



The Development Process

Investing in Prayer



This Pamphlet is part of the ‘The Development Process’ range of publications produced by Global Focus and whilst it can be used on its own is most effectively used as part of the wider Global Focus Process.

Other pamphlets in the range include:-

The Global Outreach Plan
Changing the Structures
Communicating God’s Heart
The global Impact Celebration
The Faith Commitment Offering
Effective Short Term Opportunities
Strategic Ministry Partnerships

For further information on Global Focus visit www.globalfocus.org.uk

This pamphlet has not been developed to help churches to set up a prayer ministry or even to attempt to show the crucial nature of prayer. There are many other books and organisations that are able to deal with this very effectively.

Neither is this an encouragement to resurrect the largely defunct ‘missionary prayer meeting’ that, if still operating, has often only a handful of faithful attendees. The fact is that by separating the ‘missionary’ prayer from the general life of the church, we have marginalised the missionary focus of the church rather than emphasised it.

The purpose of this pamphlet therefore is to encourage the linking of a majority of the congregation to the church’s Global Outreach Plan in prayer. To effectively create a sense of ownership of the local and global ministry of the church by encouraging each member to be part of the team that helps to make it happen through prayer.

This pamphlet (as with the others in this series) makes the assumption that the church is taking part in the wider Global Focus process and as such will make references to other parts of the process such as the Global Outreach Plan, the Global Impact Celebration and so on.



**Suggestions and Guiding Principles
For A Local Church Wanting to Involve the Congregation in Prayer for the Church's
Global Outreach Plan.**

1. Accept that this is an ongoing long term process not a one off quick fix.
2. Plan a process of education, week in week out including illustrations, etc.
3. Communication and information are essential in maintaining this commitment. Keep people informed even during any planning process when uncertainties abound.
4. Balance intercessory prayer with praise and thanks giving.
5. Don't underestimate the spiritual opposition that a commitment to pray produces.
6. Seek to understand and explain the spiritual realities behind what is happening on the surface.
7. See this as a whole church activity and not just an event for those who feel that they have the gift to pray.
8. Learn to listen as well as speak and give space to feedback what is heard.
9. Lead by example and learn spontaneity in prayer in every day situations.
10. Continually link prayer with the church's Global Outreach Plan giving both local and global information to provide opportunities for everyone to be involved.
11. Whilst it is good to have specific meetings for prayer make sure that prayer is a part of everything that you do.
12. Be well prepared before any specific prayer event and provide variety and fresh approaches to make such events exciting and not to be missed.
13. Train the teams that lead prayer in the church to be upbeat and creative in their presentations.
14. Gradually educate the congregation to accept we can pray in different ways and in different situations. Encourage them to spontaneity in prayer.
15. Keep records of prayers and answers and make this widely available.
16. Link ministries to specific pray teams that are committed to that ministry
17. Realise that a good prayer strategy will need financial resources.



A. Developing an Effective Church-wide Prayer Strategy to Support the Global Outreach Plan

Introduction: Jesus demonstrated that his ministry was utterly dependent upon his communication with his Father. As we pray a number of things happen.

First is the reality that we grow in our intimacy and relationship with God. The more time that we commune with Him the more His reality invades my life.

The more that happens then the consequence is that I better understand His purposes. Thus I grow not only in my understanding of who God is but also in my knowledge of what He wants us to do.

Finally, as we grow in the confidence that what we are doing is what He wants us to do then we are able to boldly ask for His intervention in the issues that we have no control over.

A1. The Importance of Shaping a Strategy for Prayer as a Church.

What follows below gives ideas of how you can develop a prayer strategy as a church. Not all the ideas will fit your situation but the one vital thing is the fact that you need to have a strategy for prayer. There is so much spiritual opposition to prayer that without a determination and a clear strategy your aspirations will fall at the first hurdle.

A2. Prayer in the Strategic Planning Process.

As you begin the process as a church of establishing your own Global Outreach Plan (see *'The Global Outreach Plan'* in this series of pamphlets) it is essential that you begin to involve the whole church in prayer. Not to involve the church at this stage is to effectively communicate that this is the leadership team's plan that you want the congregation to buy into and not one that you have arrived at together as a fellowship in prayer before God. This will make any future attempt to get the church to own the plan as theirs so much harder. Practical ways that you can use to keep the church informed are suggested in a later section but whichever way suites your church it is vital that you have a strategy that involves the whole church at this early stage of the planning process.

There is a temptation for a leadership team to keep information to themselves in the early stages of planning, especially when there are so many uncertainties. This is very understandable and there are sometimes good reasons for doing this and it certainly makes it easier to manage. However, we would encourage as much openness as possible for a number of reasons.

First is the fact that leadership doesn't have exclusive access to God's wisdom. God can speak through any in the fellowship whether in leadership or not and if we are



attempting to discover God's plan for us as a fellowship then the more involved in this the better.

Second, this action alone engenders a trust between the leadership team and the congregation and although eventually decisions will have to be made by the leadership, the congregation feels trusted and involved. It does mean that the leadership team has to make it clear at the outset that the final decision rests with them. It is also important that difficult or controversial decisions are handled well. However, when this is done inclusively and in the light rather than behind closed doors then generally understanding and support follows.

A3. The importance of Information Flow in Maintaining Prayer Involvement

As the Strategic Planning Process develops it is vital that information flows smoothly between the leadership team and the congregation. Reports of leadership or planning meetings that have usually been formatted in a minute or agenda style could be produced as information for prayer. Simple but regular reports from the pulpit, in the church bulletin, on the web site, on a bulletin board etc. all add to the high level of communication needed.

In addition ways need to be found for the fellowship to be able to feed back to the leadership or planning team. A prayer response email address; a letter box at the church or even feed back sessions during or after corporate prayer times are all vehicles to consider using to get the response back from the church.

Once the Global Outreach Plan has been established and the ministries are up and running, it is vital that a structured reporting system is established so that the whole church and in particular, specific interest groups are kept up to date with prayer needs.

A4. Prayer Teams and Special Interest Groups.

Whilst it is important that the whole congregation is kept generally aware of the prayer needs and answers to pray from the Global Outreach Plan, there are also needs to link individuals to specific ministries where their particular interest lies.

These prayer teams can range from teams associated with specific ministries both local and global and special teams set up for specific functions.

The ministry linked teams will be associated with a particular ministry that is part of the church's Global Outreach Plan. In this case it will be the responsibility of the ministries leaders to keep this team linked, informed and encouraged by the ministry and what it is achieving. This is just as crucial a resource for the specific ministry as manpower and money and ideally each ministry should have a linked prayer team.

As far as the special teams are concerned there could be a variety of teams as long as there is need, enthusiasm and people available. One such special team for example could be a prayer research team, ideally made up of younger people, that is tasked to



collect as much information as possible on a particular people group or country. The results can either be regularly brought to the church for prayer as a specific part of the Global Outreach Plan, or can be part of the planning process in attempting to discover God's mind about any involvement that you should have with this people group etc.

Another special prayer team could be a global news team that is tasked to keep up with the news world wide and interpret that to the fellowship in spiritual terms. How do we pray and are there any actions that we need to take as a result of what we hear on the news day by day?

There are a wide variety of things to pray for apart from international news items including justice issues; fair trade; trafficking; ecological issues; poverty; street children etc. Locally you might consider a team that liaises with the local council leaders; police; social services; health workers etc. to seek to support them in prayer.

Finally it could be that special project teams need to be set up from time to time that will have a limited life and remit, focussed only on the project or event that the church is involved with.

A5. Acknowledging the Importance of a Prayer Coordinator.

As soon as possible, recruit an individual who will take on the role of 'Prayer Coordinator' for the church. This person will be responsible for the administration, communication and logistics of the church prayer life. This is a vital role and without this person dedicated to make sure it happens, however well intentioned, you will not achieve your prayer goals as a church.

This person needs to have a vision for prayer, have organisational gifts and be a lateral and creative thinker. They need to have access to the leadership team and be empowered to take initiative. In addition it is a great help if they are an able communicator

A6. Don't over burden the fellowship.

Whilst it is important to come together to pray don't just add more and more meetings to an already over stretched church agenda. Where possible use existing meetings when you want group prayer times. For the most part recruit people to pray, give the information and leave them to either include this in their own prayer/devotional times or let them set up their own meeting schedules. If we desire communion and intimacy with God, then we need to encourage and model to concept of 'any time any where'.

Encourage individuals, where they feel comfortable to pray, with non Christians and in non Christian environments. By doing so you are introducing people into the presence of God and at the same time giving a powerful testimony to His reality and your belief.





B. Practical Methods of Mobilising Prayer

Introduction: The ideas listed below come from other churches that have linked a powerful prayer strategy with their Global Outreach Plan. Although there may be some good ideas below, the best ones are usually your own as they not only have your own vision and enthusiasm attached to them, but they also better fit your church culture, experience and history. However maybe you will be stimulated by some of the ideas below and you can modify them to fit your situation.

B1. Monthly Prayer Guide.

Introduce a monthly prayer guide that is given to the entire congregation with the church bulletin on the last Sunday of the month.

B2. Weekly Answers to Prayer.

Have a regular section in the church bulletin giving answers to prayer and prayer updates to keep everyone informed.

B3. Prayer in Main Church Meetings.

If not done already, have a regular prayer slot but be creative in how you present it and how you pray, e.g.

1. Use audio visuals
2. Have a phone link with overseas partners
3. Interview ministry leaders and others
4. Have testimonies of answered prayer
5. Invite civic leaders and interview them
6. Have members of the congregation share about their work situations
7. Vary how you pray, e.g. one person, small groups, all together etc
8. Use drama to illustrate a prayer need or an answered prayer
9. Target a different Ministry focus or mission partner each week.
10. Use the Operation World CD ROM to present countries for prayer, even to have on the screen whilst people are assembling.

Be persistent in having the prayer but be creative and innovative about how you do it. Make prayer fun as well as vital.

B4. Ministry Notice Boards.

Have information and sign up boards for each ministry section of the Global Outreach Plan. Have prayer commitment cards that people can use to sign up to join the ministry linked prayer team. Have these as triplicate cards, one for the individual to keep as a book mark reminder, one to go to the ministry team leader so that they know who is on their prayer team and the final one to go to the Prayer Coordinator.



- B5. Use the Global Impact Celebration to recruit.**
Churches that are taking part in the larger Global Focus Process will be running an annual Global Impact Celebration (See '*The global Impact Celebration*' in this range of pamphlets). This is an ideal opportunity for recruiting for the various ministry prayer teams. As the overall Global Outreach Plan is explained there will be an opportunity for each member of the congregation to commit themselves to one aspect of the plan.
- B6. Set up email or text group addresses for the various prayer teams.**
This enables the various ministry and prayer coordinators to contact their prayer team very easily.
- B7. Have a section on the Church web site (usually the members only secure section) for prayer requests.**
This will need a moderator, usually the Pray Coordinator, but is an excellent way of keeping a good part of the fellowship informed. It is really important however, that it is updated on a frequent basis. There is nothing more likely to discourage people than information that is a month old and hasn't been revised.
- B8. Consider reformatting any regular minutes of meetings.**
Minutes of leaders, members, PCC meetings etc. can be reformatted as items for prayer and praise rather than the usual set of reports.
- B9. Investigate other groups set up to encourage prayer.**
There are various national and international groups that have been set up to encourage and resource those who want to become more involved in a prayer ministry. Web sites for many of these groups contain very helpful resource material and two to begin with are 'www.worldprayer.org.uk' and 'www.24-7prayer.com'.
- B10. Encourage the use of 'Operation World' for adults and 'Window on the World' for children.**
These are both excellent resource books that are available either on line or from your local book store and can be used on a daily basis to prayer for every nation in the world. There is also an Operation World website at 'www.operationworld.org'.
- B11. Have world maps and local area maps available for sale.**
A map can encourage a deeper involvement with a ministry area, whether the local town or another part of the world. Having world maps and maps focussing on different ministry areas on sale at the church bookstall encourages this involvement and better understanding of the outreach ministry.
- B12. Your ideas here**
Write and let me know of other ideas that have worked for you and we will include them for the benefit of other churches.



DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Investing in Prayer

Strategy Planning Aid

<i>No.</i>	<i>ACTION STEPS</i>	<i>RESPONSIBLE PERSON</i>	<i>RESOURCES NEEDED</i>	<i>COMMUNICATION NEEDED</i>	<i>OTHERS EFFECTED</i>	<i>DEADLINE DATE</i>

