day when you are mentally alert. Consider it the most important time slot on your daily schedule. Regular time is more productive than occasional longer periods of time, so plan for it and anticipate it as you would a meeting with the most significant and dearly loved person you know.

3. The power of prayer

Vital prayer is more than a monologue or recital of requests. It is a dialogue, a conversation in which two or more participate. Let God begin the conversation by listening to what He is saying through the Bible and allowing Him to give direction to your petitions. Look for promises in Scripture and ask God to fulfill them. Also, pray as a team because there is power in united prayer. When two or more teammates are able to pray together with common convictions and concerns, there is spiritual impact. These prayer times can become great times of relationship building. When you pray, whether alone or as part of your team, be sure to make your requests specific and expect specific answers. Finally, be thankful. Continually thanking God will help you live with the most Christ-like attitude, whether you're having trouble sleeping or loving a team member. Thank God for His presence in every situation and condition.

B. The Importance of Prayer in the Bible

For Jesus, prayer was as necessary as breathing. If the Son of God felt such a great need for contact with the Father, how much more do we!

But why? Why do we need to pray? Certainly God, who knows everything, knows our needs. Why do we need to tell Him what He already knows?

Herein lies one of our most basic misunderstanding about prayer. We think the purpose of prayer is to give information to God: "Lord I need this and I need that"-as if the Lord didn't already know everything we need!

NO the purpose of prayer is not to inform God about our needs, but to conform us to His will. Prayer doesn't change God. Prayer changes us. It changes our attitude from complaint to praise. It enables us to participate in God's eternal plan. It makes us aware of our total inadequacy-and God's infinite sufficiency.

The goal of faith is to bring us into direct, personal fellowship with God. If we do not move deeper into our fellowship with Him through prayer, we retreat from fellowship with Him. Prayer is active-not static. You cannot stand still in your prayer life. If you don't move forward, you move backward. You either pray your way to a deeper relationship with God-or you lose heart and ultimately give up on faith
Praying with My Father-Ray Steadman

Old Testament Verses on Prayer

1 Chronicles 16:11

Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14-15

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.

Psalm 4:1

Answer me when I call to you, O my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; be merciful to me and hear my prayer.

Psalm 5:3

My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct my prayer to You, and I will look up.

Psalm 17:1

Hear, O LORD, my righteous plea; listen to my cry. Give ear to my prayer--it does not rise from deceitful lips.

Psalm 25:1

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul;

Psalm 37:7

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him.

Psalm 50:15

Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."

Psalm 55:17

Evening and morning, and at noon, I will pray and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice.

Psalm 65:1-2

Praise awaits you, our God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled. You who answer prayer, to you all people will come.

Psalms 145:18

The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Proverbs 15:8

The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.

Proverbs 15:29

The LORD is far from the wicked but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

Isaiah 55:6

Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

New Testament Verses on Prayer

James 5:13-16

Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for

everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Ephesians 6:18-19

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. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel,

John 14:13-14

I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it

Luke 18:1-10

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!' " And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Revelations 5:8

And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

1 John 5:14-15

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him

PRAYER: The Power that Wields the Weapon

By John Piper

When the apostle Paul came to the end of his life, he said, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). Life is war just to maintain faith and get to heaven. Satan tries to create unbelief by targeting faith. Paul makes that very clear in 1 Thessalonians 3:5: "I wrote to you because I couldn't stand waiting to find out about your faith, lest the tempter had tempted you and all that we had done be in vain." If you take a further step, you come to Paul's statements about his own life and ministry in the midst of warfare: "I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air; but I pummel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I should find myself disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:26). That's the language of a soldier talking about the danger and discipline of mortal conflict. We move on another step when we read Paul's description of his ministry in 2 Cor. 10:3: "Though we live in the world, we are not carrying on a worldly war; for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly, but have divine power." So ministry is war. Fighting for faith in my heart is war. Fighting for the souls of other people is war.

A Peacetime Casualness in the Church If you were asked, "What's the most crucial text on warfare?" Ephesians 6:10-20 would need to be a leading candidate. Verses 12 and 13 declare, "We are not contending against flesh and blood; we are contending against principalities and powers and the world rulers of this present darkness, and the spiritual forces in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on the whole armor of God that you might be able to withstand and stand." The list of armor then follows. The problem is that most Christians don't really believe that life is war and that our invisible enemy is awesome. How, then are you ever going to get them to pray? They'll say they believe these truths, but watch their lives. There is a peacetime casualness in the church about spiritual things. There are no bombs falling in their lives, no bullets whizzing overhead, no mines to avoid, no roars on the horizon; all is well in America, the Disneyland of the universe. So why pray? In wartime, newspapers carry stories of how the troops are doing. In wartime, families get together, talk about their sons and daughters on the front lines and pray with wrenching concern for their safety. In wartime, people are alert, armed, and vigilant. In wartime, people spend their money so differently than in peacetime. There's an austerity and simplicity of life, not because such things are so valuable in themselves, but because there's something grand about a cause greater than paneling your den. Everybody is touched in wartime; everyone cuts back. Perhaps, for example, you've heard Ralph Winter's description of the transformation of the Queen Mary during the Second World War. This luxury liner became a troop carrier. Where three once slept, they slept fifteen. Where a table was once set with fifteen items per diner, tin plates appeared. Everything changes in wartime. But most people simply don't believe that we're in a war worse than World War II, worse than any imaginable nuclear holocaust. In this war, the casualties don't just lose an arm, a leg, or a life; they lose everything forever in hell. If only we believed that life is war, how different things would be!

Prayer as an Instrument of War The connection between prayer and war is not left to our guesswork. Ephesians 6:17 says, "Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, with all prayer, praying on every occasion in the Spirit, keeping awake with all perseverance." It doesn't take any exegetical ability at all to see that prayer is the power that wields the weapons of warfare. Take the sword of the Spirit praying! Prayer is not a civilian device; it is a weapon of war. Another text, John 15:16, says, "You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you go and bear fruit and that your fruit would remain so that whatever you ask of the Father, he may give it to you." Why is the Father going to answer the prayers offered in Jesus' name? Because Jesus has given a mission to go and bear fruit. Or turn it around: Why did Jesus give us a mission to go bear fruit that would remain? So we might enjoy getting answers to our prayers. So what is prayer for? For war and wartime, not for civilian life. The primary reason prayer malfunctions in the hands of believers is their insistence on trying to take a wartime walkie-talkie and turn it into a domestic intercom. A tool made for tanks and trenches won't work when you install it in your yacht or the lake cabin or the second, third, or fourth car. This is what I believe has happened. God sent His Son into the world on a mission. The Son comes to us and says, "My Father wants me to extend my mission to you. It's dangerous, but you can't lose; the mission will succeed. He's given me these transmitters here. Each one is tuned to the General's frequency. As long as you stay in battle, fighting His war in His ways, you will always have free access by the transmitter to the General. Go use them, and I'll do whatever you ask for the war cause." But what have millions of Americans done? They have stopped believing in the war. To them life is peace, not war. There's no urgency, no watching, no vigilance, no strategic planning—just easy, peacetime prosperity. They take the walkie-talkie, trying to install it in the domestic and luxurious places, and it won't work. They're not getting any signals, and they can't figure out why. If we're going to mobilize a movement of prayer in our churches and cities, if we're going to sustain a heart for prayer, we must truly believe that life is war. We must get out of the peacetime mentality that is drummed into our minds all day long by television, radio, newspapers, and magazines. These all say, "Don't believe what you hear about war; pad your lifestyle." But this is a false message of "peace, peace" when there is no peace. Until we feel the desperation of a bombing raid and the thrill of a new offensive against the forces of darkness, we will not pray the way we should.

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Prayer Cards

Please fill in the information below.

Your full name: _____

How can people pray for you? Write three to four **brief** points.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Complete this form and give it to your team leader. We will also need one passport-sized picture for your card.

This information is put together in bookmark form to give to those of your choosing as reminders to pray for you.