

# Building an Effective Class Prayer Ministry

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## 1. General Recommendations for each class

- Identify someone to be the prayer coordinator for the class (or two co-leaders).
- Allow ten minutes for prayer time, either at beginning or end of class—5 minutes for requests, 5 minutes for prayer.
- Prayer coordinator leads the prayer time, but engage the class (two suggestions follow).
- Prepare and distribute a class prayer request list (print or email, yourself or a volunteer). This is optional, but people generally respond well to having something in writing.
- Plan for occasional prayer times outside class meeting time.
- Use class time to suggest ways to become more effective in prayer.

## 2. Leading a prayer time that engages the class.

As you begin or make changes to the prayer time in your class, explain to the class what you are doing and why. (Go through this more than once to be sure all regular class members are aware, and then briefly explain when you have visitors present, so they'll know what to expect.) Assure everyone that you won't ask anyone to pray aloud.

### Suggestion #1: Ask class volunteers to pray for prayer requests

- a) Open prayer time asking for requests and praises; jot them down to update your class prayer list. (Briefly repeat and summarize each one to make sure everyone hears it.) You may want to remind them to be brief.
- b) After each request, ask "Who will pray for this request?" If no one immediately volunteers, repeat the request: "Who will pray for (summarize it briefly)...?" (You might have one or two primed to volunteer on an "as needed" basis, or you can always say, "I'll pray for this one.")
- c) Have everyone stand for the prayer time (helps them feel part of it).
  - ~ Encourage everyone to pray silently along with the one who is praying aloud.
  - ~ Remind those who pray to speak up so others can hear.

Suggestion #2: Have everyone pray softly aloud at the same time

This gives everyone in the class an active part in the prayer time; provides the opportunity to practice praying aloud without feeling put on the spot.

a) Lead the class through the prayer time, one topic at a time, reminding them to whisper or softly pray their prayers aloud *all at the same time* (or to pray silently along). Ask them to stand; it helps even those who pray silently feel part of it.

b) Open with a prayer of worship. Give people simple examples, praising God for His names and attributes. (You might even write some of His names and attributes on 3"x5" cards and pass them out so people will have one in hand.) Samples:

- Father, we worship You as our Prince of Peace.
- We praise You for Your unfailing love.
- You are King of kings, Lord of lords.
- Jesus, we worship You as our Shepherd who leads us.
- We praise You as our Creator.
- You are the great I Am that I Am.

c) After worship, you will pray for the prayer requests that have just been shared.

d) Sample format:

- Father, we want to begin with a time of worship, turning our eyes to You. *Hear us as we each pray softly, praising Your name, all of us at the same time...*
- Now, Father, we want to pray for the requests we have just heard, all of us at the same time. We'll each pray for one person or concern, as You lead us. *Now hear us as we pray aloud together, all at the same time...*

Choose from these other topics as you have time:

- Now, Father, we want to pray for the church service as it will soon begin. *Hear us as we pray for the church service, all of us at the same time...*
- Now, Father, we want to have a special time of prayer for (mention one particular class request that seems especially urgent)...
- Now, Father, we want to thank You for what we see You doing in our lives. *Hear us, all together at the same time, as we thank You for something specific...*
- Close: Father, thank You for hearing our prayers. In Jesus' name, amen.

**3. Prepare and distribute a class prayer request list (print or email, yourself or volunteer).  
This is optional, but if you do, be sure to set boundaries—**

- Decide as a group what kind of requests you want to include, such as limiting the list to concerns for only immediate or extended family of class members. (You may want to include close personal friends or co-workers, but typically, the less familiar the class is with the people, the less they will be drawn to pray for them.)
- Encourage the class to bring spiritual requests, such as needs for spiritual growth (consistent prayer and Bible study; salvation; to develop or return to a close walk with the Lord).
- VIP: Set a time limit for prayer requests to remain on the list, such as one month. Without an update, automatically remove a request from the list until an update is given. (Otherwise, the list will keep growing.) Add this reminder to the weekly prayer list.
- Ask for a volunteer to do the prayer list (he or she can take notes during prayer request time). Can be sent email or be printed and brought to class the following week, or both.

**4. Plan for occasional prayer times outside class.**

- Agree to schedule these prayer times periodically (such as quarterly) or on an as needed basis. Ask for class members to volunteer their homes, or add a prayer time to a class social when appropriate.
- These times will be most effective if you lead them. Plan your topics ahead of time.
- Keep people in one large group, and ask those who are comfortable to voice their prayers for the group as you move through the topics. Or, divide into smaller groups.
- Suggested format—
  - 1) Begin with prayers of worship, praising God using His names and for His attributes.
  - 2) Prayers of thanksgiving, without asking for anything.
  - 3) Topics of prayer concerns, introduced one at a time, such as—
    - For individuals
    - For class—
      - strong marriages,
      - children, grandchildren,
      - to be active in kingdom,
      - to grow in Christ
    - For church
    - For the nation
    - For the lost
    - For revival

## Outline for leading class prayer time (everyone praying at the same time)—

- Let's all stand and pray together at the same time, each of us softly whispering our prayers, trusting God to hear them all...
- Father, we want to begin with a time of worship, turning our eyes to You. *Hear us as we each pray softly, praising Your name, all of us at the same time...*
- Now, Father, we want to pray for the requests we have just heard, all of us at the same time. We'll each pray for one person or concern. *Now hear us as we pray aloud together, all at the same time...*

Choose from these other topics as you have time:

- Now, Father, we want to pray for the church service as it will soon begin. *Hear us as we pray for the church service, all of us at the same time....*
- Now, Father, we want to have a special time of prayer for... \_\_\_\_\_ (mention one particular class request that seems especially urgent)....
- Now, Father, we want to thank You for all we see You doing in our lives. *Hear us as, all together at the same time, we thank You for something specific ....*
- Now, Father, we want to pray for:

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## Format for Special Class Prayer Time (15-30 minutes or more)

“Father we begin with a time of worship, not asking You for anything, but simply praising You for Your names and attributes. *Hear us as several of us offer You brief prayers of worship and praise....”*

“Now, Father, we want to have a time to thank You for what You are doing in the life of our church (or our class, or our lives personally). *Hear us as several of us voice our prayers of thanksgiving without asking You for anything....”*

“Now, Father, we want to have a season of prayer for the concerns that are on our heart. We’ll pray for one concern at a time, with several of us verbalizing our prayers:

1. Our first concern is.... *Now, hear us as several in our group voice their prayers for us about this one concern... (repeat it)....*

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2. Now, Father, we want to pray about... (another specific concern). *Hear the prayers of a few of us as the rest of us pray silently along with each one about... (repeat topic)....*

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3. Now, Father, we want to pray about... (another specific concern). *Hear the prayers of a few of us as the rest of us pray silently along with each one about... (repeat topic)....*

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4. Now, Father, we want to pray about... (another specific concern). *Hear the prayers of a few of us as the rest of us pray silently along with each one about... (repeat topic)....*

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Close: Now Father, thank You for hearing our prayers.