

Appendix A

Prayer with a Purpose

Or Why You Should Get Involved in the United Prayer Movement Even if God Never Answers Your Prayers (Or at Least It Sometimes Feels that Way!)

Some crucial thoughts about the importance of your involvement in the prayer movement:

Historically, prayer movements have often persevered for many years before the answers came.

The prayer movement today is prayer with a purpose. We are praying for a move of God that will result in spiritual revival and worldwide evangelization.

God remembers every prayer and every Concert of Prayer, and brings the answers down upon the earth in renewing, awakening power. Sometimes, however, we must wait in faith for Him to answer.

Nevertheless, prayer movements around the world have demonstrated that those involved experience great benefits—immediate benefits—quite apart from the actual answers when they actually come. These God-given gifts found within the prayer movement itself can keep us encouraged, involved, and enthusiastic, until God does answer us as fully as He has led us to seek Him.

Remember, our two agendas for a Concert of Prayer, outlined above, are Restore prayers (fullness) and Release prayers (fulfillment). The immediate benefits of involvement in the prayer movement can also be divided into these two categories:

Restore (Fullness) Benefits:

1. An Enlarged Vision of Christ.

Our vision of who Christ is becomes enlarged as we seek the greater implications of His Lordship in our lives and the life of His Church.

During a Concert of Prayer, the prayers for revival are offered by Christians from many different traditions. They end up painting for us a perspective of the Christ we seek that no one group could ever uncover by itself. (Colossians 3:1-4; Revelation 5:8—12)

2. Our Relationship with God Clarified.

Our relationship with God is clarified, as we confront revival issues that can only be accomplished by His direct intervention. Through the prayer movement we learn a greater level of dependency on God. We turn from every other thing that might keep us from calling on Christ to deliver us and bring us into His fullness. (Joel 2:12—17; 27—28)

3. A New Spirit of Hope and Celebration.

As we embrace the larger vision of what God will do to revive His people and reach His world, we are filled with a new spirit of hope and celebration. The hopeful vision is “caught” more than “taught.” And it invigorates all we do, long after a Concert of Prayer is over. (Romans 8:22—27, 31—37)

4. A Deeper Hunger for God’s Glory.

When people participate in a Concert of Prayer their hunger for God’s glory increases. The more that people pray for true awakening, the more convinced they become that it must happen! A hunger and thirst for righteousness totally re-orient their values and priorities. As the hunger grows, the intensity of prayer—both corporate and private—will grow. And as a result, God will be able to respond to even larger requests. (II Chronicles 15:9—15)

5. An Increased Sense of Family and Visible Unity.

A united prayer movement builds our sense of family and our experience of visible unity across the Body of Christ. A movement of united prayer is probably the very best way for the Body of Christ within a city to find new ground to learn from each other, receive one another, build each other up, and uncover new ways to work together. (I Peter 2:4-6; 9—10)

6. Revitalization of Existing Prayers.

Within the Body of Christ in each community are those who are already deeply committed to praying for revival and world evangelization. A Concert of Prayer is a wonderful means for these believers to be refreshed in their own prayer lives and to be connected with others within the Body

who have the same desire. This united prayer effort keeps the committed core praying in the days between prayer concerts. (Isaiah 46:31; 57:15)

7. Accelerated Congregational Prayer.

United prayer movements accelerate congregational prayer. Those who participate in a Concert of Prayer return to share the vision for united prayer with others in their churches. They are better able to lead others in prayer for revival and world evangelization, and to recruit others to come with them to the next Concert of Prayer. The united prayer gathering also provides a place where people can come to be “infected” with the vision and call to deeper prayer. (II Chronicles 29:20—31)

8. A Foretaste of True Spiritual Awakening.

Although the ultimate answer to our prayers for revival and mission may come in the future, the dynamic of an on-going prayer movement encompasses many facets of an awakening in a less profound manner. These foretastes of full-fledged awakening keep us calling on God for a full outpouring of the Spirit. (Acts 1)

Release (Fulfillment) Benefits:

9. Enlarged Vision of the Kingdom.

As we unite with others in prayer, our vision of what Christ’s Kingdom is all about will be enlarged. As we pray for city-wide and worldwide concerns, we can better envision what God’s Kingdom will look like when we experience breakthroughs in justice, healing, and redemption. (Jeremiah 33:1—3)

10. A Deepening Dedication to Ministry and Missions.

At the end of each Concert of Prayer, participants pray to be used by God in any way He chooses, in order to bring about the answers to our prayers. Closing prayers also ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit in order to lead lives consistent with our prayers. By offering ourselves to God in this way, He is able to draw out our desire to be as fully committed to the work of the Kingdom as possible. (Malachi 3:1:4)

11. Existing Ministries and Missions Undergirded.

A united prayer movement undergirds, sustains, and protects existing ministries and missions. Through prayer, we build protection around existing Kingdom enterprises and, more importantly, around the laborers represented among the praying people. What better way to undergird those in ministry than to surround them with a united prayer movement? (Ephesians 1:15—19)

12. New Strategies for Outreach and Ministry.

When people begin praying for specific needs and opportunities, new strategies for outreach and ministry are stimulated. In an environment full of hope and faith they begin to see specific steps they might take to get involved. A prayer movement is often a most creative atmosphere for unleashing new dreams and visions. (Acts 13:1 -A)

13. Networks for Ministry and Missions Expanded.

As those from different organizations, churches, and enterprises hear each other's concerns for the Kingdom expressed in prayer, networks for ministry and missions will be expanded. As we pray in outreach and love for one another's efforts, we enter into a new level of concern for one another. We begin to gain "ownership" of one another's callings. As our trust and respect for one another builds, we see new ways to work together, helping each other accomplish our tasks more effectively. Often, a Concert of Prayer is a time when those with similar ministry burdens will "connect" with one another. Through the praying, they discover there are others in the gathering who carry their same burden and desire for a specific type of involvement in the Kingdom. (Haggai 1, 2)

14. Workers for the Mission Launched.

A united prayer movement often launches workers for Christian mission. As Christian workers take up new ministries, they often return to the movement to ask for continued prayer backing. Most believers who enter a new work struggle with feeling alone and misunderstood. In a Concert of Prayer they can be assured of continued support and encouragement, since their efforts are recognized as a fruit of the prayer movement. They are launched into new areas of mission with a solid backing of prayer. (Matthew 9:35—10:1)

15. An Act of Spiritual Warfare.

The unity of the prayer movement is in itself an act of spiritual warfare, casting down the enemy. By gathering together we are declaring the coming of the Kingdom of God and Christ's authority over the entire city. Moreover, the blessing of God is commanded in the midst of our unity. (Ephesians 6:10—13; 18—20, Philippians 1:27—28)

16. A Witness to the City at Large.

In keeping with Jesus' prayer in John 17, by gathering together in united prayer we are a witness to the city at large. The visible unity for which Jesus prays, which He says will encourage the world to believe in Him, is demonstrated through a Concert of Prayer. When the whole Body is willing to unite in prayer to pursue God's whole vision for that city, the prayer movement is actually doing evangelism! (Acts 4:31—33; 5:12—14)

17. An Arena for Evangelism.

When nominal Christians and curious unbelievers attend special city-wide prayer events, the meeting itself provides an opportunity for evangelism. At a Concert of Prayer the Gospel is not so much preached, as it is demonstrated through believers' conversations with God. When Christians unite in the conviction that God is real, that He is present, that He is full of grace and power, and then interact with Him in direct, life-giving fellowship, Christ's reality is vibrantly demonstrated. Unbelievers also see Christians who are talking with God for the sake of the world itself, and doing so with the conviction that God will hear, answer, and bless in saving ways. The entire environment of a prayer gathering provides a wonderful context to bring non-Christians to personal faith in Christ. (Zechariah 8:20—23)

18. Ultimately, the Seekers Become the Receivers.

Even before any answers come, these are certainly remarkable reasons to get involved in a prayer movement. But, on top of these glorious benefits, we have this absolutely dependable reality: God will answer the united cries of His people when they pray about the concerns most on His heart. The day is surely coming when the movement of prayer will receive—beyond all we could ask or think—God's gracious work in Christ. He will answer us with fullness and fulfillment—with spiritual awakening and world evangelization. (Hebrews 6:12—20; 10:29—25)

With all this encouragement, how can you afford NOT to be faithfully involved in a movement of united prayer?

How Involvement In the Prayer Movement Can Strengthen Your Church

