



# IDEAS AND RESOURCES

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**[WWW.IRISHMETHODIST.ORG](http://WWW.IRISHMETHODIST.ORG)**  
**[WWW.IMYCD.INFO](http://WWW.IMYCD.INFO)**

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## IDEAS AND RESOURCES

There are a variety of suggestions, and endless resources, that will help you facilitate a prayer rhythm for your church once you have discerned God's heart. Below are some ideas, links & resources that can help you know where to start.

All of these ideas encourage individual participation and devotion, but the heart of this rhythm is to encourage corporate prayer and worship among the people of God.

We are not created to live in isolation from each other, yet increasingly our faith is becoming essentially private and personal; as the body of Christ we are called to work in a rhythm together and so this is an attitude we should foster in church life.

### PREACHING

Preach what prayer is all about! Don't assume that everyone in the congregation understands the nature or call to be people of prayer, instead teach and preach from the vast amount of biblical texts that talk of prayer. The disciples asked Jesus, 'Lord teach us to pray...' (Luke 11:1), and as disciples today we have the same need to be taught in prayer, it is not always an easy natural progression; so teach on prayer with clarity and conviction. Encourage a passion and an expectancy for prayer among the people, that we may truly see how God is at work and be transformed as we meet with him in prayer. May the words of our congregations echo the Psalmist when he says, 'I love the Lord

because he hears my voice and my prayer for mercy. Because he bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath!' (Psalm 116:1-2)

### PRAYER SPACES

Prayer spaces have been popping up in churches, schools and communities for many years now; and the stories that come back are incredible. These spaces intentionally invite people to sit in the presence of God and hear him speak; often they provide creative stations to prompt thoughts and actions and focus a person's mind to the mind of God. They can be a way of engaging people with prayer like never before. Often people will reflect on the peacefulness these spaces can provide, and in a culture that is busy and stressful, these spaces can offer an escape to stillness that a person longs for.

It is important that if you are going to set up a prayer space, that you do it well! Be creative and inventive with how you decorate the space; after all the space is dedicated to a God who created this incredibly beautiful earth that we live on... so don't just stick white pages to a wall.

Perhaps there is an opportunity to work alongside other churches in hosting a prayer space for your community; be creative with the location, there have been unused shops taken over and transformed into a place of sanctuary on the high street and caravans have also become mobile prayer spaces.

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There are many ideas available online on prayer spaces, and the **24-7 prayer room resource** is also available to download alongside this document; it includes tips on prayer spaces and other prayer ideas. The 'Why pray?' animation is a great tool to encourage all ages to get excited about prayer and involved in making a prayer room happen. The video is a free resource and can be found on the 24-7 prayer website along with other helpful & inspirational videos.

[www.24-7prayer.com/videos](http://www.24-7prayer.com/videos)

Hosting a prayer space is a great idea, but it's also important to consider what do to after the prayer space is over. For example, you might decide not to take the space down, but to leave it up as a permanent space available to the church and community, that you intentionally use throughout the year. It may be that the prayer space leads into prayer walking, or small group prayer times... wherever it leads, be intentional in the pursuit!

## PRAYER WALKING

Prayer walking is a simple yet effective way of engaging with God for your community; it is a great way of focusing your prayers on a particular locality and listening to what God is saying. Perhaps there will be certain times of year that are filled with tension for your community; why not walk the streets praying for peace

before that time arrives? Or why not simply seek the welfare of the city by asking God's blessing over homes and families while you walk the streets.

There is a downloadable resource that contains some tips for prayer walking to go alongside this resource. Also, Brian Heasley (National Director of 24/7 Prayer UK) has written a helpful article on Prayer walking called, 'Prayer walking and the salvation strategy for your city,' that can be accessed at

<http://www.24-7prayer.com/features/2490>.

Another helpful prayer walking resource can be found at

[http://www.24-7prayer.com/prayer/  
howtoprayforyourcity](http://www.24-7prayer.com/prayer/howtoprayforyourcity)

Brian and his wife Tracy served in Ibiza with 24/7 Prayer and have shared their experiences to help churches think about prayer and mission; check out their series of podcasts at: <http://24-7prayer.com/podcasts/category/prayerandmission> or grab a copy of their helpful and thought-provoking book 'Gatecrashing: The Story of 24-7 Prayer in Ibiza'

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## PRAYER TRIPLETS

Praying in committed triplets can help keep prayer focused and accountable; the aim of these groups can be to provide support for one another, or to pray for a specific need or event. It encourages a helpful rhythm and a firm foundation of prayer in the community of church.

## SMALL GROUPS

Praying in small groups also helps to focus our prayers on specific areas, and combining this with study on scripture enriches the personal growth and development of those participating.

There are many resources that can be used within small groups that can help you think more about how we serve God in our daily lives...at home...at work...wherever He has placed us. Here is one example:

<http://www.licc.org.uk/>

The Prayer Course is also a fantastic resource that has been developed by 24/7 prayer and Alpha. It uses The Lord's Prayer to draw out key themes about prayer:

<http://www.prayercourse.org/>

## PRAYER CHAINS

Many churches have in place a system to distribute prayer requests through a number of people, whether this be through telephone calls, emails or text. This allows emergency requests to be distributed to many people in a short space of time; however, it is crucially important that this is focused on prayer and not gossip, and so boundaries on confidentiality should be put in place for this type of system.

## PRAYER MINISTRY

A prayer ministry team can add to the ministry of a church and are a resource to help discern God on behalf of others. A team should be well trained and chosen for such a ministry, and understand the difference between intercession (pleading with God on behalf of another) and prayer ministry (hearing God for another person).

*The Training & Development Officer, Louise Wilson, can help to provide training for volunteers, and support a church in this area; she can be contacted at Edgehill Theological College on 028 90665870.*

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## INTERCESSION

To intercede for someone is to stand in the gap between the needs of others and God, and to plead with God on their behalf. Intercession forms a part of our worship services, and our corporate prayers of intercession should be specific, focused and expectant; but intercession does not only find its place in worship services, but should be a daily rhythm of our churches.

Richard Foster describes intercession as,

*'a way of loving others... Intercessory prayer is selfless prayer, even self-giving prayer. In the ongoing work of the kingdom of God nothing is more important than intercessory Prayer. People desperately need the help that we can give them. Marriages are being shattered. Children are being destroyed. Individuals are living lives of quiet desperation, without purpose or future. And we can make a difference... if we learn to pray on their behalf.'*

We can help to aid our intercessions by using the Methodist Prayer Focus; or by providing specific prayer requests for our local communities that as a church family we can be praying into. Prayer walking can also link with intercession, as you intercede for the area which you are walking.

Intercessors are important people to find within our congregations; people who have a heart that is sensitive to what

is going on around them and can be active in prayer. Intercessors can be a great support to the ministry team of any church and should be encouraged to grow in their gift of praying for others.

It might be that there is a weekly or monthly Intercession Sheet that is distributed around those intercessors, that includes a range of issues and needs that require prayer. This can be a great way of including those mighty people of faith who are no longer as physically able to attend church, but are still a vital part of our church family.

Try to encourage the whole church to be involved in intercession in some way; maybe there's a way to make intercessions visible each week by displaying them on a noticeboard for everyone to see... and don't forget to include how God has answered so that everyone can give thanks.

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## COMMUNITY PRAYERS

God may challenge you as a church to engage in a new way with your local community. Take time to continue to pray for your local community and for opportunities to become more involved....listen, act, and be expectant.

The cry of our hearts may be for more unity in your town/area... then why not approach other churches in your local community and suggest working together at prayer initiatives or community outreach, for example the Alpha Course has proved effective in many areas with churches being creative with venues and approaches.

<http://www.alpha.org/>

Seek God's heart for your area, and follow his leading; be ready to try new things and not be fearful! Persistence and passion will see God at work; be expectant remembering that this is about God's agenda and not our own.

Why not go out in your local community, speak to businesses and ask if there is anything they would like prayer for; then follow up to see if God has answered those prayers.

Or what about opening up the church on a particular day, or at a certain time each day, to allow people to come in to the stillness and pray?

Or perhaps as you pray, God will prompt you to bless your community in some way... follow through on these promptings and give thanks for what God will do, remembering that the littlest of things can have the greatest of impacts.

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