



# PRAYER AT FELLOWSHIP

2023

2024

MINISTRY YEAR

**Developing a Dynamic  
Culture of Prayer**





# Prayer at Fellowship

Our goal at Fellowship is not to be a church with a prayer ministry, but to be a praying church. It is our desire to develop and experience an ever-growing dynamic culture of prayer, depending on God for everything. We seek to view the kind of prayer Jesus taught in Matthew 6:9-13 as something He intended for us not to recite, but to put into practice, and to follow His model prayer both personally and corporately.



## Worship-Based Prayer "Jesus' Pattern of Prayer" - Matthew 6:9-13

### Reverence

In the prayer pattern Jesus gave His disciples He instructs us to begin with a focus of reverence (worship)...

*"Our Father in Heaven, hallowed (holy) be Your name . . ."* (Matthew 6:9)

This is the principle of "worship-based" rather than need-based prayer. It begins with the character of God as we take time to focus our entire being on the wonders of who God is. Ultimately, prayer is my response to the character of God, which leads to praise and thanksgiving. As I get to know the God Who is, I will naturally respond to Him. This response is called prayer.

**Praise** is my response to the person, presence, position, power, greatness, majesty, and the love of God.

*"Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable."* Psalm 145:3

**Thanksgiving** is my response to the goodness, the graciousness of God.

*"What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" "To Thee I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving..."* Psalm 116:12,17a



## Response

Jesus taught a second element of biblical prayer when He said...

*"Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven . . ." (Matthew 6:10)*

This speaks of our response to God's character in prayer as we consider His will from His Word and for the sake of His purposes on earth. This also involves yielding to the control of the Holy Spirit as I respond to His invitations to a fruitful and obedient life. Introspection and surrender mark this time of response. It is a season of pledged obedience to the will and Word of God, desiring the accomplishment of His will in our lives.

## Requests

*"Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."*  
(Matthew 6:11-12)

This involves a period of heartfelt requests with the themes of resources and relationships. This is not a time of informing God of our needs as much as it is a conscious trust in God as the perfect definer and provider of our needs. It involves prayer about personal requests and the concerns of others. This focus also includes corporate concerns, such as congregational challenges or broader issues in the body of Christ.



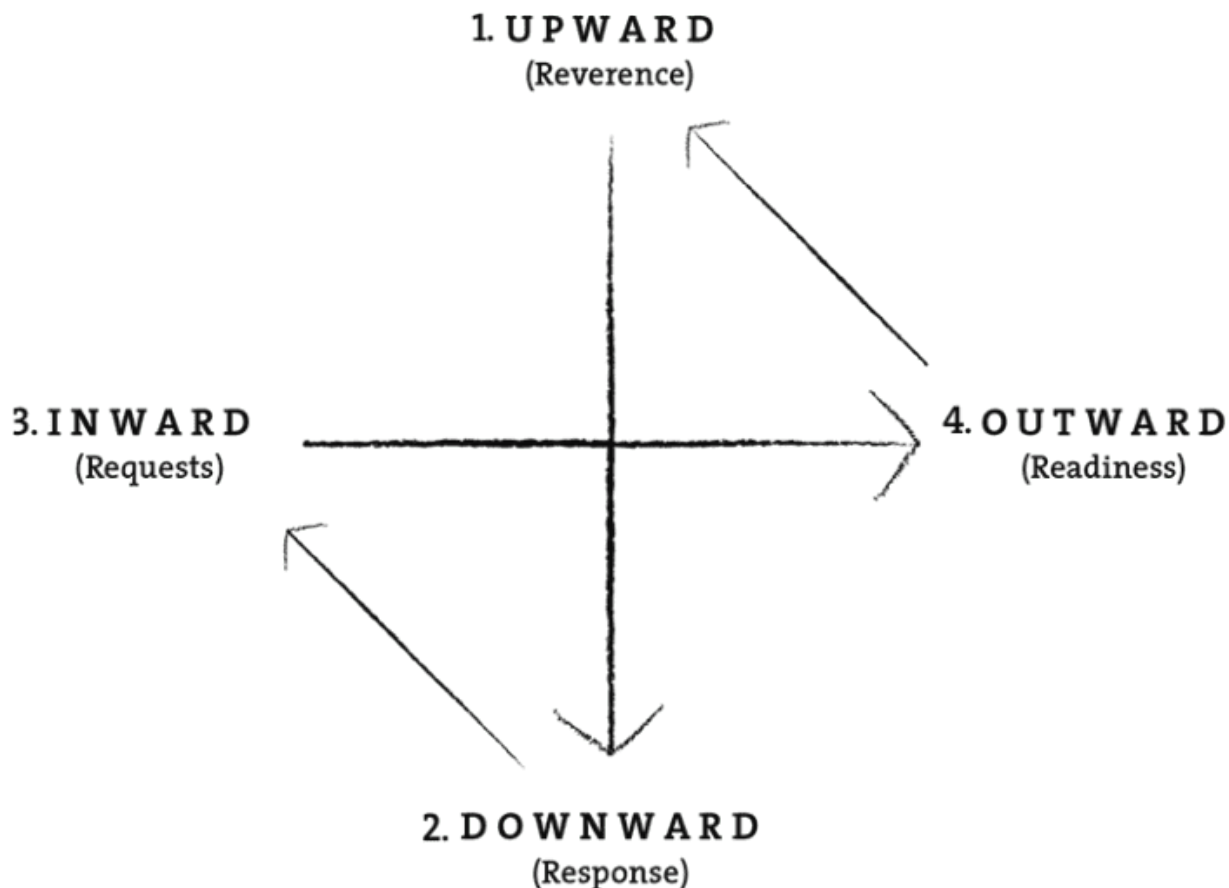




## Readiness

*"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." (Matthew 6:13)*

This reminds us of the spiritual contest before us, and more importantly, reassures us of the spiritual resources within us. It is the recognition of our own inability to overcome the temptations and attacks of daily life. We entrust our welfare for the warfare to the delivering force of our Divine Enabler, often through the power of His promises. We pledge ourselves to walk in obedience and victory as the fruit of our praying.





# Principles for Life-Giving Prayer

**Principle 1 - Foundation:** God's Word – always start with the Bible, this allows God to begin the conversation. This makes prayer *Scripture-fed*.

**Principle 2 - Fervor:** Spiritual fervency – always ask the Holy Spirit to lead and guide in Prayer. This makes prayer *Spirit-led*.

**Principle 3 - Faith:** A high view of God who rewards when we seek Him – always seek God in worship. This makes prayer *Worship-based*.

**Our goal in every setting is to lead prayer experiences that are Scripture-fed, Spirit-led, and Worship-based prayer.**





# Developing a Dynamic Culture of Prayer at Fellowship

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In seeking to develop a dynamic culture of prayer at Fellowship, there are some basic principles which have driven us to seek to become a church that doesn't just have people who pray, but that truly is a praying church. To develop a dynamic culture of prayer at Fellowship these principles must be in place...

## 1. We must be convinced that praying people is what God desires us to be.

### God's Name for Us

The Bible tells us God has a chosen name for His own house – *"...my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations"* (Isaiah 56:7). In Solomon's dedication of the temple, God made it clear that this was to be a place of prayer – 2 Chronicles 6:40; 7:15. The gospel writers mentioned that Jesus quoted Old Testament Scriptures in referring that the Father's house was to be house a prayer for all nations (Matt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46; John 2:17).

God's house has never been limited to a building (2 Chronicles 6:18). Paul made it clear that WE are God's house – Ephesians 2:21-22; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 Peter 2:5. In this church age, God's house is now His people, both when we are gathered in assemblies as well as individually. What hasn't changed is the name. God's house is still a house of prayer for all nations. Therefore, we are a praying people. Praying people who walk in intimacy with God will change whatever culture in which they find themselves. The owner of the house gets to name the house. God has clearly unequivocally named His house – every follower of Christ - a house of prayer.

Why is prayer so important that the Lord would name His dwelling place a house of prayer? God has invested something of great significance in prayer. It is His way of bringing about change on planet earth and at the same time, bringing His sons and daughters to maturity. He chose prayer as His strategy, giving mankind a role to play in accomplishing His purposes as a means of helping us grow to maturity.

We often take prayer and change it into something selfish, using it to get what we want from God. But prayer is from the beginning about God. All true prayer originates in the heart of the Father (1 Corinthians 2:11). The Father makes known His will to the Spirit who makes it known to the believer. The believer prays back to the Father through the Son what He wanted to do in the first place. God then performs His will in answer to the prayers of the saints - which originate from Him in the first place. John Wesley said, *"God does nothing on earth save in answer to believing prayer."* In this cycle of prayer there can be only one weak link, and it isn't the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit.





## The Early Church

What did the early church do when it met together? It's not difficult to see. They prayed! Consider the role of prayer in the life of the early believers in the book of Acts: 1:14; 2:24; 3:1; 4:24; 4:31; 6:4, 6; 7:59; 9:11, 40; 10:9; 12:5, 12; 13:2; 14:23; 16:16, 25; 20:36; 21:5; 28:8. Prayer was part of everything they did! If we want to see power, we must pray.

One example is in Acts 4:23-31. The early believers began their prayer by focusing on God, basing their prayer on Scripture, then they prayed for boldness and after that...all-heaven broke loose!

The early believers were not a perfect church. But Scripture presents them with all their flaws, as a group of praying people who followed Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. As they trusted the Lord to work through them as they prayed, they changed the world around them. The same promise is before a praying church today!



## 2. We must have in mind what a praying church looks like.

A church that prays attracts the Presence of God. God has always wanted His people to be with Him and to communicate with Him. God shows up in special ways where His people have chosen to spend time with Him in prayer. God rejoices over a praying church! Because the Lord's people are busy in prayer, all of heaven is busy with divine activity. Things begin to change on this planet that would not have changed had the Church not prayed. Prayer really does move the hand of God. But in addition to all the wonderful things that are released because of the praying saints, we will also see a changed Church as it becomes known for prayer.

### Marks of a Praying Church:

- Passionate love for God
- Love for each other in practical ways
- Love for lost people in our community
- Growth in the Word
- Love for lost people around the world
- Demonstrations of the power of God (salvations, life transformations, healings, etc.)
- The nurturing of stronger families
- The mobilization of the church for Christ's mission



### 3. We must have leaders who are people of prayer and who lead in prayer.

One of the key marks of spiritual leadership is knowing your calling and priorities. The apostles had those marks. They knew that heaven's calling to them was for prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4). Satan has won a great victory in convincing church leaders that prayer should be kept private and not at the heart of church life. Andrew Murray said, *"Time spent in prayer will yield more than that given to work. Prayer alone gives work its worth and its success. Prayer opens the way for God Himself to do His work in us and through us. Let our chief work as God's messengers be intercession; in it we secure the presence and power of God to go with us."*



### 4. We must understand our church culture and what uniquely works in this culture.

It is important for us to recognize that what works in regard to prayer in one church might not work in our church. It is easier to employ prayer into our existing culture than it is to change our culture altogether.

So where is the place where our church family gathers and through which prayer can be integrated? Fellowship has two primary gathering points: Worship Services and Growth Groups. We should do our best to integrate and cultivate prayer into these two already existing church structures which provide rallying points for prayer in our church culture.





## 5. We must integrate prayer into everything.

The chief danger of prayerlessness is pride! When prayer is not front and center, we can begin to feel that whatever is happening that is good in our congregation is the result of our hard work, or great ideas, or fantastic marketing. But Jesus said, *"apart from me you can do nothing"* (John 15:5).

When prayer is used to simply open and close meetings, we are walking in the pride that says, *"We can do this ourselves, Lord. We'll let you know if we need anything."* A church that is not actively/regularly praying is a church that is not connected well with its Head, which means it is not moving in accord with the One who is in charge. This lack of connectivity leads to a failure to receive direction from our Leader. Rather than spending the time in prayer and allowing our Leader to show us what to do, we adopt the methods of corporate America to develop our strategic plans.

When the church begins to pray, we will once again see the demonstration of the Spirit's power. *"God shapes the world by prayer. The more prayer there is in the world, the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil."* ~ E.M Bounds

## 6. We must not elevate forms (when/where we pray) over function (the activity of praying).

What matters most is that Fellowship becomes a praying church. This will at times require us to develop and experiment with prayer forms which encourage and grow prayer in our church family. But should these forms not lead to effective prayer, or should they become ineffective over time, then they should be discontinued and replaced.

## 7. We must seek to be sensitive to everyone and do our best to bring them along in prayer.

Prayer can be intimidating. Our church will always have newcomers or new believers who are not accustomed to being part of a praying church. Possessing a sensitivity to these people will mean that we give people freedom to be themselves and to grow at their own pace in their prayer lives while at the same time we encourage and affirm them in taking steps of spiritual growth in the area of prayer.





## 8. We must constantly affirm our core “prayer warriors” and build this group.

It is important for our church family to have a recognized “core” group of people who are passionate about prayer. These “prayer warriors” form the backbone of the prayer culture in our church family. As such, our leadership needs to constantly identify this group, show appreciation to them, and fan into flame even further their heart for God through prayer.

Here at Fellowship our core “prayer warriors” are those who are part of at least one of these three groups: Prayer Partners, Power Team, and the Prayer Team. Each group serves a different function for prayer.

## 9. We must constantly provide training in prayer in various ways to various segments of our church body.

Growing in prayer is often overlooked in discipleship strategies and programs. New believers, children, youth, adults, parents, married couples, and church leaders all need the benefit of prayer training for spiritual growth in prayer to mature.





## 10. We must build prayer traditions that sustain a culture of prayer.

### Our "Rhythm of Prayer"

(focusing on Worship-based, Spirit-led, Scripture-fed prayer)

- Daily Staff Prayer (everyone invited) - Monday - Friday, 10:00 a.m. in Room 201
- Prayer Elements integrated into the Sunday Worship Services
- Prayer as a key component in all adult Growth Groups
- Prayer Summits:
  - Fall – Annual 3 Day Summit
  - Winter/Spring – 3 Day Men's Summit, 3 Day Women's Summit
  - Summer – ½ Day Summit

### Current Prayer Practices/Traditions

#### Daily:

- The Fellowship Staff meets for Worship-based, Spirit-led, Scripture-fed prayer every day at 10:00 a.m. Everyone is encouraged to share requests for this prayer time and to join this time of prayer any day Monday through Friday.

#### Weekly:

- The worship team meets together for Pre-service Prayer 1/2 hour before the services
- Prayer requests are received from the church body and communicated by email
- The pastor communicates prayer requests for he and his family to the Power Team for prayer by email
- 2-3 Prayer Partners pray during the message portion of each of our morning services
- Ministry leaders integrate concentrated prayer into ministry gatherings
- Individuals are encouraged to practice ASAP Prayer with others "on the spot" (in person, on the phone, etc.) – **Always Stop And Pray**

#### Monthly:

- Scripture-fed, Spirit-led, Worship-based prayer in Elders/Deacons meetings
- Prayer in Harvest Teams for our MIF's (Members in the Field)

#### Bi-Monthly:

- "Praise & Prayer" Service - 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

#### Quarterly:

- "Prayer Encounter" in morning worship services – services dedicated to a shorter message integrated with prayer

#### Annually:

- Regional and/or National 6:4 Day of Renewal or Conferences – Staff and anyone else who wants to attend
- Message series on the topic of prayer



# Prayer Teams

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**Fellowship Prayer Update** – The Fellowship Prayer Update is sent weekly via email so we can together intercede for those in our congregation who have prayer needs. All Fellowship Staff, Elders, Deacons, and church members receive the Fellowship Prayer Update.



**Prayer Team** – The Prayer Team is comprised of Fellowship's elders, deacons and other prayer-minded individuals who make themselves available to pray with anyone at our prayer stations at the conclusion of our Sunday mornings services.

**Power Team** – Provides the prayer covering for the senior pastor and his family on a regular basis. Prayer requests are sent by email to the team members each week.



**Prayer Partners** – Prayer Partners cover our pastor and our people in prayer during our Sunday morning services, praying with other Prayer Partners during a Sunday morning service once every 1-2 months in Pastor Rob's office. Prayer Guides are provided in the office.

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## Prayer Training

- Model Worship-based, Spirit-led, Scripture-fed prayer at all prayer functions & events
- Offer the "How to Lead and Experience Life-Giving Prayer Times" training to all Growth Group leaders each year in the summer
- Include brief instruction/challenge in prayer at all Prayer Summits



# 2023 - '24 Ministry Year Plans

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- **Sunday, August 27th:** Praise & Prayer Service - 6:00 p.m. Focus: Children/Youth  
"Inspire our Schools" - 7:00 p.m. - Prayer on site at area schools
- **Sunday, September 3rd:** Prayer Encounter in morning service
- **Monday - Wednesday, September 11th - 13th:** 6:4 Fellowship Day of Renewal in Chicago
- **Wednesday, September 27th:** "See You at the Pole" - Students pray at flag poles of local schools
- **October:** Pray for Our Pastors Month
- **Sunday, October 1st:** Praise & Prayer Service - 6:00 p.m. Focus: Presence Centered Life 40 Day Emphasis Kick Off
- **Sunday, October 8th - Thursday, November 16th:** The Presence Centered Life 40 Day Emphasis
- **Saturday, October 28th:** Prayer Partners Appreciation Breakfast - 9:00 a.m.
- **Thursday - Saturday, November 2nd - 4th:** 3-Day Fellowship Summit at Hidden Acres
- **Sunday, November 5th:** "International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church" in morning services
- **Sunday, November 19th:** Praise & Prayer Service - 6:00 p.m. Focus: Thanksgiving
- **Saturday - Sunday, December 10th - 11th:** "Prayer Lane" as part of our Synchronized Lights & Live Nativity Outreach
- **Sunday, December 31st:** Prayer Encounter in morning service
- **Tuesday, January 16th:** 6:4 Regional Reclaim event at Faith Bible Church in Cedar Rapids
- **Sunday, January 21st:** Praise & Prayer Service - 6:00 p.m. Focus: The Unreached
- **Thursday - Saturday, February 22nd - 24th:** Men's Summit at Hidden Acres
- **Thursday - Saturday, February 29th - March 2nd:** Women's Summit at Hidden Acres
- **Sunday, March 17th:** Praise & Prayer Service - 6:00 p.m. Focus: Missions
- **Thursday - Saturday, April 18th - 20th:** 6:4 Regional Pastors and Leaders Conference at Eastern Iowa Bible Camp
- **Sunday, April 21st:** Praise & Prayer Service - 6:00 p.m. Focus: TBD
- **Thursday, May 2nd:** National Day of Prayer Gathering at Norwalk City Hall - 5:30 p.m.
- **Sunday, June 2nd:** Praise & Prayer Service - 6:00 p.m. Focus: Summer Outreaches
- **June - August:** Prayer Walking all of Norwalk
- **Sunday, August 24th:** Half Day Prayer Summit at Wildwood Hills Ranch - 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
- **Sunday, August 25th:** Morning Services - Prayer for Children/Schools  
"Inspire our Schools" - 7:00 p.m. - Prayer on site at area schools
- **Tuesday - Thursday, September 17th - 19th:** 6:4 National Conference in Atlanta, Georgia



# Principles for Creating a Vital Culture of Prayer in Our Church

**Principle 1** - A prayer culture must not be confused with a prayer program.

**Principle 2** - A prayer culture always emanates from the epicenter of church leadership.

**Principle 3** - A prayer culture is fueled by experience, not explanation.

**Principle 4** - A prayer culture is rooted in clarity and conviction about community.

**Principle 5** - A prayer culture is sustained by the right motive (the highest motive for prayer is that God is worthy to be sought).

**Principle 6** - A prayer culture is key to supernatural mission achievement.

**Principle 7** - A prayer culture is more a crock-pot than a microwave.





# The War on Prayer

Our enemy hates prayer. He would rather you do anything than pray. Satan will do whatever he can to distract us away from the one thing that can defeat him. The opposition of Satan to prayer comes because prayer is a powerful spiritual weapon given to Christians that unleashes the power of Jesus Christ and can bring defeat to our enemy – Ephesians 6:12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-4.

The enemy's attempt to stop prayer is even intensified at the congregational level. The only thing on earth more dangerous to Satan than a praying Christian is a whole church full of praying Christians! As a church begins to move into prayer together, it can expect increased opposition. *"The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray."*

~ Samuel Chadwick

Here are some ways the Devil tries to prevent powerful prayer in the church:

1. **Apathy** – Apathy is created by a failure to understand the purpose and power of prayer. If you believe that prayer doesn't really change anything, then it won't matter much to you if you pray or not.
2. **Lack of Praying Leaders** – The church as a whole will never rise above the level of its leaders. If leaders do not see the importance and necessity of becoming a praying people, then it will not happen. In many churches, prayer is handed off to a few prayer warriors and leadership feels like they've handled the issue. What a far cry from the leaders of the Jerusalem Church in the first century who handed off other issues so they could give themselves to prayer.
3. **Fear** – Many Christians are afraid to pray out loud. That usually keeps them from attending any sort of prayer gathering.
4. **Pride** – Prayer in its essence is a humbling of oneself before the Creator of all things. If a church is all about building itself up and its own accomplishments, prayer will always be a distant reality.
5. **Self-centeredness (self-reliance)** – This can often be the way we approach prayer with little notion of seeking God but instead focusing on ourselves.
6. **Unforgiving Spirit** – Unforgiveness in a church over hurts, real or imagined, often stops people from praying because they know that things are not right. Forgiveness, that great gift of God, releases the healing power of the Lord and tears down the barriers that keep our prayers from being heard.
7. **Tradition** – Prayer can be a real threat to people who are used to simply sitting in church and listening. When we begin to seriously pray, our years of simply sitting are at an end. Prayer will move us to act.

*"Depend on it, if you are bent on prayer, the devil will not leave you alone. He will molest you, tantalize you, block you, and will surely find some hindrances, big or little or both. And we sometimes fail because we are ignorant of his devices... I do not think he minds our praying about things if we leave it at that. What he minds, and opposes steadily, is the prayer that prays on until it is prayed through, assured of the answer."*

~ Mary Warburton Booth





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