

# EQUIPPING the CHURCH

for  
*Kingdom  
Praying*

BY BARBARA THOMPSON

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Dear Believer,

As the Coordinator of Christian Education and Publications, I am delighted to encourage you to use this helpful prayer manual, written by Mrs. Barbara B. Thompson, Consultant to Women In the Church ministries. Barbara is the wife of a ruling elder, and a woman who has a servant's heart. There is no question that members of the PCA need to heed God's call to prayer.

Listen to Barbara's own testimony and purpose for writing and compiling this manual:

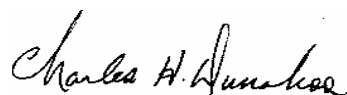
"As a new-born believer, the first Bible study I attended was based on Evelyn Christenson's book, *What Happens When Women Pray*. I still remember the verse we memorized, James 5:16, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." Twenty years later, as I study Douglas Kelly's *If God Already Knows, Why Pray?*, I'm learning again of God's design for prayer and the privilege of praying. Kelly writes, "The New Testament teaches us through the account of the Apostle Paul's life that one of the first effects of the new birth is the beginning of true prayer." And what is true prayer? "...the key to true prayer is God first, mankind second....every true prayer is a trumpet against secularism and an opening of the door to the reality of the glory and power of the risen Christ to flood into our entire situation."

Maybe you read the first paragraph and concluded that my prayer life is rich and obedient. After all, I have studied the subject from scripture and other books for *all* of my believing life. Wrong conclusion! My difficulty with this spiritual discipline is similar to my difficulty with diet. My head knowledge far exceeds my obedience and walk. Thus I write this prayer guide and call it as a tool to provoke true believers to apply what we already know about Kingdom prayer,

This is not a study about prayer. The resources listed provide you with multiple choices of studies, books, devotional guides, and helps. This is, however, an exhortation and a tool. My question is, What happens when true believers pray kingdom prayers? I pray that true believers will be responsive and that God will be pleased. Thank you for your leadership in this effort. I am praying for you!"

I join Barbara in her prayer that God will challenge, encourage, and motivate you to faithful, steadfast prayer.

Sincerely in Christ,



Charles Dunahoo Coordinator

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— *This material is formatted to allow you to easily copy it and create a booklet to hand out.*

# USING THIS GUIDE

This guide is compiled to help you lead or plan a variety of prayer efforts. It can provide resources to help you start a prayer ministry, or fresh ideas for an existing prayer group. Your leadership team and prayer warriors should adapt these suggestions to fit the style and vision in the local church.

Kingdom Praying is participating through praise and petitions in the revealed will of the Father as set forth in His Word. Another way to say this is that Kingdom praying is praying God's Word. Kingdom praying points us to scriptural references when we pray tying each prayer request to a specific scripture. If no scripture is identified, then pray that God will lead you to the specific Scripture applicable to the request. When we encourage people that we are praying, it is helpful to refer to the scripture prayed.

Example: If praying for a rebellious child - pray from Ephesians 3:17-19. Lord, I pray that Christ may through her faith dwell, make His permanent home in her heart. That she will be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love, that she will have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth of your love. That she may know the love of Christ which far surpasses mere knowledge; that she may be filled unto all the fullness of God (Amplified Bible).

Goals: To exhort, encourage, and equip the Church for Kingdom praying. To establish congregations in God's Word as the foundation for Kingdom praying. To build community among the congregation as they participate in Kingdom praying through small groups. To encourage compassionate hearts among congregations as they pray Kingdom prayers for one another and the world.

## Planning Alternatives:

A ministry leadership team can use this guide to make an annual prayer plan as a part of vision and implementation of all other activities.

Plan a particular prayer study using the suggested resources.

Plan a prayer day or event for prayer and use the suggested resources.

Using the guidelines given, make prayer time a part of regularly scheduled Church events such as Bible studies, retreats, and ministry teams. For example, all small groups may use the same prayer plan despite their different studies or activities.

Leaders: The prayer time leader and/or prayer study teacher should prepare in the following ways.

- *Pray* - ask several people to pray with you about the possibility of using one of the prayer studies or establishing a prayer group.
- *Request* - Ask the pastor and/or elder who oversees the particular ministry to review this guide as well as your plans. Ask for his input, wisdom, and continuing oversight.
- *Publicize* - Establish the goals and vision with clear parameters. Publicize details such as time required, and clearly state that participants will not be expected to pray aloud.
- *Pray* - There is no way to over emphasize the need for prayer about prayer. Kingdom prayer by God's people is likely to be resisted. Refer to the full armor of God in Ephesians 6. Pray and ask others to pray that God will use this time.

Evaluate: Each prayer leader as well as other leadership should evaluate regularly with questions such as:

Are people praying individually and corporately—not just talking about prayer but actually praying?

Is gossip or slander creeping into the prayer times?

Are there journals or other ways to document God's answers to prayer?

What is the opinion of the church leadership about the prayer ministry? What changes do they suggest?

Handouts: The prayer guidelines may be copied and handed out at prayer times.

*Seeking Higher Ground* by JoAnn Hackenberg may be copied in booklet form and used at retreats or during a prayer study.

# INTRODUCTION

In *Near Unto God*, edited by James C. Schaap, Abraham Kuyper says:

What we should never assume is that God acts in our lives only when we ask him. That's ridiculous and wrong. The truth is, God has something to do even with the substance of our prayers. When we understand that, we've come closer to seeing light in the darkness of our doubt.

God plants the seeds for our prayers just as surely as a farmer plants seeds in spring. Our prayers, thus, develop just as seeds ripen. As we grow in our knowledge of God and his promises, our prayers actually mature. Our foolish prayers become purified, the nearer we come to the Lord.

True believers live in the presence of God. We know God who has established this relationship based on His covenant promises to be our God and to dwell among His people. God made us and called us to be His sons and daughters.

To paraphrase Douglas Kelly, children talk! And that is the essence of kingdom praying. Kingdom prayer is not a pathway to stress free living, health, wealth, or prosperity. Nor is it our opportunity to control and have our self-centered way Kingdom prayer is a privilege of the covenant.

## *Privilege*

One of our covenantal privileges is intimate fellowship as we immerse ourselves in God's Word and hear with enlightened hearts what He has to say. The corollary of hearing Him is responding to Him as the Holy Spirit prays through us by interpreting and enabling our prayers.

Our privilege does not end with intimacy. God calls and enables us in the incomprehensible privilege of participating in a powerful and exciting calling: Kingdom praying! God uses us in His eternal purposes and plans. Mysteriously, His design for doing His will on earth as it is in heaven does not *just include* our praying but *depends upon* our prayers. As we think of this privilege of participation, we are cautioned by Mordecai's words to Esther, "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14) Our royal position as Sons and Daughters of the King equips us as God's people for kingdom prayer.

## *Pattern for True Prayer*

The divine pattern for prayer is rich in its application for equipping believers for kingdom prayer. One of my earliest Christian experiences was attending Sunday School with Mrs. Mary Aldridge. She opened the Bible Sunday after Sunday and spoke to us from her wealth of experience and heart of commitment to the Lord's Prayer. What did I learn?

### Priority

The Lord's Prayer begins and ends with God. Douglas Kelly speaks of this as prayer depending on God's person and character. Kingdom prayer begins with contemplating His glory and His character. When we are given a glimpse of His glory, we see our urgent need of His mercy and respond with



gratitude for His grace. Kingdom praying always reminds of us who God is, of who we are and are not, and of our dependence on His redeeming love manifested in Jesus Christ. *God First* will never be our own idea. The Holy Spirit through the Word of God teaches, convicts, and enables the true praise of our hearts and lips.

### Petitions

The Lord's Prayer includes three requests which Douglas Kelly categorizes as Provision, Pardon, and Protection. In determining the substance of prayer these petitions are inclusive. These explanations from Kelly are helpful:

*Provision:* "...since Christ teaches us to pray not merely for my daily bread but for our daily bread, we are to be concerned for the material needs of the whole body of Christ, and indeed, like the good Samaritan, for our neighbor. The closer we get to Christ, the more we will transcend our own immediate concerns and become burdened and full of compassion for the poor and oppressed..."

*Pardon:* "...the day-to-day need that we have, as justified but imperfectly sanctified sinners, of forgiveness and cleansing." Praying for pardon also extends to praying for God's forgiveness to be evident as we plead for salvation of the lost as well as the obedience of forgiveness among His people.

*Protection:* "...we are asking the Lord to keep us from getting into situations of trial or temptation which would be stronger than we could resist." We also are asking Him to protect others.

### *Perseverance*

The Lord's Prayer gives us the divine pattern for the substance or content of prayer. The Word also straight-forwardly instructs us about the style of prayer. We should pray with perseverance. True believers praying Kingdom prayers are given strong admonitions to keep on, to stand firm, and to wrestle in prayer. Persevering prayer is described as without embarrassment, self-protection, or shame. See Luke 11 and 18.

God's people equipped for Kingdom praying for Kingdom purposes know the Intimacy of a relationship with Christ and their positional privilege in Christ. The Lord's Prayer summarizes the essence of Kingdom prayer: *Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done!*

Will God's people in the PCA respond to the call to participate in God's Kingdom purposes and plans through Kingdom praying? Christian Education and Publications and the Women's Advisory Subcommittee pray and intend that the tools in this manual will equip the denomination for such a time as this.

# PART I - PRAYER PLANS

## CHAPTER 1

### Prayer Retreat Plan

Objective: Equipping God's people for Kingdom praying and establishing group prayer ministries.

Participants will receive a plan for praying individually and in groups and will exercise this plan during the retreat. They will also be exhorted and trained through testimonies or panels at each session.

Planning: *Considerations - Plan a prayer retreat which is either a kick-off or completion of a study on prayer.*

*The book or study would then offer guidelines for the retreat and include participants in the study. - Consider carefully the location of a prayer retreat You may want participants to have individual rooms or plenty of open indoor or outdoor space for them to be alone with the Lord.*

1. Present the concept of a prayer retreat to the pastor and/or elder assigned to church retreats. Ask for his input and oversight of the retreat. Ask him to attend if at all possible.
2. Recruit a planning team for the retreat.
3. Pray as a planning team that
  - a. God will give wisdom (James 1).
  - b. The team will be filled with the knowledge of God's will for this retreat (Colossians 1).
  - c. That attendees will be equipped for and obedient in Kingdom praying.
4. Consider the following possibilities for retreat content:
  - a. Ask two or three true prayer warriors to give a testimony at different sessions or to serve on a panel. (See figure 1-1.)

The following questions give you a starting point for the presentations.

    - *At what point in your spiritual journey did you learn more or become convicted about Kingdom praying?*
    - *How do you define Kingdom prayer?*
    - *What are the barriers to your praying?*
    - *What is the most dramatic answer to prayer you have experienced?*
    - *What kinds of prayers have you seen God answer? « Answer differently than you expected?*
    - *What are some practical suggestions for obedience in praying?*

#### **Planning for Testimonies, Presentations, or Panels:**

A well planned testimony or panel has a time limit and focuses on the goals of the program. Consider the following steps in planning:

- Pray that God will lead you to approach the presenters of His choice for the program.
- Approach each person individually with a written request for participation including:
  - A time limit for the presentation. A well prepared testimony of three minutes is sufficient Panelists can prepare one minute answers to most questions.
  - Questions or an outline for the presentation or panel.
  - A request that participants write and time their presentations and answers.
  - A request that speakers not make any reference to time constraints.
  - A request that participants meet with a person on the planning team to review and rehearse the presentation.
- Choose a panel facilitator who can gently interrupt and move the question from one participant to another.

figure 1 -1

- b. Ask two speakers or presenters to prepare 20 minute segments on some of the following topics. (See figure 1-1.)
- *People Praying Together: The Joys and Snags*
  - *The Effectual Prayers of God's People*
  - *The Biography of a Prayer Warrior* (Choose a person from scripture, like Elijah, Edith Schaeffer, Amy Carmichael, or others.)
  - *The Pattern for Prayer: A Study of the Lord's Prayer*
- c. Plan times for prayer and meditation on prayer as well as group prayer led by prepared facilitators. (See figure 1-2.)
- d. Ask several creative people to plan and present a skit about prayer groups. This skit should point out some of the ways we dilute prayer times including personal distractions, gossip, talking instead of praying, etc.

#### **Preparation of facilitators:**

- Pray that God will lead you to the leaders of His choice.
- Approach leaders individually with a written request that they facilitate prayer groups.
- Give facilitators the prayer guides to be used in small group prayer.
- Give guidelines for facilitators including time limit and sensitivity to those who prefer not to pray aloud.
- Ask facilitators to meet with the planning team for prayer prior to the retreat
- Ask facilitators to read any material to be discussed during the retreat.
- Meet with facilitators at the beginning of the retreat for prayer and review of expectations.

Figure 1-2

## Suggested Schedule:

### First Session:

Speaker who will define Kingdom praying and give exhortation about prayer. (20-30 minutes)

Small Group prayer time led by a designated facilitator who will prepare according to figure 1-2. Consider focusing each group on a specific prayer area such as the lost, missions, mercy ministry, or revival. (You may use prayer guides from this manual.) Allow facilitator to select the prayer topic of his choice. (20-30 minutes)

### Second Session:

Encourage retreat participants to maintain one hour of silence and spend time alone praying and studying God's Word. Give them a prayer guide and scripture references for this time (You may use prayer guides from this manual, excerpts from resource materials, *Seeking God in a Private Place*, by JoAnn Hackenberg, or devotional material.)

See figure 1-3 on the following page for sample material to use in this session.

### Third Session:

Panel or testimonies. (See figure 1-1.)

Large group prayer time focused on one aspect of prayer. For example, spend this session praying for missions or revival. Include appropriate music and hymns.

See figure 1-4 on the following page for an example of this session.

### Fourth Session:

Speaker who will give a biography of a Prayer Warrior. (20 minutes) Ask the speaker to prepare a prayer and reflection guide based on the principles set forth in the presentation.

Follow this presentation with individual prayer and reflection using the speaker's guide.

### Fifth Session:

End the retreat with a time of prayer focused on praise and thanksgiving.

Recruit a facilitator who will lead this large group time interspersed with music. If you choose to include brief testimonies, have someone pray with thanksgiving after each testimony.

See figure 1-5 on page 15 for an example of this session, including topic of praise, testimony, hymn, prayer of thanksgiving.