



# THE PRAYER CLOSET

Equipping & Encouraging Believers  
In Prayer

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## PRAYING WITH OTHER BELIEVERS

Every believer has the incredible opportunity to spend time with God through prayer. You have the blessed opportunity to talk with the living God of time and eternity. You can have intimate fellowship with the mighty God of heaven and earth. You can pour your heart out to the God who loves you and is concerned with your life. No words can truly describe the richness and power of this privilege.

At the same time, you have another incredible opportunity that is just as rich and powerful. It is the privilege of praying with other believers. It is the opportunity to speak with God with another believer or believers. It is to cry out to God with your brothers and sisters in Christ. One of the richest blessings this side of heaven is praying with other believers.

Every believer has equal access to God (**Ephesians 2:18**). Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, every believer can pray. We have an open door to the throne room of God. We can now speak to God at any time, in any place, and for any reason. Not only can we approach God individually, we can also approach Him with our other brothers and sisters in Christ. All our brothers and sisters have access to God through Jesus Christ. We can join together and speak to Him in united prayer. We can come before our God with united hearts and purposes.

Because of this awesome privilege, believers need to make time to pray together. An essential part of developing a powerful prayer life is praying

with other believers. Spending time alone with God is crucial to your maturity and power in prayer. Yet, praying with other believers will provide you with insight, power, and encouragement that you cannot receive through your own individual quiet times.

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on developing prayer partners. It will offer guidance and insight on how you can pray with other believers. It is my hope and prayer that this newsletter will encourage you to develop or deepen prayer partnerships with other believers. God desires that we pray individually and corporately. He longs for us to approach Him alone and with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

### Why Should I Pray With Other Believers?

The believer should seek to pray with other believers. You can do this by having prayer partners and by taking part in your church's prayer meetings. You may be wondering, "Why should I do this? I have my own quiet time. Isn't that enough?" There are several reasons why you should practice praying with other believers.

*First, the Bible teaches the practice of both individual and corporate prayer.* The Bible reveals that every believer has access to God through prayer. Each individual believer should take advantage of this glorious privilege. In the Bible,

Dr. Kevin Meador, 595 Stratton Road, Decatur, MS 39327 (601) 635-2180

Email: [prayercloset\\_1998@yahoo.com](mailto:prayercloset_1998@yahoo.com)

OUR WEB PAGES: [www.prayerclosetministries.org](http://www.prayerclosetministries.org) - [www.kingdompraying.com](http://www.kingdompraying.com)

the believer is taught to seek God and to persevere in prayer. Yet, the Bible also reveals that believers prayed together.

***“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers” (Acts 1:14).***

***“Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1).***

***“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).***

***“Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour” (Acts 3:1).***

***“So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: ‘Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them’ (Acts 4:24).***

***“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).***

***“Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them” (Acts 6:6).***

***“Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church . . . So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying” (Acts 12:5, 12).***

***“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’” (Acts 12:2).***

Believers should seek opportunities to pray alone and with other believers. The believer’s prayer life should consist of individual and corporate times of prayer.

*Second, Jesus promises power and results to those who pray in agreement. The Word of God*

declares, “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:19). Jesus promises that God responds when two or more agree in prayer. This requires believers to pray together in agreement. This means that believers will have to join with other believers and pray with the same agenda. This promise is given to those believers who will join with other believers in prayer.

God does hear and answer the prayers of individual believers. Yet, praying in agreement with other believers moves the heart of God like nothing else. God loves to hear the united pleas and cries of His children. When believers pray together, it releases God’s power and blessings in an unprecedented way.

*Praying with other believers will help you learn how to pray.* When you pray with other believers, the Holy Spirit can use this to guide you in a deeper, more vibrant prayer life. Individual prayer is crucial to growing in your ability to pray. Yet, praying with other believers provides you with insight and encouragement that you can’t receive by praying alone. It will increase your burden to pray and will help you stay fervent in your praying. In order to develop your communication with God, you need times of individual and corporate prayer. A powerful and effective prayer life is built on both individual and corporate times of prayer.

*Praying with other believers will protect you from discouragement.* When you pray with others, you have brothers and sisters who can pray for you and not just with you. Your prayer partner(s) can help you when you feel discouraged or want to give up. They can help you shoulder the burdens in your praying. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12 reveal the value of praying with other believers, “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls. For he has no one to help him up . . . Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

## Developing Prayer Partnerships

There are a variety of ways that you can develop prayer partnerships. You can seek out

another believer that you join with in prayer. You could commit to pray with two other believers. You might even consider developing a small group that will pray together. A church could develop teams of prayer partners.

However you develop the prayer partnership, there are five basic qualities that are needed in prayer partners. These five basic qualities will help you form and develop powerful prayer partnerships. They are essential to maintaining a prayer group.

### **(1) Commitment**

There has to be commitment first to seek God and then to seek God with the other believer(s). A prayer partnership means that you will seek the Lord individually and with the others also. The believers must be committed to getting together and seeking the Lord in agreement. You cannot develop powerful prayer partnerships if there is lack of commitment to prayer and to praying with others.

### **(2) Focus**

Your prayer partnerships need to have a focus. I realize that you are meeting in order to pray. Yet, why are you praying? What is the focus of your praying? Your prayer team might be praying for particular needs like healing or salvation. You may be praying in agreement concerning certain people. You might be interceding for your church. You could be joining together to pray for your pastor. Having a focus is crucial to developing powerful and effective prayer partnerships. If you do not have a focus, you will spend more time talking (gossiping) than you will praying. Without focus, you will have a tendency to wander from the main purpose of having a prayer partner or partners – to spend time praying together.

### **(3) Transparency**

In order to pray powerfully with another, there has to be openness – openness to share one's heart and the leadings of the Spirit. When you partner to pray with others, you need an openness to listen to the hearts and insights of others. Pride can destroy the effectiveness of a prayer partnership. Each believer must be willing to listen to the others. Even when there is disagreement, the believers must be willing to receive what needs to be said and pray concerning the issue. The feelings and insights of others must be heard, examined, and prayed over.

### **(4) Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an absolute must for prayer partnerships. What is shared must stay between the prayer partners and the Lord. There can be no discussion of matters outside of the times of seeking the Lord, except for sharing insights from the Holy Spirit concerning the situation or the person. The credibility and effectiveness of prayer partnerships can be destroyed when needs or concerns are shared with others outside of the prayer partners.

### **(5) Accountability**

Prayer partnerships provide an opportunity for accountability. Your prayer partner(s) can help you stay fervent and faithful in your prayer life. The Word of God teaches that believers are to encourage and stir other believers to faithfulness and good works (**Hebrews 10:24; 1 Thessalonians 5:11**). How can you hold one another accountable? The following are accountability questions that you can ask your prayer partner(s) in order to encourage one another and to pray for one another:

- Have you spent time daily in prayer with your Father?
- Have been reading and meditating on His Word daily?
- Have you been going through the motions of prayer?
- Are you praising God with your lips and life?
- Are you justifying or hiding sin in your life?
- Are you thanking God specifically?
- Is anything hindering your relationship with the Lord?

You might want to go over these questions on a periodic basis. You can use these or develop your own from them. The purpose of these times is to encourage one another to stay faithful and fervent in seeking the Lord. It is also a way of asking others to pray for areas where you are struggling.

## **Pointers For Prayer Partnerships**

The following are some basic points to remember in your prayer partnerships. These points can apply to any type of group prayer meeting.

- *Be specific in your prayer requests.* Make specific requests of the Lord. Generalized praying is powerless and empty. Jesus told a parable about a man who woke his neighbor up

for three loaves of bread for his unexpected company (**Luke 11:5**). When you seek the Lord, be specific in your asking.

*Be open to the leading of the Spirit.* The Holy Spirit is our Guide in prayer (**Galatians 4:6**). He is the One who enables the believer to pray in the will of God. Invite Him to provide you with insights to pray concerning the person and the situation. Be willing to change as He leads.

- *Be willing to fast* (**Matthew 6:16-18**). Prayer combined with fasting touches and moves God in a unique and powerful way. It enables those who fast and pray to hear from God and to pray with greater intensity. Be willing to have times of abstaining from food or whatever the Lord leads in order to seek Him more intensely.
- *Be persistent.* Seek God until He answers (**Luke 11:8-10**). In this parable, Jesus is not teaching that God is reluctant to answer our prayers. He is revealing that we must be bold and persistent in our praying. Persist in prayer until God moves. Keep praying in your group until God intervenes and acts in mighty power and wisdom. Don't give up; don't yield to unbelief.
- *Pray in agreement* (**Matthew 18:19**). Make sure you are praying in unity. Be clear about what your partner(s) are asking of God. Strive to pray concerning the same person, the same need, and the same Scriptures.
- *Base your prayers on the Word of God.* Study what the Word of God says about the needs for which you are praying. Use the Word of God to plead for God to act. Share with your prayer partner(s) the verses that God is giving you to pray. Ask them to share what verses they are using in order to pray.
- *Fill your prayer times with praise.* Don't allow your prayer partnership or prayer group to degenerate into a "grocery list prayer-time." It is crucial that you pray specifically concerning needs and people. Yet, strive to fill your prayer times with praise. Focus on God above all needs and concerns.
- *Be thankful.* When God answers your prayers, spend time thanking Him. Honor Him by acknowledging that He has heard and answered you. You can also thank God when you present your requests to Him – thanking Him for answering your prayer in advance in His time and way (**Philippians 4:6**).

- *Trust God regardless.* When there are answers and when there are no answers to prayer, trust Him. When your times of prayer are sweet and fresh and when they are dry and a struggle, place your confidence in Him. Fix your eyes on the Lord and continue to seek Him (**2 Chronicles 20:12**).
- *Be patient.* Keep in mind that believers pray differently. Your way of praying may be totally different than that of your prayer partner(s) or those in your prayer group. You may have some in your group that are immature in prayer. In these cases, be patient and gracious. Ask God to help you appreciate the differences and to learn from them. Pray that the immature believers will mature in their praying. Provide prayer guides and other material to help those who are struggling in prayer.
- *Be willing to share your struggles and your sins with your prayer partner(s).* Prayer partners need to develop openness to the point that they can share their struggles and their sins. Discernment must be exercised in this matter. Yet, you must grow in your prayer partnerships that you can share these things and ask prayer for them. Only by doing this can you experience healing in your life, "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed" (**James 5:16**).
- *Remain alert and focused in your prayer times.*

## Volleyball Prayer

One of the keys to healthy prayer partnerships is variety in praying. A helpful way to develop variety is through "volleyball prayer." This is a type of praying that is based on listening to and following the leadership of the Spirit. It is ideal for prayer partners and small prayer groups.

In volleyball, the ball is knocked back and forth over a net. The ball passes back and forth from team to team. This is the basis of this type of prayer. Designate one person as the prayer leader. This person will be silent and still before the Lord. The group will pray that God will reveal to this person what the group should pray about during the prayer time. As the Spirit reveals persons and needs, the group then prays as the Spirit leads them. The leader will call out the need, the person, or the burden that the Spirit brings to his or her mind.

For instance, the leader may say, "The president." Then each person will pray for the president as the Holy Spirit leads him or her. Each person needs to ask God to show him or her what they are to pray at that time. As the Holy Spirit reveals insights, each person can pray according to this. Once each person has prayed, the leader may say, "The pastor." Each person will then pray for the pastor as the Spirit leads. The time of prayer goes back and forth between the leader and the pray-ers.

It is right and good to have prayer lists and specific requests for your times of prayer. But there needs to be times of waiting on the Lord and listening to His agenda. This can provide variety in your prayer times and can sharpen your ability to listen to God and to intercede before Him.

The following are some guidelines for this type of prayer:

- *Begin with praise to God.* Before you begin this type of praying, praise God with all your being. Magnify God with all your strength. Let praise flow freely from each person in the group.
- *Plead for the filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).* Seek the power and insight of the Holy Spirit with all of your being.
- *Ask the Holy Spirit to enable you to listen to Him and follow His leading.* Pray for sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. Ask that you will be receptive to His guidance.
- *Pray that you will intercede according to the will of God for each request.* Ask that your praying for these requests will conform to the will of God.
- *Record any insights that you receive during this time.* Keep up with the insights that God is giving you.
- *Don't get in a hurry.* Learn the valuable lesson of stillness and silence before the Lord. Don't be impatient with the Spirit.
- *Ask for God to reveal Scripture promises and commands that you can pray for each concern.* Pray that the Holy Spirit will lead you to promises and commands that apply to your prayer concerns. When I practice this type of prayer, I have an open Bible in front of me. I do this so that I can turn to texts that the Spirit may lead me to pray for the person or the circumstance.

## When You're Afraid To Pray In Public

I often encounter people who tell me that they are afraid to pray in public. They do not want to be called on to pray in a public setting. They will not attend a prayer meeting where people pray in public or in small groups.

This is tragic. They are failing to experience the privilege of leading their brothers and sisters in Christ to our Father's throne of grace. Believers who are afraid to pray in public are also missing a unique and blessed privilege – praying with their brothers and sisters in Christ. At the same time, this is one of the greatest hindrances to genuine prayer meetings in our churches. Most "prayer meetings" in churches are a Bible study or sermon with a prayer time attached at the beginning or end of a service. This is robbing the church of its power and effectiveness.

Can a person overcome the fear of praying in public or in small groups? Is it a "hopeless" case? God is able to help a person overcome this fear. God can empower the believer to pray in ~~private and in public~~. ~~The Holy Spirit enables the~~ believer to pray whether that believer is alone or is surrounded by others (**Galatians 4:6**).

How can a believer overcome the fear of praying in public setting? The following are some suggestions on how you can deal with the fear of praying in public:

- ◆ *Ask God to remove this fear from your life.* God does not give the spirit of fear. He is the God who provides strength, hope, and help (**2 Timothy 1:7**). Call on Him to remove the fear that you have concerning this.
- ◆ *Commit yourself to learning how to pray in public.* You can overcome this fear. It is not impossible. You can pray in public and small group settings. God will help you. But, you must be willing to commit yourself to this. You have to put away your excuses. You have to be willing to get outside of your comfort zone. When you say, "I can't pray in public," are you really saying, "I won't pray in public?" Make the commitment to overcome this fear and to learn how to seek God in public prayer.
- ◆ *Pray out loud when you are praying alone.* This will help you to get used to speaking out loud in

- a public setting. You might consider praying out loud in parts of your prayer time with the Lord.
- ◆ *Enlist a prayer partner.* Find a prayer partner that you can pray with. Ask God to help you find another believer with whom you can pray. When you're afraid to pray in public, start small. Pray with this prayer partner. By doing this, you get used to having someone around when you are praying. I have encouraged churches to start "Prayer Mentoring" programs. This program allows those who are more experienced in prayer to team up with those who are struggling in this area. The prayer mentor will encourage, equip, and pray with the believer. This will help the believer grow in prayer and become accustomed to praying in public.
  - ◆ *Prepare to pray.* One of the best ways to pray in public is to prepare for prayer. Before you go into a worship service or small group prayer meetings, prepare what you are going to speak with your Father. Pick an attribute with which You can praise Him. Fix some verses of Scripture in your memory that you can use in your praying. Know what you are going to speak with your Father about before you are called on to pray. I'm often called on to pray in group settings. Before I go into a worship service or a time of prayer with a small group, I ask God, "If I'm called on to pray, what do You want me to seek You about? How do you want me to lead the group in prayer?" By making preparation, you can alleviate the fear of being called on and freezing up when the words don't come right away.
  - ◆ *Focus on God when you pray.* When you pray in private, your focus is to be on God (**Matthew 6:6**). The same is true of public prayer. Fix your focus on God. There was a man in a church who spoke so softly when prayed that no one could hear him. This went on for a period of time. Finally, a frustrated deacon approached him and said, "When you pray, you need to speak up. We can't hear you." The man replied, "Well, I wasn't talking to you!" When you pray in public, you're not speaking to the people around you. You are speaking with God who is your Father and Friend. Concentrate on him when you pray in public.
  - ◆ *Pray short prayers.* A woman confessed that she was afraid to pray in public because she could not pray long, impressive prayers. She felt inadequate to pray. When praying in public, it is best to pray short, pointed prayers. There are exceptions to this. Yet, when you are struggling to learn to pray in public settings, it is good to start by praying these short, pointed prayers. Eloquence doesn't bless God nor move His hand. It is praying from the heart. It is better and wiser to pray a two-sentence prayer from the heart than to pray a long, eloquent prayer that does not flow from the heart. I was called on to pray in a group setting one night. I felt led to pray this, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, for I am a sinner." That's all I prayed. Yet, I sensed God's presence and power as I prayed. He moved powerfully in the lives of those present through that prayer. The best way to start praying in public is to pray short prayers from the heart. Don't worry about length. Focus on praying sincerely.
  - ◆ *Don't get in a hurry.* When you pray in a group setting, stay calm. Don't get in a hurry to finish your prayer. Focus on God and speak to Him.
  - ◆ *Trust God to help you.* You can learn to pray in public. God will grant you the strength for this. Through His strength, you can do this (**Philippians 4:13**). Claim this promise of God! Trust Him for the insight and the strength for this. It will change your life and the lives of many, many others!

## Praying For A Difficult Person

Is there someone in your life that really gets on your nerves? Is there a person who seems to love making things difficult for you? Throughout your life, you will have to deal with difficult people. In your life, there will be people who know how to push your buttons and stress you out.

How do you deal with a difficult person? The best way to deal with a difficult person is to cover the situation and the person in prayer. Through prayer, God can give you the strength and

insight that you need to face and minister to this person.

The following is a prayer guide to help you pray for difficult people:

- *Ask God to help you identify the difficult people in your life (Psalm 139:25-26).* Pray that God will help you to identify the people in your life with whom you have a problem or problems. Begin praying for these individuals on a regular basis.
- *Thank God for the difficult person or people in your life (1 Thessalonians 5:18; 1 Corinthians 1:5).* You may be thinking, "Thank God for this person?" Yes, thank God for the difficult people in your life. By thanking God, you are opening yourself to what God wants to do in your life. God will use difficult people to teach you and show you truth that you can't receive any other way. It also protects you from the attacks of the enemy. Satan would love nothing more than for you to develop bitterness and resentment for this person. By thanking God, you can overcome any resentment or bitterness. Thank God especially for the person when they push your buttons and stress you out.
- *Confess any unhealthy attitudes that you may have toward this person (1 John 1:9).* Deal with any unforgiveness, bitterness, or resentment that you may have developed toward this person. Ask God to cleanse you and to help you overcome these attitudes.
- *Pray for the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).* Plead that you will be able to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit in this situation and toward the person.
- *Ask God to show you how you can minister to this person (Matthew 20:28).* Call on God to grant you creative ways that you can minister to this person. Pray for the strength and wisdom to minister to particular needs of this person.
- *Plead with God to be merciful to this person (Lamentations 3:22-23).* When a person is difficult to deal with, it is usually because there is some type of problem in his or her life. It could be related to the person's family, job, past experiences, or prejudices. Ultimately the person has a spiritual problem that only God can change.
- *Pray that God will touch this person in his or her area of need (Psalm 147:3).* Ask that God will deal with the problem that is fueling his or her words and actions. Plead that He will heal the person and remove the sin or the wound that is making the person difficult.
- *Pray that this person will see how painful and hurtful his/her words and actions are (Galatians 6:7).* Ask God to reveal to the person how harmful his/her words and actions are. Pray that the person will see the consequences of his/her words and actions. Plead with the Holy Spirit to make it clear that he/she is inflicting pain on others.
- *Plead that you will make godly responses to this person's words and actions (Proverbs 15:1).* Ask God to keep you from responding in a way that will not glorify Him and will be hurtful to the other person.
- *Pray that you will live in peace with this person (Romans 12:17-18).* God desires that you are to live in peace with others – as much as it is possible. Ask Him for the power to do this.
- *Don't plot revenge but commit this person to the Lord (Romans 12:19-21).* Don't try and take revenge against this person with words or actions. Commit this person to the Lord. Surrender it to the Lord who can deal with him or her. He alone can do what is right and good.
- *Pray that you will not have a self-righteous attitude (James 4:6).* When you deal with a difficult person, you can develop a self-righteous spirit—that you are always right and this person is always wrong. Humble yourself before God and ask for a humble spirit.
- *Ask God for wisdom (James 1:5).* Plead with the Father to give you the wisdom that you need in dealing with this person.
- *Plead for a change of heart (Psalm 115:3).* Pray that the power of God will change the heart. Ask that He will change your heart concerning this person. Plead that He will change this person's heart concerning you.
- *Pray for yourself.* Remember: you're a difficult person to deal with sometimes. There are times when your words and actions are hurtful. Ask for the transforming grace of God that you stand in need of—the power that you need as much as the difficult person in your life.

## Praying Through The Pews

A powerful prayer ministry that can impact your church is praying through the pews. This ministry involves praying through the pews before worship services or special events. It is covering

people in prayer before they even come to the worship service. It is pleading for God's work in the lives of those who will be sitting in those pews.

You can do this in a variety of ways. One way is to have volunteers that will pray before worship services. The volunteers will go to each pew and pray for the people who will be sitting there. Another way to do this is to have volunteers come during the week and pray over each pew. By doing this, you can have abundant prayer covering over every pew and every life. You might even consider assigning certain rows to volunteer. You can do this by numbering the rows or pews of your sanctuary and then assigning particular rows to those who volunteer. This will make a difference in your worship services and the lives of those who attend your worship services.

As people pray, they should be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to guide you in how to pray over the people who will be sitting in the pew. As I have practiced and taught this method of prayer, I have developed and used this simple prayer guide. You can use it as a prayer starter or develop your own from it:

Pray that each person will have a prepared heart to worship and hear God's voice;

Ask that each person will have a surrendered will to obey what God speaks;

Plead that any hindrances to their hearing and obeying would be removed;

Ask that they will be transformed by the power of the Word and the Holy Spirit;

Plead that God would meet the spiritual needs of that person;

Pray that each person would make the commitments that God is leading them to make;

Ask that the enemy would be bound and not allowed to snatch the Word away from each person.

### **The Mississippi Prayerwalking Explosion**

The Mississippi Prayerwalking Explosion will take place on June 21 at Hickory Baptist Church. Registration begins at 8:30 and the conference will begin at 9:00 a.m. It will last until 2:00 p.m. It is open to believers of all denominations. This conference will focus on transforming cities, communities, and lives through prayerwalking. Whether you are a beginner or veteran prayerwalker, you will receive encouragement and insight for prayerwalking. Please be in prayer for this conference. Make your plans to attend now!

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Dr. Kevin Meador  
595 Stratton Road  
Decatur, MS 39327

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Steve & Ann Mayes  
P. O. Box 525  
Pelahatchie MS 39145