

How to Lead a Concert of Prayer

Plan What You Will Do—

To move your prayer group away from praying only for people who are sick or out of work, plan a focus for your prayers. For example, you might want to pray for your church, or for a mission team who are planning a trip, or for the church's youth group.

Whatever the focus is to be, make yourself a list of several things you would want to cover in prayer. For instance, praying for your church: 1) for the pastor and his family, 2) for the families in the church, 3) for the leaders (deacons, elders, teachers, etc.), 4) for the visitors.

You will introduce each of these topics for prayer. Then, add one final “season” of prayer, giving everyone the opportunity to pray *briefly* for whatever else is on their hearts.

As You Begin—

Keep in mind that most people are not familiar with concerts of prayer—praying with a leader—and many are uncomfortable praying aloud. You can put them at ease and help give them a skill they'll use the rest of their lives, if you will spend a few minutes introducing the idea and telling them exactly what to expect. Do this not just once, but every time you meet for prayer until it becomes second nature. Be sure to re-introduce it whenever you have new participants.

There are two helpful handouts provided. Share them with your people, and go over the points in your introduction. The first few times you do this, plan to spend 15-20 minutes or even longer if necessary. It's worth the investment of time.

A good ice breaker for people new to group prayer—

Ask them to pick a number from 1-5 (1 low, 5 high) that best describes how they feel about this kind of praying together. Say something like, “If you've never prayed this way before, you're probably a “1”!

Give them a moment to pick their numbers—it doesn't take long.

Ask them to turn to 2 or 3 people and tell each other their numbers and why they feel that way. Allow 3-5 minutes, as long as they are engaged. You'll typically hear a bit of laughter as they relax and some of them realize they are not alone in feeling a little uncomfortable.

Make the first few times you pray together “practice sessions.”

This also relaxes people. Acknowledge what they've just heard, that many of them are uncomfortable because this is unfamiliar to them. Point out that even people who are used to praying with others may not be experienced at following a leader in prayer, so almost everyone in your group is new to the experience. (You might even ask for a show of hands.)

Tell them the first few times you meet for prayer will just be to practice and learn—and if God wants to listen in, that's okay. (This usually draws a bit of a laugh too. It acknowledges where they are, and God's patience and delight in us when we want to learn new things that will help us become more effective in prayer. It's a good thing to laugh together!

Take time to explain how you will lead your concert of prayer—

- Spend a few minutes rehearsing your prayer time. Again, this is time well-invested.
- Include the focus of your prayer time (the people or concerns you will cover)
- Make it clear that you will include time to pray for what's on their hearts.

An easy to follow format—

- **Use the A-C-T-S acronym:**

Adoration (worship), Confession (silent), Thanksgiving, Supplication (asking)

- **Move from topic to topic, making the prayer time one continuous prayer**

Introduce each topic with a phrase such as “*Now, Father we will pray about...*”

- **Introduce each topic or *season of prayer* with a sentence to complete:**

→ Adoration (worship): Ask them to complete a sentence prayer—

“Father, I love You because...” Then tell God one reason why they love Him:

“I love You because You first loved me...”

“I love You because You are faithful...”

Or have them complete the sentence prayer, “Father, I worship You as...”

“I worship You as the Shepherd who leads us...”

“I worship You as the Protector who keeps us safe...”

→ Confession (silent): This will be silent prayer, about one minute of silence.

→ Thanksgiving: Have them thank God for something He has done in their lives—

“Thank You, Father, for...”

→ Supplication (asking): Go over your list of prayer topics—

Explain that as you introduce each topic, they will have the opportunity to pray at least once for that topic. Encourage them to pray brief prayers, to ask God for just one thing related to each topic.

For instance, if you are having a concert of prayer for a mission trip, you might pray for these topics:

- for staff as they are planning,
- for those who go,
- for those you will serve,
- for whatever else is on their hearts

Plan for 15 minutes—

When the group is new to the idea, plan for 15-20 minutes of prayer. As they grow comfortable, you'll spend less time setting up the prayer time, and more time praying.