

Partnering with God to Pray for Others

INTRODUCTION

Prayer Ministry is all about partnering with God in his ministry to people. Jesus came to destroy the works of Satan and reconcile the world to himself¹. As his followers, he fills us with his Spirit, and sends us out in his authority to do what he did². In this training, you will learn to partner with God in his ministry to people through prayer.

Partnering with God is...

- Being Spirit Filled and Spirit Led
- Listening to God's Voice
- Doing What Jesus Did and Praying with His Authority

First, it is important that we consider what we mean by *prayer*. While there are many ways of praying, there are a few key aspects to prayer that we want to consider:

Prayer is conversation: Prayer is a two-way conversation that involves both talking and listening to God.

Prayer is communion: Prayer can be more than conversation with God. Prayer is communion or being *with* God. It is spending time in his presence and learning to live life present to God.

It matters who we are praying to: As Jesus followers, we pray to the God revealed to us in the Bible. This means we pray to a God who is loving, holy, sovereign, good, powerful, and kind. We pray to the God revealed to us in Jesus. We pray to a God who is not absent, distant, or angry, but close, intimate, and personal. This affects how we pray.

Prayer is not about performance: Prayer is not about conjuring up the right words or incantations, rigid legalism, or mastering hyper religious or super spiritual language.

Growing in prayer is a process: There is no such thing as a prayer expert or prayer professional. This course is all about growing together. We recognize that we learn to pray by praying. For this reason, this course involves both *teaching* and *practice*.

Through this guide, you will learn to partner with God through prayer to bring reconciliation and restoration to people. You will learn how to hear from God and pray in a way that is encouraging, strengthening, and comforting³.

¹ John 10:10

² 2 Corinthians 5:17-6:2

³ 1 Corinthians 14:3

WHAT IS PARTNERING WITH GOD?

Being Spirit Filled and Spirit Led

Jesus was full of the Spirit, led by the Spirit, and went places in the power of the Spirit. The Spirit was on him, and he was anointed by the Spirit.⁴ Jesus regularly went away to quiet and solitary places to pray, in order to discern what God was leading him to do next⁵. Paul teaches Jesus followers to be filled by the Holy Spirit⁶, to be led by the Spirit, and to keep in step with the Spirit⁷.

Jesus fills his followers with the Holy Spirit⁸, in order that we might continue his work and do the stuff that he did⁹. Jesus teaches his disciples to ask for the Holy Spirit¹⁰. He even taught that it would be better for him to return to the Father¹¹, so that the Holy Spirit could be with us and live in us¹². Jesus even teaches us that we will do greater things than he did through the presence of the Holy Spirit¹³.

Being Spirit filled and Spirit led is a normal part of following Jesus. We shouldn't expect to do what he did without him, nor should we expect that Spirit filled ministry is just for a special, select few. Being Spirit filled relieves us from the pressure of making something happen and increases our expectancy that something will happen!¹⁴

The Holy Spirit reminds us that we are children of God¹⁵, and empowers us to do the work that Jesus did. His work includes leading us to truth¹⁶, helping us to experience God's love¹⁷, and giving us spiritual gifts to help us minister to people¹⁸. The Holy Spirit enables us to minister to people with the power of Jesus¹⁹ and the posture of Jesus²⁰. For this reason, we seek to learn what the Spirit's voice sounds like, what his presence feels like, and his what his ministry looks like.

Listening to God's Voice

God speaks to us through the Bible. The Bible teaches us how to discern the voice of God by showing us what God sounds like²¹. We learn his voice by spending time with him. There is no substitute for intimacy with God²². If we are to be led by his Spirit, we need to make space to learn and listen for his voice²³.

⁴ Luke 3:21-22, 4:1, 14, 18-19

⁵ Mark 1:35-39

⁶ Ephesians 5:18-20; better translated to go on being or keep on being filled

⁷ Galatians 5:16-26

⁸ John 20:19-23, 14:15-17, 17:20-23, Acts 1:4, 2:1-4

⁹ Luke 9:1-2, 10:1,9

¹⁰ Luke 11:9-13

¹¹ John 16:7

¹² John 14:17

¹³ John 14:12-14

¹⁴ Acts 3:1-16 is a great example of Spirit filled life. As they were going, they encounter a man who God desires to heal. They use Jesus' authority to heal. They view this as something that Jesus does through them, not as something they do apart from him.

¹⁵ Romans 8:14-17, Galatians 4:4-7

¹⁶ John 14:15-17, John 16:13

¹⁷ Romans 5:5, Ephesians 3:16-20

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 and 12:28, Ephesians 4:11, Romans 12:6-8, 1 Peter 4:11

¹⁹ Luke 24:49, 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, Ephesians 3:16-20

²⁰ Galatians 5:13-26, 1 Corinthians 13

²¹ John 10:1-18

²² Matthew 7:21-23,

²³ Mark 1:35-39

Jesus teaches us that the Father is always working²⁴. It's our job to pay attention to what God is already doing and seek to partner with him in his work²⁵. We can do this by paying attention to his presence and promptings as we go about life. This will take intentionality in learning how he speaks and require us to pay attention to him throughout the day. Intentionality takes practice. A constant refrain in the gospels is that we would *"have eyes to see, and ears to hear."*²⁶ Jesus will often show us who to minister to and how to minister²⁷. The more we practice, the more we will see opportunities to minister to others. As we listen for God to speak, we can begin to minister in his authority.

Doing What Jesus Did and Praying with His Authority

Listening for God to speak is pointless if we don't also do what he says!²⁸ Jesus sends out his disciples to do the stuff he did. His mission to reconcile the world to himself is now our mission; we are to partner with him in his reconciliation of all things²⁹. This means that we will heal, deliver, forgive, and reconcile people through him.

In the book of Luke, Jesus quotes the book of Isaiah to show what the ministry of the Kingdom looks like. According to this passage, ministry of the Kingdom is...

- Empowered by the Holy Spirit
- Acceptance to marginalized people
- Freedom to enslaved people
- Sight to blind people
- Liberation for oppressed people
- Healing to sick people

This kind of ministry was a regular occurrence in Jesus' ministry: he both announced and demonstrated the Kingdom³⁰. He sends his disciples out to do the stuff he was doing³¹, to announce and demonstrate the reality of the goodness of God, his coming Kingdom.

The Father has given Jesus all authority, and he is sending us out in his authority to continue his mission³². Jesus vanquished the works of the devil. He took authority over darkness and destroyed the works of the devil³³. As we are filled with his Spirit and listen to his voice, we will increasingly find ourselves doing what he did³⁴. As we practice the ministry of Jesus, we will see people healed, delivered, and encouraged by God's presence. For this reason, we seek to minister to others with his posture, his presence, and his power.

²⁴ John 5:17

²⁵ Read the Book of Acts. This sort of logic is all over the disciples and early church.

²⁶ This phrase is commonly used in the synoptic gospels in reference to parables Jesus told about the Kingdom. I am using it here as another way to show that the Kingdom Jesus preached is advancing in our midst. Do we have eyes to see it?

²⁷ This is common in Jesus' ministry- when he *has* to go to a certain place or use a certain route, consider John 4:4.

²⁸ Matthew 7:24-27, James 2:22-25

²⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:16-6:2

³⁰ Matthew 4:23

³¹ The Twelve: Luke 9:1-2, The Seventy-Two: 10:1 and 9, and ALL disciples: Matthew 28:16-20

³² Matthew 28:16-20

³³ 1 John 3:8

³⁴ Ephesians 6:11

CORE VALUES

Biblical

We want to be rooted in the scriptures- even when we are pushed out of our comfort zone. The scriptures help us to learn and discern the voice of God. We submit to the Bible for our worldview and seek to pray in a way that is consistent with who God reveals himself to be in the Bible.

Spirit Filled and Spirit Led

We seek to be filled and led by the Holy Spirit as we partner with him to minister to others. For this reason, we seek to leave space for the Holy Spirit to speak, work, and direct us as we pray.

Simple

We seek to be simple, clear, and direct when we pray for others. We seek to use normal everyday language and to be concise as we pray.

Normal

When we pray, we don't need to be weird, overbearing, mystical, or intense. While people may experience physical, spiritual, or emotional manifestations of God's presence, our goal is to be normal and calm, and to demystify the Spirit's activity.

Compassionate

Compassion is the foundation of prayer ministry. Without love for people, we become religious and legalistic. We seek to love people by helping them to encounter God's loving presence.

MINISTRY POSTURE

Invitational

Jesus invites people to respond to him. We don't want to force or manipulate people.

Ask Permission: ask permission to pray, to lay hands, etc.

Allow Freedom to come back: Encourage people to keep receiving prayer. The Father is always working- we can experience this instantaneously as well as over time.

Conversational

We seek to be normal in our language and physical posture, and humble as we share.

Normal Tone: Speak in a normal style and tone. Seek to avoid intensity. Seek to be self-aware: no shouting, hyping up, or whispering.

Everyday Language: Use normal, everyday language. Don't use elaborate, wordy, theologically advanced, or insider language. When sharing pictures or visions, try to be concise and clear.

Sharing in Humility: Share with the level of certainty you actually have. We seek to draw attention to

God and what he is doing, not to ourselves. Refrain from elitist or super-spiritual language. Seek to serve others through your words, tone, and posture.

Loving

The goal of prayer ministry is for people to feel loved. Create space for people to encounter God's loving presence by being sensitive to God and by embodying God's love in your interaction with the person.

Respect the Dignity of the Individual: We want to ensure that people are being treated with respect, value, and dignity. Be aware that receiving prayer can be vulnerable, sensitive, or awkward, and seek to normalize and gently coach people in receiving prayer.

Same Gender Where Possible: This is to protect both you and the person you are praying for. When praying for someone of a different gender, best practice is to ask someone of the same gender as the person receiving prayer to join you in praying for them.

Confidentiality: People may share information that is private or confidential. Do not share this information with others, except in the case of self-harm, harm of others, or harm of children. In these cases, invite a pastor, leader, or professional into the situation.

Affirm, Don't Condemn: Jesus didn't come to condemn, but to offer everlasting life. God may convict people of sin, but we don't name or shame people for sin, instead we offer life through making space for confession and receiving forgiveness.

Prophetic ministry is for the encouraging, strengthening, and building up of others. We seek to see people how God does and speak his life-giving words to and over them.

Remember, what's loving for you isn't loving for everyone- be sensitive to the person in front of you, and don't assume that they receive love the same way you do. Be conscious of others around you and remember that you are modeling prayer ministry to others.

PRAYER MODEL

01. Ask

Ask to Pray. Ask if you can pray for the person. Be sure to explain what you are going to do and how you are going to do it.

Ask the Lord to come. Invite the Holy Spirit to come and minister to the person and wait.

02. Listen + Wait

Make Space to Listen. Take your time and allow the Holy Spirit to come and minister to the person you are praying for. While you wait...

Ask God what He is doing. In your head, ask the Lord what he is up to, and how he wants to love this person. Ask, "Lord, what are you up to?" or "Lord, is there anything you want me to

say?"

How might God speak? A word or phrase, picture, thought, verse, emotion, sense, feeling, affirmation, specific area of healing, or something specific that he wants to do.

Be a Non-Anxious Presence. Stand confidently knowing that it is God who ministers to his people. We want to partner with him by helping to create a safe and loving environment for others to encounter him.

03. Commentate + Pray

Commentate. It's important to have an ongoing conversation and commentate as you go, explain what you see happening. Remember to keep your eyes open and watch what God is doing outwardly. Continually encourage by acknowledging what you see God doing and by checking in with the person.

Pray. Pray simple prayers out loud, such as "Come Holy Spirit", "More Lord", "Thank You God", or "Lord we bless what you are doing". These are not formulas, but helpful ways of joining in with what God is doing. These prayers indicate that it is God who is doing the work, and that we are simply observing and participating in what He is doing.

Share in Humility. If you feel like the Lord has given you something to pray, say it with confidence and gentleness, never speaking on behalf of the Lord. As you give words or pictures be clear and concise. Remember, be as normal as possible and commentate as you go.

If we don't hear anything, continue to pray simple prayers. We don't have to worry or force it. It's not about conjuring something up for them; it's about God ministering to them. However, do not let fear of "missing it" or sounding silly keep you from risking in love and humility.