

When to Pray Specifics

When we pray what is on God's heart, He answers! This past month my church experienced a powerful proof of this truth in action.

I have previously shared with you what has been happening in our smaller church (85-95 average attendance in March 2023 . . . and 143 in March 2024) over the past year.

I preached from March 2023 until we welcomed a new senior pastor in mid-January 2024. During my time, I focused a lot on spiritual hunger and worked to grow and change our weekly prayer meeting. There we added 20-25 minutes of worship and refocused the primary prayer agenda to mainly pray about kingdom growth—the lost, spiritual transformation, and so on—rather than the typical “make my life better” prayers many church prayer meetings cover. Most weeks now we see 20 to 25 percent of our congregation come out to our midweek meeting called Fresh Encounter.

About a month prior to Easter, as we prayed in our weekly corporate prayer meeting for what God would do on Easter, we sensed we should ask the Lord for something specific: 200 in attendance and 10 salvations on Easter. Each week leading up to Easter we prayed for that to happen. Many of us got more and more excited as each week in March our attendance grew until we were over 150 on Palm Sunday (our largest attendance in years).

I normally do the count, quietly moving across the back of the sanctuary to count each section. 198! I hoped I had missed someone, so I did it again. 198! Back at my seat, I told my wife, “We didn't quite hit 200. But praise the Lord for 198.” Then I turned around and the back doors opened. Another couple entered, late for church. We had our 200!

That morning, we also saw 3 kids in children's church and 8

adults in the sanctuary indicate they had given their lives to Jesus!

Last night at Fresh Encounter, when we shared that, people cheered and praised God! People prayed with great fervor and faith after that answer to prayer was shared.

While there is certainly precedence in Scripture that it is okay to pray for specifics, most of us try to leave room in our prayers for God to do what He wants. But those times when you sense what you are asking is certainly God's will, storm the gates!

For churches, simply getting back to praying for kingdom growth and transformation—both spiritual and numerical—in the lives of your people and church will bring great results.

—Jonathan Graf is the president of Church Prayer Leaders Network and the author of *Restored Power: Becoming a Praying Church One Tweak at a Time*.