**8 Characteristics of Praying Churches**

**By Chuck Lawless**

I’ve written this week about characteristics of evangelistic churches and equipping churches. Frankly, it’s easier to find these churches (though they’re comparatively few) than it is to find churches addressed in this post: praying churches. Here are some characteristics of churches I know that are genuinely praying churches:

Their lead pastor has prayer in his DNA. He doesn’t just talk about prayer; he does prayer. The congregation truly believes that their pastor prays well. Like evangelistic churches, I’ve never seen a praying church who doesn’t have a praying pastor.

Their worship services are filled with prayer. They don’t pray only perfunctory prayers at the beginning of the service, the middle of the service (the offering), and end of the service. They have intentional, focused moments of prayer throughout the service—often beginning with a times of confession.

Their small groups have a prayer leader. He or she serves as a liaison between the church and the group, carrying the church’s prayer concerns to the group. No small group meeting passes without gut-level praying for each other.

The church has someone responsible for leading their prayer ministry. In some cases, this person is a paid staff member, though in most cases it’s a volunteer. In any case, this leader purposefully keeps prayer in front of the congregation.

Staff meetings are saturated in prayer. The staff in praying churches, in fact, pray so deeply and passionately together that even their own members would be surprised by the zeal of their prayers. These staff members do not lead out of their own ability.

They pray for non-believers by name. Anecdotally, I’ve learned that evangelistic churches are likely also praying churches—probably because they’ve learned that their expertise can’t change hearts. They intercede for non-believers caught in darkness.

The pastor preaches an annual or biennial series on prayer. Folks are more inclined to pray when their pastor preaches or teaches on the subject, and these pastors plan accordingly. They let the Word of God show people how to approach the throne of God.

The church trains new believers how to pray. It’s never enough to tell people they need to pray; instead, leading them to pray requires teaching new believers to pray. These churches plan for annual equipping opportunities to teach prayer.

What other characteristics come to mind for you?

The above article, “8 Characteristics of Praying Churches,” was written by Chuck Lawless.

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This article may not be written by an Apostolic author, but it contains many excellent principles and concepts that can be adapted to most churches. As the old saying goes, “Eat the meat. Throw away the bones.”