

Developing a Culture of Prayer

A culture can be defined as a set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes a company or corporation. If we embrace a culture, we cannot help but reflect the values of that culture. And if the Church represents its own unique culture, how will that culture be defined?

If we take an honest look at most churches in the “American West,” we would likely have to define the culture in terms of programs, strategies, and methodology. But is that how God desires the culture of His Church to be defined? Jesus made it clear that His Father’s Church should be known as a “house of prayer for all nations.” Clearly the place of prayer in the life of a church is to be elevated and pursued, as the nations of the world are dependent on the prayers of God’s people.

Prayer Transformation Ministries believes that a significant shift needs to occur whereby churches begin to develop into “cultures of prayer.” If a church becomes, above all, a culture of prayer, it will reflect the very values of the heart of God. By bringing prayer to the forefront as the greatest defining characteristic of a church, the people will become engaged in and saturated by the powerful effects of prayer. In turn we will begin to see the Church overtake the culture that defines our society as God begins to move in revival and transformation throughout a community. By determining that your church will be defined as a culture of prayer, you will add a greater dimension to the prayer life of your church.

What Is a Culture of Prayer?

Understanding a culture of prayer begins by taking a fresh look at the place of prayer the Scripture gives to us in the life of the Church. The New Testament talks about the idea of being “devoted” to prayer (Acts 2:42; Rom. 12:12; Col 4:2). The meaning and context of this word has to do with a corporate mindset that places prayer at a place of being always before us, and always a part of everything we do. It means persevering with persistent application. Paul speaks to Timothy about prayer being “first of all” in his ministry (1 Tim. 2:1).

A culture of prayer is the aggregate of the praying lifestyles of the people in a given local congregation in every area of their individual and corporate lives together.

How do we establish a culture of prayer in our church? The answer is not found in a simple formula. We cannot give you a checklist of things to do to make this shift. The answer lies in the realization that every local congregation has a very unique “personality” and “destiny” from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church (Rev. 2-3). This means that, beginning with the leadership of the church, there must be a commitment to spend time listening and hearing from the Lord. The Lord is the One who will determine what a culture of prayer will look like in that local congregation. As a church seeks the Lord and waits on His response, He will reveal how to begin to “change the culture” in their church (Rev. 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:29; 3: 6; 3:13; 3:22). It’s the obvious that we usually miss—pray and ask God how you should pray!

Prayer Transformation Ministries is committed to helping local congregations understand the truths of the culture of prayer, and how to begin the journey toward a cultural change in their congregation that will lead them toward the development of a culture of prayer.

Here are some questions for prayer, reflection, and discussion:

- How does the term “culture of prayer” differ from a “prayer program”?
- What is a “culture”? How do you define and recognize the characteristics of a culture?
- Knowing that your church is uniquely designed by God, how would you begin to discover what a culture of prayer might look like in your congregation?
- How can you encourage your leadership in moving toward developing a culture of prayer?
- How does one go about changing the culture?
- What are some indicators that the culture of your church is changing?

For more information on a culture of prayer contact Prayer Transformation Ministries. We work with churches in a consultation role, helping leadership move toward developing a culture of prayer. Each local church is unique, and we will seek to understand what God is already doing in your midst, and then encourage you toward growth in the prayer movement.