

Creative intercessory prayers for your community

"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). It would be rare to find a church leader who didn't want their congregation to grow in corporate prayer. But it can be hard to truly engage people in meaningful ways. The following ideas tap into different learning styles, character types and senses, to draw people into prayer.

Using songs

Sing a simple refrain between prayers or different prayer topics. Some examples:

- Lord, Hear My Prayer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMSr_dO_9TA
- Stay With Me: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmAOCqHqvS0Q&index=8&list=PLAFC3BF61F242A1C6>
- Laudate Dominum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbG3FS8EEvI&index=11&list=PLAFC3BF61F242A1C6>

Using physical objects

Many people are fiddlers, and having something in their hands can focus their attention and inspire fresh prayers. Examples include play-doh or clay, pipe cleaners, or simple paper and crayons. Ask people to make a representation of what they wish prayed for.

Writing prayers

Often people might be nervous of praying out-loud, and will find their minds wander when asked to pray silently. An alternative way to pray together is writing down prayers. This can be done on post-it notes, small pieces of paper, or even on mobile phones and the prayers texted to one number, where the prayers could be collected and projected onto a screen.

Alternatively, people can write on something - such as a wall, an image, or a giant map. The prayers can be read by other people as encouragements and the basis for further prayer. If you are praying for a specific person (such as a missionary, church member, or even a public figure) the written prayers could even be given or sent to them as an encouragement.

Using taste

Taste is also highly evocative. If you are praying for issues like drought you could pass around glasses of water. If you're praying for a particular country, you could use food that represents the region.

Pop-corn prayer

This is where everyone is encouraged to pray out-loud, all together, for a particular issue. For some more reserved congregations, you may need to work up to this way of praying! Perhaps start in smaller groups. And avoid being too forceful when you ask people to pray like this - encourage and release, don't nag people into doing something they are uncomfortable with, and give enough time to people speak into the silence

Silent prayer

Modern culture has very little space for silence. However, we know from the Bible that often we need to quiet ourselves to hear the voice of God. Also, there are some terrible situations that are best responded to by silence rather than babble. So how can you encourage silent prayer, that doesn't have people's minds wandering?

You might want to have visual images projected on a screen during a time of silence, to inspire intercession. Or you could encourage people to use different body postures - hands raised, kneeling, eyes open or closed.

Using pre-written prayers

Here are some resources

- From Re-Worship: <http://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/06/prayers-of-people-topical-index.html>
- From TEC for the Millennium Development Goals: <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/article/prayers-people-mdg-0>
- From TEC for Episcopal Relief and Development: <http://www.episcopalrelief.org/church-in-action/worship-resources/prayers-and-liturgies>
- From the Church of England: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/topical-prayers.aspx>