

Building a House of Prayer

“The purpose of Prayer is to know God Himself.” (Oswald Chambers)

“Prayer is the measurable dynamic act that determines a Christians spiritual state.” (Oswald Chambers) Therefore Prayer can also be described as the measurable dynamic act that determines a “churches spiritual state.”

Three types of Adventist Churches: All churches operate from 3 distinct models of prayer and spirituality.

1. **Prayer Lite/Pray-less Church: Book-end/Zipper Church:** These churches recognize the importance of prayer to its ministry but have not developed prayer in any strategic way. Meetings open and close with prayer, they have pastoral prayers and special prayer meetings from time to time. Prayer is unstructured. People pray for the church and its ministry, but they are not given specific requests. Prayer is not recognized as a ministry in the church. **15% of all Seventh-day Adventist Churches** fall into this category.
2. **A Church with Prayer:** Most members of a “Church with Prayer” delegate the praying to a group of people called “Prayer Warriors.” In this group the congregation has no sense of urgency about prayer. Most of the members do not do much praying --- they believe that someone else will do it. This church **represents 80% of Seventh-day Adventist churches.**
3. **The Praying Church/Prayer Saturated Church or Church with a culture of prayer.** This church takes the Holy Spirit and prayer very seriously. They are the center of every activity. They make sure that all activities of the church are bathed in prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit. The atmosphere and culture of the church is all about prayer. Strategies for ministries are developed as the result of prayer. Every ministry is prayed for and has leaders who pray. These Houses of Prayer grow as a result of the relationship of its leaders and members with God. Board meetings are prayer meetings, Prayer meetings offer opportunities for the congregation to commit to God, pray for each other, celebrate victories and to worship. The members of this church model are passionate and hungry for God. God’s plans become their plans. **5% of all Seventh-day Adventist Churches fall into this category.**

* Results of research done 2003-2007 to study flourishing congregations in NAD. The Big Four, pg.12, pg. 94-97, Joseph Kidder. Review and Herald Publishing.

Reflection:

How does my Church measure up if “prayer is the measurable dynamic act that determines its spiritual state?”

1. **Where does my Church fall in the description of the models above?**

2. **Discuss ways you can encourage and develop the prayer-life in your Church.**

“Ninety Five percent of Seventh-day Adventist Churches relate to prayer as an incidental concern or as the ministry of a few people. Thus 95% of Adventist congregations need to move from treating prayer as a formality or one ministry among many and become sanctuaries focused on the God of answered prayers.” Five percent of Adventist Churches are Houses of prayer. (*The Big Four*, pg. 96, Joseph Kidder, R&H 2011)

How does a church become a House of Prayer? It begins with one. Pray for your Pastor, church leaders, church families and your communities. Ask God to give you the names of at least five people during the next year that you would like to bring to Christ. Then ask for a prayer partner to pray with you.....then ask for others in your church who have a burden for prayer and are willing to commit to a ministry of prayer.

Eight practical Steps:

1. Pray for a hungering and thirsting after God.
2. Ask God to give others a burden for prayer. Then identify a group of praying people who can provide leadership in a prayer movement.
3. Appoint a prayer coordinator or prayer director in the church who will plan, program, and manage times of prayer. Such an individual's main task is to keep the vision of prayer in front of the people.
4. Promote prayer in connection with projects of the church, such as ministries events, the work of the local Adventist school, and evangelistic series.
5. Regularly publish and distribute a church prayer list.
6. Emphasize intercessory prayer for unsaved people. Aim to have at least 50 percent of your congregation praying for others.
7. Have more than one prayer meeting. Develop a whole program of prayer meetings according to ages, agencies, tasks, and needs (prayer for the sick, a ministry to jewish people, men and women in the armed forces, college students, missionaries, etc.)
8. Plan interesting and special programs with a special emphasis on prayer. Some ideas are:
 - a. Hold a prayer conference in your church.
 - b. Provide two or three prayer retreats each year.
 - c. Host a banquet.
 - d. At least once a year, preach a series on prayer.
 - e. Offer a small group Bible study or Sabbath school class on prayer.
 - f. Establish a men and women's prayer breakfast group that will meet for prayer every month.
 - g. Schedule, during the corporate worship hour, testimonies about prayer every two or three weeks.
 - h. Emphasize victory through prayer: Prevailing prayer brings victory in life.

* Adapted from *The Big Four*, pg. 100, Review and Herald, 2011, .Joseph Kidder

Model opportunities for prayer in practical and easy ways for your congregation to become accustomed to the many different ways that they can incorporate it into their lifestyles and ministries.