

5.1.c Leading a time of worship

Worship is one of the most important parts of Strategic Prayer. This section will provide practical insights about how to effectively incorporate worship into times of corporate prayer.

5.1.c.i The role of the worship leader

The worship leader builds an atmosphere of open-ness to and intimacy with the Lord. They lead the way into the Holy of Holies and usher people in so that they can interact directly with the Lord, to bless Him and be blessed by Him.

They establish a place for the Lord to be enthroned on the praises of God's people.

5.1.c.ii The preparation of the worship leader

A worship leader is first and foremost a humble worshipper.

They must have a servant heart to lead and facilitate others.

Before a time of worship the leader will take (maybe considerable time) to prepare their own heart to hear and receive what the Spirit is saying and where He is leading.

The Lord may give the worship leader a certain theme or scripture that will be important in the time of worship and prayer.

They will prepare practically making sure that people have the words that they need to sing (books, OHP, video projector). Any technical equipment needs to be carefully checked to avoid distracting technical failures!

The worship leader will probably find it helpful to have a number of songs prepared that flow together thematically and musically.

5.1.c.iii Leading worship

It is always important that the worship leader stays open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and is prepared to depart from any prepared list or order.

The worship leader needs to work closely with whoever is leading the prayer time. Often a closeness develops over time where the worship leader understands the overall direction the prayer leader is taking and is sensitive to lead the worship in that direction.

The worship leader also needs to be responsive to the group of worshippers. Are they 'experienced' worshippers or is this new for them in which case they may need more encouragement and explanation? What background do they all come from? What are they used to? What will free them most in worship?

5.1.c.iv The time of worship

Times of worship should not just been seen as singing but may include many different elements as we use all of our strength and creativity to worship God. For instance they may include:

- Singing
- Instrumental music
- Speaking out truth
- Reading scripture
- Meditating on scripture
- Sharing stories of God's goodness and love
- Using our bodies dancing, jumping, bowing, kneeling, prostrating
- Applause and clapping
- Reverent silence

Worship in Strategic Prayer is also corporate, meaning that we do it together. It is not a time when we bring our own individual worship but we declare something together. Often there will need to be a progression in worship to help people to enter into the Lord's presence. Depending on the focus of the gathering this may look something like:

- Preparation - forgetting other distractions and focusing on the Lord maybe in silence
- Intent – speaking out or intention to worship together as His people (Ps 95:1-2)
- Repentance – A time to allow the Holy Spirit to search and convict people's hearts (Ps 139:23)
- Thanksgiving & praise – stirring people to 'enter in' and worship (Ps 100:4)
- Declaration - using worship to proclaim truth over the nations and declare the Kingdom
- Intimacy – sensing His presence and hearing His voice

5.1.c.v Sample outline for approx 45 mins of worship

Preparation:

A few moments quiet to focus hearts and give an opportunity for confession

A time of entering in: 2-3 songs:

Usually the best way to begin a time of praise and worship is with thanksgiving, praise, and declaring the rule of the Lord. Musically, this usually is done using upbeat, faster songs that focus on lifting up the lord, praising His goodness, proclaiming His rule and His Kingdom, etc. There can also be reading of scripture for example Psalm 100:4

A time of worship/meditation on a theme: 3-4 songs:

If this praise time is meant to be part of a gathering that has a certain theme, you need to incorporate songs that serve that theme in preparing people's hearts and minds to focus on that idea. Whether it's part of a theme or not, this time is usually more mellow and meditative. Slower songs are usually more useful here.

Closing 2-3 songs:

You probably don't want to leave people in a contemplative place. Bring people back with some upbeat, faster songs again, and finish on a note of victorious proclamation.

5.1.c.vi Suggestions for leading a time of praise and worship leading into a time of prayer and intercession:

Usually shorter than the 45 min time slot

May not have the worship/contemplative style section above but may have a somewhat quieter part that is focused on supplication or repentance

Having songs of powerful proclamation often really opens up the atmosphere of faith.

5.1.c.vii General suggestions:

Try to repeat songs just enough that people have a chance to think about the words but not so many times that they "check out" and disengage.

Choose musical keys that are easy for both men and women to sing (too high is too hard for women, too low is too hard for men). However, keep in mind that lower keys have a

** Taken from Strategic Prayer: A Guide for Apostolic CP Teams (Groundwork)*

psychologically saddening effect, as it brings down the ‘mood’. So, aim to play them in the highest sing-able key!

If possible have words for songs ready and easily accessible to people. PowerPoint is good because it lifts people’s faces up and helps them to be part of the group rather than focusing on themselves as they stare into a book.

Pray for gifted worship leaders to be involved in Strategic Prayer – not just in your city or country but in every nation.

5.1.d A time of listening

We are not always good at taking time to listen to God. We are very quick to start talking in our praying. However, we need to develop the discipline of listening to God. Here is an exercise that might help:

- a) Worship to help us come into God’s presence
- b) 5 minutes of silence – wait on God – ask one of these questions:
 - What do You want us to pray about, Lord?
 - What is standing in the way of cp movements in our nation?
 - What is Your Spirit doing that needs further prayer?
 - Is there a Scripture that should be prayed through now for our nation?
 - Is there something You want us to ask for in faith?
 - Is there a battle needing to be fought in prayer?
- c) Each person shares what came to mind during the time of silence.
- d) The prayer leader discerns the direction prayer should take for the rest of the allotted time.

5.1.e Leading different types of prayer meetings

5.1.e.i 2 hour

This is a good way to get into longer times of Strategic Prayer and is good for those who have never spent prolonged periods of prayer. Try to keep the time moving with a variety of forms – sung worship, corporate simultaneous prayer, prayer in groups, prayer in pairs, silence, reading

scripture etc. Take time at the beginning to explain to everyone what is expected and what time you aim to finish. This means that people can relax and know what is happening.

5.1.e.ii 5 hour

This is the regular time of prayer with the whole group. Obviously there is no set rule to this, but five is a significant number. In Colombia we would begin at three o'clock every afternoon and go until eight, six days a week. Vary the time as for the 2-hour prayer time. We would often take a fifteen to thirty minute break in the middle of the five hours to snack on some food and chill for a while. Ever since then our normal time of Strategic Prayer is for five hours. There is a need for continuity. The same people need to meet every day for this five hour time of prayer. You could begin with 21 days, five hours a day. Try it you'll like it!

*When five hours of prayer goes by
and it seems like it's been only fifteen minutes
and you're having fun
and the Lord is sharing His heart and plans with you for the nation
and people even hang around after the five hours to enjoy each others' company
and you can't wait for the next time you can get together for five hours to pray
and you enjoy these times in the Presence of the Lord more than anything else you do in life then
you won't need anyone to tell you how to run a five hour prayer meeting!*

5.1.e.iii Whirlwind

This is a time of prayer with two or three people. You can do it at home, at school or at work. It is not so much a prophetic time but a time for petitions. Most of the time is spent offering up strong prayers and petitions in the context of a one hour time of prayer.

5.1.e.iv Skype Prayer

The world is flat. So with an internet connection you can set up a time to pray on Skype (using the *conference* facility) with people from all over the country or all over the world (allowing for

time zones)! Set up a time that is convenient for everyone and if possible keep to that time each week. You might want to start with

- one prayer focus, (i.e. a particular people group)
- one other person or couple
- one hour – it will go quicker than you think

Then you can begin to add both time and people (up to 5 locations still works well) to that Skype prayer event. You will need a relatively fast internet connection and will need to adjust speaker volume, microphone level/position so you can all be heard and you don't have too much echoing. It is good to have clear instructions on how you will pray. For instance:

- Appoint someone to convene and facilitate the session
- Introduce yourselves so that everyone knows who is present including more than one person using the same microphone in one location (this also allows you to check microphone levels etc)
- Agree the security guidelines
- Decide the sequence in which participants will pray to avoid interruptions
- It may help to use the word “over” to indicate that you have finished speaking and it is someone else's term
- Make sure that you are all using the *chat* facility to communicate non-verbally so that a participant can indicate that they would like to interrupt the sequence
- Cut and paste any scriptures or ideas you want to share onto the chat screen
- Know who will reconnect the conference call if a connection is broken

More and more we need to use the internet for the purposes of God in Strategic Prayer. However, in the light of recent concerns over the security of Skype in some locations (particularly China) you will need to decide together what you are happy to say or not say during a prayer session. It will be important that all participants understand the security guidelines.

Skype is an amazing way to pray with people across the time zones. It can take Strategic Prayer into a totally new dimension! Try it out.

5.1.f Organizing a period of focused prayer

Periods of focused prayer may include: gathering people together in one place to pray for anything from 3 to 21 days; or it may mean organising a month or year of prayer for a city, people group or country when you mobilise an international prayer focus.

5.1.f.i A three-day event

** Taken from Strategic Prayer: A Guide for Apostolic CP Teams (Groundwork)*

It's good to take a full three days. We talk about planting the banner of prayer in a particular city for those three days. Just as in the olden days of battle the captain would plant the troop's banner on a hill and then all the soldiers would see the banner and gather there to fight. Choose a suitable venue that is available for the whole time. People from all over the country can be invited. It's good to have a good number come in from outside because then the only thing they have on their agenda for those three days is to pray. We understand that the majority of the time we are together during these three days is to pray and not to receive teachings. We impart by doing so keep public teaching and preaching to a minimum and do the teaching by modelling times of prayer.

5.1.f.ii A twenty-one-day event

This is an extended time of continual prayer. It needs to be planned well in advance, if possible, so that people can prepare themselves to take time off from their daily activities of work and study. The way we like to do it is to have a four or five hour prayer meeting at the beginning of the day in small groups. Then we have a time of teaching in the afternoon after lunch that usually lasts one hour. Then we break until the evening when we all come together for a three hour evening "break through" session which usually goes from 7 to 10 pm. There will be times when it will be both fasting and prayer. Other times there may be a sense to have days of 24/7 prayer where people are praying around the clock. There may be some who can only pray for one week during the 21 days, but there should be a good core group that prays together every day right through the 21 days. One more thing needs to be said about this. We are literally meaning 21 days. Not 10 and not 28 but 21 days. Daniel understood that this was the time prescribed by God in order to bind the strong man and allow God to accomplish His purposes in the heavenlies. These battles in the unseen world will have great repercussions in the seen world.

5.1.f.iii A period of international focused prayer

The most important thing about organising a period of prayer for a city, nation or people group is to be sensitive to what the Spirit is saying. All the planning, networking, finance and effort cannot replace the wisdom and guiding of the Holy Spirit.

Whoever has the vision needs to clearly communicate it to others, preferably face to face as this is much more effective than letters or emails. For large projects it can be very useful to have

publicity, PowerPoints and videos. But these are never a substitute for the raw enthusiasm and heart of the person who is carrying God's vision.

It may be that a steering group needs to come together to facilitate and oversee the period of prayer. These people ideally need to be in the country on the ground where they are observing and sensing what is happening as the prayer progresses. If there are churches present then it may be good if national believers were involved in this group as well as expatriates.

It can be very effective to network together Christians in other places. In particular there are many prayer networks around the world that have a burden to pray for the nations. They are sometimes keen to partner with groups involved in Strategic Prayer on the ground.

If people outside of the situation are being asked to pray then it is very important to provide them with adequate material to pray over. It may be that prayer bulletins could be sent daily, weekly or monthly probably using email. DVDs and videos can provide a good introduction and overview of the situation. Flags and maps are good visual aids that can be given to people. Maybe a small booklet with background information, history and demographics could be produced.

One of the most important aspects of mobilising prayer is feedback. People need to know that their prayers are being answered. There is nothing more discouraging than praying for an urgent situation but then never hearing what happened. So when prayer requests are sent out they need to be followed up by frequent updates during the period of focused prayer and preferably afterwards too.