

Leading a Prayer Meeting

This course focuses on the general practice of corporate prayer and can be applied to many kinds of prayer meetings. If you are a small group leader or thinking about a small group context, consider taking the [Cultivating Intimacy with God Together](#) course.

The Importance of Group Prayer

Why Prayer Meetings

Ministry without prayer can make us susceptible to these temptations:

1. **To rely on strategy and not God's power** – This doesn't mean to ditch wise planning, but to submit the work to God and acknowledge the work is his.
2. **To keep our spiritual lives private** – We don't want our prayer and worship to become isolated, never linking up with one another in the shared life of community.
3. **To let our prayer life become rote and routine** – Regular group prayer allows variety and companionship to keep our hearts and souls refreshed.

Despite the copious amounts of prayer we might do in our lives, having a space completely devoted to prayer can help your ministry to thrive.

Corporate Prayer in the Bible

Throughout the Bible we see examples of people praying together. See the early church (in Acts 1:14, 4:24, 12:12, 20:36), Jesus' ministry (in Luke 11:2-4), and the life of Israel (in 2 Chronicles 20).

Elements of a Prayer Meeting

Understanding Prayer Leadership

Prayer leadership is about hosting and facilitating a safe, hospitable conversation between people and God about God's world.

The Host

The host is the one to:

- **Set the table** – Consider location (when and where), length (for how long and frequency), and setup (how the space will be arranged)
- **Make invitations** – Inviting is an extension of God's love. Consider who you will invite and what reminders you'll give beforehand. Check out the [Inviting Well course](#) for more.
- **Make room** – Create a safe, inclusive atmosphere for everyone who might join. Consider people who aren't followers of Jesus, accessibility, culture, and language.

The Facilitator

Here are seven ways to facilitate a prayer meeting:

1. **Identify the facilitator** – The facilitator's role is to proactively think through the entire meeting and how their community can meet with God together. They can also delegate responsibilities.
2. **Pick a focus** – Have a distinct focus like praying for the campus mission, an upcoming event, etc.
3. **Orient the group to prayer** – Welcome, cast vision, set expectations, and encourage brevity.
4. **Plan a format and style** – Planning can help you dive right into prayer at the start of your meeting, rather than using the meeting time to figure out the plan.
5. **Get community involved** – Identify people to help (e.g., greeters, worship leaders, someone to open and close prayer) and ask them in advance.

6. **Debrief the prayer meeting** – Invite people to share what they experienced and how they encountered God.
7. **Be open to the Holy Spirit** – The Holy Spirit works through our plans and in spite of our plans.

The Dreaded Circle Prayer

Prayer circles may be something you or others might dread. Therefore, having a facilitator can help those who might not feel comfortable praying in public.

As a leader, you can coach those new to praying out loud and in public by meeting with them before the meeting, reminding them that prayer doesn't have to be elegant or wordy, and invite them to read written prayers.



Having a Conversation with God

We don't want to lose sight of God or God's world during our prayer meetings. We want to share our hearts, listen to his voice, and remember what God is doing in the world.

Seven ways to make your prayers more conversational:

1. **Silence** – Create times of silence to listen for God's voice.
2. **Sharing** – Invite people to write what they heard from God and display it somewhere.
3. **Small Groups** – Break into pairs or triads to share and listen to God together.
4. **Scripture** – Read Scripture aloud and invite the Holy Spirit to speak through the Word.
5. **Creation** – Take the meeting outside.
6. **Agreement** – Have people pray short prayers building on the same topic.
7. **Debrief** – Prioritize space to debrief and share what they heard from God.

Prayer Methods and Common Mistakes

Many Ways to Pray

Styles of prayer include:

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|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Conversational Prayer | • Liturgical Prayer | • Intercessory Prayer |
| • Pair-Share Prayer | • Listening Prayer | • 2+ Prayer |
| • One Voice Prayer | • Centering/Silent Prayer | • Prayer Room |
| • Lectio Divina | | |

Common Mistakes

1. **Unplanned Silences** – These happen because of prayer monologues or unclear expectations. You can remind people to keep prayers brief, leave space for others to pray, and clearly explain what to pray about and for how long.
2. **Length of Meeting** – Prayer meetings don't have to be long; 30 minutes works best. Clearly communicate what time the meeting starts and ends at and stick to it. (You can extend the time if the Spirit is moving or if your culture values extended prayer times. Just give the group freedom to leave without feeling guilty.)
3. **Getting Into a Rut** – Repetition can lead to boring prayer meetings. Take advantage of the variety of formats and themes for prayer meetings to enjoy the vast diversity of Christian prayer tradition.

Related Resources

- [Leading Prayer Meetings](#)

Recommended Courses

- [Depending on the Spirit](#)
- [Cultivating Intimacy with God Together](#)
- [Praying for My Campus](#)

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