

PRAYER STRATEGIES

The surest way to build a movement that lasts is to build it God's way. And if we want to build a movement God's way, we must begin with a foundation of prayer.

Both history and God's Word make it clear that prayer is more than preparation for the work—it is the work. Unfortunately, we often fail to invest the necessary time in prayer. We know it's vital, but we're "too busy." We think we can pull off a ministry with only perfunctory prayer. It takes discipline to pray effectively, because we don't always see what prayer is accomplishing.

Have you ever heard of Epaphras? He's not too famous, but he's the one who brought the gospel to Colossae. In Colossians 4:12 he's singled out by Paul for his emphasis on prayer—"He is always wrestling in prayer for you ...". Are we prepared to be like Epaphras? Are we prepared to really pray?

Where Do We Start?

There's no set formula for development of a prayer strategy; there's plenty of room for variety. The important thing is that you and your leaders are seeking the Lord regularly as you are involved in reaching international students.

Here are some ideas:

1. **Spend personal time in prayer**, taking time to develop your personal prayer life. Prayer must be a priority in your life as a leader before you can call others to make it a priority.
2. **Establish a Prayer Ministry** – Challenge other Christians on your campus to pray together and to make prayer a priority in their personal lives. Invite them to join you. Choose a time to meet consistently for prayer.
As you gather a leadership team, encourage your team to spend time in prayer and take time during your leadership meetings to pray.
3. **Invite people in your church** and Christians in your community to pray for the ministry on campus.
4. **As small groups** are formed, make prayer a vital part of each meeting.
5. **Pray specifically**. Each development phase of your campus ministry will have its own prayer needs. Bathe each event, each outreach and each person in prayer.

6. **Be creative.** Variety is a positive factor for enjoyable prayer, but if you have to choose between consistency and creativity, go with consistency.

Here's what Dr. Bill Bright said about the importance of prayer in launching a ministry to college students at UCLA in 1951. This movement grew to be known as "Campus Crusade for Christ":

"This unprecedented demonstration of God's blessing was not an accident. God was responding to the prayers of many of His children.

"When God called this ministry into being, we immediately formed a 24 hour prayer chain, which we divided into 15 minute time periods. Scores of Christians invested 15 minutes in prayer every day on behalf of our new ministry at UCLA."