

WHAT IS A PRAYER ROOM?

Simply put, a prayer room is a space dedicated to encounter with God. We prioritize time to encounter God through the ministries of worship, intercession and engagement with the scriptures. In worship, we engage in the exaltation of the God-head and in intercession we partner with God's desires by asking Him to release His power and purposes in our midst. The combination of worship and intercession allow for the building of an enjoyable atmosphere where the beauty of God is welcomed, revered and released. The scriptures are the transcript of God's heart. They are a doorway into the knowledge of God by way of inspired revelation. This three-stranded cord of worship, intercession and scripture forms the building blocks for how we function in relationship to God in the place of prayer.

WHY A PRAYER ROOM?

Hearing God is slowly becoming a lost art. Our ability to hear God is directly related to the time that we spend with Him. The global culture around us is moving at a blistering pace and shows no signs of slowing down; and more often than not the culture within the church is becoming increasingly dependent upon event-styled production to keep people entertained and in their seats. This may seem a harsh criticism but the pressure that many pastors and leaders face is one of trying to create and brand a unique ministry identity while appearing attractive to members and relevant to outsiders.

Instead of competing for attention, Jesus emphasized a devotional prayer life in the midst of high-flying religious icons jockeying for positions of honor and recognition in the culture of His day. He said, *"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."* -Mt.6:6. The devotional element of a prayer room is designed specifically to facilitate the heart of Jesus' command to develop a unique and hidden history in God.

There is also a corporate dimension to a prayer room. One where believers can employ themselves in the business of corporate intercession and worship while reaping the benefits that come with doing so in healthy relationship with others. Paul told his spiritual son, Timothy, to *"...pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."* -2 Tim.2:22.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE PRAY?

This is one of the most important questions that we need to answer when encouraging believers to engage in a prayer room. Revealing the *Why* behind the *What* allows for sustainability and growth over time because it begins to shift prayer from religious obligation to joyful encounter. As strange as this may sound, we don't mostly pray so that God will answer our prayers. While He delights in answering prayer and promised that He will continue to hear our cries, He desires

that we would be a people of promise, like Abraham. By faith, Abraham had the promises of God's very words applied to his life and the life of his posterity and even the lives of future countless gentiles and yet the letter to the Hebrews records that during His lifetime he did not receive the fullness of those promises. God trained Abraham in the school of friendship; Abraham became the friend of God not just the possessor of answered prayer. And when He went to the place of intercession God listened to Him on the basis of that friendship (Gen.18:16-33). God is still looking for friends today.

In a prayer room we cultivate closeness with God. Individually, we grow in the knowledge of what God is like and then we take practical steps in our spiritual disciplines to begin to apply that knowledge in our relationship with Him. This is the foundation for a life of prayer. We also grow into the knowledge of God corporately by experiencing His presence and deep affection for us. The apostle Paul taught the church in Ephesus to gather regularly for times of corporate worship and to exhort and encourage one another by singing and declaring the scripture. Moments like these give entrance for the power of the Holy Spirit to begin to fill and strengthen us in fresh ways (Eph.5:7-29).

As we gather in His presence and respond in obedience to His promptings we are changed. And prayer, by nature, is transformative. As we focus in sincerity and diligent obedience on the person of Jesus, we become like Him, that is, like His image (1 Jn.3:2). The indwelling Spirit working in concert with our new nature produces within us thoughts, desires and actions that reflect the very heart of God Himself. ¹⁸ *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*" -2 Cor.3:17

CONTENDING FOR REVIVAL

I want to emphasize one more critical aspect to a prayer room; and that is the role of the church in praying for revival in the nations of the earth. While we emphasize cultivating a personal history in God, and the formation of the corporate man in the place of worship, we are not to neglect the prayer dimension of the Great Commission. Jesus taught His disciples to, *"pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."* (Mt.9:38), while God said to Ezekiel, *"So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one."* (Ezek.22:30). Our prayer is a potent weapon that releases the kingdom of God in power and repels the advance of the enemy with great effectiveness. We are not to neglect our responsibility to regularly gather in the place of prayer to cry out to the Lord to establish His mercy and justice in the earth. As an example, and really, as one of our chief prayer mandates, the Spirit cries out through the prophet Isaiah, *"I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth."* -Is.2:7-8. God's answer to the day and night accusation and onslaught of the adversary is to raise up a day and night prayer movement that sings forth His praises and

releases His power in intercession. *“And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?” -Lk.18:7.*

I HAVE NO PRAYER ROOM

Well, the simple answer is, “Yes, you do.” Matthew 6:6 tells us just to go and find a quiet place and begin to pray. But that doesn’t really answer the corporate dimension, which is essential. At this point, most of us don’t have access to a ministry devoted to building and facilitating a day and night prayer movement with worship in our city. But Jesus told us that wherever we would gather, even two or three of us, in His name, that He would be there in our midst by the presence of the Holy Spirit (Mt.18:20). This is a great place to start. We begin by gathering with just a handful of others. This can be in a living room, your own or at a friend’s home, a church building or something similar. Just block off some time. I would recommend starting with an hour if possible. And when it comes to fueling your prayer meeting, whether its devotional or intercessory, worship is key. Maybe you have a friend who is a worship leader, or perhaps a qualified musician or singer who can be part of the group and add a musical dimension to what you are doing. If not, you can even let the iPod lead! Personally, I have enjoyed using the free web-stream broadcast from the 24/7 Global Prayer Room at the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, MO (ihopkc.org). Either way, don’t let the lack of an organized prayer room or prayer meeting slow you down. God is looking for leaders who will take initiative and begin to pray and lead prayer meetings, and this includes you. Remember, the Spirit of prayer is available to every believer, the call to prayer rests on every believer, and the necessity of prayer is essential to every believer.