

## Straight Street for Church Planters

### Unit 2 - Prayer

#### **Scripture Helps:**

**Desired outcome from this unit:** For participants to reflect on the importance of prayer in their life and ministry, to consider how their prayers, and the prayers of their intercessory prayer team, along with specific prayer activities, can prepare the community and shape the life of the church plant.

**Desired outcome from the Basic Training unit on Prayer:** For the planting team to rededicate themselves to personal prayer, develop a list of potential intercessors and a plan to enlist these individuals as an intercessory prayer team.

#### **I. What is God saying to me in His Word?**

#### **Reflection and Thoughts**

Jesus Christ took the initiative to speak to Saul on the road to Damascus. Saul was on a mission to arrest the people of the Way. Jesus was on a mission to arrest the heart of a man and show him the true Way. It is not surprising that only after a short time Saul, whose name much later was changed to Paul, was found praying to the very Jesus who had just a few days before changed his life forever. Saul's prayer life was one of the very first things that he developed immediately after his encounter with Jesus. Read Acts 9:11.

Dr. T. W. Hunt says that, "Prayer is the shaping force of history." "The apostle Paul's prayers helped to shape the personality and destiny of the new church as it spread across the Mediterranean world."

In this unit you will discover how Paul's life was shaped through prayer, how prayer can shape your life, and the life of your church plant.

Read Acts 9:1—Saul was breathing out threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. The word literally means, "snorting." Saul by breathing out threats was only doing that which was natural and common to him. Fellowshiping with God in prayer does not come natural to man. God, on the other hand, initiates the relationship with mankind. Most often this takes place through prayer. Satan is very good at causing individuals to rely on processes and procedures that can be devoid of spiritual power. The reminder of Zach 4:6 is very important to church planters "Not by might, nor by power but by my spirit says the Lord Almighty."

Read Acts 9:3-5—As with most of the divine encounters in the Bible, Saul recognized that he, too, was in the divine presence of God. He was in the presence of holiness (Jesus Christ). Not only did Saul experience the holiness of Jesus on the road to Damascus, but he also experienced the love and mercy of Jesus toward a sinner. Each church planter should allow the Spirit to root out every impurity that interferes with our personal holiness and witness.

Describe a time in your life when you experienced the holiness, love and mercy of God. Was this through a time of prayer? What areas of your life need renewal and cleansing?

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God is holy, loving, and merciful. When we pray to God we must take into account His total nature. In other words, because He is holy, loving, and merciful we come to Him in prayer on those grounds. Be careful to replace religious pretense and ritual with intimate, personal relationship with your Abba Father.

God is holy—Read Isaiah 6:3.

Take time to allow the Spirit to replace all religious pretense and ritual with intimate relationship. Write a brief prayer of praise to God.

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God is loving—Read John 3:16.

Pause to acknowledge his gift of love by dying for our sin. Write a brief prayer thanking God for His love.

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God is merciful—Read Psalm 103:8.

Imagine where you would be serving if His mercy did not override our deserved judgment for sin in our lives. Write a brief prayer thanking God for His mercy.

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“Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank” (Acts 9:8-9, NASB).

Saul was made temporarily blind by the intense light. He naturally closed his eyes upon seeing the bright light, but when he later opened them he could not see; externally that is. He was, however, able to see internally. For three days he dealt with his past life and the meaning of Jesus’ personal visit to him. It is no surprise that when Ananias went to Straight Street to the house of Judas, he found Saul of Tarsus praying to God.

There are times when we find ourselves brought to the dust. These are painful days filled with darkness and uncertainty about what God would have us to do. It is in our time(s) of prayer and undivided focus on God that we often discover the Why’s, What’s, and How’s of life. It was no different for Saul. Notice the importance of not allowing Satan to take our self-confidence and turn it into self-sufficiency, or worse, to turn self-confidence into arrogance.

Describe a time in your life when you were without direction and could not see a particular situation clearly from God’s perspective. Or when the self-confidence needed to be a church planter became self-sufficiency or arrogance.

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Describe your prayer behaviors at that time. (Example, Where did you pray? Did you pray with others or ask them to pray for you? How much time did you devote to prayer? Did you fast or read God’s Word or a devotional study?)

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Describe how prayer, experiences, or God's Word helped you to see the situation more clearly from God's perspective.

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What were the implications from that experience? How has that experience affected your prayer life today?

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Describe what God has been saying to you in prayer about your prayer life, your attitudes and some of the self-made difficulties you are facing.

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Describe what God has been saying to you in prayer about your walk with Him. Notice the implication to your walk with Him if you are not hearing Him say anything to you right now.

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Describe what God has been saying to you in prayer about your ministry and church planting. Notice the implication to your ministry if you are not hearing Him say anything to you right now.

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## II. What is God saying to me through others?

Read Luke 24:52-53.

The birth of the early church started in an atmosphere of prayer and praise. This evidently was not private prayer. The early church met **every day** at regular hours for prayer. This perhaps was the beginning of a climate for an ongoing community lifestyle of prayer. It is good to pray not only privately, but also with others.

What happens when the church comes together and prays? What could happen to your community if you prayed for and shared Jesus with everyone there?

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When God answers the prayer(s) that have been prayed for by the church, then the church can give God the glory because they have seen God respond to specific prayer.

What specific prayers have been answered in the past two months at the church that you attend? Did God get the glory for answering those prayers? What are the implications to your ministry if you cannot think of any specific answered prayers?

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Read 1 Timothy 2:1-4, NIV.

1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone- 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Note in these verses that Paul deals with praying for others, our need for prayer, and praying for the lost. If we who believe in prayer are not praying fervently and specifically for others, then who is praying for them?

The following question will help you to think about who you are praying for and with whom you are praying.

**Reflection:**

- What did Saul pray about?
- What did he ask people to pray about?
- What is your understanding of Saul's prayer life?
- How did prayer impact his ministry?
- Do you believe in the power of prayer?
- Do you believe in the power of others praying for you?
- How has the power of prayer been demonstrated in your life?
- How does specific, fervent, prayer impact your life and ministry?
- What has God been saying to you in your prayers?

Answer the following questions.

What should I do to create or enhance a daily, consistent, and effective quiet time?

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Do my spouse and I pray together consistently?

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Do I pray consistently with my children in a way that distinguishes ritual from relationship?

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Do I have someone that I am accountable to for my prayer time? If so, who? If not, do you see value in having someone to be accountable to in prayer and Bible study?

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Who am I praying for? What are the implications for my obedience if I am not praying fervently and righteously for others?

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Who is praying for me? What can happen to my ministry if I do not enlist and maintain prayer support?

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What would you like people to pray for when they pray for you?

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Who is a prayer warrior that I would call at 3:00 a.m. to pray for me? Why this person? Do others consider me a prayer warrior? Why or why not?

**III. What is it that I am supposed to be doing?**

List:

Books that I've read recently about prayer. What lessons did you learn from them?

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Books that I need to read about prayer. (Visit [www.namb.net/prayer](http://www.namb.net/prayer) or [www.praytimer.org](http://www.praytimer.org) and click on bibliography for updated, biblically accurate prayer material)

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Resources about prayer that I need to obtain

Conferences or seminars that I have attended that dealt with prayer and lessons I learned and applied to my life.

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Specific prayer activities that you will engage in or ask your intercessory prayer team to participate in that will help to prepare the soil through prayer for the harvest. Some examples could be, Prayer Walks, Taking Prayer to the Streets, implementing PrayTimer, and Lighthouses of Prayer.

Things I have done and will do this year in terms of my personal prayer life. Zech 4:6, NIV: “So he said to me, ‘This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty.’”

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**Reflection:**

- I can pray fervently for doors of opportunity to open.
- I can pray specifically for believers, unbelievers, and personal needs.
- I can pray for deliverance.
- I can pray for boldness.
- I can pray for the churches.
- I can enlist others to pray for me.
- I can participate in a prayer walk.