

The Transforming Power of Pastoral Prayer



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by [Dave Butts](#)

I often hear pastors speak of their desire to have a church that prays more. I certainly understand and appreciate that desire. A praying church is a powerful church in so many ways. While there are many things that can be done to help a congregation grow in prayer, I believe the first and easiest step concerns the prayer life of the pastor(s).

A praying pastor can become an amazing influence toward the church becoming a house of prayer. Let me focus today on two

of the many reasons why this is so critical. The first has to do with the power of prayer itself.

When pastors, who are already in a place of spiritual authority and influence, begin to pray solid, biblical prayers for their congregations, they are lining up with the will of God. The will of God in such matters is not a mystery. God wants His church to be a house of prayer. When the pastor prays for the church to become a praying church, he is not trying to talk God into doing something He doesn't already want to do. Because of what Scripture tells us, we must believe that prayer is powerful when we pray in accordance with the will of God.

In a real sense, when a spiritual leader begins to pray for those for whom he has responsibility, he operates as a priest before the Lord. He stands in a place of effective prayer between the congregation and God. God has committed to hear his prayers. Pastors who persistently pray biblical prayers for their congregation to become a house of prayer will begin to see significant changes in the prayer lives of their people.

Pastors who pray kingdom-focused pastoral prayers over their congregations from the platform/pulpit encourage and teach their people to pray! A pastor should spend significant time privately praying and growing in intimacy with the Father. But there must also be times when the congregation hears their pastor pray out loud in a public setting. People learn much about how to pray from hearing others pray, especially their pastors!

I have spent a lot of time reading the epistles of Paul. Over and over again I heard Paul praying for the Church. I put myself in the place of those early Christians and I realized how they learned to pray. They listened to their spiritual leader. Paul poured out his heart, privately and publicly for his people. They didn't so much need sermons or lessons on


prayer. They could just listen to Paul pray for them and found they could pray as he prayed.

One of my concerns for the Church today is the absence of the pastoral prayer and pastoral leadership in prayer. How will we know our pastors are praying for us if we do not hear them praying publicly? How can we learn from their lives of prayer if we do not hear regular, powerful, biblical prayers coming from them week after week?

My preacher for the first thirteen years of life was Neil Kuns. I know Neil preached good sermons but I confess that I don't really remember them. What stands out in my mind was Neil's pastoral prayers. Oh, I was a normal kid and I remember thinking about how long some of those prayers were and shuffling about as we stood for the prayer. But through the years, what has emerged from my memory is having a pastor who prayed for us. My life was and continues to be impacted by those prayers.

Pastors, if you will examine your own life of prayer and commit to allowing God to transform you by spending much time in His presence, you will be a person your congregation wishes to emulate in prayer. If you will begin to pray over your people, model prayer publically, and equip your people to pray, they will learn to become a praying people...and you will see your church on a journey toward being transformed into a house of prayer for all nations.

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