

**Patty:** Good afternoon, everybody! It is really encouraging to see you all here. Sometimes when you have a meeting about prayer it's a very small group that shows up. So I want to thank each one of you for your deep commitment to prayer. That's what we need. Leaders need prayer. We all need prayer.

*Father, we thank you. You have ordained for Your work to be propelled by Your Spirit, as Your people pray. And we want to thank You for this because it reminds us that in ourselves we can't do anything. But it's also a serious responsibility because leaders need to be held up in prayer. So, Father, we ask You to teach us; teach us deeper things about prayer. And teach us practical things. So we commit this time to You. And thank You. Through this may Your prayer warriors be better equipped, in Jesus' name.*

**Participants:** Amen!

**Patty:** Hallelujah. I want to introduce myself. I'm Patty Katzer from Elkhart, Indiana. This is Linda, and we're going to start by having Linda share briefly about how she became so involved in prayer.

**Linda:** Yes, I'm Linda, and I'm from Indiana. Same place as Patty. It's a pleasure to be here with you today. Patty is our main teacher. When I was 21 I heard a teaching about some intercessory prayer. I was young in the Lord, but in my spirit I said, "Oh, I want to do that!" And I think this was the call of God on my heart, on my life. But it was maybe up to 15 years before I realized I was beginning to function in prayer and intercession. And then through the hardships of life, I grew in my relationship with Jesus. I lost my husband at a young age. I had five small children, so we began to depend very strongly upon the Lord and to cry out to Him by praying and asking for everything. So this began my confidence in the Lord and my pursuing Him in prayer.

**Patty:** My story is a little bit similar to Linda's. I read a book about a famous man of prayer, and I knew I wanted to do the same thing. I asked, "Lord, can I do that?" As I got older, I married and had children, but during that time I developed in prayer. At one point – this is what we're going to share with you – we became a part of a prayer team to support our pastor in prayer. A lot of what I'm going to share comes out of that. We want to make sure that you glean some principles because how you do something might look very different.

Okay, I think we can all agree that leaders are under attack by the enemy. If someone just gets saved and does nothing, they probably won't get hassled too much. But as soon as we get real with God and start advancing the Kingdom, then we have some attack. So the goal of this workshop is to equip prayer leaders and prayer coordinators to gather praying people in mobilized groups and use the power of unified prayer to support pastors and leaders.

Here's our basic outline – this is what we're going to talk about. We'll first look at a couple examples in Scripture of people supporting leaders. A quick mention of what a prayer team is not, why and how we want to form a prayer team, what it does and how to keep it going.

Okay, let's look at a few scriptural examples. The Bible is rich in beautiful pictures, and one of the pictures we have of supporting a leader is right here in the Book of Exodus (Ex. 17:8-13). This is going to

be the story of Aaron and Hur. We can all read it together. This is a beautiful picture of how we need one another. How different people have different functions, but every function is needed. So what are some things that you see in this example of how Aaron and Hur supported Moses?

**Translator:** Helping to carry him.

**Patty:** Anything else?

**Translator:** They carried the stones.

**Patty:** This was a lot of work. It was heavy. It was uncomfortable. Anything else?

**Translator:** They stood beside him.

**Patty:** Yes, and they stayed with him. They stayed with him until the victory. And there's also relationship; Aaron is Moses' brother, and Hur is probably a trusted friend. Their function wasn't to be out there fighting with Joshua, but their function was standing on a mountain holding somebody's arms up for a very long time. So, you see, there's a cost to supporting leaders.

Next example: Samuel 14: 6-7. Okay, so what do we see in this example? This is an armor bearer supporting Jonathan.

**Translator:** Same heart. Same spirit.

**Patty:** I love that. One heart. One soul. It's not just that the armor bearer had to do it because it was his job; he had worked with Jonathan and devotion was there. Anything else you see?

**Translator:** According to your will, I will do whatever you do.

**Patty:** Yes. Wow! He didn't try to direct Jonathan or tell him what to do. There was trust. So it wasn't just obedience; they were united in purpose. I just love that about the "I'm with you in heart and soul." Okay, well look at one more. This is Colossians 4:12 – Epaphras – a faithful intercessor of the church at Colosse. Here we also see that he had a goal in his prayer: the maturing of the believers. There was wrestling to get there. There was purpose in his intercession. So those are just a couple examples in the Bible. When I read these, I am inspired to keep going.

Let's look briefly at what a prayer team is not.

A prayer team is not a substitute for a leader's own prayer life. We are supporting the leader. The leader can't be praying all the time because he's doing the work. But the leader does have a prayer life. Another point: a prayer team is not a group with just inside information that knows stuff. In our prayer groups, sometimes our pastor would share things with us, but the point is to pray and not just be "in the know."

Another thing: it's definitely not a gossip group. What did we just read about Jonathan and his armor bearer? They were together heart and soul. There was no criticism.

Also, it's not a controlling board. A prayer group is surrounding the pastor and upholding him, not telling him what to do.

Finally, having a prayer group is not a guarantee that everything in your whole life will be wonderful. We are promised trials because God is interested in developing our faith and character.

Why should we build a prayer team?

First of all, everybody is supposed to be praying for their leaders, but sometimes, maybe they don't. A lot of people are young in the faith and haven't yet developed in their prayer life. Their prayers are more self-oriented. A more mature prayer supporter will be able to carry a lot of burden that maybe immature young prayer warriors would not.

Also, having a team encourages accountability because this is a group of people who made a commitment to uphold a leader. So we're accountable to one another because we made this commitment.

Another important reason is that a prayer team builds unity on a small scale. Every aspect of unity brings blessing to the church. And if there is a core group of people that support their leader in heart and soul, it will encourage more people to support their leader. It doesn't mean there aren't problems. But it is a small scale demonstration of unity of heart and soul.

It also builds trust and deeper communication, where a leader can have a group of people that he can share some things and know that it will be confidential. His concerns will be prayed over, and dealt with properly.

Let's look at some foundational values of a prayer team for supporting leaders. These are some things that are very important for a successful prayer group.

The first is *commitment*. First of all, the commitment is to God. I'm talking about the people that are going to form a prayer group. They are committed to God. They need to be committed to God and have a real relationship with God because they may draw some warfare in their own lives for supporting the leader. Another part is commitment is to the leader and the vision. What drew me to be a part of the prayer team for our pastor was that I so connected with his vision. Right from the beginning, he was a man who had a vision that resonated with my heart. Finally, there is commitment to the rest of the team. In our prayer team, we had a group of eight or ten people. We not only prayed for the leader, but we would also support each other and pray for one another's struggles as well.

The next foundational value is *communication*. This is important because what feeds that burden to pray is being in touch with the person you're praying for. If our leader assembled a team to pray for him and then never spoke to us, it would quickly die out. Some people don't need to know lots of details but most people need to.

Okay, I want us to do a little exercise here. If you could just team up with somebody near you that you don't know, and then pray for that person. Just a very short prayer, for about 30 seconds. Or make it 15 seconds. Just pray for them. Prayer, that's a good thing! Now, I want the other person to say something they'd like a short prayer for. Communicate a quick prayer request. Now go ahead and pray for a specific request.

Was there any difference between praying for something without information and praying for something with some information?

**Translator:** It's a goal to pray for.

**Patty:** Yes. What else?

**Translator:** More heart when you pray for something specific.

**Patty:** More heart. Okay, any other thoughts?

**Translator:** You get to know the person.

**Patty:** Yes, there's a deeper bonding in relationship. Okay. That is why communication is really important. Every now and then I'll pray for somebody I don't even know. I'll pray for a country. But when I pray for something where I have information, it just fuels the prayer. There has to be a level of communication if you want a prayer team to be successful.

The third foundational value is *confidentiality*. There could be things that a pastor or leader is burdened about and wants to share, but he can't share because he doesn't want these things to be broadcast all over the place. Different leaders will share different depths from their personal stuff, but we as prayer people want to be confidential with all information we hear from a leader. And they might not be things of deep personal concern, but could be timing issues. Maybe there's some kind of transition coming up but it's not time yet, and we want to pray about it. A leader needs to know that there are people who can pray with him and carry this burden with him, who aren't going to be telling about it.

Now, gathering and training prayer people – this can be done by the leader himself, or it can be done by a person who's going to be a prayer coordinator on behalf of the leader. This is what happened in our situation. Our leader approached a trusted person (It wasn't me at the time) and said, "I'm really getting a lot of spiritual attack. I need a prayer group. I need a prayer team to hold me up in prayer." And this trusted person went and got a group together. This was in our church. The leader and prayer coordinator both knew some people that were trusted prayer people. A leader that initiates this is certainly showing that he values prayer.

We don't have to read all these, but these are some of the scriptures where Paul or other leaders asked for prayer in the Bible. (Ps. 72:15; Rom. 15:30; 2 Cor. 1:11; Eph. 6:18-19; Phil. 1:19; Col. 4:2-3; 1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1; 1 Tim. 2:1; Philm. 1:22; Heb. 13:18; Jam. 5:16; 1 Pet. 3:12). Some just say that prayer

is made for the leader, but the other ones are just exhortations to pray, but mostly the leaders are calling for prayer and asking for prayer. A leader who doesn't really value prayer won't even want to hassle with this whole thing.

Alternately, a prayer leader or somebody with a burdened heart for a leader can also initiate and gather praying people. A praying person could approach a leader and say, "I see that you're struggling. Can we form a team that would be effective in holding you up before God on a regular and powerful basis?" Most leaders would be very happy to have such a group.

So where do you find praying people? You probably already know them. In our situation, we started out with people that we knew, who were serious about prayer. They had stable lives with God. There was no need to put an ad in the paper. You don't want to just broadcast it and ask anybody because you'll need those *trusted* people. In our case, the prayer coordinator that worked with our leader found men, women, older people, and slightly younger people, people with different giftings and different personalities that our leader was comfortable with. We all agreed that we wanted to pray and support our leader. It doesn't have to be a giant group of people. If you find a whole lot of trusted people, that's great, but you don't need that many.

Okay, you found some people. Next, it's time to train them. In our case, I don't think we had a formal training because we already pretty mature in prayer. Most of us already had basic training in prayer where we understood that God works through prayer, and that we are commanded and privileged to pray.

As you assemble a team, communicate expectations. Let people know what they are committing to, because you want people serving where they are called. When you're going to have somebody who'll be joining a prayer team, you don't want them to feel like this is a lifetime thing that they must do from now until Jesus comes. So you want to communicate expectations, which also include those three foundational values: confidentiality, communication, and commitment.

I started providing training. I wrote an outline for our training for the group later on, when I ended up leading it. I will give you basic outline. First of all, they need to know that being in a prayer group is a function of service, support, and teamwork. If somebody is asked to serve, it doesn't mean that they're more important than anybody else. It's a function in a church. We're looking for people who have that burden to support the pastor. It's a function. In our situation, we had a group, and it was pretty steady, since most of the original group remained until the leader was called to something else. Linda was not one of the original team members, so I want Linda to come and share how she ended up being a part of our group.

**Linda:** I began to hear that there was some kind of a group of people praying for the leader, but I didn't really know anything about it. I noticed that my heart longed to be a part of new things to come and praying for the vision of our leader, but I didn't understand what was happening about a team. I realized that my burden to pray needed the communication that Patty referred to, but I didn't have any communication. So I checked my heart, and I said, "Am I looking to be a part of an elite group 'in the know?' Or am I going to pout that they didn't include me?" The Lord gave me the grace to say, "I will

continue in my burden for prayer, even though I know nothing about a team. I will personally commit and continue.”

The way I remember it is, I eventually discovered that Patty was leading the group, and I had a dream. I think it was a dream about our pastor. So I thought maybe I would just tell her to help with protection and prayer for him. It was soon after that that she approached me and said, “Would you like to join our team and be a part of the prayer for the leader?” So, I came in the back door. It’s been a great privilege to be able to join with others in prayer.

**Patty:** We’re very grateful to have Linda. So we’re going to have some people be a part of a team. We want to make sure that everybody understands what our purpose is. So this is kind of the training that we go through. First, is for everyone to recognize that this is not an elite group, but people functioning together for the purpose of supporting the leader. Being on the team doesn’t make anyone more important.

Here are some responsibilities:

One. Maintain a prayer life. That sounds very basic, but it’s really important because it’s warfare. We’re in a war. The people that are on the team are like Jonathan’s armor bearer; they’re used to some warfare.

Two. Obviously, if you’re going to be on the prayer team for the leader you want to pray regularly for this leader. We don’t dictate how long to pray because we want prayer from a burden, rather than obligation to duty.

Three. Attend the meetings to stay in communication. A lot of times now communication might go through emails and such. But in our time, we had regular monthly meetings with our leaders. Even if you have an email list of the people that are praying for you, if there is some way to have some kind of a physical face-to-face meeting, it would really help. So one of our responsibilities is to attend the meetings. If someone couldn’t make a meeting, they got the notes I provided. And since we were all in the same local area, we would also have meetings to pray together for our pastor.

Four. Communicate input. What have you heard from God? People that pray, especially carrying a burden like this for one person, often hear from God. I’ll just give an example of communicating input. One time, we all got together for a time of prayer. The leader wasn’t there. I started by saying, “I want to share a dream I had. I had a dream of this tornado coming...” and I went on to briefly describe the dream and my concerns. It turned out that two others in the group also had dreams about tornados coming, so we knew that this was something important. We had something serious to pray about and communicate to our leader. Other times several of us would be impressed with the same passage of Scripture. All this is valuable. In our team, we want to be free and obedient to communicate the things that we’re hearing from God. When we put it all together we have a much better picture of what’s going on and clearer direction for prayer.

Five. And this is a big one – we avoid criticism. There might be times when somebody doesn’t like something that’s happening or doesn’t feel like maybe that was the best thing, but being praying people,

we've committed it all to God. And we support our leader. We're not trying to direct him. Paul, in the Book of Acts, as he was getting ready to go to Jerusalem heard some prophetic words that there was going to be trouble, but the leader knew what he was called to do. He didn't change his course, but took the revelation as a warning that it's going to be tough and went ahead with his plan. All those people that had those revelations didn't get offended that Paul didn't cancel his plans. In their concern they didn't want him to go, but they said, "The will of the Lord be done." They didn't get all mad and criticize Paul to one another saying, "Paul didn't listen to me!" No, we're here to serve and support. Okay?

Six. We maintain confidentiality. It's very important to bring that up periodically as a reminder. It's not that we have this big exclusive club going. Some things are not to be shared, and we hold them confidential. A really good way to destroy a prayer team is for people to start talking when they shouldn't be talking.

Seven. Members of the prayer team need to be able to receive correction without getting into self-pity. And we had a few incidents where we had to bring correction.

Eight. We want to model a life of prayer for the rest of the church.

Now, as I said, people who usually pray a lot usually hear from God, so we have a protocol for prophetic revelation. I have a paper here that we can hand out later that gives some suggestions where prophetic revelation is given, so it doesn't become unhealthy or bossy. We were fairly active with prophetic revelation here and there and were careful that the prophetic revelation was in no way used to control. Usually they were just encouraging words.

Next, let me touch on the role of the Prayer Team Coordinator. I want to quickly go through some of the things I did as a prayer coordinator.

I provided training.

I facilitated communication between the team and the leader.

I did my best to discern warnings and seasons, so I could bring them before our leader in a package together, based on the revelation from our team.

I did my best to nurture the unity of the team to make sure that everyone on the team felt valued and knew that they're important to the team. A couple of times we had picnics together. And we had times for praying for one another.

I encouraged the foundational values, making sure that we're all on the same page with our commitment, confidentiality, and communication.

I did my best to guard against negativity and pitfalls that would diminish the effectiveness of the prayer team. If there were any conflicts, I would work within the team or with the leader to resolve them. There were a few of those incidents, but not many.

I facilitated meetings and updated meetings with our leader. In our situation, we would take a few minutes first to meet with each other on the days when we would meet with the leader. We would discuss some things first, and then when our leader came in we were able to present to him anything we had to share, and he was ready to present what he had to share. This would be followed by group prayer.

Okay. Here we have a good functioning prayer team. It's the right people with the right motivation. We're covering all aspects of a leader's life and ministry in unity. Even more, we also noting that between all the different people in this small group, each person also had his own area of emphasis, according to the burden they carried. Maybe someone would pray more for the family of the leader, and another would pray for his ministry, while another prayed more deeply for personal stuff.

We have a handout that has some Scriptures that we pray. These are just basic things that we pray about in a leader's life. We really emphasize praying the Scriptures, praying the Word of God. And that's for about anything, not just a leader. It's better to not pray out of our own need, but to pray for the glory of God and the fulfillment of His purpose.

After you've got a team together that's functioning, you have to sustain it. Maintain communication. As we've already said, we've got to have communication or it won't work. We also have appreciation from our leaders. In our situation, our leader was very grateful and very often voiced his appreciation for all of us taking the time and sacrifice to be praying for him. And that just makes us want to pray more.

Another way to sustain a group is to share testimonies. Our leader would also share testimonies of the things that would happen and thank us for our prayer. I want to give you one example of one thing that happened. Our leader was on a trip for a long time overseas, and we got word that his backpack was stolen. His computer was in it and also his passport. It seemed like it would be a completely impossible situation to fix. We had this little lady on our prayer team, and she came up to me and said, "Let's pray that God will restore that backpack." At first I thought it was too bold a prayer, but then I remembered the power of agreement. "Yeah, let's do it!" And so we prayed. We held hands, and she prayed out. She prayed a really fierce prayer. And the backpack was restored. I forget exactly what happened, but against all odds, the backpack was recovered. And it was an example to me because here I was just ready to say, "Oh, this is just too big." But our team member's faith inspired me to believe for the impossible.

Another thing that is motivating is confirmed prophetic revelation. When we see something happening in line with what God showed us, something positive, it just feeds our prayer.

We also had periodic prayer gatherings and other events to keep us all motivated and unified.

In conclusion – this was a a period of strong directed prayer for our leader. But today is a different era. Then, we had email and phones, but because our group was in the same location, we were really able to nurture communication. The challenge for this generation is to nurture communication by long-distance, overseas, and by email. I'm going to have Linda share now.



**Linda:** Just an interesting note – my daughter was on the prayer team with us for our leader. But I think about the time she was married, she said, “It’s my time to step down.” Some of her responsibilities were changing, so she stepped back. But just to show the seasonal nature of things in God, as the leadership changed in the church, she accepted responsibility to become the prayer coordinator for the current leader. And so, she comes to Patty for wisdom, encouragement, or understanding of the dynamics on how to keep this going. I like the example of generational succession. Just seeing how younger ones take on some of that responsibility gives me joy.

**Patty:** Some personal experiences: One time, our leader saw someone who was kind of zealous and invited this person to be on the prayer team. It turned out to not be really a great fit. And so, I was challenged with this because he wasn’t quite on board with our foundational values. But yet, he was specifically invited to be on this team by our leader, so I had to ask God what to do. I didn’t have to confront anyone in this case. It was a very short time before this person just left our church.

Another time, there was something very, very important that our pastor had to address at church, and that was a time where the whole prayer team and I were very, very deeply in prayer that he would have the heart and mind of God. And he had such wisdom and such grace in what he shared that we knew that God had answered our prayers.

One more amusing story. We’ve always told God, “You can wake me up at any time if you need me to pray.” I like to sleep soundly. But this one time, I heard a sound in the night. It was one of my children. So I got up and checked on the child. Everything was fine. And after that, I heard some kind of clicking in the house, so I got up and looked at that. Everything seemed fine. I went back to bed. And as soon as I got back to bed a dog started barking. I finally realized, I think I’m supposed to pray. So I did. I obeyed. And it did turn out that our leader was struggling with something serious at that time. So I was glad I was obedient.

We do have a couple handouts before you go. But does anybody have any questions or any thoughts?

**Participant:** How many people would you recommend to be on a prayer team?

**Patty:** Jesus had 70 that were following Him, and then he had the twelve. So there’s different levels of depths in communication. In our team, we had about eight. But if you have only two or three that are with you heart and soul, it will make a positive difference.

I looked through the Bible about how people pray. I really saw that they pray for people and not projects. So that’s why we support our pastor in a way that’s very deep and personal, and not just pray for the stuff he’s doing. Even sometimes going through a meeting with him, he’s not necessarily sharing anything personal. When we’re face-to-face, we can read in between the lines a little bit about what is concerning him, so we’re better equipped to pray face-to-face.

Any more questions?

**Translator:** Do you have a fixed time where you pray together?

**Patty:** What we did is we each individually carried a burden for our pastor, and we also had times when we prayed together. But notice, it wasn't really strongly structured because that's just the way it worked for our group.

**Translator:** You're the people behind your pastor. Nobody can see. Nobody can know. So what do you experience from this? You experience a blessing from the Lord?

**Patty:** Yes, intercession is a bit of a hidden ministry, but we like it that way. I know sometimes we look at the complexity of what a leader goes through, and I think to myself, "I'm glad that's not my job. I'd much rather be praying!" And of course, that's important too. Any other thoughts or questions?

**Translator:** Do you pray for one leader or other leaders of the church? Because some churches have many leaders. One leader gets one team? Or a team for all the leaders?

**Patty:** In our situation at that time, we were focusing on one leader, but we also had some other prayer teams for other situations, and for other leaders. We prayed for other ones too, but our main focus was on the one leader.

**Translator:** Your prayer team is a secret?

**Patty:** No, it's not secret. The church knows that there's a prayer team. Linda said, "They might not know who's on it, but they know there's a prayer team."

**Translator:** Do you have any tips on training a prayer team?

**Patty:** Well, I just gave the basic outline. I wrote something up based on that outline that I just showed but it's the basic outline with more detail. If you just stick with those three values it helps. Does anybody remember our three values? Commitment, communication and confidentiality.

Everybody's situation is going to be different. We have a missionary in our church that has a very large prayer team. But even though it's a large team, he has gatherings where he will update a big group, at least those in one region, where he does communicate face-to-face for prayer. So what you do, how you develop something is going to be individually based on what you're facing and what your need is and what can be done. Ask God to lead you and give you those people that are united with you in heart and soul.

Before you go, I have two handouts – one about basic revelation and prophetic guidelines and the other is about Scriptures that you might want to pray for your leaders. Okay, let's close in prayer.

*O God, raise up prayer warriors! Raise up people with a burden to pray! Let no leader be out there unprotected. Increase the connection between leaders who need prayer and prayer warriors that are one with heart and soul with that leader. Father, we thank You. As we look to You much can be accomplished for Your Kingdom. We thank You, Lord, for as we pray for our leaders, our*

*prayer can make the difference between them getting burned out and them receiving more of Your grace and empowerment. Stir up prayer, God. Thank You for it, in Jesus' name.*

Thank you so much!