



Build Prayer Power!

Action Steps for a 21st Century Praying Church

How often do we affirm that prayer is the key to global missions advance, but then we invest far more time and energy in sending workers or in doing projects than in developing prayer?

Does the problem partially stem from not knowing what to do to engage our congregation in powerful intercession? This *Postings* provides some principles and action steps to increase a church's global prayer involvement.

FOUR CORE PRINCIPLES

- ◆ **Discipling.** Churches need to *disciple* people to be powerful intercessors. Just cajoling the congregation to pray more doesn't work. We need to be intentionally proactive about discipling in prayer. Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray. To elicit a similar request, our own prayer practices must be observable, passionate, and teachable.
- ◆ **Substance over style.** Praying long prayers that cover multiple topics may come easily to long-time intercessors but new pray-ers are often intimidated. [Conversational prayer](#) is much less threatening—pray about one topic at a time with brief prayers by multiple people. Model how one- or two-sentence prayers invite others to add additional requests on the same topic. It's also easier to stay alert and engaged.
- ◆ **Consistent practice.** Just like physical muscle strength, a church's prayer muscles demand consistent, disciplined effort to build intercessory skills and passion over the long haul. Missions leadership teams must constantly work at this. Try different approaches at different times to see what helps your people, especially younger members.

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- ◆ **Resilience.** Satan cares far less about your missions activities than your missions prayer. Be prepared for strong opposition and efforts to discourage if you focus on developing intercessors. Pray for your prayer leaders.

committed to reporting back to them what God did after you joined in focused intercession.

Feedback is an essential means of strengthening prayer muscles.

ACTION STEPS TO BUILD INTERCESSORS

1 Share one specific, strategic request and quick feedback.

Developing new global intercessors requires creating beginner steps. Before they become passionate pray-ers, your congregation needs a conviction that that their prayers are truly valuable and effective around the globe.

Share one very specific request from a global partner for a strategic activity occurring in the coming week. In advance, get this concrete request from one of your workers along with a commitment from



them to report back to you prior to the following Sunday. Share the request with the congregation. This may be via the pastoral prayer. If using this method, challenge the congregation before you pray to listen for the specific request. Then ask them to pray for this request at least three times (or whatever frequency you choose) during the following week.

Report back the next Sunday what God did. To tangibly reinforce your value on prayer, you may want to ask people to stand who prayed for the request during the week. Thank them for praying and confirm that God heard and answered. The immediate results may not be overwhelming, but describe any evident ways their prayers made a difference.

If you do not have platform time in services, this process can be done on your Facebook page, via email, fliers handed out at the door, or a note in the bulletin. You can ask for a prayer commitment in some form of electronic response. Just make sure to follow up the next week.

Wait a few weeks and repeat the process. As your congregation strengthens their prayer muscles, they will be able to pray more long term without always hearing of immediate results. *But feedback is an essential means of strengthening prayer muscles.* Don't ask people to pray if you are not highly

2 Engage your workers in developing intercessors.

Global workers pray personally and with their team, but few of them have been taught or have given much thought to how to build intercessors back home. Provide guidelines:

Prayer Fuel Principles for Field Workers

- ✓ **Communicate prayer needs briefly and frequently** via texts or short, focused emails--preferable weekly or at least bimonthly.
- ✓ **Focus on very specific, strategic requests.** "What is the most important thing I am asking God to do this week? Where do I need Him to act in a specific aspect of my ministry?" Requests should focus on the immediate future. When possible, include a request appropriate for kids and/or teen intercessors.
- ✓ **Follow up every request with one or more equally concrete reports of how God answered.** If you didn't see any direct response, it is okay to say that, but look for evidences that He is answering prayer. Reporting on what you have done can be included but it is a sideline to the focus on what God has done. Intercessors need to hear what resulted from their prayers.
- ✓ **Reinforce that intercessors are an essential part of your team.** After all, you are not working alone or in your own strength. Quote verses supporting the powerful impact of prayer.
- ✓ **Occasionally in your prayer letters, tell about one of your intercessors,** especially someone younger. It's wonderful to have senior citizens pray for you, but highlight models of younger, busy-with-normal-life people who intentionally and perhaps creatively carve out the time to pray for global impact.

3 Occasionally feature prayer "bursts."

Introducing a short, intensive "burst" of prayer can be a great way to build the prayer muscles of new intercessors.

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For beginner pray-ers, committing to do something for a short period of time makes the new habit seem more attainable. The most familiar prayer burst is the *30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World* that occurs annually during Ramadan.

Your church can create your own prayer burst by choosing a focus and providing one strategic prayer request for each day for one month. These can be circulated ahead of time in a small booklet but are probably most likely to be used if emailed to participants each morning.

Prayer bursts are also beneficially paired with short-term teams. Begin a week before their departure and continue a week after their return. Write up a very specific request for each day. This process can be educational as well as a stimulant to prayer.

At the conclusion of any prayer burst, recognize those who participated and provide specific ways to continue their new prayer habit. Collect email addresses of those who wish to continue to receive focused prayer requests and answers on this topic. Set up a schedule to regularly provide prayer fuel.

50 Hours of Prayer

Intercessors once organized a one-day [billion hours of prayer](#) effort. The concept revolved around churches recruiting their members to pray for 10 minutes that particular day. Your church could organize its own one-day prayer focus and set a goal for how many total hours you want to pray for a particular global opportunity. For example, 300 people praying for 10 minutes one day = 50 hours of prayer!

4 Maximize prayer trips.

Some churches send teams of people to prayer walk with their workers around the globe. This activity has value but often fails to be maximized back home. Recruit the whole congregation to be a part of the prayer team, even if they can't go. Provide several relevant requests for each day along with background material.



Send out emails sharing immediate answers the team sees or guidance they have discerned as they prayed.

Ask the team each day to video (a simple cell-phone video is fine) brief prayers shared by their on-site partners—some may be in English and others in the local language with translation. These can be uploaded immediately for the church back home or posted on the team's return.

Will your team form the core of an ongoing prayer team focused on these workers, location, or ministry? The group could meet in person or virtually via a Skype call weekly, biweekly, or monthly. Try to set a time when your field workers can join in, at least occasionally. Keep the sessions short. You can do a lot of praying in 15-20 minutes if you are focused.

5 Make and share prayer videos.

Use Prayercast Videos

The [Prayercast](#) videos are a tremendous resource for developing powerful intercessors. These short videos have been produced for almost every nation in the world. Each features the voice of a national from that country praying powerfully for their own people. The prayercasts are educational in what to pray for and they communicate a passionate desire for God to work powerfully in that country. Don't miss the additional videos focused on religious blocs and a [series](#) of sermons by great communicators on the ministry of prayer.

You can make your own prayer videos that focus on your workers, a ministry you support, or a special global outreach activity you want to see advanced. Ask your on-site worker or partner to write and record a 2-3 minute audio or video prayer that helps your people to understand key requests and invites them to join in laying these needs before the throne. Insert some appropriate photos over the audio or at various places on top of the video.

Use these prayer videos in services and small-groups, but also make them available for your congregation to download and use as prayer prompts as they go about daily activities.

6 Train children to be strong intercessors.

Children can be [powerful intercessors](#), and their prayers are equally as effective as any adults! Don't talk down to kids about prayer. Instead challenge them to pray big prayers about strategic needs. As with all beginner intercessors,

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they need to hear very soon how God answered, or began to answer, their prayers. Ask your workers for specific prayer requests appropriate for younger intercessors and then to send you follow-up reports. One resource to help children pray is the book, [Window on the World](#).



link to your workers so they can play the audio/video to hear you actually praying for them. It's a great encouragement! At your next meeting, share what God did in response.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- The Global Prayer Digest: www.globalprayerdigest.org/
- Fellowship of Prayer Strategists: <http://ethne.net/prayer.php>
- The Global Watch: <http://www.theglobalwatch.com/vision--mission.html>
- Global Prayer Resource Network: www.globalprn.com/
- A Prayer Stations Guide: <http://www.u4theu.com/prayer-stations-guide/>
- A list of people-group-specific prayer guides: <https://justinlong.org/prayer.php>
- Challenging messages on prayer:
 - Murray / [Are We Really Asking for Harvest Workers?](#)
 - Piper / [Prayer and the Victory of God](#)

7 Pray *WITH* your workers.

So often we pray *for* our global workers when we could pray *with* them, thanks to modern technology. Take five minutes at the beginning of your small-group meeting to Skype with your workers, ask for a key prayer request, and then pray together. You can also Skype with one global partner at the beginning of your elders meetings, church-staff meetings, Sunday-school sessions, or women's/men's groups. Keep the calls brief and focused.

If the timing makes this difficult, have someone call the worker ahead of time and ask for a key request to share with the group. Then record your group's prayer time and send the

*The prayer of a righteous person
is powerful and effective.*

James 5:16

Read our *Worth Considering* blog and share your response to "[How Were You Challenged to Intercession?](#)"

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