



# Prayer Groups in Women's Ministry

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*What does the "prayer group" look like in your church? How many are in the group. How often do they meet? What is the structure of a prayer meeting?*

As with all aspects of women's ministry, there is no one formula that will fit all churches. BUT, there are some principles and ideas that might spur a group to embrace prayer and prayer groups as essential to their ministry.

## **Why should we pray, not only individually but, with our team and other groups of women?**

- God commanded it
- Prayer paves the way
- Answered prayer builds the body
- Prayer puts God on the throne
- Prayer teaches us to seek His face
- Prayer sensitizes your group

## **What do we need to know before we begin to bring women together in prayer?**

1. Prayer lays the foundation for all aspects of ministry with women. In scripture Jesus says, **when** not **if** you pray! (Matthew 6:9, Luke 11:2) So it's understood that we will pray! And the most important thing is not getting an answer, but getting to know the One who answers... building a love relationship with Christ. When our focus is right and we are truly seeking His interests, then we know how to pray and we expect God to answer His way and in His timing.
2. Next we must be willing to change for Him. Are we truly willing to listen and respond to whatever He tells us? Perhaps we need to stop doing something we've done for a long time in ministry to women, or maybe we need to add a new element.
3. Finally, are we really willing to focus on serving others first? When our women's minister came on staff at the church where I attend and serve, the first thing she did was wash our feet, pray for us and then instructed our team that we were to become a "servant" team, serving the women in our church and community. "*God is not nearly as concerned with number of people involved in your ministry as He is with whether or not you love the number He gives you regardless of their actions*". (Transformed Lives, John Franklin) We must focus on serving the women He brings to our church.

## **What Prayer Will Do for Your Group**

- Refocuses perspective from self to Him
- Quiets and calms the heart and spirit
- Transfers burdens from the person to God
- Upholds others who need our prayers
- Empowers believers to serve in His power believing His direction
- Sensitizes group to God's will and work

Again, addressing foundational aspects of prayer groups before actually talking about how to set them up, *let's understand knowing some universal things to pray for:*

- God wants us to grow spiritually (Heb. 13: 20–21)
- God desires that we encourage each other (Heb. 10:19–25)
- God longs to see souls added to His kingdom (Matt. 28:18–20)

## **Here are some things that the Holy Spirit will do when we pray:**

- Create unity
- Create understanding and insights through Scripture
- Place burdens on church members' hearts
- Offer peace, confirmation, assurance of heart (Rom. 8:16)

With the foundations of prayer behind us, how do we start prayer groups? Very simply, first of all guess what? PRAY! It's essential in discovering how God wants you to begin.

Next, what are the most compelling and prevalent needs of women in your church and community? As you begin to compile a list, ask God which you should begin to pray about and if there is a prayer group to start to pray for these needs.

Here is a list of possible prayer groups that might form:

### **Early Prayer Groups**

Women arriving early to an event can pray about that activity asking God's Holy Spirit to teach, move and minister through it. Or, use this time as a general prayer opportunity so that women don't have to juggle schedules to meet at another time to specifically pray as a group.

### **Prayer Chains**

When requested and with permission to share needs, this can be by email, Facebook page, twitter, phone, text or word of mouth. Keeping the request moving and praying as you do.

### **Prayer Partners**

Assigning two women to pray for one another for a week, a month, or any period of time you choose. This might even include a specific time they meet to pray together for one another.

### **Bountiful Blessings**

This group meets for a specific short-term purpose such as major trials or crises. They might meet weekly for 4-6 weeks (Read prayer letter p. 26 Transformed Lives) the person being prayed for provides a verse of scripture to claim that week as well as requests and praises for next week. This can be handed out to those praying that week as the women pray "bountiful blessings" for that person in need.

### **Mom's Prayer Group**

This can be specific for preschool age or another age of children, special needs children, by schools attended (as Moms in Touch International does), unsaved children, prodigal children Lost sheep group-specifically praying for the lost-family, friends, co-workers, community, world

### **Special Events Group**

This is a part of the event planning team and their responsibility is to bathe each aspect of the event in prayer prior to, during and even as a follow up to decisions made during the event. Ideas: Prayer walk through each room utilized for event; pray for speakers and worship leaders; pray for attendees; pray for salvation of the lost who might attend

Here is a possible format to use as you begin your prayer groups, but keep this flexible and ask God how He wants you to direct this time so that it doesn't become stale and ineffective:

- Talking (5-10 minutes)-catching up with each other and greeting new attendees
- Getting focused (5-10 minutes)-leading women to begin quieting down by reading Scripture praising God in song, sharing testimony of answered prayer, having them conduct a heart evaluation
- Praising God and confession (10-15 minutes)
- Petition and intercession (10-15 minutes)
- Responding to God after prayer time (10-15 minutes) Talk about what the group sensed, ask: How should we respond? How do we follow up if Holy Spirit laid a burden on someone's heart?

**Other helpful guidelines for your prayer time include these:**

- If you have received an insight, immediately voice it as sometimes the Holy Spirit uses one or more minds to bring understanding and reveal His will.
- If someone is burdened during your prayer time with the spirit of prayer of supplication for someone, allow the person to pour out heart to God.
- Should someone expresses a personal burden, surround that person and encourage her by praying immediately.
- If someone is broken by the awareness of sin, allow her to pray unless names are being used and it's not appropriate, then gently stop the prayer.
- If someone receives assurance, peace or confirmation, praise God!
- In sharing prayer requests, these questions will help guide the women...have them ask: Is it true? Is it confidential? Is it kind? Is it necessary? This will help direct your prayer time and keep it from turning into a gossip session!

To include a short 10 minute prayer time in any group of women try these things:

- 10 words or less-each person must only use this many words to share the request. Remember, we want to spend more time PRAYING than TALKING ABOUT PRAYING!
- Immediate family and friends only- focus on just a few rather than a great uncle three times removed. Not that he doesn't need prayer, but just to keep this time short!
- Physical and spiritual needs-either personal or immediate family
- Ask specific ones to pray for each need-when time is short ask specific ones to pray for one of the requests.
- You might also try using prayer forms so they fill it in (or they can come with prayer request already written when they arrive) and then either each person can draw one out to pray for till you meet again, or one person can email the list out.

This is what my Sunday morning women's small group does. We are there primarily for Bible study, but because prayer and fellowship is also important, we do try to incorporate those elements as well. Each week one person takes the list home and emails it to all our members. We also have a Facebook page where we can update during the week and only our class has access to that page and those requests to keep it confidential to our group.

### **Other Ideas**

- Open with a devotional on prayer
- Claim promises of God
- Sing prayer songs
- Read current community papers (or national) and pray for needs you see
- Use sentence prayers as you focus on specific topics

### **Prayer Resources**

*Transformed Lives: Taking women's Ministry to the Next Level*, Chris Adams

*He Speaks to Me*, Priscilla Shirer

*Discerning God's Voice*, Priscilla Shirer

*Fervent*, Priscilla Shirer

*Oh, God, Please*, Leighann McCoy

*Whispers of Hope*, Beth Moore

*Lord, Teach Me to Pray*, Kay Arthur

*Disciples PrayerLife*, Hunt & Walker

*Various Studies on Prayer* by Jennifer Kennedy Dean

*In God's Presence*, T. W. Hunt

*The Prayer of Jesus*, Ken Hemphill

*Follow Me: Lessons for Becoming a Prayerwalker*, Randy Sprinkle