

Praying Together



The Salvation Army New Zealand, Fiji & Tonga Territory
www.salvationarmy.org.nz

IN OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

WHY?

- Harmony—being in agreement with each other—with the Spirit, with the Word of God is an unbeatable combination in finding God's mind and resources. We must seek this through Word and worship and being willing for our hearts and minds to be changed.
- When Jesus is present, things happen. Learn to cultivate and guard his presence not only on Sundays but during your weekly events and meetings.
- Many of our leadership challenges will need 'the wisdom that comes from above' (**James 3:17-18**), because we are handling Kingdom matters. We must be like children in seeking our Heavenly Father's guidance.
- Discover how *each* person brings discernment, wisdom and direction from the Lord—and ask them to do that. Don't just settle for 'everyone takes a turn at doing devotions'.

RESOURCES

Books

- *Spiritual Authority* by Dutch Sheets
- *The Power of a Praying Church* by Stormie Omartian (Harvest House)

Articles from www.prayerchangeslives.org.nz

- *Those Novel Prayer Pauses; Cultivating the Presence of God Together; Devoted to Prayer; Holy Priests Offering Spiritual Sacrifices*

From the Booth College of Mission library

- *Strategic Prayer: Applying the Power of Targeted Prayer* by Smith and Hennen (248.3 SMI)
- *Teaching P.R.A.Y.E.R.* by Brant Baker (248.32 BAK). Excellent teaching and activities to stimulate Psalming, Reconciling, Adoring, Yielding, Entreating, and Realising.
- *People in Prayer* by John White (248.3 WHI). An inspiring study of the prayers of key biblical characters like Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Daniel and Hannah. Would be great for a preaching series!

TIPS

1 Pray to prepare

- Make time for worship and waiting on God before you do the business. Just one song or CD and praise from a Psalm can bring us into his presence and realign us to God's Spirit. Learn to linger there and listen for God. Who leads this sort of time well in your team? Let them do it often.
- Make time to ask and receive what the Lord is impressing on various members of the team before you get into business. He can speak at any time. It could save time for you all in the end!

2 Seek God during your meeting

- If things get confused or in conflict on the team, agree to worship and wait for God's direction and leading, either then or at a later time.
- There will be things that need PUSH prayer (Praying Until Something Happens). Identify them—and decide how you are going to do this. Congregations feel safer and more responsive to leadership when they know their leaders are regularly in prayer, so make prayer spaces a priority in leadership.

3 Pray specifically

- Be specific in your prayers, not vague. Remember the concept of a boiler room. For example, instead of praying 'God bless our meeting', pray specifically: 'Father, we need to develop a heart for the lost—reveal your heart of love to us', or 'we are about to ... prepare hearts for this ...'.
- Do more than ask—declare the Word of God over situations. Be alert to Scripture that is the Lord speaking his will and purpose for your church. Declare it until it comes to pass. Try declaring it in your auditorium regularly. It will stir your faith! Further insight comes as we do this.

4 Encourage everyone to participate

- When interceding as a team, make space for each other. Pray short prayers on one topic before moving onto another topic. Many leaders are naturally articulate and can 'take over' a prayer time, not allowing others to participate. See this as a shared conversation with your Father. (There is an exception—when a strongly 'prophetic prayer' pours out from someone's spirit and moves us all.)

5 Develop your prayer ministry

- Once a year, read a book on prayer together (all have a copy), so as leaders you seek to grow in your awareness of the power of prayer for individuals and a congregation.

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IN OUR MINISTRY TEAMS

WHY?

- Prayer is essential if our ministry is to bear 'fruit that lasts'. We need God's love, wisdom, power and resources to do his work—because this is HIS work, not simply 'our ministry'! John Wesley said, 'If the church will not pray, God will not act.'
- We need to be 'in agreement' (in harmony) to hear God and receive his empowering together. If we cannot pray together, our ministry and service will not bear fruit.
- We need to encourage each other to keep prayer at the top of our list, not as an afterthought.
- There are 'all kinds of prayer' for all sorts of situations, so we want to learn to pray in many different ways both for our needs, and the needs of those we serve (**Ephesians 6:18**).

TIPS

1 Encourage prayer champions

- Who among you carries a heart for prayer (it could be someone who is not a leader)? Ask them to keep reminding others to pray and to listen to the Lord—especially those who are more focused on plans, practical work, or people.
- Ask them to keep a prayer journal of requests and answers, and to note words and Scriptures the Lord gives you.
- Enlist others to be prayer supporters to your church's ministry. Keep them informed so they can pray specifically.

2 Ask the Lord for a Scripture for your group

- Pray for a Scripture that depicts your calling to serve in this ministry. Pray it by declaring it out loud, by pondering on its various words and aspects, and by thanking the Lord for his leading and provision. He may bring other Scriptures later on that you can add to this one. Keep a journal of these.

3 Pray over your plans and work

- Lay hands on your papers and organisational work, asking the Lord to inspire, adjust, reveal and re-work these as necessary. He promises us wisdom and insight. (See **James 1:5** and **3:17-18**.) Fresh ideas or insights can come at any time as we keep our faces and hearts towards him. Keep flexible and open for a 'better way' in your planning.
- Pray for your practical work each time you serve. He can help us do it 'as unto the Lord', with the right heart and mind and with zeal and energy as we see it is not just for people, but for him. Encourage each other to say, 'This is for Jesus' in whatever way you minister.

4 Expect the empowering of the Spirit

- This is when you see with more than natural eyes; you hear God's inner promptings and are able to offer 'what you have' from him.
- As a team, ponder and pray over **Acts 3:1-7** and **6:1-3** and ask the Lord to empower you to bring Jesus' love and power into your areas of service.
- Leaders need to teach the team how to receive the compassion of Jesus and hear the prompting of the Spirit.
- Pray over each other for boldness and insight.

5 Use prayer to create a positive atmosphere for your ministry

- Our prayer and worship can change the atmosphere of the place we minister in, especially if people come in who are burdened and needing the Lord. Walk around and praise Jesus, read a Psalm, sing and fill the atmosphere of the room with God's presence. Do this often.

6 Pray for the individuals in your team

- Speak blessings over their lives, pray Scriptures for them, encourage each other to persist in prayer—and expect God to intervene in people's lives!
- Make a time to pray specifically for individuals each week. This is a vital part of your work for God. If you feel the Lord giving you an encouraging word for them—write a little card and send it to those you pray for.
- Holding people in a warm hug and breathing the perfect love of their Father over them can be very powerful. He looks on them with such tenderness. He delights in them, sings over them, yearns over them, understands their every need, and sees their every tear. Let God's love fill YOU and then 'release' it over others.

RESOURCES

Articles from www.prayerchangeslives.org.nz

- *Mandate for Miracles; Hearing His Voice; Exploring Different Ways We Hear and Respond to God; The Privilege of Prayer; Recognising God Moments; Prayer in the Centre.*

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IN OUR REGULAR PRAYER MEETINGS

WHY?

- This can be a precious time to meet with the Lord, hear his heart and declare his purposes. *Dispel the notion that prayer meetings are boring!*
- Cultivate 'all kinds of prayer' to bring freshness. God has created an infinite variety of life. Don't get stuck in one style.
- Prayer is 'front-line' work, so encourage one another not to grow weary. The enemy will seek to shut you down.
- If you are a leader, being at prayer meetings will keep you in touch with what God is doing among your people and model the importance of prayer to others.
- A heart of love and 'the tools' of the gifts of the Spirit are essential in regular prayer.
- Find a way to report back to the congregation when the Lord answers these prayers.

TIPS

1 Good leadership is important

- Be clear about what you are there to pray about. Write topics on a whiteboard or introduce them before praying (make sure you take time to wait on God before moving on).
- People bring their own burdens, so it may be helpful to pray about these briefly in pairs before shifting the focus to the needs you are committed to praying about.
- Some people prefer to wait on the Lord for direction. Assure them that there will be time for that, but that persisting in prayer for known needs is also very important.
- Rather than introducing a range of prayer topics all at once, drip feed them one at a time. This will encourage people to pray more deeply for each topic.
- If someone often hijacks the group for their favourite topics (such as prayer for Israel), suggest to them privately that they could gather others and pray for that at another time.
- If time is going and you haven't prayed for all the things you had planned—divide into pairs and give each pair one topic.
- While focused prayer is important, do not quench the leading of the Spirit if he is leading you all to pray about another thing during that time!

2 Ensure 'equal opportunities' for prayer

- Prevent people dominating or taking over the prayer time (particularly if you have serious intercessors in the group). Ask them to encourage others to pray by making simple, heartfelt and shorter prayers the norm. Speak to them in private if their eloquence and length is discouraging others from participating.
- If you have more than 10 people, not many will be able to pray. Start with praise and prayer together before breaking into smaller groups of three or four.

3 Keep focus on God

- Teach the group to cultivate the presence of Jesus, and learn listen for words, Scripture and the Spirit's leadings.
- Sing together! Do this at the start, and in the middle to restore focus on the Lord.
- Sometimes there is a strong sense that the Lord is leading people to pray for things not identified. Learn to discern, receive and respond to such promptings. God wants us to pray what is on his heart, as well as what's on our heart!

4 Pray with boldness

- We cannot 'agree in prayer' if we are praying silently! Faith is stirred by hearing the prayers of others. Boldness grows as we declare openly what God is saying or doing (see **Acts 4:29-31**). Pray boldly for God to move and make a difference through your ministries.
- Make your prayers specific—it's easier to see answers.
- Contemplative prayers reflecting on your own life are useful ... at the end of a sermon or during a retreat! Use corporate prayer meetings to build faith and energy by focusing *outwards* on growing God's Kingdom.

5 Include variety in your prayer meeting

- Avoid just sitting bent over in a little room every time. Get physical! Hold up the Word. Stand up or walk around. Meet in a place where there is space to move. Change the location now and then, as well as people's postures.
- Do a 'prayer walk'. This could be inside, praying over seats in the auditorium, the rostrum, the music stands, the Family Store, where children meet, etc. Head outside and walk around your community, stopping to pray at locations.
- If you are praying for your town or city, get a map and lay hands on it in small groups. Bring symbols of what you are praying for and ask people to hold these or stand around them and pray.
- Depending on the fluency of the group, write or draw prayers with symbols.

RESOURCES

From the Booth College of Mission library

- *Transforming Prayers: 40 Unique Experiences* by Jenny Baker with reproducible handouts (248.32). Designed for youth, but many of the tangible ideas would help all of us to enter into prayer. Full of symbols and actions to 'flesh out' our praying.
- *Prayer Power Unlimited* by J. Oswald Sanders (248.3 SAN). This gem covers 22 aspects of prayer with clarity and inspiration. A wonderful resource for lifting our sights in our prayer times together.

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IN OUR CORPORATE GATHERINGS (SUNDAY MEETINGS)

WHY?

- Scripture gives us lots of stories of big groups of people praying together, and God acting in miraculous ways. This is a powerful way of invoking the Lord's intervention—so give space in your services for this regularly in some form.
- Explore, experiment and develop what works best with your numbers and facilities believing that you **must** do this, not just leave it to the 'serious pray-ers' in small groups. This needs oversight and coordination, and probably some instruction to the congregation.
- Believe that as you do this together, it will spill into the lives and homes of those who usually hesitate to pray. They will catch the joy and faith-building effect of prayer.

TIPS

The three main areas of prayer in corporate gatherings are response in worship, praying for needs and praying in response to the Bible message.

1 Tips for Responding in Worship

- Display a prayer or Scripture passage to declare out loud.
- Use a responsive prayer or reading.
- Provide a prayer of repentance that people can either say together or read quietly to themselves. Either write one or provide something from a Psalm (perhaps **Psalm 32** or **51**).

2 Tips for Praying for Needs

- With some planning, you can use a great variety of people in your corporate prayer: families, small groups, ministry leaders, even fairly-new believers who could write and read a prayer. Get creative and involve the whole congregation.
- Organise a roster (or grab people) and ask people to pray for anything on their heart. This will vary the focus from church needs to community, national, international and missions.
- Keep alert to what is on people's hearts. If there has been a serious accident, a school closing, or a contentious issues in your community, make that your focus for a week or two.
- If your group number less than 100, consider an open time of short praise and thanksgiving prayers. If inviting the whole group to respond, have a couple of people primed to pray so there is no long silence.
- Ask two or three people to offer brief praise prayers.
- Try everyone praying out loud at the same time. Get creative, but keep it to a few minutes.
- Break people into small groups to pray for presented topics.
- Include a prayer in your newsletter and declare it together.
- Show a DVD clip on the topic (eg, missions) and then ask people to pray in groups.
- Ask someone to pray in a different language (eg, in Māori), then translate it.

3 Tips for Praying in Response to the Bible Message

- If you are a regular preacher who isn't confident at leading response times, find someone who is and ask for coaching. Or hand this time over to them to lead.
- Make sure you do not miss the moment when God is powerfully speaking by just 'having the last song' or saying a quick benediction to get to morning tea.
- Use the response time to reinforce action. For example, at the end of a message on sharing our faith, ask people to think of others in their lives whom they would like to bring to faith. Then ask them to pray specifically for these people and any actions they can take this week.

4 Keep your response times fresh. Don't fall into the trap of doing the same thing over and over until it wearies people. Our Creator God has no end of variations in how he touches lives!

- Offer the chance for people to come up for prayer. Allow time for this response (but don't become predictable).
- Have people sit in silence and allow the challenge or the question to settle in their heart. Ask people with a prayer on their heart to pray publicly (or for bigger groups, invite two or three to come to the microphone to pray briefly).
- Have paper and pens handy for individuals to write a prayer to take home and continue to pray.
- Ask people to pray in twos or threes about their response. This can take time, and some people get into long conversations and do not pray, so be clear in directing people in this. If they feel inadequate, suggest they just sit with the other person and pray silently. It can be very precious to pray together.
- Put a written prayer on screen and ask people to say it aloud together, or offer a prayer that they repeat in their heads.
- Make a special 'prayer place' available where people can be invited to come forward to pray.
- Ask people to speak a 'blessing prayer' over someone else. You could write one and display it on the screen as a model.

RESOURCES

Articles from www.prayerchangeslives.org.nz

- *What if Worship Really Came Alive?; Cultivating the Presence of God Together; Exploring Different Ways We Hear and Respond to God.*

From the Booth College of Mission library

- *Transforming Prayers: 40 Unique Experiences* by Jenny Baker with reproducible handouts (248.32). Designed for youth, but with many practical ideas. Full of symbols and actions to 'flesh out' our praying.

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IN A HALF-NIGHT OF PRAYER

WHY?

- Imagine the impact on your church and community if you all come together for one evening to pray. That's the vision: to place God at the centre of *everything* you do—and what better way to do that than to pray together as a church?
- Something supernatural happens when a congregation gathers together for an extended season of prayer to pray for its ministry. Prayer builds faith and unity and grows an expectation that God is going to move.
- The Bible is full of examples of people praying together for their ministry. This includes prayer before important decisions and for success in battles. And when they prayed, amazing things happened!
- Maybe you're having trouble getting your congregation to regular prayer meetings. Perhaps they'll come to a special one evening of prayer.
- Jesus had at least one night of prayer with his disciples (**Luke 22:39-45**—even if his disciples fell asleep!). He obviously thought prayer was essential!

TIPS

1 A suggested format for a half night of prayer is: introductory praise and worship, followed by four 45-minute prayer sessions (separated by breaks). For example:

- 7:30 pm, Introduction, praise and worship
- 8:00 pm, Session one (then a 15-minute break)
- 9:00 pm, Session two (then a 30-minute break for supper)
- 10:15 pm, Session three (then a 15-minute break)
- 11:15 pm, Session four
- 12:00 am, Conclusion

2 Choose a different topic for each 45-minute session

- Mission areas make great topics for prayer: evangelism, disciple-making, Community Ministries and other Salvation Army services in your area, youth and children, leaders, etc.

3 Choose a different leader for each session and encourage them to bring a range of topics and to use different prayer styles, such as:

- Conversational prayer with one person speaking at a time
- Everyone prays out loud at the *same* time
- Small groups
- Intercession by leader only
- Silent prayer
- Capture prayer topics and display where they can see them (screen or whiteboard)
- Laying hands on people (eg, if praying for leaders)

- 4 Start each session with thanks for the good things that are happening and for previous answers to prayer.**
- 5 If the leader presents a range of topics and then says 'let's pray', the 45-minutes can really drag! Instead, drip feed topics one at a time. This will encourage people to pray more deeply for each topic (and the time will race by!).**
- 6 Take a note of what you pray for so that you can celebrate answers in the future.**
- 7 Make your prayers bold and specific, not vague. Expect God to make a difference—ask him to do so!**

ANSWERS TO COMMON MYTHS AND OBJECTIONS

- *If I can't pray for 10 minutes, how could I possibly pray for half a night!* Our time is divided into smaller sessions and the leader will prompt for topics every few minutes, so there's heaps to pray about. Besides, you don't have to pray out loud unless you want to.
- *I can't think of anything more boring!* You won't get a chance to be bored. This is not a lengthy 'be quiet and fall asleep session'; this is people praying excitedly for God to bless us. But be warned, most people tend to stay longer than they planned, not the other way around!
- *I doubt I'd last more than half an hour—definitely not till midnight.* You'll be surprised at how the time races by, and there are plenty of breaks. People come and go all evening.
- *We can't get a babysitter.* How about one of you come for the first half and then swap at half time?
- *Is it worth it?* Absolutely! You'll see some incredible answers to prayer and a real unity grow in our congregation.

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AT HOME

WHY?

- It is the greatest safeguard for our marriages when believing couples regularly pray together. Becoming vulnerable and honest in prayer will deeply enrich our marriage—and enable us to hear the Lord together.
- Our children need to see and hear their parents pray, and to receive the protection and blessing of their parents' prayers.
- Our neighbourhood will be influenced and drawn to the Lord by a praying home among them.
- Even one Christian believer in a family can profoundly affect the rest of their family through persistent prayer.

TIPS FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

- Determine to find a way and a time. Agree this is essential for your marriage and your family, and that you will pursue this together until it works for you both.
- Find a style that suits you both (intercessors can overwhelm their spouse with their passion and eloquence). Pray simply, from the heart and from the Word, so both are 'on the same page'. No correcting each other's prayers!
- Have some prayer at the beginning of the day. It does not need to be long. It could be just a blessing on the day, reading a Psalm and giving thanks. You may need to do it in bed before the breakfast rush. Or it could be together with the children.
- Ending the day with prayer is very precious. Often that is the time you are relaxed and open to the Lord. Pray short prayers each: for the people you have met that day and for whatever else is on your hearts.
- Sometime in the week make space to read a book together so you are learning and growing in the Lord together. Pray about what you are discovering.
- You may need to have seasons of prayer to do battle against dangers or serious needs that your family is facing. Be prepared to fast and look for Scripture promises from the Lord. You may need to have 'no-TV' evenings so you can devote yourself to serious prayer during this crisis.

TIPS FOR FAMILY PRAYER

- Talk about prayer as a normal everyday thing. Do it with the children as spontaneously as you can. For example: in the car before going to school, after a meal before getting into evening activities, or whenever they share concerns with you. Keep it simple and tender, and weave Scripture into it.
- Find a pattern for reading and praying that fits in with your children's daily routine. Get them involved. Have a devotional book for children. After a meal, have the children take turns reading to the rest of the family.

- Regularly read story books to children that teach spiritual truths. Pray afterwards.
- Pray with your children and encourage them to pray as they go to bed. This can be a special time of blessing and of teaching. Suggest 'prayer challenges' as they grow older. Ask them to join you in praying for some of the big challenges in the family or church. Stretch their faith.
- As the children get into their teens it is harder to get them to pray with you. Look for new ways, like writing Scripture-filled prayers and asking them to read it with you before they disappear for the day.
- Ask if you can give them a blessing—and hold them and speak the favour of God on them (see *The Father's Love Letter*).

TIPS FOR A SINGLE BELIEVER IN A FAMILY

- Find ways to pray aloud around the home when you are there alone. Declare Scripture—speak praise—speak the blessing of the Father over other family members.
- Pray for the children when you take them in the car if there is resistance to praying with them in the home.
- Invite praying friends to pray in your home regularly so the atmosphere will be full of blessing and faith.

RESOURCES

Books and downloads

- *The Power of a Praying Parent; The Power of Praying for your Adult Children; The Power of a Praying Wife/Husband* by Stormie Omartian (Harvest Press)
- *Families Walking with God: Quiet Time Diary*. An easy method for the whole family to read, share scripture and pray together. See www.walkingwithgod.com
- *The Fathers Love Letter*. Download from www.fathersloveletter.com

Articles from www.prayerchangeslives.org.nz

- *Couples who pray together* (Praying Together section).

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FOR YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

WHY?

- Where we live is part of God's plan for us. God intends for you to be a doorkeeper to his presence and his power in where you live. Everywhere we, his people are, is both a sacred place and a mission centre.
- We are assigned to be priests for every area of our influence: 'For you are a kingdom of priests ...' (1 Peter 2:9). We are priests for our street and our workplace!
- God wants all to be saved, to come to know him and enjoy his favour. We cannot be selective about who we share his love with. *Everyone* deserves an opportunity to know God.
- Somewhere in your street are people hungry to know God. *What percentage can you believe for?*

TIPS

- Ask the Lord to give you the heart of a priest for your neighbourhood so that prayer for them will become instinctive.
- Ask for God's compassionate, shepherd heart for the lost and needy. Read Luke 15 and pray: 'Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God'.
- Pray to 'the Lord of the Harvest' to provide other workers, prayer partners in your family and in your local community who will join you in praying.
- Seek the Lord as to the extent of the area you are to pray for. It could be just five or six houses, or a whole street. Begin to 'prayer walk' that area regularly, bringing God's presence, and speaking his blessing and his favour over people.
- Be open to the prompting of the Spirit to visit, offer help, or speak an encouraging word to someone. Methods have limited value—being led by the Spirit is essential.
- Have a simple pattern of prayer if that helps you. You can pray as you walk or pray in your home. Create a map, write in names as you learn them, or keep a notebook.
- Have a quiet and tidy place in your home where an enquirer could come and talk and pray with you about their spiritual journey. Have a few Bibles or leaflets ready to give away, and keep tissues handy!

RESOURCES

Articles from www.prayerchangeslives.org.nz

- *Get Ready for the Harvest; Neighbourhood Prayer: Getting Started; Pray to the Lord of the Harvest; A More Excellent Way.*

Other ideas

- Get a poster or sticker to identify your home as a place of prayer.
- See www.neighbournetwork.org.nz for information about a new venture in setting up praying homes that has started in the Hibiscus Coast.

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WITH OUR CHILDREN

WHY?

As a parent, have you ever stopped to think about what you're aiming for? What would you like your children to be when they leave home? Hopefully, top of the list is having a great relationship with God, with prayer central to their lives. How will they learn and develop this? By you modelling it and making it part of the 'rhythm of your family'.

TIPS

1 Make prayer a natural part of every day

- Pray with your children as they leave for school.
- Pray before each meal.
- If your child is anxious or struggling—pray about it (and if something really good happens, pray about that too).
- Encourage children to talk to God throughout their day. Remind them they are simply talking to their friend.
- Make the most of bed times—reflect on the day, praying for the good things and bad.

2 Providing structure helps children feel confident when praying. Here are some models you can use to encourage prayer:

- Five finger prayer
 - Your *thumb* is nearest to you. Begin by praying for those who are closest to you.
 - The next finger is the *pointing finger*. Pray for those who teach, guide and heal, such as teachers, doctors and those working for Jesus.
 - The next finger is the *tallest finger*. Pray for those who lead, like the prime minister and councils. Also, those who keep the country safe, like police, the fire brigade, etc.
 - The fourth finger is the *ring finger*. This is the 'weakest' finger (because it doesn't stand alone easily). Pray for those who are sick and in trouble.
 - Lastly use the *little finger* to pray for yourself.

RESOURCES

Books

- Stormy Omartian has written a series of fantastic books to help you pray, including *The Power of a Praying Parent* and *The Power of a Praying Kid*. (Harvest House)
- *Think Orange* by Reggie Joiner (David C. Cook)
- *New Ideas for Creative Prayers* by Judith Merrell (Scripture Union Publishing)

- Put letters of the alphabet on cards. Every member of the family picks a card and prays for all the things they can think of starting with that letter. This could be around topics for prayers of thanks, for instance, or people or places.
- P.A.C.T. prayers
 - *Praise*—what are things you like about God?
 - *Ask*—ask God to help people and situations.
 - *Confess*—tell God the things you shouldn't have done and did, and the things you should have done and didn't.
 - *Thanks*—say thank you to God.
- Use the newspaper or TV News to pray for those in need.
- Think about the last 24 hours:
 - What was I most thankful for?
 - When did I feel loved by someone?
 - When did I feel loved by God?
 - When did I act like Jesus?
 - When did I not act like Jesus?
- Pray for people you have come in contact with today (teachers, bus driver, shop assistants, family and friends).

3 The best antidote for endless wanting is thankfulness, so end each day with prayers of thanks.

- Help your children understand that many children do not have what we have:
 - family.
 - basic needs: food, shelter, clothing.
 - opportunities to learn: school, teachers.
 - luxuries: electricity, water, treats, toys, TV.
 - fun: friends, games, sports coaches, clubs.

4 Develop a weekly prayer chart

- There are lots of things you can pray for, so why not make a chart? Monday: parents; Tuesday: siblings; Wednesday: teachers; Thursday: friends, etc.
- Involve your children in creating the chart.
- Make your topics two-directional. For example, on Monday when they pray that their parents would help them to make wise decisions, children might also pray that they will be an obedient son or daughter; prayers for friends might be focused on those friends' needs, but also that the child would be a good friend too.

5 Pray for your children!

- Do you worry about your children? What they believe about themselves? Who their friends are and what influence they have? *Then pray!* 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.' (**Philippians 4:6**)
- Do you want to be a better parent? *Pray!* 'If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.' (**James 1:5**)
- If you don't pray for your children, who will?

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IN AN OUTSIDE YOUTH PRAYER EXPERIENCE

What is the attitude of your youth to prayer? What have they seen? Do they think prayer means praying fancy prayers seated in church? Consider holding a prayer party—outside!

WHY?

- To provide positive prayer experiences for youth.
- To role model the priority of prayer.
- To strengthen your youth ministry. Youth love to hang out together—so let them hang out and pray.
- To make a difference in our communities—when we pray, stuff happens!

TIPS

1 Prayer should be a key part of our lives, so take it to where life happens—outside the Church!

- Pray for your city and The Salvation Army's ministry from a lookout.
- Hire a bus and do a 'prayer drive'.
- Pray for what happens in local community groups: Police, Housing New Zealand, Work and Income NZ, City Council, library, public transport, etc.
- Go (in large groups) to where the city's night life happens.
- Visit and pray for local Salvation Army centres and ministries.

2 Make it easy to participate

- Choose a theme or topic.
- Provide clear instructions.
- Explain that this is a safe place to learn about prayer—it's not for 'experts'.
- If you're worried about numbers, invite other youth groups in the area to join in too.

3 Variety is the spice of [prayer] life

- Set up a range of prayer stations for people to move between.
- Do a 'Scripture wash': praying Bible verses over people (even strangers).
- Write prayers on Post-it notes, then stick them around the community.
- Provide prepared prayers for people to read.
- Pray for others. This could be structured (eg, 'pray for the person on your left') or completely random.

4 Expect God to do something ... as He will

- When you take prayer to the streets, you never really know what's going to happen, but something always does. Expect the unexpected!
- People will start off somewhat reserved and nervous, but keep going and these will quickly become 'must-be-at' events.

5 Include a feedback time at the end

- People's faith will be strengthened as they hear each other share their experiences about how God has shown up.

6 Wear mission wear

- You'll be amazed how wearing uniforms and Salvation Army-branded apparel opens doors, provides credibility (and persecution!).

7 Socialising is important, so keep the format relaxed and provide supper. Keep people moving in groups.

8 When running events for youth, make sure you finish by 9:30 pm to allow time for kids on restricted licences to get home!

RESOURCES

The Northern Division has been running these youth experiences for a number of years. Contact the Northern Divisional Youth Secretary for more ideas.

Praying Together



The Salvation Army New Zealand, Fiji & Tonga Territory
www.salvationarmy.org.nz

IN OUR SMALL GROUPS

WHY?

- We want the presence of God among us more than anything else (and he loves to be with us when we gather). Prayer is never just 'us'. The Trinity joins us!
- We want everyone to participate and grow in prayer. This is an 'equal-opportunity' group and we want to explore and find meaningful ways for all of us to pray.
- We believe God can show us things and pour in his love as we pray—and that will change how we pray.
- Our prayers matter, because God acts in response to spoken prayer, not just thoughts.

TIPS

1 Create an environment for prayer

- Ensure people are comfortable. Being too cold or too hot, too close to others or too distant, bothered by phones, children, or even pets, is highly distracting. Some people need 'atmosphere' before they can focus on the Lord and pray freely.
- Create a restful place where prayer is natural. For many, coming to a small group is like coming to an oasis. Discuss what things refresh them in their time together, such as quietness, pondering the Scriptures, music, praying their burdens, the sense of harmony, etc. Include these regularly.
- Recognise the presence of Jesus at the start: 'Thank you Jesus that you're here ... you are so full of love ...', etc. Describe what the spiritual reality is and your faith will bring his presence to your awareness. This often melts people's hearts and opens them up to God and his direction.
- Often, our focus is on events or people and our struggles. It helps for the leader to offer focus, perhaps providing a short Scripture to ponder, or asking everyone to give thanks for something. Just asking for prayer 'out of the blue' can be daunting.
- Use songs on a CD or if you have a musician, sing together. Make sure the songs you choose are easy for a small number of singers.

2 Encourage everyone to participate

- Small-group prayer should be a family conversation 'with the Father', with everyone contributing (different from more formal church-service prayer). One person speaking in long prayers isn't much of a conversation! Instead, one person might begin with adoration or intercession, with another picking up the same topic and adding to it, and then another person doing the same, so that you have lots of short 'waves' of words and agreement.

- Jesus said that when he was in the midst of his people they would 'agree' in prayer. This means harmonising together. Consider prayer in a group being an orchestra with different instruments, different sounds and different parts, all doing their part to create a symphony. The Spirit is the conductor, and Jesus and the Father are the audience. Together, we are the harmony that delights our God.
- To ensure all members understand the desire for everyone to participate, talk about this and consider agreeing on some ground rules and expectations (for example, keeping to one topic per prayer and no more than 1-2 sentences).
- People hesitant to pray often need a long time to take the plunge. If you pray anytime there is silence, *they won't!* If this is happening, consider not praying yourself until you've slowly counted to 60 in your head—see what happens!

3 Encourage a range of ways to pray

- Teach your group to pray the Word of God. Personalise a verse. Pray its promises, declaring the intentions of God or exalting his nature. Use prayers such as those in Psalms, the Lord's Prayer, or prayers from people in stories. Take a phrase and 'breathe' it gently in reflection a number of times to 'stir' prayer.
- If people are frequently hesitant to pray, ask them to pray a written prayer. Write one for them or ask them to write something at the end of your study. Let them read a hymn or piece of Scripture. Encourage them to write a prayer or poem during the week and bring it to share.
- Use symbols. Have a discussion about what 'things' remind you of God in your daily life; then ask members to bring them along with them (if possible) to share.
- Explore the shape of Psalms with their declarations, praise, petitions, etc. Then ask everyone to write their own psalm and share it or write one together.
- For a season, think about different aspects of God—his goodness, his majesty, etc. Getting people to bring something such as a song, poem or object that speaks of this aspect can be inspiring and enlarging. Make a list together and ask people to pick one they would like to share about at a later meeting.

4 Cultivate meaningful silence

- Not the awkward silence that occurs when no one responds to suggestions to pray or worship (which can come from not preparing people sufficiently). Meaningful silence can just 'happen' after music or someone's prayer. Let the group savour the moment for a few minutes then ask, 'What do you think was happening just then?' A fresh direction for prayer or worship will often come out of people's answers.

5 Change the dynamic when praying for needs

- Pray in twos or threes—people often feel more comfortable sharing personal prayer requests with just one or two others (this also helps if someone is dominating with long or frequent prayers!)
- Have half the group sit on a line of chairs, with the other half standing behind them praying one on one. Then switch.
- Set up a 'hot seat' and invite a person to receive prayer from the others. Wait for words or pictures or Scripture for them. Consider writing these down for that person to take away.

6 Maintain a prayer diary

- Celebrate answers to previous prayers.
- Collect prayer requests before you start praying, then 'drip feed' topics to remind people of things they can pray for (or put the list in a central place that people can easily look at).
- Send an email during the week to remind the group of the things they are praying about.

RESOURCES

Books

- *Creative Prayer* by Christ Tiegreen (Multnomah books)
- *Praying the Bible* by Wesley & Stacey Campbell

From the Booth College of Mission library

- *The Way of Prayer: a Small Group Experience in Spiritual Formation* by Vennard and Briant with workbooks (253.7 THO). A very tender and imaginative way of exploring prayer through a variety of means: Scriptural, contemplative, with music, heart prayer, with our bodies, etc. Lots of helpful exercises.
- *Transforming Prayers: 40 Unique Experiences* by Jenny Baker with reproducible handouts (248.32). Designed for youth, but its tangible, practical experiences would help all of us enjoy prayer.