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saturday@theHOP Altar Ministry Training ***Praying Grace: Training for Personal Ministry***

I. Foundations

A. Prayer as a Ministry

- Important because this is where it gets personal and needs are addressed at personal level
- Jesus as our example of compassionate prayer (healing of the leper in Mark 1:41)
- Praying for others is part of bearing good fruit.

“This is to my Father’s glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

- John 15:8

“God does not want us to shift into a stained-glass prayer voice to address Him. Prayer comes out of this world, the workday world of houses and cars and grass and sewer lines and schools and janitors and the IRS.”

- David Jeremiah

B. What is Altar Ministry?

- It is an application of the “One Second Principle” – God can do more in a person’s life in one second than we could in a whole lifetime of analyzing and “helping”.
- It is a visible display of public prayer - for the benefit of the whole body.

“Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

- John 11:41-42

- It allows for a personal response to the gospel – to actively respond to the message making a physical declaration of their need or decision.

C. What Altar Ministry Is Not

- It’s not counseling.
- It’s not focused or dependent on the pastor – personal ministry is carried out by the people.
- It’s not the time for spiritual surgery.

- It's not a commitment to solve problems. (Philippians 4:19 "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.")

D. Prayer Ushers Defined

- An "usher" is someone whose job it is to "introduce" or "direct" people. They are never the main attraction.
- The job of a prayer usher is to escort those in need to God in prayer, and then let the Holy Spirit do the work.

II. Training

A. The Personal Prayer Model

1. The Interview is the first step in any prayer encounter. It is important to gather some information so that we can pray effectively. Listen carefully to the seeker!
 - Ask name, repeat and remember it.
 - Ask what they would like to receive prayer for.
 - Listen to the heart of the matter in addition to "information" they're giving. May need to repeat back to them "what I hear you saying is..."
 - Exercise "compassionate identification" – connecting emotionally to someone at the point of his or her need. (Isaiah 53:4-5 – prophetic picture of what Jesus did on the cross.)
 - Remember that why they "think" they are there isn't always why the Lord has them there.
2. The Intercession is what comes next. After the interview is conducted ask, "May I pray for you? Important to ask because shows sensitivity and is an effective way to stay on track. We are going to pray grace based prayers using the acronym G.R.A.C.E.

G – God's Nature

Let God's nature – who God is – be the focus of the prayer time, NOT the problem. God is our Healer, Redeemer, Creator, Comforter, Defender, Protector, Friend and so much more.

R – Righteousness of Jesus

Pray with the assurance that you are being heard based on the righteousness of Jesus and His finished work on the cross (James 5:16). His name is our authority.

A – Ask

Even though God knows what we need even before we do, it is important to submit our requests in prayer through the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 7:7-11). Pray the Word – it is our prayer language and creates agreement between God and us. Use memorized scriptures or actual Bible.

C – Confidence: Complete Trust

Once we have presented our request to the Lord, we declare with confidence that He will answer because He is good. That's why we can leave the problem with Him - we leave it all in His hands.

E – Exaltation of Jesus

Finally, we praise God that Jesus will be exalted through the answer to this prayer. Thank Him in advance for what He is going to do to meet the need.

3. The Inquiry - after the prayer time, it's important to inquire about the experience. It gives the seeker a chance to follow-up on something that was prayed, encourages the seeker to be sensitive to what the Holy Spirit might have said, reinforces that the burden of help is on the Lord, and provides us with immediate feedback about the prayer time. These are some possible questions to ask:
 - ❖ Did you sense anything in particular while we were praying?
 - ❖ Did you hear anything?
 - ❖ Did an image or picture come to mind?
 - ❖ What did you feel?
 - ❖ Do you need to do anything in order to appropriate God's provision in this situation?
 - ❖ Is there any action on your part required to receive the answer to this prayer?
4. The Invocation – the blessing of God holds significant power and we as Christians have the authority to invoke such a blessing. Close the prayer encounter by speaking a blessing over the seeker as a final encouragement that he/she is blessed and loved extravagantly by God.

B. The Nitty Gritty

Here are some important things to help personal ministry time go smoothly. As prayer ushers we need to:

1. Prepare our own hearts by praying and spending time in the Word throughout the week.
2. Be sensitive to gender issues.
3. Be aware of personal hygiene since we'll be up close and personal.
4. Be sensitive in choosing the appropriate point of contact.
5. Stay alert and watch as we pray.
6. Have necessary materials on hand.
7. Know where and when to refer when there is a "bigger" problem.
8. Don't share your own personal experiences.
9. Do not turn prayer requests into gossip.
10. Report salvations to Ministry Team Leader so we can follow up.
11. Be careful with the volume of our voices.

