

Prayer Summit Guidelines

(Formerly developed by Margaret Kickasola, 2006)

The first thing to do when scheduling the prayer summit is to notify our intercessor prayer team of the date and time so they may be praying for this time. Stephanie Anderson is the coordinator and her email address is prayer@flocog.org.

The prayer summit is scheduled for about two hours. I tell them to bring their Bible and we want everyone from the church there, from teens to adults, leaders and followers, people who have just started coming to the old timers. There will be no breaks but if they need to use the rest room, they can simply quietly dismiss themselves and then come back. I don't want any food served.

As far as an introduction, I spend the first 5 minutes telling them that we are here to listen to what God has to say about His mission for His church and our lives. I also tell them we are going to spend about two hours going through His Word, confessing our shortcomings in the area of mission, and then asking Him to clarify His heart in the area of mission.

I always find prayer more effective and focused if we first allow God to speak to us through His Word. Then, I take about 40 minutes having them share verses on what God has to say about the mission of His people. I have a few primed, but usually the easy ones come up--Luke 15, Matthew 16.16-19, 28.19-20, Acts 1.8, Eph 2.10, 4.10-11, Rev 3.20. I have them read the verses with no commentary. I ask them to listen to what others are reading without trying to think of another verse. Only think of another verse after you have listened to the verse being read. You will be amazed at all the verses from Genesis to Revelation that are read. They simply stand, read and then sit down. You will have people share their favorite verses which have nothing to do with God's mission, but that is okay. If there are long periods of silence, that is fine.

After about 40 minutes, tell them, "We have heard what God has to share on the subject of mission. Now we simply need to ask ourselves where have we fallen short in fulfilling His desires in our lives and the life of this church. Before we can ask God to clarify our vision we have to spend time in confession. It may be a general attitude or a specific incident where we have failed to fulfill God's mission through our lives or in the life of this church." I ask them to take time and ask God to show them (Psalm 51). Usually, they will confess general and specific. Be ready to do some pastoral work if someone confesses something major, it may happen. I have others come around and pray with/for them. The intent of this section is to rout out sin in the life of the church...let it happen. Sometimes, I may have to prime the pump by sharing where I have failed to make the sacrificial steps to see someone hear the gospel. Or maybe where I didn't serve a lost person in love because I was too interested in my own schedule or comfort. I also share how I have gone through phases of ministry where I have been more interested in something other than the mission of God. I only do this if needed. This goes for 30-40 minutes. Again, silence is a good opportunity for the Spirit to work.

Lastly, I tell them that we are going to simply ask God to give His heart and mind on this area of vision. We are to ask Him to renew in us a right heart, to renew our minds, to give us clarity on where we should be going as a church. I am not asking that we come up with a clear statement at that meeting. We are simply asking God to move this congregation, to use us in our personal and corporate lives in His mission. This usually goes for 15-20 minutes.

I usually close the time with prayer and simply dismiss them