

Prayer Leader

Creative Intergenerational Prayer Gatherings

By Kim Butts



In our increasingly dark and seductive culture, how well are we discipling children and youth in prayer, teaching them to seek Jesus and listen to His voice instead of other potentially dangerous voices around them? As adults, we need to impart what we have learned about the purpose and power of prayer.

In visits to hundreds of churches over the past two decades, I have seen very few congregations that intentionally include children or entire families in their corporate prayer gatherings. Rarely have I seen youth from middle school or high school involved.

However, when churches initiate creative prayer experiences, families and people of all ages can become fully engaged, meeting with God in new, fresh ways. Instead of viewing prayer as a perfunctory act or a duty, they discover it to be a delight. This is especially true when the prayer experience crosses generations.

I believe the lack of intergenerational prayer is robbing the Lord's Church of her power and Kingdom purpose. Remember that children do not have a junior Holy Spirit. Youth and children

are fully capable of engaging in the deep things of God! Do not marginalize them spiritually—especially in prayer.

Creative Prayer Experiences

Prayer leaders and pastors can employ simple strategies to help their churches become intergenerational praying churches. Here are some ideas:

- **Prayer Stations:** Develop prayer stations to engage everyone in creative prayer. Allow for people to move from one station to the next in their own time. For more detailed information, look up “prayer stations” on Pinterest, or email kim@harvestprayer.com.
- **Kingdom Praying:** Praying through the Scriptures helps people to see the difference between our “default” mode of prayer—which is largely focused on oneself or the health needs of others—and praying the purposes of God. As we incorporate Scripture, we see that God is interested in things like Christian unity (John 17:11), love for one another (John 13:34–35), and sending workers into the harvest field (Matt. 9:37–38).
- **Prayer Encounters/Prayer Parties:** This is a fun way to engage families and teach prayer concepts at the same time. Offer several short prayer activities that a family can do together around a table. For instance, provide a map or globe and let each family member choose a country. Pray for all of the children and teens who are orphans, who live in poverty, or who live in families torn apart by war. Making a paper chain (using one link for each nation), and then taking the chain home, can serve as a reminder to continue praying.
- **Bless a Pastor:** Using sticky notes, write some prayers including specific ways you want God to bless your pastor or a church leader. When finished, the whole family can get up and “stick it to the pastor” or whomever they have chosen to bless in prayer.
- **Body Prayer:** Together look up Scriptures that describe

how several people in the Bible prayed from various body postures. Bowing our heads and folding our hands are not the only ways to seek God with our bodies. Postures help to describe the attitudes of our hearts at various times. (See Abraham in Gen. 17:3, 17; Moses in Ex. 9:27–29; King Solomon in 1 Kings 8:54, and Jesus in Mark 6:41 and John 11:41, 17:1). Talk about how emotions can affect the ways we use our bodies to pray with thankfulness?

- **Prayer and the Senses:** choose to use our bodies in prayer. What posture expresses humility? Which is a posture of expectation? How can we create ways to pray that use each of the senses. Write the names of people in sand as you pray for them. Or pray as you listen to worship music. Give thanks to God as you “taste and see” that He is good (different kinds of finger foods). Smell flowers or spices and give God praise for all He has created.
- **Praying in Color:** Draw your prayers to the Lord with markers or crayons. This is especially good for young children who can’t read or write yet.
- **Praying the World:** Ahead of time, create passports that each child or family can use as they move around the room, praying for missionaries and the nations/people groups they serve. Stamp the passports at each station.

The creativity of our God allows us so much freedom of expression in prayer! He wants all of His people to seek His face. With a bit of creativity, you can connect all the generations with the heart of the Father—and significantly grow the prayer movement in your church.

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