

A Pattern to Help Find Your Strategy

1. **Broaden the prayer team to help strategize.** If everyone on your team is a seasoned intercessor, their strategies are going to be different than those of a ministry leader. You need to have people who can honestly see whether something will work or not. If all you have are people passionate about prayer, you may not end up with a workable strategy. Try to get a cross section of people—leaders and average attenders—who understand the importance of prayer, but who don't necessarily live and breathe it.
2. **Pray about prayer.** For the first meeting or two or three, I would do very little else than pray together. Seek God for His direction and strategy. It would be great if some would add fasting to this as well. Perhaps set aside a day where the team agrees to fast and pray.
3. **Pass out resources.** Before any brainstorming begins, let team members read valuable resources that can put a picture of a praying church in their minds. These books can also give them thoughts as to what might work given your church's culture. Such books as *The Prayer Saturated Church*, (NavPress) *The Praying Church Sourcebook* (Faith Alive) and *My House Shall Be a House of Prayer* (Pray! Books) as excellent tools to have them study.
4. **Brainstorm ideas.** Have a meeting where team members share what they are sensing. Talk about the different ideas the resources had. What might work in your church; what might be difficult?
5. **Refine the strategy.** Begin putting down on paper—mapping out—where you want to go. Make a three- to five-year plan that includes what you would like to launch when, sets goals for involvement of church members, etc.

As you strategize, you also want to develop a plan in two parallel streams:

A. Implementation. What are we going to do. What prayer ministries/opportunities will we start first, etc. What prayer events will we offer, when.

B. Motivation. How are we going to get people to participate. What keeps people from getting involved in prayer? How do we overcome those barriers. Plan ways to motivate your people.

Many churches develop excellent strategic plans, but fail at this second point. They never figure out how they will encourage people to join into the prayer life of the church.

1. Use your church vision/mission statement as a guide. If your church has a mission statement, it was probably prayed over significantly, and word-smithed carefully. It is supposed to be what your church is all about. So use it to plan your prayer strategies. Make sure every aspect of that statement has prayer woven into the fabric. For example, most statements can be broken down into three areas: Win (evangelism), Train (discipleship), Send (missions). Your starting point with prayer ministry is to make sure each of those areas sees prayer develop within it.

- Develop strategies for prayer evangelism—prayerwalking your neighborhoods, a planned effort to pray for specific lost people, etc.
- Develop strategies to disciple in prayer—through Sunday school classes and small groups with electives, curricula, etc.
- Develop strategies that focus prayer outside the walls of your church and community—into the world. Plan creative ways for people to pray for your church’s missionaries. If you are denominational, get missions prayer guides from your headquarters to use.

2. Focus first with a successful or unique ministry. What’s the ministry that seems to have the most touches to the outside world, that seems to be an effective point of contact for the church and unbelievers? Develop solid prayer for that ministry. For example, what if you had dozens of unbelievers start to come to your M.O.P.S. program? The starting point for this church would be to cover those women in prayer, to have prayer teams in place at the church while the program was going on.