



## **GUIDELINES TO LEADING AN EFFECTIVE PRAYER MEETING**

**Church Awakening** is a ministry, raised up by the Holy Spirit, for the purpose of calling the Church of Jesus to "put the altars of God back" in the Church. By "altars of God" we mean those foundational elements of the life of the local church recorded in the Book of Acts, namely corporate prayer, heart-moving worship, anointed preaching of the Word and the manifest presence of God.

The **Holy Spirit is the Spirit of prayer**, and the priority of all prayer, especially **corporate prayer**, is to be **anointed and led by the Spirit** in ways that carry the corporate body into the **flow of the Spirit**.

With that said, there are some practical helps we have learned that facilitate an **effective corporate prayer meeting**. These helps are not intended to "control" the Holy Spirit, or to be a legalistic straight jacket, but, over the years, we have learned that when they are followed they actually **enable a greater flow of the Spirit** in a prayer meeting.

1. **Open** a prayer meeting **with an appropriate Scripture and/or faith-focusing encouragement** for the people of God to come with confidence and faith into God's presence. An example would be Paul Billheimer's quote from *Destined for the Throne*, "**Through the plan of prayer God is actually inviting redeemed humanity into full partnership with Him...not in making divine decisions, but in implementing those decisions in the affairs of humankind.**"
2. Follow the opening comments with a time of **worship**, by which means the congregation is invited to shed the distracting issues of their day and enter the presence of God with thanksgiving and praise. This also prepares the hearts of the people for intercession.
3. Encourage the first season of prayer to be **prayers of thanksgiving** for who God is and His faithfulness and ways of drawing near to His people. Don't be in a hurry to move into intercession.
4. **Provide a focus** for prayer for a portion or all of the prayer meeting, and encourage those present to concentrate on that focus, at least initially.
5. Encourage everyone present to **pray in turn as the Spirit inspires them**, without having long periods of silence, unless the Holy Spirit directs a time of silence. Long periods of silence will kill the spirit of prayer in a prayer meeting.
6. **Prayers should be short.** Long prayers make it difficult for the people to stay in a spirit of agreement, and the purpose of a powerful prayer meeting is everyone present being in a spirit of agreement in receiving the object of prayer.





7. If possible, **pray in the same theme**. The flow of a prayer meeting is best experienced when those present are attuned to what the Spirit is doing in that prayer meeting and how He is leading the person or persons who have just prayed. Nothing will kill the spirit of prayer faster than "pin ball" prayers, binging from this topic to that topic in rapid succession. The focus of prayer may change in the course of a prayer meeting, but the more gradual that change is, the easier for the people to stay in agreement.
8. Corporate prayer is **not for...**
  - **sharing a testimony.** While testimonies have a place in building faith, they can be a distraction for those gathered for prayer.
  - **giving a devotional thought** or exhortation. Those have their place in a different setting. The people present have to "set aside" their heart of prayer to listen and process a teaching.
  - **telling a story.** We are here to pray, and the best thing you can do for the prayer meeting is to pray.
  - **reading long passages of Scripture** in your prayer.
9. Charles Finney, 19th century revivalist in New England, said that prayers should be **offered with a warmth of spirit** in keeping with the urgency of our need for God to act on our behalf and the confidence that He does and will answer prayer.
10. Prayer in a corporate prayer meeting must be **offered in a volume that everyone present is able to hear** and be able to be in agreement. Unless microphones are available, this will require the people praying to significantly increase volume way above what they usually think of as conversational volume. This is critical for maintaining a spirit of prayer.



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