

Developing a Team Prayer Strategy

Sources:

- Extraordinary Prayer, Garrison
- 5 Important Things in an “Extraordinary Prayer” Plan, Anderson

Almost all movement teams believe, in theory, that prayer is crucial to seeing movements begin in their context and most movement teams have detailed plans and methodologies through which they hope to see movements initiated - but very few teams think of prayer strategically, or actually combine prayer and strategy to create a strategic prayer plan which changes and grows according to the stage of their movement work. Hopefully this document will help you change that.

Some individuals and teams may struggle with motivation for prayer or intercession. If this is the case for you, prayerfully consider the vision that God has given your team. If it is truly a God-sized vision, a vision so big that it could never be accomplished by the efforts of your team alone, then how else will you actually see that vision come to pass except through asking God to move? When we truly realize how desperate is our situation, suddenly prayer makes much more sense, and becomes much easier to prioritize. Conversely, if prayer does not seem very important to you, it may be that (1) your vision isn't big enough or (2) you're actually depending on your own strength or wisdom to accomplish a task that only God can do - and for which only God deserves the glory. Your team's plan for prayer and intercession should match the breadth and scope of your team's vision.

Further, for every stage of movement work, and for every CP initiative or strategy your team is working, you should have a corresponding prayer strategy to hold it up. What is your current focus in your movement work? How are you praying into that focus? The AMI Strategic Prayer Manual should help you grow in this respect.

5 Parts of a Strategic Prayer Plan

C. Anderson (in her article at www.dmmfrontiermission.com) lists 5 areas of strategic prayer that a movement team should consider on a regular basis:

- 1) **Prayerwalking** - this simple practice has many benefits - it will help your team grow in love and vision for your target people \ location, it will give you fresh insights into your target people's lives, and if done with a listening prayer mindset, the Lord may use prayer walks to speak specific things to consider, to pray for or against, or to lead you to people open to the good news.

Some questions to help you think more about this aspect of your plan:

- How often are we prayerwalking among our target people or location?
- How often are we out among our people *in an attitude of prayer and listening*?
- How systematic are we being in our attempts to prayer over \ through our target location?
- How attentive are we being to the Lord's direction about specific areas in which to focus our efforts?
- In what ways do we need to learn more about effective prayerwalking?

- 2) **Individual Prayer Commitments** - Hopefully everyone on your team is regularly connecting with the Father in their own devotional times, but how much time each week does each member of your team set aside for intercession for your target people or location? Experienced movement catalysts report that they often spend hours each day in prayer and intercession. That may seem a long way off, but what change could you make today to open up more time for targeted intercession for the work that the Lord has invited you into? Anything more than what you're doing now is progress!

Some questions to help you think more about this aspect of your plan:

- How much time does each team member spend in targeted intercession for the work each week?
- Given that there are limited hours in each day, what could each team member stop doing in order to make more time available for strategic prayer?
- How could each team member combine intercession with existing activities?
- To what degree might we be valuing our own "doing" over asking the Lord to move on our behalf? How can we change mindsets that depend more on our own ability than on the power of God?
- What will be the focus of our individual times of intercession?

- 3) **Regular Corporate Prayer Times** - Most teams have regular team meetings, though many of those meetings focus little on actual intercession for the work. Many teams have found it helpful to prioritize prayer, interceding and listening together as a group before whatever else may occupy their meetings. Of course, administration and scheduling and strategic planning all have to happen - but every one of those will be more effective and powerful if built on a foundation of prayer. You may not be able to have a separate prayer time, but at least

consider how you could spend a significant amount of time in prayer before anything else at your regular meetings.

Further, you might consider with whom else you could pray, locally or long distance, for your work: teammates, local brother and sisters, near-culture believers, workers from other organizations, etc. Building unity through corporate prayer has often been the foundation for broader unified efforts to initiate movements among unreached peoples.

Some questions to help you think more about this aspect of your plan:

- How often does your team meet together to intercede and wait on the Lord for guidance, insight, or wisdom?
- How well does your team keep track of what you hear: impressions, guidance, warnings, encouragements, or specific scriptures you receive during times of prayer? Do you have a means of weighing these things and reviewing them as you move forward in your work?
- On what does \ will your team focus during times of corporate intercession?
- How is your team pursuing prayer with others outside of your team? With local believers, other foreign or local workers from other teams or organizations, etc.?
- How often does your team schedule and execute longer focused times of prayer and intercession? Have you considered coming together for a 1/2 night or full night or prayer? A corporate fasting time?

4) **Extraordinary Prayer Mobilization** - the most fruitful movement teams are often those who not only pray themselves, but also work hard to mobilize others to pray as well. There are a number of creative ways to mobilize prayer, but most of them require maintaining relationship with prayer supporters by way of frequent, specific, illuminating communication. If you are going to go to the trouble of writing prayer updates, consider keeping ministry prayer updates separate from more general family news, etc. Keep prayer updates \ requests short and to the point, send them frequently (as often as every 1-2 weeks, depending on your situation), keep the requests specific and time-sensitive, and write the requests in such a way that they illustrate or illuminate the bigger issues your team is facing, without lots of background explanation.

Some questions to help you think more about this aspect of your plan:

- How many committed prayer partners does your team have now, all together? Is that enough to see what you want to see? How could increase the number people committed to pray regularly for your team's work?
- How frequently do you communicate with prayer supporters? Do you keep them engaged at least twice each month with current, specific updates?
- Have you considered other means of communicating prayer needs beyond email? WhatsApp broadcast groups, a dedicated Instagram or Twitter account (for those not in security-conscious locations), or connecting with other existing prayer efforts for your target people in order to get your teams' requests featured in other places, and sent to other groups of people?
- Have you attempted to recruit whole churches, or small groups in churches, to pray regularly for your work? This will require relationship building and regular communication, but pays healthy dividends!

- Have you considered pushing your prayer requests out to larger networks of believers connected to your sending church, or other supporting churches or denominations?
- What other tools are other teams using to effectively mobilize prayer? How could you learn from them?
- How could you potentially mobilize prayer from among believers among your target people? From among near-culture believers?

5) **Train Everyone in Extraordinary Prayer** - As others have pointed out (see articles above), when new believers in movements begin to own the burden to pray and intercede for their own people, that is when movements often explode. But even before we get to the point of seeing multiple generations of disciples and churches, we can still be intentionally training others in effective prayer and intercession, and mobilizing prayer among those we train. In fact, just as much as we train others how to share and disciple, we should be training them how to intercede effectively - These are 2 sides of the same coin that should not be separated (prayer and ministry of the Word, Acts 6:4).

Some questions to help you think more about this aspect of your plan:

- Do you have a plan to train believers among your target people or near-culture believers in effective prayer and intercession, beyond devotional prayer? Is this training part of a larger effort to train more believers in sharing and discipling?
- If you are already seeing house churches form, how are you modeling and training effective intercession for them?
- How are you assisting new believers, house churches, and house church networks to create their own strategic prayer plan?
- How are you helping them to understand the biblical underpinnings for strategic prayer?
- How are you helping them to grow in vision through listening to the Father through prayer?

** Resources for all of these kinds of prayer can be found elsewhere in the Strategic Prayer Manual.*

Creating Your Plan

One of the first steps to progressing in strategic prayer is to simply have a plan to do so. Here are some steps to help you make an initial plan. Remember, though you want all 5 of the above to be part of your plan eventually, start with something you can actually implement this week. Any progress is an improvement, especially if you seek to continue making small steps toward greater intentionality and effectiveness in intercession for the work the Lord has entrusted to you.

- 1) As an individual, couple, or team, schedule a 30-60 minute block of time, when you will not be disturbed, to **wait on the Lord** and ask Him how He would have you proceed. You might consider asking Him some of the questions listed above, and journaling the answers as a basis for your plan.
- 2) As a first step to implementing your plan, you might consider simply making more time in your schedule for intercession, or this week, for planning your intercession.
- 3) Look back through each of the 5 sections above - **think of 1 thing you could do**, 1 way in which you could engage each of the 5 aspects of strategic prayer listed above. Write these below:

1) **Prayerwalking:** _____

2) **Individual Prayer Commitments:** _____

3) **Regular Corporate Prayer Times:** _____

4) **Extraordinary Prayer Mobilization:** _____

5) **Training Others in Extraordinary Prayer:** _____

- 4) From the above 5 things that you listed, **choose 1-3** to implement in the next 3 months, and make a plan for how and when you will implement these things. Now open your calendar and **schedule recurring blocks of time** for each of the things you chose to implement in the next few months.
- 5) On your calendar, **schedule a block of time to review** your strategic prayer plan in 3 months.
- 6) Return to this exercise in 3 months time, and **repeat** - looking for ways in which you can grow in new areas of strategic prayer, while still maintaining or strengthening the things on which you were previously working.