

# *Prayer Matters*

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## **Does it matter if I only pray at Sunday worship services?**

Yes, I think it does matter!

We need to be connected to God as we go about our daily lives. More and more of us are keeping connected to our friends and business colleagues by electronic means (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn ), but we find it challenging to keep connected to God in prayer on our own. While we may pray for God's help on an ad hoc basis when we, or others close to us, face difficulties, we often can't find the time, energy, or discipline to pray regularly by ourselves. We are so busy "doing" that we have difficulty finding a way to fit prayer into our lives outside of Sunday.

One way of overcoming this is to become part of a group of others who come together regularly for prayer. Being part of a Prayer Group that meets to pray together and can encourage us and help us to keep our connection to the life giving Spirit of God every day.

## **Why do we need Prayer Groups?**

There are two ways to answer that question. One way deals with the needs of the individual, and the other way meets the need of the Church (as the Body of Christ in the world today). The first way involves the needs of pray-ers: the other way involves the need for prayers. One's congregation, the people within it, and the world around it, all need prayer. One of the effective ways of carrying on prayer activity is in small groups. Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18: 20).

Prayer Groups meet another need, which the Church today recognizes more and more. People may be regular in worship, and participate in corporate prayer, and they may or may not exercise personal prayer. Yet for many it is very useful to be part of a smaller group in which personal concerns may be expressed and prayed about. This desire to be part of a group much smaller than the worshipping body--the need for growth, for deepening our spiritual life--leads one to seek out other Christians who feel the pull of prayer. In a small group Christians can come together to share what each has learned, and to seek to learn and experience more about prayer, as well as to provide prayerful support for one another and the needs of others within the congregation.

No more eloquent testimony could be offered than the following one attesting to the value and efficacy of a prayer group.

*"Becoming part of a prayer group opened a whole new life for me, and I've been strengthened, taught, and healed within the circle of love therein, and I know I too have strengthened, taught, and healed as I became an active part of that loving circle."*

In forming a Prayer Group there are some things to consider such as: what is the particular purpose of the group; who belongs to the group; when and where will it gather; how long will each group session last; who will lead the group; and the need for the discussions and information about others to be kept confidential. Regardless of the answers to these questions, being in a Prayer Group is deeply rewarding and strengthens our connection to God.