

CRUCIAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE CORPORATE PRAYER

Posted by: **Pastor Paul Busobozi** | December 31, 2009

Principle One: The Preparation of the Heart and Avoiding Idle Chatter

Always come to each meeting with your heart prepared and your Spirit edified. Do not come looking to be brought into the presence of God by the spirituality or effort of others. Bring His manifest presence with you. We want to gather as producers of God's Glory rather than consumers. It would be impossible to overemphasize the importance of this principle. Take time to quiet yourself in God's presence before you come to the prayer gathering. If it is possible arrive early and continue to seek God as you wait for others to arrive. Put a worship CD in your car and minister to the Lord as you drive to the meeting. Life is full of distractions that demand our attention. Make a commitment to refocus by looking to God as you prepare your heart. The depth of our personal preparation will determine the height of the anointing we will experience together in corporate prayer. We are gathering to meet with the King of Kings to request His intervention in the affairs of men. When we truly comprehend this great privilege and our solemn duty we will reverently come to Him with our hearts ready and our spirits edified. We should gather with our minds previously quieted from life's daily distractions and our hearts already prepared by waiting in God's presence. If our spirits are edified in communion with God before the prayer gathering commences, during the meeting we will be immersed in a heavenly atmosphere of spiritual reality. In that powerful presence the Holy Spirit can empower our hopes, elevate our expectations and activate our faith. In stark contrast many, if not most, prayer meetings are rendered ineffective before they ever begin with lack of preparation by individuals and the dissipation of idle chatter. Avoid unnecessary talking as we wait to start the meeting. Be warm and friendly but maintain an atmosphere of prayer that will welcome the Holy Spirit into our midst.

Principle Two: Rising Above A Personal Devotion Mentality

Remember we are gathering together for corporate prayer not personal devotions. In these meetings we are praying, "Not my will but thine be done" Luke 24:42. "To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1. A time for personal devotions is absolutely essential for your growth as a Christian. It just is not that time when we gather together for corporate prayer. Effective corporate prayer requires focus. Praying in agreement about the same thing in the same place at the same time are three essentials of dynamic corporate prayer. The meeting must have an objective that we are joining together to obtain from God through our united prayer. A swamp is just a river without banks. They both consist of water but the river flows in a direction. Many prayer meetings stagnate in shallowness because people gather to pray about their individual needs and desires. This is not corporate prayer as it was practiced in the first century church.. As believers we should deal with these issues in our seasons of personal devotion. Prayer meetings that focus on the needs of those in attendance have a lot of breadth but not very much depth. Our aim should be to discover God's specific direction for the prayer meeting. We already have a general idea since these are "American Patriots In Prayer" groups. Those that God appoints He also anoints. Prayer leaders need to have their hearts prepared. That preparation should include a sense of direction for that specific gathering. As we gather with prepared hearts The Holy Spirit will lead and guide us

even more specifically as we flow together in prayer. I want to make sure I am not misunderstood. There are instances when we should take some time to pray together for someone's personal needs. If a parent just had a child in a serious accident or someone had just learned they had a life threatening illness or similar crises certainly that would warrant us joining in prayer for those needs. In larger groups these types of circumstances would arise more often. A few minutes for bringing these types of pressing needs to God in united prayer is completely appropriate. What we should not have is a shopping list of personal needs that diverts us from our mission as patriots in prayer. These statements from a description of our mission should help amplify this principle. This message of repentance will call believers to turn from inactive indifference by inspiring them to pray for a purpose much greater than their personal needs and desires, much larger than their personal ambitions and aspirations while challenging them to look beyond the needs in their local church settings. We will equip them and provide opportunities for them to make a genuine impact on national events through corporate, strategic, Spirit-inspired prayer at this critical moment in American history. These opportunities will be provided by establishing a trans-denominational network of focused prayer meetings across America pleading for national repentance in an atmosphere of passionate worship and ardent intercession.

Principle Three: Overcome Your Fears

It is important that you be a participator not a spectator. Do not be reluctant to lead out in prayer because you are afraid of making a mistake in front of others. We are all learning and maturing in The Holy Spirit's school of prayer. The greatest mistake you could possibly make is to not participate as you sense the Lord directing you. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." John 10:27. The gentle promptings of the Holy Spirit you will sense as we gather to pray requires your response to follow. What God gives you is vital. We are not here to be critical of each other or to judge another's spirituality. Do not compare yourself to others who seem to be more mature in God and more fluent in prayer. We are all students in training and the Holy Spirit is a gentle and perfect teacher.

Principle Four: Every Joint Should Supply

The stronger should always defer to the weaker. Our goal is to see this principle that is revealed in scripture fulfilled in our midst. We will only experience God's full intent for our prayer meeting when we embrace that which every joint supplies. The mature understand that every believer in attendance should be encouraged to contribute. This leads us to the next vital guideline for effective corporate prayer.

Principle Five: Contribute but Do Not Dominate

Always contribute but never dominate. Esteem God in others above your own maturity, wisdom and knowledge. The Praying of the mature should be an inspiration moving others to pray not a lengthy monologue that keeps everyone else's head bowed in silence. When you lead out in prayer be focused, be specific and be brief but above all be led by the Holy Spirit. God never rambles. More importantly the bible declares that before God in prayer our words should be few. We would do well to heed the Wisdom of Solomon. "Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few". Ecclesiastes 5:2

Principle Six: Do Not Cloak Preaching In Your Prayers

Pray to be heard by God. You are kneeling at an altar invoking God's intervention. You are not standing behind a pulpit instructing God's people. Do not cloak preaching in your prayers to admonish or correct others in attendance. Jesus clearly warned us that it was hypocrisy to pray to be heard of men. Talk to God and lead us in prayer. Direct your words towards "Our Father Who art in heaven". Leave admonition for people out of your prayers.

Principle Seven: Be Genuine

Be Genuine and transparent. Avoid rote and spiritual clichés. God will be moved by the passion flowing out of your heart not the spiritual jargon coming out of your mouth. If you expect to move God you must first be moved yourself. Your heart must be gripped by the objective of your prayers if you expect your pleas to grip the heart of God.

Principle Eight: Keep Your Focus on the Solution

Focus on the solution and not the problem. Season your prayers with faith and praise. Magnify God above every mountain or hindrance. Proclaim the victory in the midst of the battle. King David amplified this powerful truth. "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; The humble shall hear of it and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together." Psalm 34:1-3. Like David we need to bless, praise and magnify God. Whenever you magnify something your vision of that magnified object enlarges. As we magnify God our vision of His greatness as the Sovereign King of heaven and earth surpasses the enormity of our human struggles and our worldly dilemmas. Remember God doesn't just inhabit praise, He also inhabits the praiser. As His presence arises in you so does His faith to empower your hopes. "Oh, magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together."

Principle Nine: Pray Boldly

Pray boldly with your God given sense of belonging at the throne of grace. Remember that you are approaching the throne of your Father who is the King of all Kings and The Lord of Heaven and Earth. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need". Hebrews 4:16. Holy boldness can only be cultivated in the deep humility of dependence on God's love for you based entirely on the merits of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is His shed Blood and His shed Blood alone that has made us recipients of undeserved grace and endowed us with Divine favor. Having been washed in His redeeming blood we have unfettered access to humbly and boldly come to the very throne of Almighty God with a cleansed conscience. "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." Hebrews 10:19-22. The hymnist clearly described our only approach to a Holy God, "Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come. Any other means we might try to use to gain access to the throne of God is completely unacceptable and totally futile. Any attempt we make to approach God based on our own merit is a denial of the redeeming value and power of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That denial is rooted in the haughty arrogance of human pride. The pride of man will always encounter the rejection of God. Absolutely nothing but

redeeming grace can give us an audience with Our Heavenly Father. The blood washed child of God has unlimited access to come boldly with faith and hope into the very presence of God. With self-sacrificing love and absolute acceptance God always welcomes the redeemed, as the sons and daughters of God approach their Father at His throne of mercy and grace.

Principle Ten: Pray with Authority

Pray from your position of victory and authority in Christ.