

# Leadership Praying

“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour”  
(Acts 3:1).

Leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less. As Christian leaders we are in the business of influencing men toward God. We influence men to come to salvation and live righteously in obedience to the Word of God. These things cannot be done by force. We can best accomplish this through persuasion and by setting an example. Paul said, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11).

Paul also revealed that our battle is not with people (under our leadership). It is a spiritual battle. We should not have difficulty with people, but with their inappropriate actions. Our problem is with Satan’s influence in their lives. As leaders we should be careful never to attack a person, but deal with the behavior.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

One way to increase our influence with those we are leading is to be involved in “leadership praying.” We often think in terms of members (followers) praying for the pastor (or leader), but little is said about the pastor (or leader) praying for the members (followers).



Prayer plays an important role in evangelism. One man has said, “Talk with God about men before you talk to men about God.”

A limited prayer and fasting base in the local church limits the power in the church. As prayer goes so the church goes.

The Book of Acts begins with leaders gathered in the upper room in an extended prayer meeting. The Holy Spirit was poured out. Souls were won through the anointed preaching of the Word of God. The church was established. Prayer remained a priority in the early church among leaders and members alike. Leadership always led the way in prayer.

## Leadership Priorities

The early church leaders reemphasized their priorities in Acts 6. Prayer was placed first among ministerial priorities. Men of God stated their main concerns in the ministry:

-  Give ourselves continually to prayer.
-  Give ourselves to the ministry of the Word.

## It’s Time to Think

What kind of prayers do you think these leaders continually prayed? Were they selfish prayers asking for personal petitions?\_\_\_\_\_

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## God Is Looking for a Praying Man

"And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor" (Isaiah 59:16).

God looked at Israel and grieved that there was no one to intercede for them. He looks for intercessors that are willing to "stand in the gap" (for a lost world). (See Ezekiel 22:30.)

## Leaders Who Prayed

### Abraham Interceded

"Then the LORD said, 'The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.' The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. Then Abraham approached him and said: 'Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?' When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home" (Genesis 18:20-25, 33 *NIV*).

### Nehemiah, a Leader Who Prayed

"When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted

and prayed before the God of heaven. Then I said: 'O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including my father's house, and myself have committed against you'" (Nehemiah 1:4-7, *NIV*).

Nehemiah fasted for several days, but prayed for several months. As a result, God gave him a vision of how he could minister to the people.

### Paul Prayed for His People

"I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers" (Philemon 4).

"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers" (1 Thessalonians 1:2).

"Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers" (Ephesians 1:16).

### Jesus Prayed for His Followers

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

## When Leaders Pray

In the Book of Exodus alone more than fifty prayer conversations between God and Moses are recorded. His famous prayer is recorded in Exodus 32:31-34.





“And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them” (Exodus 32:31-34).

God had decided to kill His people and start again with Moses. The leader interceded for the people, and God changed His mind. Prayerful leaders have influence with God.

Stuart Lassetter in *Manna from Moses* says, “Powerful forces are unleashed when a leader travails in prayer before God. The leader has access to God and, like any other child of God, can come boldly into the throne room of God’s presence. When a leader will be burdened for the needs of the people, God will listen to his unselfish, intercessory prayer. Tremendous benefits and blessings to the people can be directly attributed to a leader’s prayer.”



## How Do You Measure Up?

Vesta Mangun, in her lesson, “Leadership in Prayer—Indispensable Example” tells us that you can:


-  Measure your love for your people by your prayer life.
-  Measure your concern for your people by your prayer life.
-  Measure your vision for your people by your prayer life.
-  Measure your leadership of your people by your prayer life.


## How Can We Increase Our Level of Influence?

John Maxwell in *The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader’s Day* informs us that leadership impact rises as influence increases. Most leaders are anxious to increase their leadership impact. They realize that when there is little influence, little is accomplished. On the other hand, with much influence, much is accomplished. How can we increase our level of influence? How can we make maximum impact and assure that much is accomplished? One important way is through leadership involvement in prayer and fasting. (This is not to suggest that a leader does not need to develop leadership skills.) Following are some ways to more efficiently organize your prayer life and amplify your level of influence.

-  To remember the various needs of your people compile a “prayer list.” This list will become your “prayer planner.” It will help you be organized in your prayer life.
-  Find a personal “prayer partner.” If married, your spouse should be your prayer partner. You can also have another person (of the same sex) that you pray with on a regular basis. It is always good to be around people who motivate you to have a deeper walk with

the Lord. Such people are “growth partners.” They will help you grow.


 Have a regular “prayer time.” Give God the best time of your day. If you are more alert in the morning, pray in the morning.


 Have a quiet “prayer place.” This needs to be a place where you can communicate with heaven without earthly disturbances.


“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour” (Acts 3:1).

Notice three things about this Scripture.


Prayer Partners	Peter and John
Prayer Place	Temple
Prayer Time	Hour of prayer, ninth hour


 You may want to have a “prayer team,” a group of prayer warriors.

 Research and pray for unreached areas. This could be countries, cities, towns, and communities that are yet to be reached. Be involved in “prayer evangelism.” Prayer should precede evangelism.


 Jesus often asked, “What do you need?” Find out what prayer needs your people have. Take note of the needs and pray for each one until something happens. Focus in on the specific prayer requests. When you pray specifically, God answers specifically.


“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” Prayer is a great way to express that you care.

 When you see someone that you prayed for mention, “I prayed for you (today).” When possible, mention the need that you prayed for. It is also encouraging when you send an occasional note to someone you have been praying for. Let them know that you care and that you have talked to the Father on their behalf. Let your members (followers) know that you understand and care about their needs.

 Have a prayer agenda. When you get together for national, regional, or local board meetings, make sure prayer is a major part of the agenda. When you pray, you show that you are dependent upon God. To discuss and decide things concerning the kingdom without prayer shows that you are depending on your abilities. Make prayer a priority!

**“The POWERHOUSE for the church is not the BOARDROOM, but the PRAYER ROOM.”  
(Rev. H. E. Scism)**

 Have a regular prayer meeting with your leadership team.

 When a member verbally mentions a prayer need, take advantage of the present and pray for that need immediately. You are a minister. Take advantage of each opportunity to minister.

Warren Wiersbe in *On Being a Servant of God* states that ministry takes place when, “divine resources meet human needs through

loving channels to the glory of God." Ministry takes place when needs are met by God, through you and your prayers.

**The leader that lasts is  
the leader that fasts.  
The leader that stays is  
the leader that prays.**

Leaders also should be committed to fasting. Fasting is a regular, normal activity of leaders. Each of the three extended fasts (of forty days) recorded in the Bible were completed by leaders (Jesus and twice by Moses.) Paul indicated that he was involved in "fastings often" (2 Corinthians 11:27).

### Leadership Prayerlessness Is Sin

The Prophet Samuel considered it to be a sin not to pray for the people that he was leading.

"Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way" (1 Samuel 12:23)





Dan Southerland in *Transitioning (Leading Your Church Through Change)* "The problem with not spending time in prayer is simply this: those who talk with God . . . hear God best. The number one hindrance to answered prayer for...leaders today is prayerlessness. We just don't pray."

Arnold L. Cook in his excellent book, *Historical Drift*, writes concerning a church he visited, "After the service, I commended the senior pastor's wife on their accomplishment. She responded quietly, "My husband leads from his knees."

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath and native air. We all promote it verbally. Every new initiative is launched with the reminder: "We must bathe this ministry in prayer." But our talk too often fails to match our walk.

Prayer is the very essence of Christianity. It was the only thing Christ's disciples ever asked Him to teach them (Luke 11:2-4). Prayer is to be the heart of the Church. Jesus declared: "My house will be called a house of prayer" (Matthew 21:13)."

Cook suggests that the following test will show how effective we are at leading from our knees:

-  **Personal Life:** How important would your children consider prayer to be based on what they see in your private and family prayer life?
-  **Marriage:** Would your spouse describe your leadership as "leading from your knees"?
-  **Professional Life:** Is your prayer life commensurate with your sphere of ministry responsibility?
-  **Leadership:** How would your staff rate the importance of prayer in ministry based on what they see in your leadership?

### From the Mouth of Babes

"Every morning we have seen (and still see) our parents on their faces pleading with God on the people's behalf, interceding and crying out to God to become better leaders. We have been blessed with such parents who love the Lord with all their heart and set such an example." (Melinda Poitras, age 12.)

**“The devil is in constant conspiracy against a preacher who really prays, for it has been said that what a minister is in his prayer closet is what he is, no more, no less.”  
(Vance Havner)**

**Study Questions**

1. According to this lesson how can we increase our influence level?

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2. What will happen when there is a limited prayer base in the church?

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3. What are the leadership priorities found in Acts 6?

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4. Give three examples of biblical leaders who prayed.

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5. Write out one verse that shows Paul prayed for His people.

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6. How many prayer conversations between Moses and God are found in Exodus?

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7. Name two things that you can do to improve your prayer life.

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8. What three things (about prayer) can we learn from Acts 3:1?

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9. Why is it important to pray specifically?

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10. What is the real powerhouse of the church?

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11. Give a reference or quote that shows that Paul fasted often.

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12. What does 1 Samuel 12:23 say?

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13. What four questions should be asked to determine effectiveness at leading from the knees?

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