

# MINISTRY: INCORPORATING PRAYER IN DAILY OPERATIONS

## The Power of Public Practices

If God owns the business (and He does), how could we ever think of making decisions without consulting the true Owner? Scripture reveals the transformative power of prayer and encourages believers to pray continuously.<sup>1</sup> Jesus implores us to ask, seek, and even knock, promising our Father will hear and answer.<sup>2</sup> In the greatest historical startup, Jesus leveraged prayer as a regular discipline in His daily operations:

- He prayed all night before a critical HR decision.<sup>3</sup>
- He prayed for key players' performance.<sup>4</sup>
- He prayed to give thanks at the beginning of a meeting.<sup>5</sup>
- He prayed for His succession plan.<sup>6</sup>

Jesus calls us to follow His example, often modeling conversation with the Father.<sup>7</sup> Many leaders who follow Jesus understand and practice this discipline in their private time with the Lord. But are we activating the full power of prayer to transform lives and our work by praying *openly* in our workplaces?

Historically, we have seen God use leaders who pray to change the world.<sup>8</sup> Intercessors pray for the growth, strength, protection, effectiveness, and leadership of a church. In the same way, we must intercede continuously for the BaaMs (business as a ministry) entrusted to us by weaving prayer into our daily business operations.<sup>9</sup>

**How do you incorporate prayer into daily business operations?**

**Do you encourage others to join in voluntarily?**



<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. 5:17; James 5:16.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 11:9–13.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 6:12–16.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 22:21–32.

<sup>5</sup> Luke 22:17, 19.

<sup>6</sup> John 17:20–21.

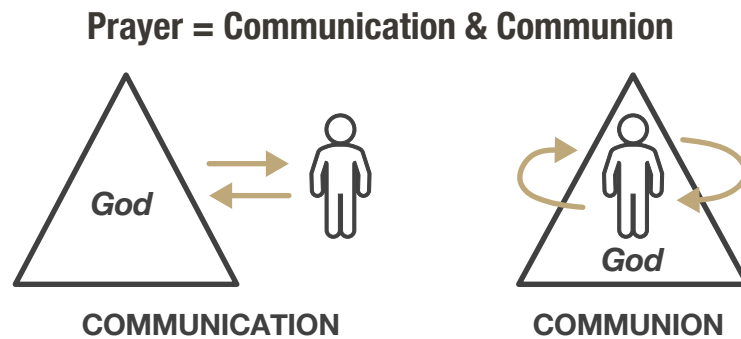
<sup>7</sup> Matt. 6:5–9; Luke 18:1–8.

<sup>8</sup> In 1857, the Fulton Street Noontime Prayer and Revival started in Manhattan by business leaders routinely praying together.

<sup>9</sup> Luke 22:31–32; 1 Thess. 5:17.

## A Wartime Walkie-Talkie

Given the elevated importance of prayer, theologians have filled books with meaningful insights about it. Timothy Keller defines prayer as “a personal communicative response to the knowledge of God.”<sup>10</sup> Skye Jethani argues Jesus’s pattern for prayer was both communication *and* communion with the Father.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps the most riveting metaphor for marketplace application comes from John Piper, who described prayer as more like a “wartime walkie-talkie” than an office intercom.<sup>12</sup>



Prayer allows us to radio our heavenly HQ from the battlefield for any and all of the following:

- courage
- troop deployment and target location
- firepower to blast open a way for the Word
- healing for wounded soldiers
- supplies and direction
- reinforcements

The world and the workplace can be a battlefield. Without prayer, we are trying to fight the war in *our* strength—something God never expected us to do. The Old Testament records multiple stories of leaders who cried out to God in the heat of adversity and conflict—Joshua, David, Daniel, Nehemiah, the descendants of Gad, etc. God answered their prayers and granted their urgent pleas because “they trusted in Him.”<sup>13</sup> Paul continued the practice in the New Testament, reinforcing his challenge to “pray without ceasing”<sup>14</sup> by offering constant prayers for his brothers and sisters in the faith.

Billy Graham took Paul’s challenge seriously. When the evangelist was interviewed on the *Today* show in 1982, a producer offered him a room in which to pray beforehand. Graham’s assistant respectfully declined, noting that Graham prayed when he woke, while he ate breakfast, and in the car en route to the studio, and he would continue to pray throughout his interview.<sup>15</sup> With notable faith displayed through their prayer disciplines, leaders and their teams can celebrate victories enabled by God.

<sup>10</sup> Timothy Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* (New York: Penguin Books, 2016).

<sup>11</sup> Skye Jethani, *With: Reimagining the Way You Relate to God* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2011), 112–114.

<sup>12</sup> John Piper, *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God’s Delight in Being God* (Multnomah Books, 2012), 214.

<sup>13</sup> Neh. 4:9, 15; 1 Chron. 5:20.

<sup>14</sup> 1 Thess. 5:16–18.

<sup>15</sup> *With*, 116.



*“During my rounds as a chaplain, I visit the office of a particular business owner who leads 300 employees in a struggling industry. We literally get down on our knees each week and pray for the company and its specific needs. How his company continues to thrive when others in the industry are collapsing, I’m not sure. But I do know that he is a praying man and God is faithful.”*

—CCA Chaplain serving in South Carolina

## Personal but Not Private

What we do privately spills over into what we do publicly. We cannot isolate our connection with God from our connection with His people, because God promises His presence “when two or more gather in His name.”<sup>16</sup> If we isolate praying for our companies to our private times of prayer, we miss leveraging the prayers of others. As Christian leaders, we are called to equip the people of God for the work of BaaM,<sup>17</sup> which includes corporate prayer.

Understandably, some Christians find praying in public uncomfortable. Others feel the misaligned urge to preach. Jesus says the power of prayer is not in the quantity of our words but the quality of our hearts. After all, God knows our needs before we even express them.<sup>18</sup> Praying with our employees allows us to demonstrate our desire to align our business decisions and practices with God’s will and way.<sup>19</sup> Praying openly may open opportunities to serve and minister to the needs of others, to comfort them in their crises, or to engage in conversations about faith.



### When praying openly, apply the following guidelines:

- Be yourself and pray as you would in private.
- Exercise childlike faith and keep language simple.
- Approach the throne of grace with confidence, knowing God appointed you to lead your organization.
- Avoid using prayer to preach a sermon.
- Model vulnerability, gratitude, and dependence.
- Be bold. The laws of the land allow you to pray in the workplace.<sup>20</sup>
- Invite and encourage others to pray as they are willing.

<sup>16</sup> Matt. 18:20.

<sup>17</sup> Eph. 4:10–15.

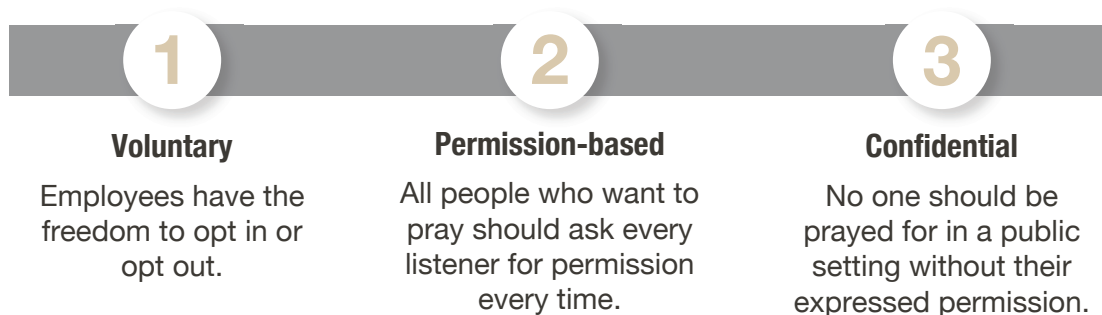
<sup>18</sup> Matt. 6:7–8.

<sup>19</sup> See “Aligning With God’s Will” (February 2021 – Devotion).

<sup>20</sup> See the previous C12 business segment “Religious Liberty” (December 2018).

## Principles for Workplace Prayer

After 25 years of ministering in the workplace, Corporate Chaplains of America (CCA)<sup>21</sup> suggests three guiding principles for incorporating prayer in the workplace:



To avoid Title VII violations<sup>22</sup> as we shine the light of the gospel, we should be mindful of how we invite others to express their faith.<sup>23</sup> The opt-out option must be nonthreatening, and no one should feel singled out or career-vulnerable because he or she does not participate. Even among Christians, avoid calling on an individual to pray publicly without asking that person’s permission beforehand.

**Long before we ask employees to “bow their heads,” our faith should flow in normal conversation.**<sup>24</sup> We can make it a routine for our people to hear us say things like “At church last week . . .” or “We have so much to be thankful for . . .” or “I heard you have been sick, and I prayed for you.” Our employees will know we are Christians by the way we live and talk. Whether or not they are praying people, they will know that we pray and believe God has provided. Having established our faith over time, we can invite others to pray, saying something like “This is a voluntary time of prayer. No one should feel coerced. For those who choose, prayer is accepted and encouraged. If you choose not to pray, we just ask that you take a moment of silence as we pray.”

When Paul uses the metaphor of the armor of God, he urges the Ephesians to pray “at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.”<sup>25</sup> Different occasions and audiences require different kinds of prayers.

<sup>21</sup> Corporate Chaplains of America (CCA) is a C12 Strategic Affiliate that supports 559 organizations, 172 of which are C12 Member companies.

<sup>22</sup> Civil Rights Act of 1964.

<sup>23</sup> See “An Employer’s Guide to Faith in the Workplace” by Alliance Defending Freedom at Barnabas > Resources > General for more on legal protections.

<sup>24</sup> See *Workplace Grace: Becoming a Spiritual Influence at Work* by Bill Peel and *About My Father’s Business: Taking Your Faith to Work* by Regi Campbell.

<sup>25</sup> Eph. 6:13–18.

	<b>DO</b>	<b>DO NOT</b>
<b>Meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite others to pray</li> <li>• Make allowances for those not praying</li> <li>• Pray for wisdom in the meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require participation</li> <li>• Shame or punish nonparticipation</li> <li>• Call on people to pray without prior permission</li> </ul>
<b>All Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite others to pray</li> <li>• Make allowances for those not praying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require participation</li> <li>• Shame or punish nonparticipation</li> <li>• Preach a sermon</li> </ul>
<b>Individually</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask for permission</li> <li>• Be sensitive to time and location</li> <li>• Find a private place</li> <li>• Keep it short but meaningful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disrupt significant work</li> <li>• Be shy</li> <li>• Use prayer to abdicate from more tangible actions</li> </ul>
<b>Prayer Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open the meeting to all</li> <li>• Allow groups of all faiths to meet</li> <li>• Meet during off hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require participation</li> <li>• Meet during work hours</li> </ul>

More ways to cultivate a culture of prayer that equips others include:

- Set a time of day for people to pray.
- Hold a prayer call.
- Designate a prayer space.
- Offer a prayer request box, webform, or email.

**How have you successfully cultivated a workplace culture conducive to prayer?**

**What are nonthreatening ways you have found to pray with nonbelievers in your business?**

**What effective ways have you discovered to incorporate prayer with customers and vendors?**





### **The Power of Prayer in Business**

**C12 Member: Barbara Myrick, Owner & President**

Barbara accepted God’s invitation to align her leadership and business with His will through a rich prayer discipline. Her faithful intercession—personally and with her personnel—has enabled God to display His undeniable power, to oversee the business, and to transform lives.

**Company:** B&M Construction, Inc.

**Employees:** 32

**Industry:** Construction

**Years in Business:** 16

**Headquartered:** Colorado Springs, CO

### **BaaM Daily Operations Prayer Plan**

We do not want to position ourselves as “priests of the business,” although we are all ministers of the gospel. Instead, we can catalyze prayer partners by inviting employees to lead prayer—just as we would delegate other functions according to the 5-Point Alignment Matrix.<sup>26</sup> Imagine where we and our businesses would be if Jesus had not prayed “sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world” in his operational prayer of John 17.<sup>27</sup>



What is your operations prayer plan? Your BaaM strategy informs how you pray for your business. Identify three moments in which you can incorporate prayer into the rhythm of your company. What can that look like, and who can own it?

#### **Prayer Opportunity**

#### **Owner**

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |



**Discuss your three ideas above and agree on an opportunity to incorporate prayer into the company’s rhythms.**

<sup>26</sup> See the previous C12 ministry segment “Distributed Ministry Leadership” (April 2020).

<sup>27</sup> John 17:17–18.

## All Things Possible

The many tasks of our day can sometimes feel like wild animals charging full speed right at us. We can stop the stampede by inviting the Lord to recalibrate our minds, quiet our spirits, and tune our souls to Him and His will. We should urge our team members to do the same.

Prayer has transformative power. Picture the following outcomes:

- Christians will be mobilized. (Matt. 9:37–38)
- Mountains can be moved. (Matt. 17:20)
- The impossible becomes possible. (Matt. 19:26)
- Needs are provided. (Phil. 4:19)
- Wisdom is given. (James 1:5)
- People are restored. (James 5:16)
- The gospel will go forth. (Eph. 6:16–20)
- God will be glorified. (Rev. 4:11)

For leaders taking their first steps at incorporating prayer into business operations, here are four things you can begin praying for with others: employees and their families, requests from customers and suppliers, the company’s city,<sup>28</sup> and upcoming hiring decisions.

**My most critical to-do is:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**demonstrated by:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**because:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



<sup>28</sup> Jer. 29:7.

