

The Prayers of Many

In 2 Corinthians 1:11 we read “*You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.*” Paul in his writings often urges the need for prayer in order that his mission will be fruitful. He simply cannot conceive that doing what he is attempting will be fruitful at all without large scale, ongoing “prayers of many.” The Church in the global South and East can teach the church in the western world much about gospel advance. One obvious stand-out example is the priority placed on corporate prayer by churches in non-western contexts. In this session, Mike and the team will explore the why and the how corporate prayer in the local church can once again become the driver for gospel fruitfulness it should be. It is the contention of this session that Europe needs a movement of prayer in order to ignite a movement of gospel advance. The one cannot happen without the other.

Mike Betts leads Relational Mission, a network of churches which is part of the global Newfrontiers family. He is the author of *From the Inside Out, Relational Mission: A Way of Life*, and a soon to be published book on corporate prayer. Mike is passionate about the church enjoying her inheritance in Christ, involving church planting, gospel expansion, corporate prayer, and seeing the next generation grow into all that God has for them. Mike is married to Sue, and they live in Lowestoft, Suffolk, UK. He is part of the eldership team at Lowestoft Community Church, which he, Sue, and a number of others planted over 30 years ago. At that time Mike and Sue sought help and advice from Terry Virgo, who had begun to serve emerging churches. Terry’s work and relationships with churches became the start of Newfrontiers. In 2011, Terry handed over responsibility for Newfrontiers to a number of his spiritual sons, and Mike began to lead the network that is now Relational Mission. Relational Mission works predominantly in the UK and mainland Europe but with growing connections across the world. Its network includes some 70 churches of which 30 are church plant and pioneering situations.

I. ‘Prayers of Many’

A. Paul facing challenge in his mission

B. Works this out through prayer – not team meetings and reinforcements.

1. A collective weight of the prayers of many
2. Spurgeon: “Someone said that 2000 or 3000 had no more power in prayer than 2 or 3. I think that is a grave mistake in many ways. Have you never noticed that when many meet together praying, warmth of desire and glow of earnestness are greatly increased.”
3. Pete Greig: “The last 30 years revolutionized worship in the local church. Imagine what would have happened if the same energy, creativity and focus had gone into transforming prayer.”

II. ‘You also must help us’

A. We might feel we are poor at prayer – but we can learn!

- B. Prayer designed for drama / crisis
- C. It is for ALL of us to learn and grow – 90% of prayer in New Testament is corporate
- D. A room full of faith-filled prayer is contagious

III. 'In answer to'

- A. Spurgeon: "Whether we like it or not, asking is the rule of the Kingdom. If you may have anything by asking in His name, and nothing without asking, I beg you to see how absolutely vital prayer is."
- B. DA Carson: "The easiest thing about prayer is giving up, like the little boy who rings the doorbell, then runs away!"
- C. Andrew Murray: "Let Christians awake and hear the message your prayer can obtain what otherwise will be withheld, can accomplish what otherwise remains undone. God longs to give but holds the blessing back."
- D. Jonathon Edwards: "That which God makes the abundant subject of his promises, God's people should make the abundant subject of their prayers."

IV. Building Effective Corporate Prayer

- A. 2 Corinthians 1:11 & An Humble Attempt
- B. The most important thing we do – all of the eggs in one basket
- C. ENOUGH – our vehicle for corporate prayer

Suggested Readings:

A Call to United Extraordinary Prayer: An Humble Attempt, Edwards, Jonathon (2004)
Christian Heritage