

# LEADING SUSTAINABLE PRAYER MEETINGS

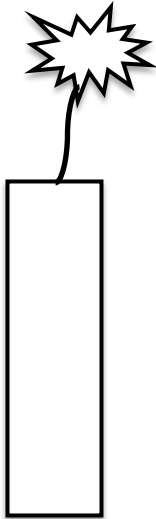
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→ **Catalytic Prayer Meetings** are characterized as being:

- Enjoyable (people want to go to them)
- Sustainable (happens regularly for an extended period of time)
- Invitational (drawing new people in)
- Catalytic toward the mission (moves people to action)

→ **CORE IMAGE: A Candle (or TNT)**



The Holy Spirit is the **flame or spark** that fuels a prayer meeting.

To be a leader of prayer just remember **WICK**:

- W- Worship
- I- Interpretation
- C- Clear Instructions
- K- Kingdom Focused

**The structure** of a prayer meeting is made up of 4 components:

- Faithful People
- Set Time and Place
- A Shared Prayer Model (Up, Out, In)
- Leadership

→ **BUILDING THE FOUNDATION- THE STRUCTURE**

- **Faithful People**- Find people and have them commit to pray with each other. This keeps people accountable to each other to show up. Also, as groups of people pray regularly together, they begin to hear and seek God together more and more as a cohesive unit. There's a certain "groove" that develops. It is better to pray with a small group of people over a period of time, instead of trying to gather the masses for one meeting.
- **Set Time and Place**- Commit to a set time and place. Once its set, it should be apart of your schedule. Treat it as you would treat any other appointment. Consistency is key to sustainability. Find a time and place that will work for a full year.
- **A Shared Prayer Model**- There is no single correct way to pray; however, it is helpful to have a shared model among people to build cohesion and traction during a prayer meeting. Luke18's "UP, OUT, IN" is a good model based on Jesus' model The Lord's Prayer. Feel free to break out of the model as the Spirit leads; models are not meant to be restricting, but offer stability when creativity is lacking.
- **Leadership**- Leadership in a prayer meeting can range from being very directive to being more like a "guide." Don't fall into the trap of thinking prayer meetings don't need a leader. Even a group of 3 people needs someone to ask, "So what should we pray about?" and initiate the beginning of prayer.

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## → BECOMING LEADERS OF PRAYER

- We ultimately lead out of who we are. Becoming leaders of prayer begins in our own prayer lives and walks with God. We will not be able to lead sustainable prayer meetings until we first understand what it means to have a sustainable prayer life.

*39 Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." 41 He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." 43 An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. 44 And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. –Luke 22:39-44*

- Four key prayer principals we can learn from Jesus in having sustainable, enjoyable prayer meetings:
  - Relationship- Living a life of regularly coming before God.
  - Humility- Knowing who you are in light of who God is.
  - Faithfulness- Praying when no one else is praying.
  - Fervency- Praying like no one else is listening.
- Leaders of prayer should not focus on trying to implement a structure to build sustainable prayer meetings, but rather pastoring their prayer group toward these four personal principals. **This is the most important element in building catalytic prayer meetings.**
- **Application-** Of these four prayer principals demonstrated by Jesus, which one(s) can I most grow in as a leader of prayer?

## → LEADING PRAYER MEETINGS- WICK

- **WORSHIP- Who do we pray to?** Worshipping ultimately sets our heart and mind onto the God we are praying to. It keeps us from thinking only about ourselves and forces us to focus on God. In this way, worship serves to tenderize the heart and prepare us to engage in the activity of prayer. It also serves to recharge and refresh us to engage in the "work" of intercessory prayer. Although all forms of worship are good and pleasing to God, there is a unique way in which people (perhaps particularly in our generation) connect with musical worship.

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- **INTERPRETATION- Why do we pray?** One of the most important jobs of the prayer leader is to explain and interpret everything.
  1. This starts with reminding and exhorting the group to why we pray. If there is a reluctance to pray, it is the leaders job to challenge the group out of this. Ultimately, we must remember that prayer is caught not taught.
  2. This also means explaining to those who are new to prayer or unfamiliar to the group's prayer culture why we are doing things the way we are doing them. If something out of the ordinary or weird happens, the prayer leader must acknowledge it and interpret it for the group.
  3. Finally, this means having a bird's eye view of the entire prayer meeting to see and interpret what God is speaking through the entire group. This allows the leader to follow the Spirit's leading and help the group see any major themes that God brings up. If there is energy behind a certain topic or behind worship, allow the Lord to guide you and press into that prayer focus.
  
- **CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS- How do we pray?** When a person is unclear about what he or she is praying about, they tend to focus more trying to figure out what's going on than actually engaging in prayer.
  1. Giving clear instructions allows people to know how to pray during this particular meeting. Tell people what kind of prayers to pray (ie. one at a time aloud, all at once aloud, in pairs, etc.). We are sometimes afraid of offering clear instructions because we are afraid to "quench the spirit." However, offering clear instructions helps limit distractions and tune into what the Spirit is doing.
  2. Clear instructions also allow for creativity in how we lead people to engage with prayer. Creativity in our form of prayer not only keeps people engaged, but creative expressions of prayer can more deeply connect with what is going on in our hearts as we pray.
  
- **KINGDOM FOCUSED- What do we pray for?** The model of prayer that Jesus offers us is to the Father in light of His coming kingdom. Our intercession must be in line with His will and the order of His Kingdom. With that said, our job as prayer leaders are to help people think beyond themselves and toward the mission of God. This kind of focus breathes a sense of purpose into prayer meetings. It also reminds us that we should ultimately be the answers to our prayers. A prayer leader should interpret what God is doing in a prayer meeting and help people directly respond to or apply what is being prayed about. Catalytic prayer meetings drive people to action in furthering the kingdom.

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## → A PRAYER MODEL- UP, OUT, IN<sup>1</sup>

### UP

#### **“Our Father who are heaven, Hallowed be Your name...” Matthew 6:9**

- Upward prayer is the prayer of adoration. Begin your prayer meetings by praying prayers of thanksgiving and speaking forth the knowledge of who God is.
- The prayer leader may announce the transition into a time of “upward prayer” or “praying prayers of thanks to God.”
- POSSIBLE IDEAS
  - Pray prayers of thanksgiving for what God has done for you this week.
  - Take turns to read and pray sections of the Psalms or the Hymns of Revelation out loud and exalt the greatness of God.
  - Sing and speak forth the truth of God’s nature by declaring the names of Jesus and of the Father.

### OUT

#### **“Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...” Matthew 6:10**

- Outward prayer is the prayer of intercession. Apply this verse to your prayer topics and ask for the breaking in of heaven in each situation.
- They prayer leader may announce the transition into “outward prayer” or “prayers of intercession for the campus/fellowship.” It is good to have specific prayer topics either prepared by the leader or gathered among the group before engaging prayer. The leader may also announce transitions in between topics during prayer. You may pray as short or long as you desire through each topic.
- POSSIBLE IDEAS
  - Take turns to pray out loud through your prayer focuses.
  - Break into groups and take a prayer walk.
  - Stand up and pray in unison all together over a particular topic.

### IN

#### **“Give us this day our daily bread...” Matthew 6:11**

- Inward prayer is prayer the prayer of asking and blessing for one another. Use scriptural prayers to pray for each other’s individual needs and for strength in his or her Christian walk.
- The prayer leader may announce the transition to “inward prayer” and guide the group toward praying for one another.
- POSSIBLE IDEAS
  - Break into small groups and pray for one another
  - Take a prayer topic from the intercession time and ask the group if it hit anyone personally. Have those people get into the middle for prayer.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Luke18, <http://luke18project.com/blog/702/up-outin-prayer-model/>