

Core Ministry: Prayer at East Taieri Church

The core ministry for prayer consists of a number of elements that were already happening in the Church. It has been our task to begin to bring these elements together into a cohesive whole so they can relate to each other. We have tried to be sensitive to what God has been doing and saying with prayer already through the Church. We have a team of core people, who with us oversee these various areas but who have a specific heart for prayer across the Church.

Prayer is not just about asking God for things. It is much broader and richer than this. Prayer is our very communication with God each and every day. Hearing and recognising His voice and knowing His presence in our lives are the foundational stones in our relationship with God. Everything else stems from that.

When Paul says, '*Pray without ceasing*,' (1 Thess 5 v17), he means just that, keeping the lines of communication open so we can speak to Him and He to us, all the time, as well as being persistent and faithful in our prayers for others. It is amazing what happens when we take time to notice Him working and speaking in our lives.

Jesus is our best example of a praying life. He spent time with God alone, had specific times when he prayed for and with others in a natural way as he was going along. He was also the best intercessor when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 17). Jesus only did what the Father wanted Him to do and this was because His life was centred on hearing His Father's voice.

Elements of Prayer

These are five main elements that make up prayer as God's people. These run through all we aim to do in our prayer ministry for the Church and are reflective in the teaching about prayer in the bible.

- Knowing and hearing God's voice
- Thanksgiving & Worship
- Blessing
- Intercession
- Agreement

Prayer Strategising and Focus for the Church: Intercession

It is vital we hear the Shepherd's voice in our daily lives and about the decisions we make about our Church and pray in unity towards what He is saying. We need to work in partnership with God, what He is saying already and where He is leading us. We are currently praying through a prayer strategy for the whole of the Church as a focus for things we are seeking God about for our Church. Included in this is seeking God for Him to reveal to us the underlying spiritual issues that are happening (blockages and barriers), when we are praying for something. The plan is to ask the Elders for their comment, additions and approval. These then will be posted on all the prayer letters and hopefully other places as a reminder of our prayer for the year.

Teaching and Equipping

The other intention of our prayer ministry is to teach and equip people for the following:

1. To hear from God and develop their prayer lives/communication with God.
2. To provide training, development and space for people who want to pray with others safely and effectively and to hear God for each other.

Below is a summary of our current elements of this core ministry.

1. Praying with others: We have a trained team of people who are available to pray with others during or after the service or at other times if needed. The team meets three times a year to develop these skills and to hear from God for each other. We want people to feel safe when they approach us for prayer.

2. Prayer chain: This is a confidential group of intercessors who pray for individuals and situations.

3. Prayer Breakfast: This happens weekly on Thursdays from 7am in the Oak Lounge.

4. Pre-service prayer: Fuel from 8:15am & ET 9:45 in the window seats.

5. People who pray: This is a team of people across the whole Church who are on an email list called to pray confidentially for events (such as ministry conference, Easter camp, Christmas outreach) and issues that we face as a Church.

6. Prayer matters: This is a prayer bulletin we issue every 2-3 months that covers the main prayer needs for the ministries of the Church and community. You can use this in your own prayer, with groups of others or in Church gatherings.

7. Special Prayer Events:

- **Prayer Retreats:** We run regular day prayer retreats (9am to 4pm) of silent listening, corporate prayer, meditation and hearing from God. It is an alternative expression of prayer and focuses on your relationship with God.
- **Prayer gatherings for reasons:** From time to time we call people to prayer for specific reasons and sometimes for a concentrated time, for people to be prayed with or for issues the Church is facing.
- **Explore Prayer:** This is a course over three weeks, exploring the nature of prayer and practical ways we can make our prayer lives more effective.

Inclusivity

All of us can pray and know God, it is not just for the people on this team. We can all be part of praying with others and praying for situations. We can also be part of developing our awareness of God's presence in our lives. All the things we do as a Church related to prayer are open to anyone who wants to take part. If you want any more information, please contact Paul and Mary Reet on 027 406 5959 or email: qpm.reet@gmail.com