



How to lead a prayer group

Being used by God to help a small or larger group of people intercede powerfully together in line with scripture and the Holy Spirit is a precious privilege. We hope this brief guide helps. Some of the pointers and advice here are condensed from pages 20-23 of our free 'Introduction to Intercession' booklet, available via our website (see above).

Basic principles of corporate intercession for all (with relevant and instructive Bible references)

1. Listen for the Spirit's leading through each other

- a. The early church prayed with one mind and heart, literally 'breathing together' (Acts 2v1). The Lord can use any one of a group to bring revelation, knowledge, prophecy, or teaching (1 Corinthians 14v6), but more often than not He moves and direct us into a path He has set as we listen to one another pray, and can say 'Amen' (1 Cor 14v16)! As we hear one another's hearts, and detect that which is birthed by the Spirit, we might identify a theme emerging, and lead others along and into it.

2. Stay focussed on one thing

- a. There is an instinctive desire in so many of us to do what Lance Lambert called 'girdle the earth' – that is, we become scattered, praying about anything and everything under the sun at any moment. Beyond that, we might get down to all praying about the same issue or topic, but still bounce around in a variety of approaches to that one area. We know God loves clarity and order rather than confusion (1 Cor 14vv33,40), so our task is to spread out a matter before the Lord, and then see where He might lead us...and then not get distracted from it. We need depth, not breadth, and to do business with God over what is on His heart – not ours. Repeating one refrain might seem boring to the Lord – but in some instances it seems this is precisely what He wants to hear (Luke 11v5-13; Luke 18v1-5)!

3. Keep brief and to the point

- a. We need to be succinct for three reasons – firstly because God already knows what is on our hearts, and we are commanded not to make long prayers like the Pharisees (Matthew 6v7-8); secondly because God is looking for a simple, earnest 'heart cry' rather than a long-winded approach that dilutes the 'nub' of what He has placed in our hearts and any fervency which had built up; and thirdly, we need to make way for our brothers and sisters who also want to pray, and who the Lord wants to hear (1 Cor 14v30).

4. Pray on behalf of the group

- a. Prayer like this is a team sport, and we need to use collective pronouns like 'we', 'us', and 'our' wherever possible! We're supposed to be all praying *together*, as one. But be warned; though we are praying upwards to the Lord, we are also seeking to be sensitive to how the group might be seeking to pray

alongside us, and bear in mind what they might be in agreement with. The 'amens' after our prayer are often a helpful (though not foolproof) guide! By extension, we should never make a declaration or seek to bind the enemy as an individual, because any such action needs to be taken together once the group (and particularly the leaders) have reached the collective feeling that God is directing in that way.

5. Join in!

- a. The Lord wants to hear every one of us, and we are part of a body for a reason. No one is lesser or greater than another on account of how long they have been a Christian, their training, maturity or experience (1 Cor 12v14-25). Our short, hesitant prayers, even those we ourselves (or indeed others) might deem clumsy or poorly worded, may well bless others and the Lord Himself more than we could ever imagine. Such prayers often achieve more in the heavenlies than those deemed more eloquent, and we should be confident before the Lord, and not fearful towards men.

Instructions for the group leader

If the Lord has called your group together, then you can be confident that, like the conductor of an orchestra, He wants to lead you all in harmony to produce a wonderful sound and fragrant offering. Perhaps you, the group leader or chair, are the baton in His hand. How can you best be used to bring the collective whole to the place He desires?

- **You must lead.** This will probably require you to add comments and instructions into the stream of prayer that help you all hit the proverbial 'bullseye' and stay in the middle of the Holy Spirit's stream. You might even need to interrupt someone or something to do so. Be brave, be humble, be gentle, but be strong!
- **Silence is good.** Do not be afraid of it. Press in and listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying. It might be that the Lord is seeking space for a scripture, a song, a prophecy, or a tongue. Give space for interpretation, too.
- **Measure everything in accordance with the Word.** Like a good Berean, you need to ensure that what people pray and do as part of the meeting is in line with scripture.
- **Help others.** There may be those less confident in praying out in the midst of a group. Gently (and perhaps firmly) encourage them in, or make space for them. Give them feedback after a meeting where appropriate.
- **Ask for feedback.** Perhaps you are struggling to discern a direction in prayer. Perhaps you might reach out and share your leading with another mature believer in the group, discreetly, during the prayer time itself. Perhaps you could pause the prayer time to ask the group. Or perhaps ask for feedback after a prayer time has finished.
- **Lead by example.** The way that you pray is often the most powerful way you can help others latch onto where the Lord is leading. Pray in that direction, and it might be that others will latch on. Unburden your heart in prayer.
- **Know your group.** Learn how people pray, and how they listen. If a member of the group presents an unhelpful challenge, it might be helpfully resolved by a side conversation outside of the prayer group. Look for cues, too – the Holy Spirit may highlight an individual who wants to pray but hasn't been able to yet.
- **Let others lead too.** Perhaps there are experienced prayer warriors in your midst, or someone with a particularly sensitive spirit or humble heart. Why not ask them to lead off, or sum up?
- **Talk less, pray more.** Introduce the prayer topic, but don't let it dominate. The Lord knows. We are here to listen!