

How to Start a Local Church Prayer Ministry

By Steve Durkac

"But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and the ministry of the word." – Acts 6:4

You may sense God's Spirit calling you to start a prayer ministry at your local church, but are not quite sure how to go about it. Perhaps you have approached your pastor and he has affirmed your desire, but his encouraging words may not have been the blueprint you were hoping for. Well, here is a brief overview that I hope will help you get started!

I believe that the local Christian church must have an organized prayer ministry if it is going to maintain optimum spiritual health.

Spiritual churches require spiritual health. Recreational churches require sporting and exercise related activities, but spiritual churches require spiritual activities. Social churches require

entertainment and arts activities, but spiritual churches require spiritual activities. Community churches require city involvement and public awareness activities, but spiritual churches require spiritual activities. There is nothing wrong with incorporating recreational, social, and community activities into the life of your local church, but without the activity of prayer – you will not have a spiritual church!

God calls men and women with a burden of prayer to stand in the gap for their churches, that they may grow in spiritual health! His Spirit bids some to a ministry of prayer that all may not perish by the ways of this world. As a Prayer Warrior you are stepping up to the plate and standing with the few, the called, the remnant of intercessors whose prayers will call down God's grace and keep out Satan's schemes!

START WITH YOUR PASTOR

How many believers does it take to start a prayer ministry in your local church? One. It starts when one believer walks up to their local church pastor and says, "Pastor, I sense God calling me to commit myself to pray for you and our church, is that alright with you?"

Now pastors are use to people coming up to them, asking for things, but asking if they can pray for them?!! They get blasted because the carpet is red. They get assaulted because the church budget various from their expectation. They get cursed because their wife is wearing the wrong dress, their child is acting like a... a child, their sermon was too long – too short – too something or another. So you want to pray for him? Answer your call to prayer ministry by approaching your pastor!

Prayer Ministry begins with one church member in a ministry of prayer on behalf of their pastor and their church.

THE BIBLICAL PRAYER MINISTRY COORDINATOR

As church members join in a cause to pray and develop an organization of prayer, there must emerge a **Biblical Prayer Ministries Coordinator**.

The **Biblical Prayer Ministries Coordinator** is an individual who senses God's calling to lead in prayer. They have a passion for prayer. They want to promote prayer. They support the pastor. They believe in their local church. They have a knack for organizing. They are able to discern spiritual gifts. They have a heart for

others. They do not necessarily consider themselves “prayer giants” but they have a strong conviction that prayer is the activity of the church and they want to see it referred to, rely on, and practiced in the affairs of their local church.

3 FUNCTIONS OF A LOCAL CHURCH PRAYER MINISTRY

There are three functions of a local church prayer ministry, as I see it. I have seen prayer ministries from various denominations with different kinds of prayer ministries and activities, but I have found that they all boil down to only three functions.

The three functions, or focuses, of a Local Church Prayer Ministry are:

1. Pastoral Prayer
2. Intercessory Prayer
3. Evangelistic Prayer

Allow me to give you a brief explanation of how these three functions would operate in a local church Prayer Ministry.

Pastoral Prayer

The function, or focus, of **Pastoral Prayer**, within the context of your local church Prayer Ministry, is to prayerfully support the person and ministry of your pastor.

My experience has been that we Americans have a love-hate relationship with our pastors. We either love them or we hate them. We act as if they were elected government officials who we are required to judge and decipher as if they are running a political campaign.

Regardless of personality conflicts, management disagreements, or leadership differences, your church is dependant (yes, to an earthly degree) on the effectiveness of your chosen pastor. Your church is merely a lengthen shadow of your pastor. This is why somebody better be in prayer for the poor boy and seriously interceding with your God on his behalf – for the church’s sake!

Your pastor is human. But God does work through humans and your prayer ministry will move His hands!

What does the **Pastoral Prayer** function look like at your church? It is an organized team of prayer ministers or prayer warriors who are committed to *pastoral prayer*! They pray on their own, they may meet together before or during Sunday services, they may periodically and extemporaneously walk up to their pastor

and lay hands on him for a brief prayer of blessings.

Intercessory Prayer

The function or focus of **Intercessory Prayer**, within the context of your local church Prayer Ministry is to pray for the requests of your local church.

As your pastor and prayer ministries coordinator promote prayer within the life of your church, you are encouraging your membership to request intercession on behalf of souls and situation in need of prayer.

The **Intercessory Prayer** team assumes the function of taking those requests and commits themselves to truly intercede for those souls and situations brought to their attention. Prayer requests can be received and reviewed through telephone, email, or distribution of cards collected at church services.

What does the **Intercessory Prayer** function look like at your church? It is an organized team of prayer ministers or prayer warriors who are committed to *intercessory prayer!*

They pray for the presented needs and its list on their own and/or by meeting at a set time during the week to gather in

intercession. They may meet for an hour on a Monday morning or evening, or some other time set-aside during the week.

Evangelistic Prayer

The function or focus of **Evangelistic Prayer**, within the context of your local church Prayer Ministry is to pray for the specific soul-winning requests and events of the church.

The **Evangelistic Prayer** team has set their petitions on calling the Spirit of God to save souls!

What does the **Evangelistic Prayer** function look like at your church? It is an organized team of prayer ministers or prayer warriors who are committed to *evangelistic prayer!*

They may be sitting with their families during the worship service, but they are praying for the lost souls who *will* walk the aisle when the pastor opens the door of the church!

They may gather once a week to pray for the lost that family has brought to their attention through prayer requests. They pray for the convicting Spirit of God to go before those who will knock on the doors of Sunday School visitors. They pray for the work of your minister of evangelism or revivalist.

They prayer walk their communities that souls would be won for the Lord Jesus Christ.

BIBLICAL PRAYER CALENDAR

The **Biblical Prayer Ministries Coordinator** should plan around an annual Biblical Prayer Calendar.

Working with a Biblical Prayer Calendar allows your local church prayer ministry to maintain focus and regulate activities that truly impact the spiritual health of your church.

Your Biblical Prayer Calendar will keep your local church prayer ministry balanced through three vital types of events:

1. Equipping (Training) Events
2. Encouraging (Revival) Events
3. Enrollment (Recruiting) Events

Equipping Events

During the calendar year, schedule prayer equipping or training events. These events should be designed to help teach your church membership how to pray better.

These events can be scheduled once per quarter or twice a year depending on church membership size.

Here are some event ideas:

- Weekend prayer seminar
- Prayer training video series
- Sunday Discipleship class
- Pastor's sermon series

Encouraging Events

During the calendar year, schedule prayer encouraging or revival events. These events should be designed to inspire your prayer warriors to continue in their ministry of prayer and the membership at-large to commit to a life of prayer.

These events can be scheduled once twice a year or once a year depending on church membership size.

Here are some event ideas:

- Prayer Breakfast
- Weekend Prayer Retreat
- Prayer Revival Meetings
- Sunday Morning Prayer Rally

Enrollment Events

During the calendar year, schedule prayer ministry enrollment or recruiting events. These events should be designed to help other believers answer God's call to join in your local church prayer ministry.

These events can be scheduled twice or once a year depending on church membership size.

Here are some event ideas:

- Ministry Fair Booth
- Special Prayer Breakfast
- Prayer Ministry Sunday
- Prayer Ministry Fellowship

THE ORGANIZATION TEAM

Like it or not, God has chosen disorganized humanity to organize His work on earth.

If you want your local church to get serious about a ministry of prayer, you must develop an organized team. An organized team will assure an effective Prayer Ministry that involves more people, blesses more people, and grows more people for Jesus Christ and His Kingdom.

I have a hope that one day our churches will catch a vision of spiritual

importance and begin staffing a Minister of Prayer on their pastoral staffs. There are churches with a staff minister of prayer, and those members can give thanks and praise to their Lord.

However, if your local church is part of the 99% that doesn't have a **Minister of Prayer** on its pastoral staff, you will need a **Biblical Prayer Ministries Coordinator**.

The **Biblical Prayer Ministries Coordinator** is usually a layperson that is willing to oversee the three functions of **Pastoral Prayer, Intercessory Prayer, and Evangelistic Prayer** within their Local Church Prayer Ministry. They communicate closely with the local pastor on their activities.

As your Local Church Prayer Ministry attracts more members who wish to get involve, you will want to select **Prayer Team Leaders. Prayer Team Leaders** oversee the activities of the three functions of **Pastoral Prayer, Intercessory Prayer, and Evangelistic Prayer** teams.

If you are leading a large or mega church Prayer Ministry than your position as **Biblical Prayer Ministries Coordinator** is more of a support role to the **Prayer Team Leaders**. It is the **Prayer Team Leaders** who leads activities, communicates vision, and plans for their specific functions.

God has put a conviction on your heart to answer his call to prayer ministry. Now

honor Him by recognizing that call and begin the process establishing an organized Local Church Prayer Ministry!

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