

Teaching and Preparing Your Group for 24-7 Prayer

Depending on the spiritual maturity of your group I would recommend teaching for at least 4 weeks on 24-7 prayer. Even though every Christian would affirm the need for prayer, some even have a disciplined prayer life, most are not familiar with day and night prayer. Because of the large number of newer Christians and seekers in our congregation I decided to teach for 7 weeks prior to our 24-7 launch. I taught a 4-week series on the History of the Presence of God in the Old Testament. This series highlighted the Tabernacle of Moses, The Tabernacle of David, The Temple of Solomon, and the Final Resting Place: The Human Heart. The second series was 3 weeks on the Simplicity of Prayer, centering on Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus in Luke 10.

I started with a huge Biblical Theology theme that I have been working on for many years. It goes like this:

The entire Biblical record, beginning with the creation of the universe, is the unfolding dramatic story of the heart of God creating places to dwell in friendship and communion with His children.

I believe that this is an organizing truth that weaves the entire Bible story together. The Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit in constant pursuit of relationship with His restored creation. The universe itself in a macro sense, the creation of the earth and its stunning beauty, and then the Garden of Eden...you could say the whole earth is a prayer room – a place of wonder and interaction between Creator and created.

Each day in the cool of evening that unbroken fellowship would focus on a walk with God through the glades of Eden. It was a time even in paradise of deliberate and delightful fellowship – by design. Then of course, the fall. And the story of restoration that followed...and we find these peeks into the few who really recovered something of the lost presence of God.... “Enoch walked with God”....”Noah walked with God”.... “Abraham, My friend forever”....and God speaking with Moses, “face to face.” From Exodus on, these intimate conversations would take place in a “tent of meeting” or tabernacle...a mobile prayer room hosting God’s presence at the heart of community. The tabernacle became an astounding symbol of the presence of God...and more – it was a place “alive” with relationship and interaction for guidance and prayer.

Here is the verse I used to organize all 4 messages on the Presence of God:

“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.”

I see in this one verse, in the heart of God, a desire to be with His people. God wants to be in the middle of our lives. He desires that we live our lives in His presence. To share with Him our joys, our heartaches, our failures, our need for guidance, our need for provision....That’s why the tabernacle was located right in the middle of the people of Israel. As a church and as individuals we desperately need to recover the presence of God in our midst. We need to experience His presence every day of our lives. Our hearts were designed with an in-built desire to walk in intimate friendship with God...to live our lives in His presence. The tabernacle is God Himself saying, “you will never be satisfied any other way but by living in My presence.”

You can see how this message would lead a person to be drawn to spend time in a 24-7 Prayer Room designed and prepared to be a meeting place one-on-one with God.

Following are the outlines to these 4 messages, which we post on a screen in ppt. Format:

The Journey of God's Presence – Part 1 Meeting God in the Wild

*"Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and **I will dwell among them**. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you."*

Exodus 25:8-9

1. The Tabernacle in the Wilderness is the expression of the Loving Heart of God IN PURSUIT of us.

"I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians."

Exodus 6:7-8

*"But it was because **the LORD loved you** and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt."*

Deuteronomy 7:7

*"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now **the dwelling of God** is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."*

Revelation 21:2-3

2. Maintaining the FLAME OF GOD'S PRESENCE is our response to the Loving Forgiving Heart of God.

*"The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; **it must not go out**."*

Leviticus 6:13

3. The TIME WE SPEND in God's Presence is far greater than life.

*"The LORD replied, "**My Presence will go with you**, and I will give you rest." Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here."*

Exodus 33:14-16

*"Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, **would not depart from the tent**."*

Exodus 33:11

"...In Your presence is fullness of joy..."

Psalms 16:11

THE JOURNEY OF GOD'S PRESENCE – PART 2

The Tent David Pitched

*“So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it.”
1 Chronicles 16:1*

I. Bringing the Ark of the Covenant into the Tabernacle of David marked the beginning of a NEW ORDER OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP.

*“And on that day David first delivered this psalm into the hand of Asaph and his brethren, to thank the LORD: ‘Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name’ [Psalm 105]... ‘Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness...’ [Psalm 96]... ‘Oh, give thanks to the Lord for he is good...’ [Psalm 106]
1 Chronicles 16:7-36*

*“...So he left Asaph and his brothers there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD to minister before the ark regularly, as every day's work required”
1 Chronicles 16:37-38 - [See 1 Chronicles 25]*

*“Behold, bless the LORD, all servants of the LORD,
Who serve by night in the house of the LORD!
Lift up your hands to the sanctuary And bless the LORD.”
Psalm 134:1-2*

II. King David modeled for us the LIFE OF THE HEART that longs for God continually.

*“LORD, I have loved the habitation of Your house,
And the place where Your glory dwells.....”
Psalm 26:8*

*“One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.”
Psalm 27:4-5*

Five Deep Needs of the Human Heart:

- **To live in God's Presence (v. 4a)**
- **To Experience Beauty (v. 4b)**
- **To Experience Intimacy in Friendship (v. 4c)**
- **To Receive Comfort in Troubles and Pain (v. 5 a)**
- **To Find Purpose for Life's Journey (v. 5b)**

(My main idea in this message was David's revolutionary experience with God on a intimate heart level. David became a man of the overwhelmed heart. He was a poet, a warrior, a skilled musician and was deeply in love with God. He surrounded himself with a company of worshippers. David appointed 38,000 priests and 4,000 musicians and arranged them in the 24 courses in 1 Chron 25, to minister to the Lord 24 hours a day. See Psalm 134 above. David was a man after God's own heart and he dwelt with a company of people who were thirsty for the presence of God! This is God's design for each of our lives. We can only be satisfied in His presence.)

THE JOURNEY OF GOD'S PRESENCE – PART 3 Solomon's Temple

*“Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David...”
2 Chronicles 3:1*

I. THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON WAS TO BE THE FINAL RESTING PLACE FOR THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

*“When Solomon had finished praying, **fire came down** from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house. When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground ... and worshiped and praised the Lord...”
2 Chronicles 7:1-3*

II. THE TEMPLE WAS THE PLACE FOR FORGIVENESS AND COMMUNION WITH GOD.

*“... if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place.”
2 Chronicles 7:14-15*

*“The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.”
Leviticus 6:13*

“...For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” Isaiah 56:7

III. OVER A THOUSAND YEARS OF PERPETUAL PRAYER CAME TO THEIR FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST.

*“And the Word became flesh and **dwelt among us**, and we beheld His glory.”
John 1:14*

*“...And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom...”
Matthew 27:50-52*

*“Do you not know that **you are the temple of God** and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”
1 Corinthians 3:16*

(In this message I tried to bring the temple to life. Every week I would post a diagram of the tabernacle, the tent and now the grand temple on powerpoint. I listed in great detail the tremendous amount of gold and silver, etc that went into the temple and discussed the day and night ministry of the priests and discussed the history of the temple which followed. I brought all this to conclusion highlighting the value of our life before God, the need for prayer and worship, etc.)

THE JOURNEY OF GOD'S PRESENCE – PART 4
My Heart – God's Home

*"I will give you a **new heart** and put a new spirit in you...
And I will put my Spirit in you..."*
Ezekiel 36:26-27

**1. The human heart is the FINAL DWELLING PLACE for
God's Presence.**

*"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his **heart** will flow rivers of living water." But this
He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive..."*
John 7:38-39

*"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our **inner man** is being
renewed day by day."*
2 Corinthians 4:16

*"I came that they **may have life**, and have it abundantly."*
John 10:10

**2. Prayer in its simplest forms CONNECTS my heart to God and maintains the fire
of His Presence.**

"Be joyful always; pray continually..." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17

"The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out."
Leviticus 6:13

*"Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find
me when you seek me with all your heart."*
Jeremiah 29:12-13

2. AN INVITATION TO PRAY IN GOD'S PRESENCE:
DATES: Sunday, Sept 26th thru Sunday, Oct. 2nd.
(these were the original 7 days we were going to pray 24-7)

*"'Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?'
'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.'"*
Matthew 26:40-41

(In this message I really focused on the need to connect my heart to God and be transformed in His presence. Experiencing God creates more hunger for God. I announced our 24-7 dates and began explaining the decorating and preparation of the room where we would meet with God. I began talking about the Moravians in 1727 and talked about the 24-7 prayer vigil they began which lasted for over 100 years. I closed with Matthew 6:6...go into your room and pray.....life change happens there)

Here are the final 3 messages I gave leading up to the launch of our 24-7 prayer room. Every Sunday I was telling more details about the Moravians in Herrnhut and the 24 hour, day and night prayer that began there in 1727 and the great mission movement that exploded out of it. I began telling our congregation about the impact of Pete Greig and his book, Red Moon Rising, on my life. I read several personal stories of life transformations in 24-7 prayer rooms around the world from Pete's book every Sunday. We posted the home page to the www.24-7prayer.com on our power point screen and encouraged people to log on and check it out. My grand goal for these last three weeks was to make prayer and experiencing the presence of God simple, do-able, inviting, non-intimidating, refreshing. (The 24-7 Prayer Manual is rich with helps and stories)

I have unashamedly told my congregation that I personally live desperate for more of God's presence. I have never hidden my thirst for God from them and I sensed something wonderful was getting ready to happen in our prayer room. I wanted to remove every barrier, every hurdle, to the place of prayer. I wanted prayer to become irresistible and contagious. I focused this series on the picture of Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus just listening....apparently doing nothing. Jesus told Martha that Mary had chosen the "one thing needful." Wow! Just "being" in His presence is the one thing I really need. No talking, no bombastic prayer, no religion, no performance.....just "being." Here are the messages:

A SEASON OF PRAYER – PART 1 Simplicity in Prayer

"He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Matt 18:2-4

1. Only one thing is needed: sitting at the FEET OF JESUS.

"As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said...."

Luke 10:38-39

2. The enemy of simplicity in prayer: DISTRACTIONS!

"But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

Luke 10:40

An International Survey on barriers to prayer:

- WANDERING THOUGHTS (80%)
- NOISE AND DISTRACTIONS (66%)
- FINDING TIME (54%)

3. Time spent with God leaves a permanent impression on our hearts: TRANSFORMATION!

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Luke 10:41-42

"One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him,

"Lord, teach us to pray..."

Luke 11:1

A KEY TO SIMPLICITY IN PRAYER: tsp [thanks, sorry, please]

A SEASON OF PRAYER – PART 2

24-7 Prayer

*“The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.”
Leviticus 6:13*

TOP TEN REASONS WE PRAY:

1. Prayer CONNECTS us to the heart of God.

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” James 4:8

2. When churches pray evil is pushed back and HEALING is released.

*“... if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” 2
Chron 7:14*

3. God REWARDS us when we pray.

“...when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” Matt 6:6-7

4. Prayer is an opportunity to ENJOY God.

*“Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” Psalm 37:4*

5. Prayer develops INTIMACY with God.

*“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” John 17:3-4*

“For this reason I bow before the Father...” Ephesians 3:14

6. Jesus MODELED the importance of prayer.

“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” Mark 1:35

7. Prayer releases POWER into your life.

“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...” Acts 4:31

8. Prayer releases your unique CREATIVITY.

*“And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works...”
Exodus 31:2-4*

9. In prayer we discover the SECRETS of God’s heart.

*“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things
you do not know.” Jeremiah 33:3-4*

10. Prayer releases WISDOM and DIRECTION from God.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” James 1:5

“Be joyful always; pray continually...” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17

A SEASON OF PRAYER – PART 3 The Influence of Our Prayers

*“The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.”
Leviticus 6:13*

1. Prayer: The Place of True FULFILLMENT in Life.

*“For He satisfies the longing soul, And fills the hungry soul with goodness....”
Psalm 107:9*

“O Taste and see that the Lord is good....” Psalm 34:8

2. Prayer is a Lasting MEMORIAL before God.

*“Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually. About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, “Cornelius!” And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, “What is it, Lord?” And he said to him, “Your prayers and alms have ascended
as a memorial before God.”*

Acts 10:1-4

3. Our Prayers RELEASE LIFE into Others.

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone- for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God...”

1 Timothy 2:1-4

4. Prayer is the Primary BATTLEGROUND of Spiritual War.

“...put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground...”

Eph 6:13

5. A Key to Meeting With God: EXPECTATION!

“O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water... Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you....My soul will be satisfied.”

Psalm 63:1, 3, 5

A PRAYER JESUS MODELED:

“It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.” And He said to them, “When you pray, say:

'Father, hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come.

'Give us each day our daily bread.

'And forgive us our sins,

For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

And lead us not into temptation.”

Luke 11:1-4

Once we launched our Prayer Room on September 26thabout 3 days in we began realizing that this was not a program or just another good event.....God was showing up in a wonderful way in that little room and people were experiencing measurable transformation. Stories began to pour out of the prayer room. “God is there! It’s like being on holy ground. I want to spend 2 hours in there next time...” I started lining 5 or 6 people up for every Sunday to give a 1 or 2 minutes testimony of what God did during their one-hour prayer slot. I focused my messages each Sunday on topics like: How to Spend an Hour with God, Praying the Lord’s Prayer, Knowing Your Identity as a Child of God, How to Hear God Speak, The Prayer Life of Jesus.....etc. I continued hammering on the simplicity of prayer and the fact that God delights to be with us....

Whether your group prays for several days day and night or if you go longer, may the Lord richly bless your prayer journey. May He enlarge your heart to hunger for God more than ever before and may you experience transformation and the fullness of joy in His presence. (Psalm 16:11)

Cassette tapes are available to all these messages. Ordering will be primitive: Call our church office at 816-246-9337 and ask if someone could run you a tape. You can pick it up or ask the person to mail it.