



The Power of Prayer in Evangelism

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The Theological Assumptions of Prayer

Prayer in evangelism presupposes the critical role of the super-natural in world evangelization. By super-natural I refer to a “reality beyond the observable physical universe.” It is in this super-natural reality that prayer, the Bible and the Holy Spirit operate to assist us in evangelism. I define prayer in evangelism as an act of worship by which intercessors systematically bear the needs of sinners to God for forgiveness and reconciliation through the merits of Jesus.

This presentation is designed to help you understand the significance of prayer in evangelism. To accomplish this aim I shall examine the theological assumptions of prayer in evangelism, biblical principles which govern prayer in evangelism, and the strategic process for organizing prayer in evangelism in world evangelization.

The Theological Assumptions of Prayer in Evangelism

Intercessory prayer helps us to understand the nature of God. So we ask the question: What does prayer tell us about God? A close examination of some of the major prayers in scripture shows that they begin by acknowledging the transcendence of God. These intercessors address God as One who dwells “in heaven” and “dwest between the cherubims” (2 Chronicles 20:6; Isaiah 37: 16). In other words Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah acknowledged that God transcends or lives apart from His creation. Therefore, God is not part of His creation but He is separate and distinct from His creation.

Biblical prayer assumes God's immanence. Rodriguez in a seminar article *Toward a Theology of Prayer* argues “prayer operates within the theological conviction that God is with us, that He experiences our joys, sadness, fears, and that He listens to us when we invoke His name” (Rodriguez March 2006). The prayers of Hezekiah and Nehemiah acknowledged God's immanence with carefully selected phrases: “ Incline thine ear, O Lord” and “Open thine eyes, O Lord” (Nehemiah 1: 6-7 and Isaiah 37: 17). In our prayers we are admitting that our God is not only transcendent but is also immanent. William Poole describes in his song, *Just When I Need Him Most*, the meaning of God's immanence (*Seventh day Adventist Hymnal* 1985). Biblical prayer assumes God is near us and identifies with our struggles, joys and sorrow.

Prayer admits that we are insufficient but God is all-sufficient. This means that God is able to provide for all our needs. In Acts 4:18, Peter and John were commanded to stop preaching about the risen Christ. They felt insufficient in the midst of serious opposition to the gospel. They decided to report the problem to a small company of intercessors who gathered in Jerusalem. The intercessors prayed “ Lord thou art God, which hast made the heaven and earth and the sea and all that in is” (Acts 4: 24). They began their prayer by acknowledging the all-sufficiency of God. The intercessors in Acts 4 believed in an all-sufficient God. In Acts 4:32 God responded to their need for deliverance in a dramatic way. Angel Manuel Rodriguez puts it tersely “prayer is an act of worship through which we express the wonderful conviction that our insufficiency is overcome through God's all-sufficiency.”

Biblical prayer also confesses that God is omniscient. This means that God knows all things. Jesus made reference to the omniscience of His Father and Lord in two of His prayers. In Matthew 6:10 Jesus taught His disciples to pray that “God’s will be done on earth as it was done in heaven.” Also at Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, “not as I will but as Thou wilt” (Matthew 26: 39). Jesus submitted His will to His Father’s will. The Father’s will took precedence. God’s omniscience transcends all that we may will or think. We know some things, but God knows all things.

The theological assumptions which undergird prayer make it an effective ministry for doing world evangelization. Through the ministry of prayer we acknowledge a God who is transcendent, immanent, all-sufficient and omniscient. Our prayers, though human utterances, are interpreted by the Holy Spirit, meditated by Jesus to the His Father and the Father answers our prayers according His divine will. Through our prayers God accomplishes missions in the world. Our prayers acknowledge God’s power to transform the human heart through fervency in prayer (Rodriguez March 2006).

Biblical Principles of Prayer

Prayer in evangelism is governed by sound biblical principles. These principles can be considered as prerequisites for the effectiveness of prayer in evangelism. In a sense these principles are divine requirements to which intercessors should adhere. Intercessors need to be aware of the principles governing prayer in evangelism so as to create the conditions necessary for divine intervention. Here are the principles undergirding prayer in evangelism:

1. Time spent with Jesus in private will be rewarded openly (Matthew 6:6).
2. If you want to see a large movement of people coming to Christ in baptism, there must first be a movement of intercessory prayer in private places (Matthew 6:6).
3. Spiritual healing precedes emotional and physical healing (Matthew 9:1-5).
4. Faith in God’s Word (promises) and the will to obey, provide the conditions for physical healing (White 1905).
5. Intercessory prayer increases visitors’ receptivity to the gospel at evangelistic meetings (Acts 16: 25-34).
6. He/she who prays for the reconciliation of others to Christ must first be reconciled to Christ (Acts 4: 23-32).

Our prayer for others gives the Holy Spirit access to their hearts. However, as we pray for others the Holy Spirit also gains access to our hearts to recreate them, cleanse them and empower us in the ministry of prayer for the lost. The principles of prayer are divine prerequisites necessary to give the Holy Spirit access to our hearts and the hearts of others in a ministry of prayer (White 2002).

HOW TO CONDUCT AN EVANGELISTIC PRAYER MINISTRY TEAM

An evangelistic prayer room or prayer tent is a sacred place where prayer intercessors and visitors experience spiritual, emotional and physical healing. The prayer room is designed to increase visitors' receptivity to the gospel. Following is the suggested nightly outline. It will allow the prayer intercessors to be involved in different facets of prayer every five to six minutes in the prayer room or prayer tent (Telemaque 2005).

1. **Bible Reading** - Begin your nightly prayer ministry in the prayer room with a Bible reading. Simply read a few verses or chapter from the Scriptures.
2. **Personal Reflection** - Allow for each prayer warrior to confess his/her sins to God each night. The Prayer Points Sheet contains a sample of the content for personal reflection prayer.
3. **Bible Study** - Bible study follows the encounter/response principle format. Read-meditation-share-prayer. **Firstly**, the prayer coordinator leads the prayer intercessors to read selected verses of scripture. **Secondly**, prayer intercessors are asked to meditate (personalize or internalize) God's revelation to him/her. Meditation allows for a divine encounter. **Thirdly**, the prayer coordinator guides the prayer intercessors to share in groups of two, God's revelation to him/her. For example, they may say to each other "God is saying to me (your name)...". The prayer coordinator may also ask a few prayer intercessors to share openly with everyone God's personal revelation to him/her. Always encourage prayer intercessors to personalize their reflections.
4. **Prayer Points** - The prayer coordinator guides the prayer intercessors to pray for specific prayer points. The prayer points are reviewed with the prayer intercessors before they pray. They may pray in various formations: groups of two, three, or four or any other format of choice. These are verbal prayers. The prayer point for the preaching of the word always takes place at the beginning of the evangelist's sermon each night. The combination of the intercessory prayer and the preaching of the Word allow for the convicting power of the Holy Spirit to descend upon the audience.

5. **Prayer Walk** - Each night during the song service, eight to ten prayer intercessors from the prayer tent, prayer-walk around the vicinity of the evangelistic campaign. While prayer walking, they may stop to pray for visitors who are standing on the outside of the church building or evangelistic tent. However, the prayer intercessors' primary focus is to exercise spiritual authority in the vicinity of the evangelistic meetings.
6. **Spirit of Prophecy Reading** - Every night the prayer coordinator may select an appropriate reading from the Spirit of Prophecy. It is recommended that the coordinator read one paragraph. There should be no comment or discussion on the reading. Prayer intercessors simply reflect upon what was read.
7. **Methods of prayer** - This section on the prayer outline allows for the selection of different methods of prayer every night. This gives variety to the prayer intercessors' prayer response. Some of the prayer methods may include: PART (P-praise, A-admission, R-request, T-thanksgiving), ACTS (A-adoration, C-confession, T-thanksgiving, and S-supplication), hymnal prayer, round-robin prayer, silent prayer, written prayer, and group prayer.
8. **Supplication prayer** - A prayer of supplication presents specific needs to God. This prayer also asks for divine intervention according to God's will. For example, "Father, Mary is confused in her mind as to her choice of a boyfriend. I pray that you will instruct her and guide her in the choice she should make. Amen." A prayer of supplication presents the person's need, and asks for divine intervention.
9. **Prayer basket** - A prayer basket should be placed in the prayer room. Encourage people to place their prayer requests in the basket. At the point indicated on the outline, distribute the prayer requests among the prayer intercessors. The prayer intercessors should be given a few minutes to read the prayer requests. Then they should sing, "I need the prayers of those I love". At the end of the song they may pray in groups of two or three.
10. **Testimony of answered prayer** - This is the time for sharing and faith building. Every night prayer intercessors are given the opportunity to share their testimonies of answered prayer. The testimonies should be recent occurrences.

EVANGELISTIC CAMPAIGN PRAYER MINISTRY OUTLINE

1. Bible Reading
2. Prayer - Personal reflections
3. Bible study - Encounter/Response Principle
4. Prayer points
5. Bible study-Encounter/Response principle
6. Prayer walk (8-10 prayer intercessors)
7. Bible study - counter/Response principle
8. Prayer points
9. Bible study-Encounter/Response principle
10. Short Spirit of Prophecy reading or “Alone with God”
11. Bible study-Encounter/Response principle
12. Selected methods of prayer
13. Special anointing - steps to follow:
 - (a) Listen to the person’s need(s)
 - (b) Match the need with a Bible text
 - (c) Pray for forgiveness and strengthening of faith
 - (d) Prayer of supplication/intercession
 - (e) Short prayer of thanksgiving to God
14. Prayer of supplication (needs in prayer basket)
15. Testimonies of answered prayers
16. Praise and thanksgiving in the Psalms

THE PROCESS OF HEALING IN THE PRAYER ROOM

The primary function of the prayer room is to increase visitors' receptivity to the gospel through Bible reading, confession of sins, faith in divine power, supplication, and thanksgiving. To increase visitor's receptivity to the gospel through the ministry of prayer is a process (Telemaque 2005). Let us note the stages in the process.

1. TIME OF VISITORS' ARRIVAL

Visitors with prayer requests should come to the prayer room/tent at specific times, preferably ten minutes before the evangelist begins to preach. This will enable the prayer intercessors to minister to the visitors before the preacher begins to preach. Remember the primary function of the prayer room/tent is to increase visitors' receptivity to the gospel.

2. KEY QUESTION TO VISITORS

When visitors arrive in the prayer room/tent they may be assigned to two or three prayer intercessors who ask them this question: What would you like Jesus to do for you tonight? The prayer intercessors then listen to the visitor's needs and desired outcome.

While listening, the prayer intercessors try to think of an appropriate text that relates to the visitor's needs or desired outcomes.

3. BIBLE READING

The prayer intercessors then respond to the visitor's needs or desired outcomes by reading to the visitor an appropriate text. There should be no explanation given to the text. Simply read with clarity and emphasis to the visitor. Reading the Word to the visitor has two functions:

- (a) To confront and challenge the visitor's need with God's word.
- (b) To encourage the visitor to place his/her faith in God's promises.

4. PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

Spiritual healing precedes physical and emotional healing. It is the responsibility of prayer intercessors to help visitors to the prayer room to experience forgiveness. The assurance that one's sins are forgiven is the *first* step to emotional and physical healing. The prayer of forgiveness should first awaken gratitude in the visitor's heart. *Secondly*, invite the Holy Spirit to search the visitor's heart and convict him/her of sin. *Thirdly*, plead with God to "wash", "purge", "blot out", "create", "restore" unto the visitor the "joy of His salvation" (Ps. 51:1-10). The prayer of forgiveness focuses on inner cleansing.

5. PRAYER OF FAITH

God's healing or blessing comes through the visitor's steadfast faith. The prayer intercessors should then pray that God would strengthen the visitor's faith in His power to make the visitor "whole". The prayer warrior may claim one or two of God's promises in this prayer of faith. For example, "O Lord, strengthen (person's name) faith in your word - 'by His stripes you are healed' or 'then shall that light break forth as the morning and that health shall spring forth speedily.'" (Isa 58:8; 53:5) God's healing power comes through the visitor's steadfast faith in His promises.

6. PRAYER OF SUPPLICATION

In this prayer, the visitor's need is presented to God. The prayer warrior also asks for divine intervention in the life of the visitor - of course, divine intervention is always in accordance to God's will.

7. THANKSGIVING

The prayer warrior then gives the visitor the opportunity to offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God. If the person is unable or reluctant to pray, the prayer warrior may ask the visitor to repeat the prayer after him/her.

The visitor then returns to the church or evangelistic meeting to listen to the preaching of the word. It is important to note that the visitor is more receptive to the gospel having just returned from the prayer room/tent. An increased receptivity usually leads to an increase in decisions for Christ, the Sabbath and baptism.

These **sevens steps** of anointing in the prayer room/tent should take **eight minutes**. All prayer intercessors should be trained how to follow these **seven steps** in **eight minutes**.

CAMPAIGN PRAYER POINTS

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Pray that God will have mercy on you and blot out all your transgressions.
2. Pray that the blood of Jesus will wash you thoroughly from iniquity and cleanse you from sin.
3. Pray that God will “create in you a clean heart (mind) and renew a right spirit within you.”
4. Pray that the Holy Spirit will prompt you to confess that “there is nothing between your soul and your Saviour.”
5. Pray that your prayer ministry will first be a blessing to you and then to others.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Pray that God’s people will be re-baptized with the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. Pray that God will move His church toward greater dependence upon the might and power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Pray that church members will receive a clearer understanding of Zechariah 4:6 -“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit...”
4. Pray that God’s Holy Spirit will convict sinners of truth, righteousness, and judgment for the express purpose of leading them to confess Jesus as their Lord and Saviour in baptism.

THE EVANGELIST

1. Pray that the Holy Spirit will empower the evangelist to preach nightly with clarity, conviction and boldness so that men and women will understand God’s will for them.
2. Pray that the evangelist will be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.
3. Pray for the evangelist’s wife. Pray that God will protect her during her husband’s absence.
4. Pray that God will preserve the evangelist’s health during the entire period of the campaign.

CAMPAIGN FINANCES

1. Each campaign is a financial challenge to the Union and to the Conference. Pray that the church’s mission will influence the financial contributions of the members towards the salvation of souls.
2. Pray for nightly protection and wise use of the offerings.

THE COMMUNITY WITHIN THE CAMPAIGN SITE

1. Pray that the Holy Spirit will invade homes in the community for the express purpose of impressing upon their minds the need for changes in their lives.
2. Pray that the Holy Spirit will begin the conversion process in the hearts of the people in the area before the campaign begins.
3. Pray that God will dispel the spirit of deception and ignorance, which has kept many people in captivity for years. Pray for the deliverance of the people from all satanic forces.
4. Pray for the movement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church members into these communities for the express purpose of bonding, bridge-building, prayer, satisfying needs, Bible study, etc.. Pray that the Lord will send His people into the harvest field.

THE WEATHER AND CAMPAIGN EQUIPMENT

1. Pray for clement weather during the nights of the campaign.
2. Pray that the public address system operators will be sensitive to the evangelistic need for quality sound.
3. Music helps to prepare the mind for the spoken word. Pray that the musicians at the crusade will be sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit; will render music to God's glory; will allow their minds and emotions to be always under the influence of the Holy Spirit; will be punctual each night.
4. Pray that the angels of the Lord will encamp round about the crusade equipment and security officers (watchmen).

SONG SERVICE

1. Pray that the angels will join the song service leader(s) in singing nightly. Pray that the song service will melt the hearts of visitors and members alike, for the express purpose of preparing their minds for the preaching of the Word.
2. Pray for God's special anointing upon the song service leader(s) and that there will be nothing between their souls and their Saviour.
3. Pray that the song service leader(s) will be blessed with the spirit of discernment and that the Holy Spirit will guide the selection of choruses and hymns.
4. Pray that the appeal singer will be carefully selected. Pray that the melody of his/her voice will encourage the Holy Spirit and the evangelist to bring hundreds of souls 'over the line.'

CONFERENCE/MISSION

1. Pray for spiritual renewal in the homes of church members. Pray for a revival of Bible reading, family worship and intercessory prayer in the homes of church members.
2. Pray that God's houses (church buildings) will be places of prayer for all people. Pray that the movement of prayer will move God's people from a defensive posture to an offensive one. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will give His people a rich harvest of souls in response to their prayers.
3. Pray for a revival of evangelism among the laity. Pray that the Holy Spirit will be with the Personal Ministries Directors giving them the skill to recruit, train and deploy hundreds of young men and women in various ministries of evangelism. Pray that God will bless the administrators with the spirit of discernment; renewed commitment and vision for church growth and conservation of new members.

PREACHING OF THE WORD

1. Pray that the convicting power of the Holy Spirit will accompany the presentation of 'testing truths' - Sabbath, state of the dead, the law and grace, etc.
2. Pray that the convicting power of the Holy Spirit will accompany the nightly reading of the scripture under the tent/church.
3. Pray that the Word of God will go forth 'quick, powerful, piercing every soul, spirit, joint and marrow.' Pray that the Word of God will be a "discerner" of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

PRAYER TEAM

1. Pray that the prayer team will be committed to the offensive ministry of prayer.
2. Pray that the prayer team will understand the weapons of their warfare are not carnal-flesh and blood, but it is warfare against spiritual forces - principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, etc.
3. Pray that the prayer team will be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, that they will be mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

NIGHTLY VISITORS' AND MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE

1. Pray for voluntary movement of people from their homes to the tent/church nightly. Pray that the Holy Spirit will lead them inside the tent.
3. Pray that members will cooperate with the Holy Spirit to draw hundreds of visitors to the campaign.
4. Pray that the youth outside and inside the tent will accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

5. Pray for God's special anointing upon the prayer team as they confront evil forces with prayer power in the name of Jesus. Pray that members will be sensitive to visitors' needs for kindness, tolerance, empathy, seats, sharing of Bibles and words of encouragement.
6. Pray that members will rally around the church's mission by supporting the campaign with their prayers, finances and nightly attendance.

CRUSADE TEAM AND BIBLE WORKERS

1. Pray that the campaign team will be Christ-centered, mission-driven and disciplined.
2. Pray that the minds of the campaign team members will always be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
3. Pray that the Holy Spirit will equip Bible workers with the gift of discernment. Pray that the Spirit will lead them to the people who are yearning for Christ, baptism and eternal life.
4. "He that winneth souls is wise." Pray that Jesus will make the Bible workers wise and tactful fishers of men and women.

TRANSPORTATION AND CAMPAIGN SITE

1. Pray for the safe nightly transportation of visitors and members to and from the meetings.
2. Pray that members will give way to visitors on the buses, to and from the crusade.
3. Pray for the convicting power of the Holy Spirit on the visitors as they travel from the campaign nightly.
4. Pray that God will hallow the campaign site with His presence.
5. Pray that God will teach us how to use the weapons of warfare as Christ and Satan battle for souls of the hundreds of men and women on the site of the campaign.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRAYER COORDINATORS

- ◆ To start the prayer ministry nightly at 6:45 p.m. and continue to 9:00 p.m.
- ◆ To ensure that the prayer tent is neatly kept and the prayer intercessors are comfortable.
- ◆
- ◆ To encourage the encounter/response principle in Bible study and prayer.
- ◆ To adopt a creative approach to the nightly program outline.
- ◆ To manage the deployment of the prayer intercessors in offensive prayer-walk ministry.
- ◆
- ◆ To consult nightly with the pastors on matters relating to the prayer ministry.
- ◆ To ensure that the following items are under the tent: water, chairs, tissue paper, proper lighting, prayer cards, etc.

HOW TO ORGANIZE AND DEVELOP A PRAYER MINISTRY TEAM FOR EVANGELISM

The development of a prayer ministry team is a process, it is not a one-time event (Telemaque 2005). Jesus used this process to organize and develop His prayer ministry team.

1. **Call** - Jesus extended an invitation to men and women to join His prayer ministries team. The call may be extended in the form of an altar call, news bulletin, house to house visitation, etc. Any method which allows you to extend a personal invitation to people to join the prayer ministries team would be appropriate.
2. **Recruitment** - Persons who respond to the call should be invited to a special meeting to ascertain their commitment and experience in prayer ministries. After careful evaluation, persons should be selected who are committed, available, and gifted. The recruitment of prayer intercessors requires spiritual discernment.
3. **Training** - Prayer intercessors should be trained in two areas: (1) The Biblical foundation of prayer ministries. (2) Prayer methodologies. Training in the Biblical foundation of prayer ministries includes a theological understanding of the following: spiritual authority, spiritual warfare, the Holy Spirit, faith and healing, and prayer in the life of Jesus. It is important that prayer intercessors understand the theological principles that govern prayer ministries. An effective prayer ministries program is governed by spiritual principles. Prayer methodologies emerge from the biblical foundation of prayer. Prayer methodologies in evangelism include encounter/response principle, prayer walks, prayer methods, anointing, blessings, think-pair-share, prayer points, prayer outline, etc. Prayer methods give variety to prayer intercessors' prayer responses. This makes prayer ministries exciting and relevant to different age groups.
4. **Deployment** - One or two weeks following the training, prayer intercessors should be set to work in an evangelistic campaign. The prayer intercessors should be given a comfortable prayer room or prayer tent within the vicinity of the evangelistic campaign. The prayer intercessors' work in the prayer room is listed in the campaign's nightly outline. Their work may also include other assignments assigned to them by the prayer coordinator.
5. **Coaching** - Coaching provides the prayer intercessors with regular feedback on their performances. Coaching also involves on-the-job training in the prayer room. The prayer coordinator should keep the prayer intercessors motivated with regular coaching sessions.
6. **Celebration** - Celebration provides an opportunity for the prayer intercessors to "come aside and rest a while" at the end of the evangelistic campaign. This is a time of praise, reflection, recruiting of new prayer intercessors and it should also be a time of thanksgiving.

Curriculum for Training Prayer Intercessors for Evangelistic Campaigns

Modules

PMBF 00A
PMBF 001
PMBF 002
PMBF 003
PMBF 004
PMBF 005
PMBF 006

PMBF 007

PMBF 008

PMBF 009

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

The Theological Assumptions of Prayer
The Role of Intercessory Prayer in the Life of Jesus
Principles Governing Prayer Ministry in Evangelism
Prayer Ministry – Missiological Perspectives
The Function of Prayer in Spiritual Warfare
Encounter/Response Principle
The Role of Spiritual Authority in Church Growth/Church Planting
Three Lessons from the Life of Intercessors in the Bible:
(Prayer Challenge (cause); Prayer Power (intercession) and
Divine Intervention (solution))
Prayer Ministry Values
Prayer Ministry Spiritual Process

Modules

PMME 001
PMME 002
PMME 003
PMME 004
PMME 005
PMME 006
PMME 007

PMME 008
(Telemaque 2005)

METHODOLOGIES FOR EVANGELISM

Encounter/Response Methodology
Prayer Points for Evangelism
How to Manage an Evangelistic Prayer Ministry Team
Prayer Outline Contents & Structure for Evangelism
Prayer Coordinators' Responsibilities in the Prayer Room
Prayer Ministries For End-Time Challenges in Evangelism
Organizing and Developing a Prayer Ministry Team
for Evangelism
Methods of Prayer

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