



Praying With God Video Course

Session 11: Praying Corporately in the Holy Spirit

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'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' Acts 4: 31

Session 11: Praying Corporately in the Holy Spirit



'Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.' Matthew 18:19

'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, For brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the Lord commanded the blessing—Life forevermore.' Psalm 133



A soldier is not an army!

Corporate prayer is very prominent in the Bible and should also be in our lives. It is a core part of our Christian experience. The descriptions of corporate prayer in the Bible paint a picture of prayer that is vital, explosive, powerful, extravagant, bold, successful, satisfying, life- changing, nation changing. This is the opposite of some prayer groups where there is dullness and the meetings are boring, lifeless and yawn inducing. Although there is absolutely no substitute for individual prayer, the results of group prayer can be more powerful and effective than praying alone. Corporate prayers in the New Testament produced extremely powerful results.

Praying together effectively requires different techniques and skills to when we pray alone. It's not a free for all! The skills can be difficult to master, but with practice will result in extremely satisfying and effective prayers.

Practicalities of Praying in a Group

1. At the beginning of the prayer time, consciously invite the Holy Spirit to come and lead you and the group. Position yourselves to be full of and controlled by the Holy Spirit. It may be beneficial to start with a declaration or confession such as:
 - 'I am strong in the Lord and in the power of His might', Ephesians 6: 10 or
 - 'I am righteous and my prayers will avail much', James 5: 16 or
 - 'Rivers of living water will flow from within me', John 7: 37, 38 or
 - 'I will pray His will and He will answer', I John 5: 14 and 15.

2. Lay down your own agendas, burdens, and opinions and be willing to be in unity with the Holy Spirit and with one another. This is one of the advantages of praying in tongues, that you can easily let go of your own agenda, and search for God's agenda. Many of us have strong opinions about current events, issues and even doctrines, but when we pray in tongues, all of this is superseded and we communicate directly with God.

This is a further part of positioning ourselves to pray WITH God. It is an aspect of the priestly function to offer sacrifice to God through making ourselves available. *'I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship.'* (Amplified) Romans 12: 1

3. Begin to pray vigorously in tongues. Do not be passive, stir yourself.
*'And there is no one who calls on Your name, **Who stirs himself** up to take hold of You'.* Isaiah 64:7
*'For we do not **wrestle** against flesh and blood'.* Ephesians 6: 12:
*'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for **pulling down strongholds.**'* 2 Corinthians 19:4
'And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force'. Matthew 11:12
All of these scriptures use active words like wrestle, pull down, warfare, cast down, violent, struggle.
4. All participate, work as a group, not individuals – a soldier is not an army. Choose to agree together and to harmonize together. *'Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven Matthew 18: 19.*
5. As you continue to pray, begin to 'tune in' to the Holy Spirit. *'I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart, And watch to see what He will say to me'.* Habakkuk 2:1
6. 'Look to see' what is happening in the Spirit, Habakkuk 2:1. This is prophetic prayer, constantly looking into the spiritual realm to 'see' what is happening.
7. 'Make a demand' on God by locking your mind onto the job of working with the Holy Spirit. Focus is on the spiritual, unseen realm. Set your mind on things above, not on things below. *'If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.'* Colossians 3: 1-3. We should focus on the unseen realm and *'not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal'.* 2 Corinthians 4: 18.

Ask the Lord for understanding, 'What are we praying for Lord?' or 'What scriptures can I quote for this?' or 'How can I cooperate?'

8. Try to identify the flow of the prayer. Recognize what the Holy Spirit is doing by listening to the type and sound of the tongues. Are they gentle, aggressive, travailing, mourning, fighting? Pray WITH God and the team. Be aware of the prayer tempo of others in the group. Pray as a team, not as an individual. Sometimes, someone in the team will take the 'cutting edge' of the prayer. You can support that person in prayer. You can also be energized by praying alongside others for a while if you get tired, or conversely you can lift others in his/her praying.
9. Continue to go with the flow of the Holy Spirit, waves and rhythms. Continually be sensitive to Him, He is like the wind and can change direction quickly and quietly, or slowly. Flow and cooperate with Him. Make yourself available physically, mentally and spiritually. Groan, sigh, weep, laugh, and shout if necessary. Work with Him but do not get ahead of Him as this may make you tired!
10. Pray from your 'bellies' or spirits. This is spirit prayer although you can engage your mind by 'looking', 'interpreting', listening. John 7: 37-39 describes the spiritual rivers that come from our 'innermost bellies'.
11. Stay in step with the Holy Spirit and others in the team. Work together, don't break rank. An army is alert, watchful, disciplined. Gideon's army watched for action while they sipped water. One of the first attacks of the enemy will be against the unity of the group. Once the prayer begins and all members move in to praying in the spirit, it is usually easy to experience a supernatural unity that goes beyond merely agreeing with each other. As we focus on what the Spirit is saying and doing, the unity of God takes over and gives us a desire to do His will. However, there are times when we have to choose to move into this place of unity. As stated in the point above, it's part of the priestly function of offering the sacrifice of prayer. The unity and oneness of the group is essential for effectiveness. In Psalm 133, God tells us that He commands blessing where there is unity.
12. During the prayer session, if a particular direction does not bear witness with you, be quiet. Do not try to change the direction of the meeting or pray in opposition. This will dissipate the effectiveness of the prayer and destroy the unity. Remember we are all on the same side. If there is a lot you disagree with, and you often find yourself in disagreement with the leadership of the meeting, perhaps this group is not for you and you may need to find a different 'battalion'.
13. Persevere. Don't stop because you are tired. Rest, praying quietly in tongues and building yourself up and then enter the next phase of prayer until there is a breakthrough and the peace of God is evident.

14. Focus. Once the prayer is in a flow, members will begin to receive revelations from the Lord – pictures, images, senses, scriptures and so on. Most often as these are shared, there is a common theme that is revealed. Sometimes, there are different themes. It is now essential for the group to agree on and focus on one theme or topic and it is practical for the group leader to pick the way forward. He or she does this where there is most ‘weight’ on a theme or topic. Now, the group needs to ‘march together’, working with the Holy Spirit and each other to get the job done. It is essential that everyone stays on the topic, being sensitive to the type of prayer the Holy Spirit and to each other. So for example, if the prayer is a travailing type, perhaps a prayer for wisdom in the church, it is not the time for one individual to begin singing a praise song.
15. Interpret the tongues, deliver or declare what God has shown. This is now the time to pray in English what God has shown to the group.

Bonus Notes: Praying in the Understanding Corporately

- ‡ Have a scribe to record what is prayed and said.
- ‡ Use what is revealed in the prayer time in tongues, as a foundation for this time of prayer in English. Briefly share what God has shown. Discern what God is saying or doing. Decree or declare what God has shown, if necessary and relevant.
- ‡ Remember to pray with boldness, authority and as God’s representatives on earth for His kingdom.
- ‡ Pray relative prayers that stay in the flow. Stay on one topic or subject until it is fully dealt with. If a member of the group begins to pray in another direction before the first subject has been fully dealt with, the facilitator should gently bring back the focus of the meeting.
- ‡ Pray short, sharp prayers that others can focus on.
- ‡ Concentrate on the prayer being prayed and where possible voice agreement.
- ‡ Don’t be critical of one another’s prayers.
- ‡ Avoid praying opinions, be led by the Spirit.

Bonus Notes: Some Guidelines for Group Leaders

Leadership is necessary and biblical. Lack of clear leadership can lead to confusion, especially in a group where there are new people or the people do not know each other well.

- ‡ Have a time of preparation before the meeting to find out what the Lord and ask the Lord for His focus for the time of intercession.
- ‡ Walk in love, be right with God, and walk in forgiveness.
- ‡ Be built up in the Spirit with lots of praying in tongues.
- ‡ Lead with strength. You have to decide to be strong, this is an attitude. Joshua 1:6, 7-18.
- ‡ Take on the 'burden' of the group. You may have different personal burdens to pray through and about, to the burden of the group. As a leader when you begin the meeting it may be appropriate to encourage people to release their burdens and cast them off. Lay them down to take on the burden of the group. You as leader will also need to assess the level of the group: does everyone pray in tongues? Does everyone participate? Are some afraid? The group has a level and it is your job to lead them on in prayer. You may be able to coax them into deeper things. You may need to teach, lift and develop your group until they are working harmoniously together. It can take several months to develop a group to its fullest potential.
- ‡ Discourage dominating people from being 'prayer hogs'.
- ‡ On the other hand, try to draw out the timid and reserved group members.
- ‡ Instruct the people to listen to God with one ear and to each other with the other.
- ‡ Keep the prayer focused and stay on that point until it is 'prayed through' and there is a release. If praying in tongues, keep the people informed about what is going on, for example, 'Now we are pushing against a demonic stronghold.'
- ‡ You should be able to flow in the gifts of the spirit. The gifts of discernment of spirits, tongues and interpretation, and words of wisdom and knowledge are particularly important for group prayer so that you can see what the Holy Spirit is doing.
- ‡ Get to know the gifting and strengths and weaknesses of your prayer team. Members of the group will have different skills and gifts. For example, some may be very sharp in seeing pictures and visions; others may be strong in discernment of spirits. Others may have a gift of persevering through hard prayer. Yet others may be gifted in releasing the compassion of God.



Key Points

1. Lay down your personal agenda
2. Stir yourself in God
3. Look to the Spirit
4. Work as a team
5. Trust the team
6. Stay on topic

Activities



Reflective Questions



1. Think about the group(s) you pray with.

What does your group do well?
Where and how could you be stronger?

2. If you lead a group :

With regard to leading, what do you do well?
Where could you be stronger?



3. Think about the example of the Amazon River and it's many tributaries. How is this picture an example of effective praying?



Activation

Psalm 133 speaks about the blessing of the Lord where there is unity. Read through this psalm and the ask the Lord to speak to you about your participation in any prayer group(s) you may be Invloved in.