

Guidelines for Congregational Prayer

“The greatest victories to the church of Christ or the individual Christian are ...gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the might arm of power.” Patriarch and Prophets, p. 203

The congregational prayer (sometimes called the Garden of Prayer) is a portion of the church service dedicated to seeking God’s presence and praying for the needs of the congregation and town. It may take different forms in different churches or go by other names. Pray about how God wants this important segment to happen in your church service so that God will be honored and people will have an opportunity to praise God and present their requests to Him.

Objectives of the Congregational Prayer

- To praise and glorify God and exalt Him in our minds and hearts.
- To confess our sins and receive God’s forgiveness.
- To present our needs and requests before God and claim His promises.
- To thank Him for meeting our needs.

Preparing to Lead

- Please pray much about what God wants the congregational prayer to be.
- If you have a **prayer focus** for the week or month, find at least one or two promises from the Bible or Spirit of Prophecy that you can claim during your prayer.
- You may want to write out your prayer, or at least write the promises you plan to use.
- Especially consider how you can pray for your town and its needs.

The Congregational Prayer

- Congregational Prayer is generally from **5-20 minutes** in length. The prayer itself will be shorter.
- Begin by reminding people that this is the Congregational Prayer and what its purpose is. If you have a special prayer focus, explain it now.
- Include other elements such as sharing, bringing requests to the front, etc. before the prayer if appropriate. More on options to include below.
- Pray from your heart. Be sure to include the elements of - 1) praise for who God is, 2) confession of sins, 3) requests for the needs of the community and church family, 4) thanksgiving.
- You may want to close the prayer time by singing a song together like “Hear Our Prayer, O Lord.”

Options for Prayer

- Invite people to share their answers to prayer and prayer requests. Use a mobile microphone to walk to people so they can share. Or ask an AV person to take the microphone to people.
- Have people bring their written prayer requests to the front to be prayed over.
- Individuals with prayer needs can come forward and kneel at the front for prayer.
- Allow some quiet time during the prayer for people to present their personal requests, confession, or praises to God.
- If appropriate, invite people that are being especially prayed for to the front. You may also want to invite pastor/elders/congregation to gather around them in prayer support.
- Include a song as a portion of the prayer. If you do this, make sure to let the pianist know ahead of time.
- Invite a child or young person from the church to help you lead. You may want to ask them to pray for the adults.
- Use a Scripture or responsive reading from the hymnal to involve people in prayer.
- Invite members with special needs to raise their hands during prayer.
- Invite members to pray in groups of 2-4 individuals during a portion of the prayer if they would like. (Some are not comfortable with this, so let people know they can pray alone if they prefer.)

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