

Prayer: The Hidden Face of Evangelism



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2. Introduction

Prayer is a vital aspect of mission. Effective evangelism is not just about being busy. Persistent, imaginative prayer, offered in faith, makes the vital difference.

This manual is intended as a resource for churches as they engage in mission. The list of contents on the previous page gives the range of subjects covered which embrace both principles and practical application. It would probably be advisable to read the manual through and then to use it as a reference work. In this way, you can access the information you need at the appropriate time.

3. Why Pray?

Evangelism cannot be reduced to a series of activities or techniques. Of course, we must do our best to train people in door-to-door work, in taking home meetings, in preaching the Gospel, giving testimony etc. We must also make the most of every opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus. All of our activity and planning, however, will come to nought if it is not accompanied by prayer. Why? The answer is found in 2 Corinthians 4.4:

“The God of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

This verse, which is backed up by plenty of others, teaches that non-Christians cannot naturally reason their way to Christ. Simply by their own intellect, they cannot grasp who Jesus is, no matter how clearly we explain the message. This is because Satan, the adversary, does not want people to move from his kingdom to that of Jesus Christ. So, in evangelism there is a spiritual battle to be fought. This battle is won in prayer and can be won nowhere else. You cannot compensate by arguing more persuasively! You cannot convert anybody! Conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit alone, in answer to prayer. We can see that the answer to “Why Pray?” is that our evangelism will have a nil effect without prayer. As someone once wrote:

“Evangelism without prayer is like an explosive without a detonator. Prayer without evangelism is like a detonator without explosives. Put these two together and the roof of hell will cave in anywhere. Wherever there is openness to the gospel, faithful prayer has gone before.”

Furthermore, we need to pray for openings for evangelism and for God’s guidance into them. Sometimes we have many good ideas about what to do next - see Acts 16.6-10; what is needed is the Lord’s clear direction and it may take time to discover this. At other times, we seem to have few options. A very useful prayer then, whether for personal use or for a whole church, is the one Paul requested for himself in Col 4:2,

*“And pray for us, too, that God may **open a door for our message ...**”*

God loves to open doors to those who keep on knocking (Luke 11.9). So, the second answer to “Why Pray?” is so that doors may be opened to us for evangelism:

- **for churches:** to receive new vision and see new initiatives established.
- **for individuals:** to gain opportunities daily to bear witness.
- **for both:** maybe to meet “the man of peace” described in Luke 10.6, the person through whom a whole network of people may be evangelised.

Finally, remember that Paul was an experienced evangelist and church planter. Yet he knew that the secret of his ministry was prayer. Therefore, he committed himself to pray and sought prayer from others at every opportunity.

4. Biblical Teaching on Prayer

There are many passages about prayer in the Bible, as well as the example of Jesus and others at prayer. Below are several passages for study. Please do not just read these notes: take time to get your Bible out and study the passages concerned. The studies can be used for both personal and group use.

Intercession A 1 Timothy 2.1-8

Study Questions:

1. What do you understand by the word “intercession”?
2. Consider the various words used in v1 to describe prayer. What do they communicate to you?
3. What should be the scope of our intercession, according to this passage?
4. What qualities (v8) are required of intercessors?

Comment:

To intercede is to come before God on behalf of others, to mediate. In truth this is the work of Jesus Christ (v5), and we can only do it in His name. This is something to do daily on our own, but also it is a command to the Church whenever the people of God gather.

The words used in v1 say something about the prayer that is offered. “Requests” and “prayers” arise from a sense of need, and so express dependence on God. “Intercession” is a word used of bringing a petition before a king; as you come to God in prayer, you come to the King of Kings. Do you come with too small an expectation? This image should make us bold in our requests. Thanksgiving is vital too and fuels our faith. *“For too many of us, prayer is an exercise in complaint” (Barclay).*

Paul encourages us to extend the range of our prayers, if we are those who just pray for our family and friends. We are to include “everyone” (!), those in authority, and prayers for peace (v1-2). The reminder of God’s will in v4 should motivate us to pray for non-Christians. This is an important ministry (“first of all” v1).

Finally, there is the reminder of the need for holy lives (v8: see also Psalm 66.18). The range of this holiness includes anger/being out of fellowship, and also doubting God (“disputing in our minds” literally).

Study Questions:

1. Read John 11.32 carefully. What is the range of feelings that Mary is expressing? What lies behind them?
2. What is the range of problems that Jeremiah faces (v7, 10, 18)? What has put him in this predicament?
3. When we are in such difficult situations, how should we express ourselves to God? How do you react to, say, Jeremiah 20.7a or John 11.32?
4. When God seems a long way away, what can encourage us (2 Corinthians 1.10-11a)?
5. What do we learn through hard times that we might not otherwise understand (2 Corinthians 1.9)?

Comment:

Lamentation is a Biblical form of prayer not well understood today. The three passages describe people walking in dark places. Mary is bereaved and feels let down that Jesus did not come when they called for him. There are times when God seems absent, and it is hard to understand. Paul's hardships, possibly severe illness, made him feel weighed down like an overloaded ship. Jeremiah found that the very task God had given him brought him trouble, and threats of violence. Are we ready to take the knocks that may come from serving Christ? *"Fight valiantly against sin, the world, and the devil ..."* it says in the Anglican Baptism service, with some insight.

We may have been in similar situations, but I wonder if we have prayed as Mary or Jeremiah? Mary's words amount to an accusation, *"Where were you when we needed you?"*. Jeremiah speaks even more strongly, *"You seduced me, God."* He even wishes that the womb had been his tomb (v18). Can we speak to God in such strong terms? Yes! In the dark places we can be real with God; if you have any doubts about that, then read Job. None of the people in these readings were being faithless as, say, Jeremiah 20.13 shows. If they were, then they would give up on God; instead, they turn to him with their pain.

Yet there is hope in these readings too. The fact that Mary *"came to Jesus"* reminds us that Christ is a light in the darkness, even when he feels absent. Paul is comforted that he had the support of the prayers of others (v10-11a). Paul also says that he learnt something from his terrible experience. Having felt himself close to death, he knows in a new way that God raises the dead - something that would not have been so clear to him otherwise. People, who have experienced great suffering, do somehow speak with an authenticity about God's care for those in need.

Study Questions:

1. What does the Luke 18 story teach you about persistence?
2. In what way does Jesus compare and contrast God and the unjust judge?
3. What does the Genesis 32 story teach you about persistence?
4. What is the most profound thing that happens to Jacob here?
5. What does the Acts 16 story teach you about persistence?
6. What aspect of prayer is highlighted by this story?

Comment:

The widow (Luke 18), with no man in the family to represent her in court, is the symbol of helplessness. Worse still, the judge does not care for justice and has no fear of God. We will meet obstacles, and it is these that test our persistence. Like the widow, we must not give up. God is not like an unjust judge! Our situation may make us feel helpless, but we come to God as *"his chosen ones"* (v7) not as an unknown widow. We also have an advocate - Jesus Christ!

Jacob was in a moment of crisis, facing reunion with a brother who wanted to kill him the last time they had been together. His persistence is expressed vividly in the image of wrestling, that continued all night, and the fact that he would not let go until he received the blessing. Each of these things challenges us to pray with passion. We must not imagine, however, that this is a case of twisting God's arm. The most profound truth of this story is that prayer changes us. Jacob has to confess his name (v27) *"the crafty one"*. He is given a new name, and character, *"perseverer with God"*, and from henceforth he knows that he must leave behind his craftiness

Paul (Acts 16) and his companions had tremendous zeal to preach the Gospel, but zeal alone is not enough. They also needed to hear God's plan. Either through prophecy or a sense of dis-ease within them, they found that they were coming up against brick walls. So, listening prayer is part of what it means to persist.

All of these aspects apply to prayer for evangelism. We will surely meet obstacles which test our persistence. There will be times when we need to set aside a whole night to pray - not to twist God's arm, but to see how He might change us. And we will certainly need to be listening and discerning God's plan.

Intercession D Warfare. 2 Kings 6.8-17, Ephesians 6.10-18, Luke 4.31-37

Study Questions:

1. What are the key insights of the 2 Kings passage (v15-17)?
2. How are we able to take our stand (Ephesians 6.10,18)?
3. Consider carefully each piece of the armour in Ephesians chapter 6.
4. How did Jesus deal with the demon in Luke 4.31-37?

Comment:

There is a great deal of confusion in our society, and indeed within the Church, about the spiritual realm. On the one hand we are a very materialistic society, denying the reality of God and of evil spiritual beings. The 2 Kings passage speaks to this in the prayer "*O Lord, open his eyes ...*" (v17). On the other hand, there is a fascination with the paranormal, in TV, film etc. This is equally unhelpful, in that it tends to paint a picture where evil is to be feared as it is at least equal to the "force of good", whether this is called "God" or not. Again 2 Kings is helpful, for Elisha is able to point out the far superior forces on the Lord's side (v17). We can go further, for we recall that Jesus Christ has won the ultimate victory over evil already, on the cross (Colossians 2.15).

This leads us nicely to the Ephesians passage, and the first of my questions above. We take our stand in Christ and praying in the Spirit. This little word is so important, for we are united with Christ in his victory. We do not stand in our own strength. We are people filled with the Holy Spirit, and our prayer arises from that deep reality. With that in mind, we can consider the armour:

Belt of truth

In some respects, these go together, expressing integrity.

Breastplate of righteousness

uprightness, the holiness that God imparts to us.

Feet fitted

Having a firm grasp of the Gospel, we stand; but we also go out to share it with others.

Shield of faith

Large Roman shield, which would keep out all the missiles thrown by the enemy.

Helmet of salvation

Our present sure hope of future glory.

Sword of the Spirit

Three times in the temptation (Luke 4.1-13), Jesus quoted the Word of God (do we know Deuteronomy so well!?).

There is a war on, and we're all involved. If we are to stand firm, then we must take up the weapons. Do you put them on with prayer regularly?

So far, the passages have dealt with raising awareness of supernatural realities, and then of our personal preparation for the battle. The gospel passage shows Jesus on the offensive against the hold evil had on an individual. This is not ministry in which to engage lightly, but it is still relevant today. Notice that Jesus simply took authority (which he also gives to his followers when he sends them out in His name) and told the demon to leave. The reaction was violent, but the man was unharmed - indeed Jesus' desire was that he might be whole again.

Intercession E Praying for Mission

Finally, when it comes to praying for mission, here is a summary of the teaching we give to local churches in mission preparation, with key texts. Pray with ...

Confidence and Faith

1 Timothy 2.3-4

“This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” NIV

God’s will is for people to come to know Him.

Specific Requests

John 14.14

“You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.” NIV

What exactly do we want? We should pray for people and places by name.

Persistence

Luke 18.1

“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.” NIV

This has been dealt with above.

One or Two Others

Matthew 18.19-20

“Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” NIV

Prayer triplets can be an encouraging and practical way to pray. More detail can be shared in these confidential small groups.

The Church

Acts 4.23ff

“On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. Sovereign Lord, they said, you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them... Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus. After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.” NIV

The whole church should come together to pray.

Fasting

Matthew 6.5,16

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full... When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.” NIV

Fasting is a normal part of the Christian life, at least as envisaged by Jesus!

Thanksgiving

Philippians 4.6

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” NIV

This was mentioned above too.

5. Practical Approaches to Prayer

This section explores a variety of ways into prayer. Not all methods will be appropriate to your situation. What is important is that prayer does happen, and that as many of the congregation are able to take part. Variety is of value in keeping prayer fresh and stimulating.

Revitalising the Prayer Meeting

Does your church have a regular prayer meeting? If so, how many people come to it? All too often, where a prayer meeting actually happens, the proportion of church members attending is less than 10%. The same few come faithfully and even then, numbers tend to dwindle slowly. Even those who attend may go from a sense of duty, having lost much sense of expectation that the prayer time makes all the difference. Your prayer meeting may be better than that, but the suggestions below are aimed at keeping it lively and attracting others to it. This is not to say that the meeting must be “entertaining”; however, if it is dull, then can we really commend it as the centre of the life of the church?

Time Can people actually get to a prayer meeting at the time you run it? Consider the elderly who may be available in the daytime, and not like going out at night. Consider people at work who might manage an early morning gathering. When would people with young family best be able to come? Is Saturday morning a good time for many people, or is it the day they spend with family? It may well be that you have to have **several times to attract different groups**.

Venue Is the meeting held at the church? Is it cold, especially in the winter? You might make use of people’s homes for prayer meetings. This can be especially helpful if a couple with young children both want to be involved, or for a prayerful housebound person.

Praise Beginning with worship draws our focus to the Lord. This can be done even in very small groups, where no-one considers themselves musical! For example, taped music can still lead people to praise God in their hearts. In a larger gathering, the people who lead worship should give some thought in advance, rather than having a kind of “praise-song-bingo” approach.

Style Prayer meetings can vary in style. Even within the meeting, there can/should be variety, as each person there will actually feel more able to participate in some ways than in others. Here are some examples:

1. **Open Prayer.** All are invited to contribute, as they feel led. It is worth asking people to pray **briefly** and **so that others can hear**. Long rambling or inaudible prayers are deadly to a prayer meeting.
2. **Facilitated Prayer.** The leader begins with a prayer, or the announcement of a theme to pray for (see below), and then people are invited to contribute to that. People can be asked to give names or single word prayers, which greatly helps those who are shy of praying aloud. The leader then rounds off the section with a prayer to which the people may respond. This could be with an “Amen” or one of the Anglican responses such as “*Lord in your mercy*” (leader), “*Hear our prayer*” (people).
3. **Prayer Together.** Each person in the meeting prays aloud, all at the same time! At first British people tend to find this rather strange, though it is more common in other parts of the

world. The aim is simple: to maximise the amount of prayer. In effect, 6 people praying for 10 mins is an hour of prayer!

4. **Groups/The Whole.** Praying with everyone together is important for discernment. If people listen genuinely to each others' prayers and to God, then insights come. To always pray in this way, however, will exclude the more timid from speaking out their prayer. So, it is important to break into groups at times too.

Quiet In our busy world, people should be given times of quiet and stillness. Shared silence often makes for better concentration than silence alone in our own homes. This time can be used for personal prayer. Equally important in the context of the church prayer meeting is the opportunity to listen to anything God may want to say to His people. We should be gathering to discern God's plans, not simply asking Him to bless our ideas. If there are those who practise the prophetic gifts, then they may have something to share after a time of quiet - as indeed may others. The leader needs to make a way for this to happen that will be acceptable to your church and also encourage sensitive contributions.

Themes Sometimes you can predict exactly what some people will pray - as they do so every time! Often this crushes expectation, giving the message that the prayer meeting never moves on as it never achieves anything. Another problem is that prayer themes change tack wildly and there is little or no opportunity to discern what God is saying on any matter. One answer to this is to use themes for prayer. If there is one issue that is particularly important to the church at the time, then give over the whole of the meeting to that. If not, then divide the meeting into sections e.g. for evangelism, for church groups, for an issue in the town/village, for the sick etc. Educate people to contribute their prayers in the appropriate section. This may take time if the meeting has traditionally been an open prayer free-for-all.

Visual The prayer meeting does not have to happen in a circle with heads bowed. The use of OHP slides, newspaper articles etc. can bring valuable stimulus to the meeting.

Leaders Do not assume that the minister or elders must always lead the meeting. This can sometimes be seen as a barrier to having more than one time during the week. Encourage and train others to lead. In particular, **look out for those in your church who seem to be called in some way to be Pray-ers.** Though we are all called to pray, some are given to it more readily than others. Identify them, encourage them, equip them, and support them.

Finally, a warning which comes from experience in many prayer meetings - **beware too much chatter!** This needs to be **emphasised where you are training others to lead meetings** in their own homes. The best thing to do is to have some introduction, some sharing of needs etc., but to keep this to a minimum. Then get down to prayer. Any further fellowship can come at the end of the meeting. **If chat is allowed to go unchecked at the beginning of the meeting, then there will only be one result - prayer will be the loser.**

Half-Nights of Prayer

Half-nights seem more popular than full nights of prayer, though the latter are equally valid. Most prayer meetings only last an hour or less. A half-night allows time for concerted prayer and worship. Many of the guidelines for prayer meetings are applicable to half-nights of prayer. There will certainly be need for variety and for times of worship. In a **high-church setting** it may be more helpful to describe the event as a **prayer vigil.**

Churches may wonder whether such an event is “worth it”. To this it can be said, “Do you believe in the power of prayer?” But will many of the congregation turn up to such an event? Again, the counter-challenge is that it is up to the leadership to lead them, and to set an example. Prayer can never be seen as twisting God’s arm. Nevertheless, there does seem to be a correlation; when I pray, things happen; when I don’t pray, they don’t happen. Commitment to prayer, by the whole congregation, can show that we are serious and genuine in the things which we ask of the Lord.

Day of Prayer

In a half-night of prayer, it may be best to call everyone to come to the whole thing. Some will not stay for the whole time, but the encouragement is to stay with the event as long as possible. With a day of prayer, an alternative approach is suggested.

- People should be encouraged **to come and go as they are able**.
- For this reason, the day needs to be divided up into **half-hour slots**. In fact, it is best to aim for **25 mins slots**, giving a clear break for those coming and going.
- **Some** of the half-hour slots would be **led from the front**. For example, the leader introduces the time with a song, a reading, and an outline of the theme for the next half-hour. This needs only take 5 -10 mins. The time of prayer could then be silent or spoken aloud. The leader would end the time with a prayer or another song. (If songs are used a musician may be needed.)
- Other half-hour slots might be for **silent prayer**, without any leading.
- **Prayer notes** could be supplied throughout the day. These could list the themes for the day, maybe some helpful Bible texts, and any set prayers that people might find helpful.
- Prayer days can be **combined well with fasting**. **Drinks**, however, should be made available. **Toilet facilities** will be needed too.
-

Programme. A very simple example programme is given below:

10am -12 noon	Half-hours of prayer, led by different people, on different themes.
12 noon - 2pm	Silent prayer
2pm - 4pm	Half-hours of prayer, led by different people, on different themes.
4pm - 8pm	Silent prayer
8pm - 9.30pm	Half-hours of prayer, led by different people, on different themes.

Alternatively, this could be a ‘prayer & praise’ meeting as a climax to the day.

The variety at a day of prayer should enable everyone to take part at some point. Some will want to drop into the church to pray quietly. This should not be despised; at least they are able to take part in this event, whereas they may be put off by a prayer meeting. The range of times has something to suit everyone.

Week of Prayer

This is perhaps a feature most commonly associated with Free Churches. The aim is to have a week where the accent is on prayer activities, often to discern a sense of God's will for the year ahead. So, this can be helpful for planning a mission or for on-going church life. The approach can easily be adapted to Anglican or Roman Catholic churches where the ministers at least will have a pattern of daily prayer. The following is offered as an example:

Sunday On the first day of the week ... teach about prayer in both services. Make sure that there is more than usual time for the intercessions. Perhaps have prayer for healing.

Monday Prayer meeting early morning and then evening e.g. 7am and 7pm. It may be good to meet at lunchtime too, e.g. 12 noon (when there is a national focus on prayer).

Tuesday Prayer meetings as for Monday, but ... the morning prayer meeting could be in the context of the eucharist or Lord's Supper

Wednesday Prayer meetings as for Monday, but ... vary the style of worship (consider using material from Taize, Vineyard, Celtic)

Thursday Prayer meetings as for Monday, but ... have a special gathering for young people perhaps.

Friday Prayer meetings as for Monday, but ... the evening meeting could become a prayer walk (see further on in this manual).

Saturday Begin with a prayer breakfast. Have a celebration on the Saturday evening, or a family event with prayer activities for the children

You could continue prayer theme on to the second Sunday. Please note that such a programme only works if you **suspend home groups and other activities for the week** - or, at least, make sure that all activities that do occur are focused on the Week of Prayer. A good time to do this is early in the New Year, when there may be a break from normal home group activities and when people are open to fresh ideas. **Do invite Christians from other churches to join you.**

Prayer Triplets

Prayer triplets have become a well-established approach to prayer for mission ever since the Mission England campaign of 1984. This section outlines some of the key points, along with some practical comments.

- A prayer triplet involves 3 people meeting regularly. Each selects 3 non-Christian friends, and they covenant together to pray for the conversion of these friends.
- Praying together is Biblical (Matthew 18.19). The people learn together about prayer, and shared answers to prayer bring encouragement. Moreover, having just 3 people makes it easy to find a suitable time to meet, thereby overcoming one of the problems of the traditional prayer meeting.
- The triplet might only meet for 30 mins each week. As long as they begin to pray promptly, this would be a significant amount of time.

- The triplet may also pray for the needs of any forthcoming mission, and on personal needs, but the main focus is united prayer for their non-Christian friends (2 Corinthians 4.4).

Prayer Chains

Through Faith Missions operates a prayer chain called the “Spitfire Group”. This is made up of trusted individuals who can be asked to pray urgently whenever there may be a crisis or sensitive issue that arises. The advantages of such a chain are the confidentiality agreed to by each participant and the immediacy of prayer activity. Churches operating a prayer chain should take account of these points:

- **Older Prayers.** Some people in the congregation may have a rich prayer life which has developed over 50 years. They may be housebound or feel they cannot offer much physical help. A prayer chain can enable them to contribute to the life of the church.
- **Confidentiality.** This is vital. If there is just one leak, then the whole thing will become useless. This must be stressed to those who wish to be part of the work.
- **Forms of Prayer chain:**
 1. The most common is perhaps **the pyramid**. The originator of the prayer chain telephones two people. They in turn each ring another two people and so on. The advantage of this approach is that prayer information is likely to progress quickly even if some individuals are not available.
 2. The other option is **the ring/circle**. The originator telephones one person, and the message goes round until it reaches the originator again. This is helpful for monitoring accuracy and speed of response. Conversely, if one person is unavailable then the whole thing breaks down - unless all the people in the ring have the full list of telephone numbers.
 3. Another way is for the originator to use a Short-Message-Service (SMS) text on a mobile phone to send the prayer request out. The recipient then sends an SMS to the next person on the chain and so on. They must agree not to send the message on to other people outside of the chain.
 4. There are also email prayer chains. However, this only works for people who have internet access to pick up emails regularly. A good way would be to have a set time to send out the emails each day/week/month.
- **Answerphones.** If you know that the person lives alone, then it may be acceptable to leave a message. Otherwise, the only kind of message that would be acceptable is to ask them to call you. If you were to leave prayer information it could be picked up by other family members who have not committed themselves to the confidential nature of the work.

Prayer Around the Clock

Perhaps one of the most famous examples of this is Open Doors’ seven-year cycle of prayer for the Soviet Union. People committed themselves to pray for 10 minutes on a specific day of the week for a seven-year period, for three specific prayer requests. Given the huge number of Open Doors supporters throughout the time-zones of the world, this meant that men and women were holding these things before God night and day for this long period. Soon after this the remarkable changes happened throughout Eastern Europe, though the final outcome is still perhaps being assessed.

For a church or even a group of churches in a town, the scale of what is possible may need to be adjusted. Here are some possibilities:

1. Aim for full coverage of the 24-hour period, but for a shorter time, e.g. a week or a month.
2. Ask people to pray for 20mins, 30mins or more. This reduces the number of people needed.
3. Aim to cover a certain part of the day, e.g. the daytime hours, but for a longer period.

Whatever approach you take, the Open Doors' example shows **the importance of discerning 2 or 3 key items for prayer**. Stick with those and ask God to give the breakthroughs in the issues that you believe are the really important ones.

Prayer in a Liturgical Setting

A few comments were offered earlier on the subject of styles of prayer in the Prayer Meeting. One aim in praying for mission is to offer a variety which enables as many as possible to participate. In a church which uses written liturgical material, here are some possibilities:

1. **The Daily Offices.** At some or all of these people could be encouraged to join the ministers to read the scriptures, pray through the office, and have a special time of intercession for mission.
2. **Sunday Services.** The intercessions should reflect what the church is doing. To pray for a forthcoming mission, and then to give thanks afterwards, can give a boost to the reality of prayer among the congregation.
3. **A Mission Prayer.** A prayer card with a "collect-type" prayer can be very helpful to those brought up in the liturgical tradition. For them, it is more than just a set of words. It is a framework through which they can bring to God key concerns. For this reason, a Mission Prayer needs to be carefully crafted to include these particular needs.
4. **Special Services of Prayer.** These can use set prayers, litanies, times for silent meditation.

Prayer Bulletins

It is important to promote individual prayer for any mission event as much as possible. Regular prayer bulletins are a good method. Note these guidelines:

- The bulletin should bear the mission title and logo. It is important to decide upon these at an early stage and carry them through all communications.
- The bulletins need to be kept up to date. Current prayer needs should be expressed, as well as answers to any requests on previous bulletins.
- The bulletins act also as a constant drip-feed of information about the mission. This is very valuable in itself.

Walking and Praying

There has been a great deal written on the subject, and some resources are listed later in this manual. Essentially it is a simple and practical approach to prayer for our community. Below is a simple summary of the principles, gleaned from Graham Kendrick & John Houghton's book, along with practical experience from the early stages of implementing this in a parish situation.

What is "prayer walking"? "Outside ... on the move ... talking to God" (Kendrick & Houghton, p29). Praying and walking can be done anywhere, and at any pace.

Advantages

1. It gets us outside of our church buildings to express our faith. That is a big step for some, and a vital one for evangelism.
2. There are opportunities to talk to non-Christians, which we wouldn't have if we were in a prayer meeting.
3. We become more aware of our neighbourhood. It is amazing how little we observe as we rush by in our cars.
4. Spiritual warfare is taken out on to the streets.
5. Distractions like the television, the telephone, or the pile of ironing, are out of reach.
6. It improves our fellowship to walk and pray together.
7. The exercise is good for the body.

Types of Prayer Walk

1. Part of your **regular activity**, e.g. walking the dog, walking to school.
2. Planned regular **small group activity** - see below for an example.
3. **Pilgrimage**. These occasional events can be used as prayer walks, and that is something important in their origins.

Practical Guidelines

1. **Start and finish** at someone's house. This will give the teams the chance to meet and pray beforehand, and to "report back" at the end of the time.
2. **Work in pairs**. Usually, it is best to pray aloud, so that you can agree in prayer. This may be easy if the place is crowded with people. Prayer should not be demonstrative or look "weird" to passing non-Christians. It could appear that you are simply having a conversation (which you are, with the Father!).
3. Listen to a **weather forecast** and come equipped!
4. **Take pen and paper**. You may meet someone who wants to be visited or have an insight or a "word" from the Lord as you pray.
5. By all means **talk to people if they approach you**, but don't get into arguments. You can explain what you are doing and ask them if they would like prayer.
6. **Identification**. This can be important if you wish to actually combine praying with visiting any people in their homes. A simple pass, signed by the minister, will suffice. It is also useful if anyone interprets your prayer walking as loitering suspiciously.
7. **Themes for prayer**. These will vary according to your situation. Pray for the known and felt needs of the place and its people. Pray for the schools and any other local institutions, for local Christians etc. If you are preparing for a mission, pray that people's eyes may be opened to the Gospel and that door-to-door work in the area may be fruitful.

Finally, I quote from the leaflet given to prayer walkers in that parish:

"Walk slowly and pause often. Keep your eyes and your ears open to all that is going on around you. Feel the atmosphere of the place and listen to what the Lord is saying to you. It is not a good idea to spend the walk talking to your partner(s). Our task is to listen, watch, and pray, NOT talk."

Prayer for a Neighbourhood

Allied to the practice of praying and walking, it can be good to systematically pray street by street for your area. One church divided up their town into pairs of streets which were prayed for each week in the church services. This fact was made known. People could telephone in prayer requests, and the response from the community was very positive. It would be possible to make sure that your “prayer walks” were timed to coincide with the church’s prayer for that part of your area.

The Prayer Pilgrimage

A variation on the theme of prayer walks was used in one large mission, with a prayer pilgrimage taken **round the perimeter of the mission area**. The route was followed on Saturdays in **3 - 5-mile sections**, making some arrangements to leave cars at each end of the route. The content of the praying was as follows:

- The scripture that was the inspiration behind the pilgrimage was **2 Kings 3.16**.
- The main prayer was that hearts would be turned to God and His Son Jesus Christ. This was prayed at the outset of each walk and at **strategic points** along the way e.g. churches, cross-roads, focal points in the community etc.
- Prayer can be undertaken aloud and/or silently, and in a variety of styles so as to appeal to all who are involved.
- Set prayers may be specially written. For example:

Protect us Father, by the name of Your Son Jesus,
whose name we confess.
Teach us, Holy Spirit, what to pray for
and inspire us as we walk along,
because we do not know what to pray unless You teach us.
Inspire our thoughts and quicken our hearts to love the Lord Jesus.
Guard and guide our steps,
bring us to know You more closely,
and to see You in our lives and in the lives of others.
Unite us who bear Your name in fellowship with one another,
that this may be a joyful journey,
and our unity may be a witness to all who see us.
Make us ready if asked to give an account of our faith.
Prepare the hearts of those in this area whom You would reach,
to be ready to receive Your Word during the mission.
In Jesus’ name.
Amen.

6. Spiritual Warfare in Prayer

As with prayer walking, this is an aspect on which many books have been written. The notes here will be brief. Those who have trained for a *Walk* mission will find further material in the team member training manual.

Firm Foundations

1. To pray is to engage in spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6.10-18). It cannot be avoided, nor dismissed as no longer relevant to our day and age.
2. At the same time, we can accord too much credit to Satan/demons for any adversity we experience. There is need for a sane **balance**.
3. Our overall perspective must be the **Biblical framework**. Satan is not equal to God in power; this is dualism. He is defeated, by virtue of Christ's absolute victory on the cross (Colossians 2.15). For the time being, Satan exploits sin and human fallenness in a rear-guard battle. His fate, however, is sealed (Revelation 20.10).
4. As Christians we stand **secure in Christ**. We do not underestimate evil. However, we do not fear for we know that ultimately God has our souls in His hand. Nothing can change that.

Forms of Satanic Opposition

We need to discern the nature of the enemy's work in thwarting the spread of God's kingdom, and then pray against this.

1. **In an Area**. This may be due to: people practising **occult activities**. This may be particularly prevalent where you live or associated with certain places. Sometimes recurrent **social problems** manifest the work of the enemy, e.g. violence, alcoholism, breakdown of family life. In other instances, **local institutions** seem to be particularly anti-Christian for no rational reason. There is debate as to the reality of "territorial spirits". Nevertheless, if you **research the history of your area** and look into the needs, you will often find recurrent trends. This suggests that Satan does sometimes attack the people of an area in a consistent repeated way.
2. **In the Church**. Satan's main method is to sow discord, within congregations or between churches. Doing door-to-door evangelism so often brings to light people who say "I used to go that church, but then ..." Churches lose too many people through backbiting, scandals, or lack of love.
3. **In Individuals**. This is not just a case of devil-worshippers. There are many who are hostile to Christianity for no particular reason. Through weakness, some have unwittingly yielded some aspect of their life to Satan's control.

Prayer Warfare

Remembering that our battle is not with flesh and blood, the answer to any of these enemy strategies is prayer. We are called to resist the devil (James 4.7) and to exercise the authority given to us to extend the Kingdom of God (Matthew 16.19, 18.18). How do we do it?

Recognise the area of Satanic opposition. Discern it. Name/describe it.

Resist the evil in Jesus' name. We do not use asking prayers in this instance. In Jesus' name we speak a prayer of command, for he has given us authority. So, for example "Spirit of X, we command you, in Jesus' name to loosen your hold on this place ..."

Replace it with the good things of God. Speak in the good which is the opposite of that which was cast out.

Rejoice in what has been achieved in the heavenly realm. Continue to pray with authority until you sense that the victory is achieved over that specific thing. Be aware that you may need to pray this through for some time. When you sense it is prayed through, then celebrate Christ's Lordship.

Recognise that the victory must be worked through on earth. Prayer clears the way, but the results must still be worked out through the proclaiming of the Gospel and the change of individual lives. An African once said to me that we must pray as though our actions can do nothing; then we must go to the work with zeal, as though our prayers are worth nothing. In this way we will be wholehearted in both, and that is the balance that God seeks.

Deliverance Ministry

A full coverage of deliverance ministry is beyond the scope of this prayer manual. If this does arise, then it should be tackled with the aid of experienced local ministers. It must be clearly understood that a ministry of deliverance must not be exercised by one Christian acting alone.

Correct diagnosis is of first importance. Most neuroses, psychoses and physical disorders are naturally based and are naturally treatable; prayer for healing may be offered. **Look first for a natural explanation.** Spirit-based disorders are much less common, but may be recognised by:

1. **Compulsive hatred** towards God/Christ/Holy Spirit and compulsive desire to blaspheme them.
2. Intense hatred of God's servants, and sometimes a desire to hurt/destroy them.
3. **Strange voices coming from the person**, entirely different from their natural voice - even using languages they do not know. A man may speak with a woman's voice and vice versa.
4. **Voices heard only by the person** that command, mock, frighten, lie, confuse, falsely guide etc.
5. **Compulsive sin** quite beyond the person's control, e.g. use of filthy words, degrading sexual vices, explosive violent temper, constant evil thoughts etc.

Any of these symptoms could be a sign of occupation by evil spirits, especially if the person has indulged in occult activity or wilful unrepented sin. **The possibility of a natural cause must be checked thoroughly first.** (One symptom alone is not enough to jump to the wrong conclusion.)

If such a person seeks help and deliverance appears to be needed, then the following form the most basic guidelines:

1. Work **with experienced ministers**, ensuring that the person's background is carefully considered and that there is **on-going pastoral care**.
2. Pray for your own protection and discernment.
3. It is sometimes appropriate to ask the person to repeat **the Lord's Prayer** line-by-line after you; it contains petitions for forgiveness and deliverance. At other times it is necessary to take authority in Christ's name, commanding any evil spirits to depart from the person's life.
4. Pray (aloud) **God's blessing** on the person and encourage them from God's Word.

7. Resources and Prayer Networks

Resources

General Books on Prayer

Paul Y. Cho	“Prayer: key to revival”	Word Books
Michael Cole	“Prayer changes people”	Marshall Pickering
Eileen Crossman	“Mountain rain”	OMF/STL
John Earwicker	“Prayer pacesetting”	Scripture Union
Richard Foster	“Prayer”	Hodder & Stoughton
Ole Hallesby	“Prayer”	IVP
Gerard Hughes	“God of Surprises”	DLT
Brother Lawrence	“Practice of the presence of God”	Mowbray
Sister Margaret Magdalen	“Jesus - man of prayer”	Hodder & Stoughton
E.M. Bounds	“Power Through Prayer”	OM

Prayer Triplets

1. “Three times three equals twelve” by Brian Mills, published by Kingsway.
2. Christian Publicity Organisation, Garcia Estate, Canterbury Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 1BW (☎ 01903 264556), do some resources for this.

Prayer Walking

1. “Prayer walking” by Graham Kendrick & John Houghton. Kingsway. 1990
2. “Walking and talking with God” by Christian Publicity Organisation, Garcia Estate, Canterbury Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 1BW (☎ 01903 264556). They produce an excellent range of literature for community prayer walking and will usually send a free sample on request.
3. “A Prayer Evangelism Strategy” by David Sherwin. Grove Books Ltd, Ridley Hall Road, Cambridge, CB3 9HU (☎ 01223 464748).

Prayer Warfare

1. “Born for Battle” by R.Arthur Mathews. Published by OMF/STL.
2. “Territorial Spirits” ed. C.Peter Wagner. Published by Sovereign World.
3. “The Overcoming of Satan” by Charles Sherlock. Grove Books, Spirituality Series.

Prayer Networks

1. **Crosswinds**, PO Box 1041, Nailsea, Bristol, BS48 2SD Tel: 01275 852700
www.crosswinds.org.uk Churches are asked to run a week of prayer for the nation and for their locality.
2. **IFB** (Intercessors for Britain), 14 Orchard Road, Moreton, Wirral, Merseyside, L46 8TS
www.intercessorsforbritain.co.uk
3. **Lydia**, PO Box 85, Waterlooville, Hants, PO7 7QU www.lydiafellowship.org This is a women's ministry, meeting in local cells approximately fortnightly for 4 hours prayer and fasting. Contact:
4. **Prayer 24/7** www.24-7prayer.com
5. Evangelical Alliance

Through Faith Missions A company limited by guarantee Registered Number 2350178 Registered Charity Number 801113
admin@throughfaithmissions.org www.throughfaithmissions.org.uk
Correspondence address - 18 Tannery Road, Sawston, CB22 3UW Tel: 07434 661697