

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

**The Power and Purpose of Intercessory Prayer: Equipping and Educating the Leaders of
Divine Providence Ministries Through an Intercessory Prayer Course**

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to
the Faculty of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

by
Tammanica S. Muse

Lynchburg, Virginia

November 2024

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Thesis Project Approval Sheet

Mentor's Name Typed below Signature Line
Mentor's Faculty Title

Reader's Name Typed below Signature Line
Reader's Faculty Title

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

Tammanica S. Muse

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, 2024

Mentor: Dr. Robert Lytle

Intercessory prayer is a selfless act where believers pray to God on behalf of others, asking for His intervention. This type of prayer is a vital part of Christian life rooted in the example of Jesus, who intercedes between God and humanity. Jesus models the role of intercessor, reconciling mankind to God through His sacrifice. Believers are called to follow this example and pray for others regularly. This DMin research project examines the issue of leaders lacking a comprehensive understanding of prayer's purpose, power, and connection to intimacy with God. It also investigates why some leaders abandon prayer when faced with challenges. The hypothesis was that if leaders participated in an eight-week intercessory prayer workshop, they would experience spiritual breakthroughs, power, and deeper intimacy with God. The goal was to equip participants with the tools to pray boldly, effectively, and confidently, to teach them how to use the Scripture for praying, and to empower them to teach and mentor others how to pray. Fourteen Divine Providence Ministries leaders participated in the workshop, which included Bible studies, prayer exercises, journaling, and group intercession activities. Quantitative data were gathered from pre-and post-surveys, while qualitative insights came from focus group discussions and data from participation in prayer meetings and workshop classes. The results indicated a positive impact on the participants' prayer life. Other ministries are encouraged to implement similar prayer workshops to enhance leadership skills in seasoned and novice leaders.

Thesis project topic abstract length: 237 words

Keywords: prayer, intercessory prayer, intimacy, leaders, prayer workshop

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, thank you, Jesus, for saving my soul and giving me victory through every trial. When I began this doctoral journey, I was in a season of joy, but storms soon followed. Yet, through it all, you stood by me, reminding me during the storm that your plans for me had not changed. Your gentle whispers gave me the strength to rise again. I love you, Jesus.

To my mom, who has celebrated every achievement and reminded me of God's promises in every challenge, I love you. From my Army graduation to my promotion to Senior Master Sergeant, you've been my greatest supporter. Your strength and love have carried me through. You can be a little tough sometimes, but I chalk it up to you being a middle child. To my family, thank you for being faithful to our monthly prayer meetings. Those prayers sustained me more times than I can count. I look forward to the day when we all are leading prayer, because it is coming. God cannot lie. To my dad and mom², your constant encouragement and platform for ministry helped me heal and remember my calling. Thank you.

A special shout out to my pastors, Pastor and Prophetess Dantzler of Walk of Faith Ministries, for your tireless prayers and unwavering love. Your intercession has been a lifeline. I know you have asked God to grace me through this project. Your love for me is genuine, and your trust is priceless. May God bless you immeasurable for standing with me. To everyone who participated in this project, I appreciate you. There would be no project without your support and participation. Additionally, I extend a special thank you to the many ministries I have been a part of as I have traveled the continent in my military capacity. Thank you, Times of Refreshing, Victorious Life Christian Center, Greater Miracle, Walk of Faith, and Anointed Remnant

International Ministries. Each of you has poured into my life exponentially and contributed to who I have become. I thank God continually for you.

To Mr. Tooke, Tobias, and Thomas, thank you for making the data come alive. Without your help, I would still be overwhelmed. You listened to me, took my rough ideas, provided insight, and perfected the various illustrations that fill these pages. Dr. Lytle, your guidance and reassurance helped me keep going when I felt discouraged. Thank you for believing in me. And to Dr. Meek, thank you for the additional perspective you provided. Your suggestion to incorporate a section on the providence of God and its connection to prayer invited a profound reflection on the theological dimensions of prayer. It also inspired me to consider writing a book on the subject. Chief Taylor, your friendship and mentorship breathed life into me. Thank you for every word of wisdom, prophetic encouragement, and direction. When I showed up at ARIM, I was in a pain-filled place, and the Lord told me to go seek you out after service...and the rest is history. Thank you for everything. Keep hovering, helicopter Auntie.

To my best travel friend, girl, this last vacation to Puerto Vallarta was the best. What a great time we had. It was just what I needed: the right blend of relaxation and fun. I would not change a thing, except maybe a few more days there. I cannot wait until next year! Lastly, to Jaden, my fur baby—affectionately known as Noodle Bug. If you could read, you would read about my love for you. Thank you for continuously barking when I am leading intercessory prayer, but most importantly, thanks for being by my side through it all. I could not have made it without your love and hugs.

Contents

Tables.....	xii
Figures.....	xiii
Abbreviations.....	xiv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
MINISTRY CONTEXT	2
BACKGROUND OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE MINISTRIES	5
DEMOGRAPHICS	6
Age.....	6
Gender	6
Race and Ethnicity.....	6
Marital and Family Statuses.....	6
Education Level	6
Socio-economic Status	7
Church Attendance	7
CULTURAL CONTEXT	7
BELIEFS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE MINISTRIES	9
MINISTRY CORE VALUES	12
Prayer	12
Outreach	13
Healing and Deliverance.....	14
Christian Education/Teaching.....	16
PROBLEM PRESENTED	18
PURPOSE STATEMENT.....	21
BASIC ASSUMPTIONS	22
DEFINITIONS	24
LIMITATIONS.....	27
DELIMITATIONS	29
THESIS STATEMENT	30
CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	32
LITERATURE REVIEW	33
A HISTORY OF PRAYER: WISDOM PASSED THROUGH THE AGES	33
THE STARTING POINT: WHAT IS PRAYER?	37
Levels of Prayer.....	40
Exploring Prayer: A.C.T.S. Method	41
The Lord's Prayer	42
INTERCESSORY PRAYER: WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT MATTERS	43

<i>Intercessory Prayer and the Word of God</i>	48
<i>Intercessory Prayer and the Holy Spirit</i>	51
<i>Intercessory Prayer as a Mighty Weapon</i>	54
<i>The Intercessor and Leader</i>	55
THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS	58
BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER: FROM OLD TO NEW TESTAMENT	59
INTERCESSION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT	63
INTERCESSION AND THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD	65
THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS	69
THE DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER	70
EXPLORING THE FOUNDATIONS: PAST CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERCESSORY PRAYER	72
<i>Shana Goodson</i>	73
<i>Dock Su Kim</i>	76
<i>Sherilyn Howard</i>	77
CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO INTERCESSORY PRAYER MINISTRY	80
<i>Spiritual Warfare Intercessory Ministry Model (SWIM)</i>	82
<i>Spiritual Growth Through Disciplined Prayer</i>	83
PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION	86
<i>Learn to Pray</i>	86
<i>Meditate and Pray God's Word</i>	86
<i>Pray and Keep Praying</i>	87
<i>Make Time for Prayer</i>	87
CONCLUSION	88
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	89
INTERVENTION DESIGN	89
THE SET-UP	91
PROJECT OVERVIEW	93
PERMISSION.....	97
RECRUITMENT	97
RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS	98
LOCATIONS	99
CURRICULUM	99
RETREAT SCHEDULE	102
DATA COLLECTION	103
MEASURABLE RESULT	104
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERVENTION DESIGN	105
RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION AND TIMELINE OVERVIEW	105
DATA COLLECTING METHODS	108
<i>Sample Selection</i>	110
<i>Course Surveys</i>	111
<i>Focus Groups</i>	112

<i>Thursday Night Prayer Meetings</i>	117
<i>Intercessory Prayer Workshop Course</i>	119
<i>Modified Retreat Sessions</i>	124
SUMMARY OF INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION	126
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	128
COLLECTIVE RESULTS	129
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	130
<i>Gender</i>	130
<i>Age</i>	130
<i>Marital Status</i>	131
<i>Leadership</i>	132
QUANTITATIVE DATA GATHERING AND SCORING	133
PRESENTATION OF QUANTITATIVE RESULTS	135
<i>Comparative Results Across Three Surveys</i>	135
<i>Survey 1: Prayer and Intercession Survey</i>	137
<i>Survey 2: Understanding Intercessory Prayer Survey</i>	138
<i>Survey 3: Christian Prayer Survey</i>	140
QUALITATIVE DATA GATHERING AND SCORING	141
PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE RESULTS	144
<i>Focus Groups</i>	144
<i>Themes</i>	146
<i>Thursday Night Prayer Service</i>	152
<i>Workshop Classes and Retreat</i>	153
DATA ANALYSIS	154
QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS.....	154
<i>Comparative Results Across Three Surveys</i>	155
<i>Survey 1: Prayer and Intercession</i>	156
<i>Summary of Overall Results of Survey 1: Prayer and Intercession</i>	157
<i>Survey 2: Understanding Intercessory Prayer</i>	159
<i>Summary of Overall Results of Survey 2: Understanding Intercessory Prayer</i>	160
<i>Survey 3: Christian Prayer Survey</i>	163
<i>Summary of Overall Results of Survey 3: Christian Prayer</i>	164
QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	165
<i>Focus Groups</i>	165
<i>Thursday Night Prayer</i>	166
<i>Workshop Classes and Retreat</i>	169
SUMMARY OF RESULTS	172
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	177
RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS	179
COURSE OBJECTIVES	182

AREAS FOR INTERVENTION DESIGN IMPROVEMENT	185
RESEARCH APPLICATIONS	188
RESEARCH LIMITATIONS.....	190
FURTHER RESEARCH.....	192
 APPENDICES	 196
APPENDIX A	197
APPENDIX B.....	198
APPENDIX C.....	199
APPENDIX D	202
APPENDIX E.....	203
APPENDIX F	209
APPENDIX G	210
APPENDIX H	211
APPENDIX I.....	212
APPENDIX J.....	213
APPENDIX K	222
APPENDIX L.....	224
APPENDIX M.....	225
APPENDIX N	226
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 231
 IRB Approval Letter / Waiver Page.....	 238

List of Tables

Table 1. Weekly Class Schedule, Week 1	95
Table 2. Weekly Class Schedule, Week 2	100
Table 3. Weekly Class Schedule, Weeks 2 - 8	101
Table 4. Weekly Class Schedule, Weeks 9 - 10	102
Table 5. Illustration of Tools Used in Triangulation	110
Table 6. Results Across Three Surveys	136

List of Figures

Figure 1. DPM Leadership Structure Diagram	4
Figure 2. Demonstration of Salvation	11
Figure 3. Gender Makeup of DPM	130
Figure 4. Gender Makeup of Participants	130
Figure 5. Age Range of DPM	131
Figure 6. Figure 4.4 Age Range of Participants.....	131
Figure 7. Marital Status of DPM.....	132
Figure 8. Figure 4.6 Marital Status of Participants.....	132
Figure 9. Leadership Status of DPM.....	133
Figure 10. Leadership Status of Participants	133
Figure 11. Scoring Scale	135
Figure 12. Survey 1: Prayer and Intercession Survey (Q1 -Q9).....	138
Figure 13. Survey 2: Understanding Intercessory Prayer (Q1 -Q9)	139
Figure 14. Survey 3: Christian Prayer (Q1 -Q10).....	140
Figure 15. Prompt Questions	143
Figure 16. Thursday Night Prayer Service Metrics	153
Figure 17. Journey Map of Lesson Content.....	154

Abbreviations

AMP	<i>Amplified Bible</i>
DMin	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
DNA	<i>Deoxyribonucleic Acid</i>
DPM	<i>Divine Providence Ministries</i>
HS	<i>Holy Spirit</i>
IP	<i>Intercessory Prayer</i>
IRB	<i>Institutional Review Board</i>
KJV	<i>King James Version</i>
NIV	<i>New International Version</i>
MIT	<i>Minister In Training</i>
TBI	<i>Traumatic Brain Injury</i>

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The belief that prayer is the foundation of the body of Christ rings true for Divine Providence Ministries (DPM), but the ministry witnessed a shift away from that core conviction over time. This shift occurred due to a lack of understanding regarding the purpose and power of Intercessory Prayer (IP) and its role in nurturing intimacy with God. As a result, the organization's focus gradually drifted from prayer, and its zeal dwindled as leaders became increasingly preoccupied with ministry activities. For the church to grow and maintain its health, it cannot neglect prayer, and leaders cannot fail to be examples of prayer for their congregations. As role models for their congregations, leaders must prioritize and demonstrate a commitment to prayer. When leaders humble themselves and engage in prayer, they experience a rekindled passion for the things of God and greater power. The Bible assures us that when God's people pray, He will hear from heaven and respond miraculously. This commitment to prayer can inspire and encourage others to do the same. Conversely, a lack of emphasis on prayer from leadership can send a harmful message.

The church's mandate is to pray without ceasing, but the question awkwardly lingers, "Has anyone taught the church to pray?" Many leaders today have not been taught to pray and lack the personal commitment and knowledge to teach others to pray. This generation of prayerless leaders struggles to foster a culture of prayer within their churches, potentially leading to a spiritually weakened or vulnerable congregation. This research explored the problem of DPM leaders lacking a comprehensive understanding of the purpose and power of prayer and its connection to intimacy with God. It also addressed the factors that led leaders to give up on prayer easily. In doing ministry, leaders forgot that prayer was the most essential ingredient and

that without it, there could be no ministry. They needed to be reminded that prayer is about having and continually developing a relationship with God, which requires time in His presence.

This research reviewed current perspectives on prayer and its benefits, focusing on church leaders. This research sought to build leaders' confidence related to their prayer lives by evaluating current scholarly material and popular literature. It aimed to provide practical tools to help them cultivate their relationship with God. Finally, it resolved to fill a gap in the knowledge of leaders who do not understand IP from a biblical worldview at DPM. This project aimed to identify the problem, provide a possible solution, evaluate its effectiveness, and implement the proposed solution. An overarching goal was to share the results from this endeavor with other churches and organizations encountering similar challenges, thereby providing support and guidance to them.

Ministry Context

The ministry context for the DMin action research project was a non-denominational church in Colorado Springs, Colorado, called Divine Providence Ministries (DPM). In 2015, the Lord spoke and called the pastor and founder, his wife (co-pastor and co-founder), and their family out from among their families into a new and unfamiliar land. Based on the Word of the Lord from Gen 12:2, the family moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado. On May 22, 2016, the ministry held its first service. It was a small gathering of people who met at the Radisson Hotel and worshipped God under the leadership of the senior pastor.

Initially, the leadership team consisted of a husband-and-wife team working side by side and in unison with the Holy Spirit. Today, DPM boasts a roster of eighteen leaders, comprising seasoned individuals, those newly appointed to their roles, and those currently in ministerial training. These dedicated leaders contribute their diverse talents and skills to the ministry,

diligently carrying out their responsibilities in service of the Kingdom of God. Through their collective efforts and commitment, DPM continues to advance its mission and impact lives within the community.

Within the leadership ranks of DPM, a core group of seven chief leaders constitutes the DPM's board. Referred to as the core, this team consists of the senior pastor and co-pastor, who sits in the office of the prophet, along with two elders, a minister, an evangelist, and a teacher. These leaders convene regularly to deliberate on ministry affairs, engage in collective prayer, and provide mutual support and encouragement for upcoming projects. Through their collaborative efforts and shared vision, the board plays a pivotal role in guiding and shaping the direction of the ministry, fostering unity, and facilitating spiritual growth among its members.

The core is also responsible for preaching and teaching as needed, mentoring and training new ministry leaders. As a five-fold ministry,¹ these leaders have been assigned roles and responsibilities that align with their gifts and calling as revealed by the Holy Spirit and affirmed by God's ministry leaders. The fact that the core membership has remained strong and committed to the ministry's vision and mission in the face of adversity and uncertainty is a

¹ The concept of the five-fold ministry is derived from Eph 4:11-13. In the New Testament, we find that Christ gave gifts to the church. The ministry gifts of the apostle, prophet, teacher, pastor, and evangelist were given to equip the saints for the work of ministry and the building up of the body of Christ. ¹¹“And [His gifts to the church were varied and] He Himself appointed some as apostles [special messengers, representatives], some as prophets [who speak a new message from God to the people], some as evangelists [who spread the good news of salvation], and some as pastors and teachers [to shepherd and guide and instruct], ¹² [and He did this] to fully equip *and* perfect the saints (God's people) for works of service, to build up the body of Christ [the church]; ¹³ until we all reach oneness in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, [growing spiritually] to become a mature believer, reaching to the measure of the fullness of Christ [manifesting His spiritual completeness and exercising our spiritual gifts in unity]” (Eph 4: 11- 13, AMP). The five-fold ministry is an extension of Christ's work. In his book, *Understanding 5-Fold Ministry: Theological Perspectives on fivefold ministry*, Stefan Sos said that many Pentecostals and charismatics believe the five-fold ministry must be restored and recognized for the church to reach its full potential and power.

testament to outstanding leadership. The following diagram captures the DPM hierarchy, visually illustrating the organizational structure.

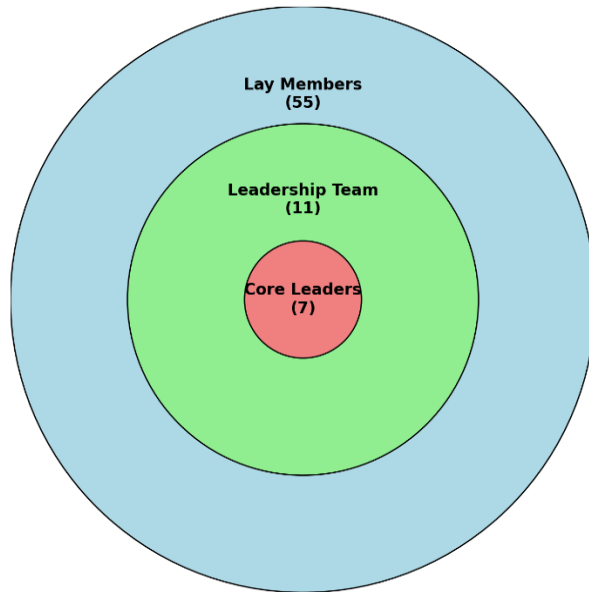


Figure 1. DPM Leadership Structure Diagram

Throughout its history, DPM has moved locations multiple times and has faced numerous trials and tribulations that tested the resilience and commitment of the ministry. However, despite the enemy's plans, DPM has endured and continues to strive toward the high calling of Christ Jesus. Significantly, the ministry has experienced unprecedented growth in the past three years. Standing on Gen 12:2, the leaders continue to preach and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ with boldness and power. The vision cast by the pastor is to continue to bring forth deliverance, healing, restoration, and, most importantly, salvation to all of God's people with steadfast dedication, with the mission of empowering and equipping all to become true disciples of Christ.

Background of Divine Providence Ministries

On May 22, 2016, the first service was held, and the ministry moved forward under the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Only a few short months later, the founders were involved in a severe car accident that caused a temporary pause in the momentum of the ministry. The co-pastor was severely injured, sustaining short-term memory loss due to a traumatic brain injury (TBI). She had to relearn how to walk, talk, and function again. Throughout this three-year season, the leaders of DPM continued to serve God in other capacities as God completed the physical healing in their bodies. The leaders partnered and supported other local ministries in the Colorado Springs area, stepping in to teach and preach when requested. In 2021, God opened the door for the co-pastor to launch a Monday night online Bible study and monthly revival experience in Denver and Colorado Springs on a rotating schedule.

After this transitional period, the ministry regrouped, reorganized, and refocused its efforts to locate a new place of worship to hold Sunday morning services. Slowly but deliberately, the leaders moved forward, holding on to the promise and the vision God had set forth for the ministry. The ministry relaunched holding two services a month in a local hotel until it was blessed with its current location housed between a vast, diverse neighborhood and shopping area. This urban area is a strategically accessible location attracting a broad range of people. For example, the ministry now holds multiple and varying services, such as children's church every third Saturday and adult Bible classes on Monday and Wednesday nights. With church attendance and membership growing, more services can be offered to support the area's diversity.

Demographics

According to current membership records, DPM has seventy-three members, with most new members joining in the last twelve months. Members are primarily women. The average age group is young to middle-aged adults.² Below are specific DPM demographics.

Age

Most of the congregation members are between thirty and fifty. As more families join, the population of young children is growing, ranging from toddlers to preteens (three to twelve).

Gender

Primarily, women make up the church. The ratio of men to women is 4:7.

Race and Ethnicity

The current racial makeup of the membership is primarily Black, with a small percentage of Hispanic attendees and a smaller percentage of Caucasian visitors. DPM is in a diverse and busy section of town and actively participates within the community to engage and welcome all cultures and ethnicities.

Marital and Family Statutes

Most young adults are single with children. Currently, there are twenty-five married couples in the ministry.

Education Level

Members have a high school diploma, some college degrees, and a few undergraduate and graduate degrees.

² Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Adulthood," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, June 6, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/science/adulthood>.

Socio-economic Status

The median income at DPM is lower for the middle class. A few members are business owners; others work in the hospitality, transportation, office management, and education industries.

Church Attendance

As church attendance at Divine Providence Ministries continues to rise, the core leadership team has grown in response to congregational needs and demographic shifts. Initially comprised of two members, the core team has expanded to include seven individuals representing the congregation's diverse demographics. Currently, the core team consists of two men and five women, with the majority being single, except for two members. This gender-inclusive and demographically reflective composition ensures that the core leadership team effectively represents and addresses the ministry's needs and perspectives.

Cultural Context

Divine Providence Ministries is in the 80917 area zip code in Colorado Springs, Colorado. God called the ministry to this specific zip code and told them it was in this area that they would build Him a house. This city region is close to the local airport in Colorado Springs and numerous local businesses, hotels, restaurants, apartment complexes, and subdivisions. This ideal location generates plenty of opportunities and outreach events to spread the gospel to people of diverse and varying backgrounds and needs. Additionally, its proximity to Denver, CO, its major airport, and other surrounding cities allows others easy access to the ministry for special services, outreach programs, major worship events, and ministry collaborations. Statistics from 2023 show that 29, 273 people live in this region of Colorado Springs, which is only 6. 52

square miles. Most of the people in the area are white (81 percent), followed by Black/African American (5.9 percent), and those that identify as having two or more races (5.1 percent).³

Data collected from sources such as the United States Postal Service, U.S. Census Bureau, Yahoo, and the IRS show that the median age range in that area is 33 for males and 38 for females, with a higher percentage of women living in the region overall. Currently, the gender ratio is 52 percent female and 48 percent male. Lastly, it is important to note the family dynamics in that area as DPM seeks to develop a well-rounded ministry that can minister to all—those single with or without children and those married with or without children. Currently, 44 percent of households include the husband, wife, and children, followed by single-parent homes (18 percent). Furthermore, 31 percent of the population is single with no children.⁴

Divine Providence Ministries envisions becoming a Christ-centered ministry in the region 80917 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and surrounding areas to help build up a diverse body of believers through the Word of God and the faith that God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for their sins so that they may have salvation in Him and receive eternal life. The founders, when considering the demographics, believed the Lord called them to that area to help bring change, reconciliation, and revival through the ministry of intercession and deliverance. The desire to see the people of God transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic, or educational background is the overarching vision God laid out for them.

³ United States Zip Code, “Zip Code 80917-Colorado Springs Map,” accessed September 8, 2023, <https://www.unitedstateszipcodes.org/80917>.

⁴ Ibid.

Beliefs of Divine Providence Ministries

DPM is a non-denominational church with no affiliations with known denominations or other religious associations but has a strong Pentecostal and Apostolic charisma. They believe in and emphasize the five-fold ministry gifts of the apostle, prophet, teacher, pastor, and evangelist as given by Christ and consider them critical to the perfecting, equipping, and maturing of the members of the Body of Christ (Eph 4: 11- 13). DPM believes these ministers are Christ's gift to the church, and without restoring these gifts, the church will fail to reach full maturity. Additionally, they are convinced the modern church will not experience the miracles, breakthroughs, and harvest of souls like the New Testament church did without restoring and recognizing the five-fold ministry.⁵

Divine Providence Ministries is a church of born-again believers who are not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The ministry believes in the Trinity: The Father (God), the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit, and that the Bible contains the very inspired words of God from Genesis to Revelation. DPM acknowledges Jesus Christ as the Son of God and believes that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is available to every believer who asks Him to come into their lives. The ministry teaches that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit empowers believers for spiritual growth and service.

The prominence of the Holy Spirit is evident in everything in which the ministry is involved. Every program, flyer, and bulletin board during every service is announced that the Holy Spirit is welcome to interrupt at any time. The ministry does not believe in quenching the Holy Spirit but in allowing Him to work as He desires. This strong emphasis on the manifested presence and leading of the Holy Spirit creates an atmosphere of anticipation and expectancy

⁵ Stefan Sos, *Understanding 5Fold Ministry: Theological Perspectives on fivefold ministry* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2006), 2-3, 8-9.

among the congregation, creating a space for God to do miracles in the lives of His people. More than just a cliché, the power of the Holy Spirit drives DPM's mission of helping bring forth salvation, healing, and deliverance to everyone who walks through its doors.

Building on this foundation, DPM also holds firmly to the essential truths of the Christian faith, including the finished work on the cross, faith, baptism, the resurrection, and the Lord's supper. This list is not all-inclusive but only highlights some of the ministry's beliefs. A complete list can be found in the ministry's new member's handbook. All new members receive a copy of this handbook when they attend their first New Beginner's Class. The handbook is a twenty-two-page guide explaining the ministries who, what, and how. The "who" explores the core beliefs that define the DPM's identity. The "what" outlines the DPM's vision and goals, highlighting the programs and events members can engage in to bring that vision to life. The "how" details the ministry's processes and strategies to achieve its goals and fulfill its mission. If the handbook were summarized in a simple tagline, it would be the following phrase pulled from the "Baptism" section: "Faith in Jesus brings about salvation, and obedience to His Word is the process of sanctification."

Figure 2 below presents a powerful visual of the ministry's beliefs by showing how the spiritual and physical work together. Faith, belief, and salvation represent the spiritual aspect, while works, baptism, and demonstration represent the physical expressions of the believer's spiritual walk. The diagram highlights the necessity of a healthy, balanced approach to living out one's conviction.

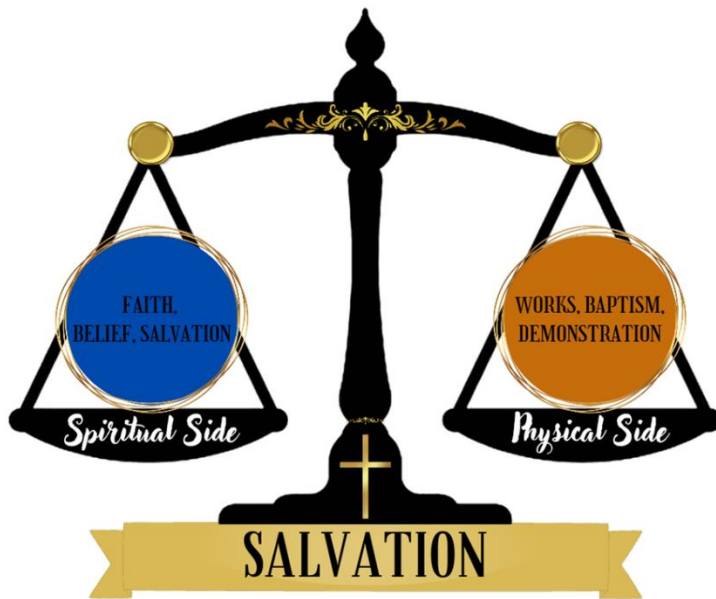


Figure 2. Demonstration of Salvation

As a ministry with an “apostolic mandate,” they are focused on spreading the gospel, establishing churches, and empowering and equipping leaders within the Christian faith to make disciples of Christ. Grounded in the command given by Jesus in Matt 28:19, they must, “therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” DPM understands this command as one of sending. They produce leaders to send them outside the city limits and even beyond national borders to reach those considered unreachable.

With a clear mission to build God’s kingdom through evangelism and making disciples for Jesus with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, DPM recognized the need for strategic focus and community engagement due to the uniqueness of the ministry. Precision and clarity were essential in communicating their identity and what they had to offer, as they were the only ministry in the area operating in healing and deliverance. To accomplish this, DPM focuses on

five key core values. Those core values are prayer, outreach, healing, deliverance, and Christian education/teaching. They form the foundation of their ministry's character and conduct.

Ministry Core Values

The founders understood the need to settle and do the work the Lord had called them to in the rich and fertile area within the 80917 zip code. They hope to engage and draw a community to Christ by focusing on five key areas. The five core values of DPM are 1) prayer, 2) outreach, 3) healing, 4) deliverance, and 5) Christian education/teaching.

Prayer

You can often hear it being uttered throughout the DPM halls of DPM that everything starts with prayer, and nothing starts without it. Prayer involves the dialogue between God and His covenant partners or the communication between God and believers. It is asking and receiving; it is talking with God. Matthew 7:7 is a foundational passage taught in new members' classes to explain levels of prayers. In this verse, Jesus instructs the believer to ask, seek, and knock. Asking, seeking, and knocking imply the levels of intensity one applies in prayer. The idea is that some things require a deeper level of prayer and faith.

Prayer in all varieties is embedded in the DNA of the DPM, so much so that new members and all members are encouraged to get involved with the prayer ministry, whether by leading prayer or simply coming out to be a part of the service as support and encouragement. The goal is a praying DPM where every member knows how to pray and is unafraid to pray. Prayer is rendered to the Lord at the beginning of every Sunday service and is not constrained by a time limit; therefore, the entire service could become a prayer meeting if the Holy Spirit moves. Consequently, the preacher may not have to preach a sermon when the Holy Spirit takes control. DPM's program ceases when the power and presence of the Lord show up because they

acknowledge that He brings with Him everything the DPM needs to live a victorious life in Christ Jesus.

Additionally, on Thursday evenings, the church has an IP meeting for an hour, where a designated leader directs IP based on the Holy Spirit's leadership. Although this is a leader-led event, lay members are encouraged to get involved and pray as the Lord leads them. Members are encouraged to read scriptures and share prayers they have written out over the week or prayers they have found online. Some nights, people give short praise reports or testimonies about what the Lord has done in their lives or the lives of those they know and love. This prayer meeting is an opportunity for the glory of the Lord to be revealed through His people's sincere prayers and testimonies. It is a night where members deepen their relationship with the Lord and pray in a safe setting among sisters and brothers in Christ who support and encourage them in the things of the Lord.

Outreach

DPM understands that faith without works is dead, so the idea that prayer and outreach go hand in hand is paramount to the ministry's mission. Since prayer facilitates action, outreach is the natural response once prayer is over. They go out into the highways and hedges to reach the lost, win souls, and advance the Kingdom of God. Partnering together, their robust prayer and outreach ministries go to local neighborhood parks every first Saturday and pray with anyone willing to receive prayer.

Additionally, on the first Fridays of the month, the ministry does food giveaways and offers drive-by prayer to those waiting in the drive-through lane for groceries. During the summer months, it is not uncommon for DPM to pitch a tent downtown and host a service in the park for the homeless population. Services consist of praise, worship singing, and a message of

encouragement and salvation for those attending. After the message, people are given the opportunity to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior, and all who want a toiletry kit or some personal hygiene items are welcome to them. Food and drinks are often available to those attending or needing something to eat or drink. In the winter months, warm blankets, socks, hot coffee, or chocolate are handed out to the men and women in the area.

Healing and Deliverance

Jesus sent out the twelve saying, "...Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give (Matt 10:5, 8, New International Version). DPM operates in the ministry of healing and deliverance and believes this expresses God's love and compassion for his people manifested through Jesus. According to John Eckhardt, deliverance destroys the devil's work and frees God's people. It enlightens the people of God and advances God's kingdom because it is the working of the Holy Spirit.⁶ The ministry finds its identity in healing and deliverance and is known for visiting and praying for the sick (whether of body or mind), the lost, and those dealing with chronic problems and addictions.

Although healing and deliverance are separate ministries that can stand alone, the researcher discussed them as a pair. This is because DPM normally operates in both ministries simultaneously, understanding that before people can be healed of infirmities and diseases, that deliverance, in most cases, must take place first. Eckhardt maintains that healing and deliverance are very similar. He argues that some people will not even experience healing in their bodies until the evil spirit(s) are cast out.⁷ For example, the Bible speaks of Mary Magdalene and other

⁶ John Eckhardt, *Deliverance and Spiritual Warfare Manual: A Comprehensive Guide to Living Free* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2014), 8, Kindle.

⁷ Ibid., 57.

women healed of infirmities through deliverance. According to Luke 8:2, Mary called Magdalene had seven devils come out of her. Also, in Luke 13:10–17, Jesus delivered a young, crippled woman from a spirit of infirmity. She had been bent over and could not walk straight for eighteen years because of this infirmity.

Just as Jesus healed all manner of sickness and disease through the power of the Holy Spirit, Eckhardt expresses that the same power is available to believers today to do the same thing and even greater works.⁸ The same God is still in the healing and deliverance business because He does not change (Mal 3: 6). There are infirmities caused by evil spirits that need to be driven out today, says Eckhardt, just as in Jesus' day. To be in a place to help set the captives free, believers must know that this ministry is still active and available to the Church and have a heart of compassion and mercy. Compassion and mercy are essential for those ministering healing and deliverance to be effective. These qualities move believers to actively engage and connect.⁹

Although healing and deliverance are part of the DPM's DNA and are incorporated into every worship service, there are special services held where the sole focus is on healing and deliverance. In these services, preaching a sermon is rare, but instead, worship Teams and prayer leaders usher in the presence of God, and the altar is opened for those in need of healing and deliverance, whether it be spiritual or physical. Operating in compassion, mercy, virtue (power), and love for God's people, the leaders of DPM are moved to act and intercede on behalf of others, asking in Jesus' name that He heal, deliver, and set free His people.¹⁰

⁸ Eckhardt, *Deliverance and Spiritual Warfare Manual*, 55.

⁹ Ibid., 51-53.

¹⁰ Ibid., 3-5, 53, 54.

Divine Providence Ministries has specific team members who travel and host annual meetings in different churches and venues nationwide. Leaders are also frequently invited to assist other ministries in deliverance. In consideration of sending teams out, the senior and co-pastor host yearly Bible studies and training worksheets to educate and train members and non-members on operating in this ministry. Counseling and aftercare resources and assistance are provided to those who request them after being set free from the oppressive power of Satan.

Christian Education/Teaching

The teaching ministry is expanding as more events are added to bring value and help develop the body of Christ. Notably, the two newest ministries launched are men's and women's fellowships. The men's fellowship targets men of all ages and seeks to bring Godly men back into alignment with God's purpose for the man as the head. While also engaging in mentorship programs to teach younger men and children how to navigate this world and avoid peer pressures to compromise. Simultaneously, the women's ministry fosters encouragement and strength through mentorship and organized activities, empowering young and mature women to walk out every aspect of their lives by faith. Both ministries have a heavy focus on healing and deliverance education as they seek to help those who have faced childhood trauma and abuse.

Leadership classes and Ministers in Training (MIT) sessions have been offered in the last couple of years to train and educate individuals called to the ministry. These sessions are designed to empower men and women of God to serve more effectively. Leader-to-leader training consists of three classes being taught over eleven weeks. The classes provided are Seasons of Intercession, The Making of a Leader, and Seasons of Revival. The courses are created to immerse leaders in the Word of God while challenging them to grow, mature, and persevere as they encounter God in new, powerful ways.

The MIT sessions involve a three-year program comprising five classes per quarter that all MIT must complete before being considered for minister ordination. These courses focus on everything from Scripture memorization to DPM ordinances and doctrines, as well as practical guidance on conducting various services in the church. This rigorous training is essential in developing character, spiritual maturity, and leadership skills. The program aims for MITs to demonstrate their capability and dedication to serving effectively in ministerial roles.

Children's church Sunday School classes are now being offered, and the children are excited about learning and sharing their lessons with the adults at the end of their class. God has brought in more mature teachers to support the demand, and now, every third Saturday, the DPM hosts youth night. Youth night is open to the community, and activities range from talent show nights to Bible trivia game shows. For the adults, the ministry offers Bible studies twice a week on Monday evenings and again on Thursday evenings. The topics vary from week to week and are facilitated by different members who bring a variety of styles and content that produce different perspectives for the students.

With the adult membership numbers increasing, DPM is looking to start small community Sunday School groups. Modeling after the small group strategies Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer put forth in their book *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations*, DPM is growing believers using adaptive and innovative methods.¹¹ For example, DPM will host what they have termed Not Sunday School classes, which will host a maximum of fifteen people per class. These classes will be held outside the traditional church setting, occasionally using online platforms and convenient commercial locations such as

¹¹ Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer, *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 36-37.

restaurants and cafes. In addition to the Sunday School initiative, DPM empowers leaders over all auxiliaries and departments to set up small group outings, classes, and services outside the regularly scheduled church services to develop, cultivate, and strengthen relationships among its members.

Based on the research of Stetzer and Rainer's small group structure, it was found that small, intimate group settings make both new and non-believers more comfortable and open to experiencing the things of God.¹² Therefore, DPM sets aside monies for icebreaker activities and department socials. For example, the singles ministry will host quarterly events and provide new members who are single parents with three days of free daycare so they can attend those social outings. New members will be invited to lunch or dinner with their sponsor to get to know their elder or deacon, who will be their primary point of contact and spiritual mentor. The goal of these adaptive and innovative approaches to doing ministry is to provide a more relaxed and accessible atmosphere for congregants, but more importantly, to grow, encourage, and retain disciples beyond the Sunday morning experiences and sermons.

Problem Presented

Thursday nights are the time set aside for IP at DPM; however, it soon became evident after only a few weeks of the service being instituted that the times of coming together lacked a concerted focus on prayer, precisely that of IP. Whether seasoned or new to their roles, leaders lacked confidence in their prayer lives due to various factors. One key factor was the absence of quality time in prayer during the week. Sadly, prayer was a priority only when the pastor called it; otherwise, it was low on the weekly list of things to do. Consequently, this lack of confidence

¹² Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church*, 36-37.

led to a decrease in overall attendance, and in less than a year, the IP service was only attended by a few faithful intercessors.

Initially, the problem was perceived as a general lack of interest in prayer among the lay members. However, the consistent lack of participation and the continuous questions, complaints, and frustrations regarding the IP service highlighted a deeper underlying problem. Through this ongoing scrutiny, it became evident that the root cause of the issue needed to be addressed. Instead of placing blame solely on the members, there arose a realization that the leadership's role in fostering a culture of prayer was equally, if not more, critical. Upon closer examination, it was reevaluated as a deficiency in the leader's understanding of the purpose prayer played in the church's life, particularly around IP.

In the original assessment of the problem, the church leaders were never viewed as a contributing factor to the problem. It was usual to hear leaders in the hallways and private meetings make comments such as: "I cannot believe no one volunteered to pray tonight" and "Did you hear that prayer tonight? What was he talking about?" The culture within the church was such that members were criticized for their perceived lack of involvement and commitment to prayer. However, upon reflection, it became clear that the real issue was the absence of leadership's active participation and commitment to prayer. Seeing four out of the seven core leaders on Thursday night was commonplace. Out of the four, having only two members step up and lead the prayer meeting was normal. When they were available and inclined, the remaining leaders at DPM engaged in IP; however, their prayers often were not prayers of intercession but general prayers focused on the self.

Intercession, distinguished from other types of prayers focused solely on oneself or one's immediate concerns, was a hugely misunderstood ministry. For example, some leaders rendered

up numerous prayers concerning their health and their financial or employment situation, and others testified within the prayer about how the devil had beat them up during the week, only mentioning God in the context of asking others to pray for them. To hear prayers asking God to provide gas money was not uncommon on those select evenings either. The personal struggles that commonly dominated the IP meetings left some frustrated and questioning the overall quality and structure of the meetings.

While prayer is always effective, some prayer leaders' lack of passion and enthusiasm impacted the overall vitality and power of the prayer meetings. Although they were not reading prayers from a book or website, they prayed as if someone else had written them. The passionless prayers were evident in the tone of voice that some prayed in; it was as if they were bored and disconnected from the words coming out of their mouths. Did they believe the Word of God that says the effectual fervent prayers of the righteous avails much? It was hard to determine because some prayers presented as apathetic and dispassionate. In contrast, others would start strongly and then abruptly stop because the person praying got distracted by a telephone ringing, and then some ran out of words and confessed they did not know what else to say. Leaders struggled in these areas despite being encouraged to prepare their prayers in advance.

Considering the unpreparedness and misguided attempts at prayer, most leaders welcomed an opportunity to hand the prayer hour over to almost anyone in the church. Sometimes, they would refuse to pray after others because they feared their prayer was less effective or powerful. Others would periodically inform the pastor that they needed to pray about leading IP. The misconception that if a leader did not pray like other specific leaders or sound as deep and theological as others, their prayers would not be heard or received by God caused a

significant number to remain silent. The problem is that Divine Providence Ministries leaders lack a comprehensive understanding of the purpose and power of prayer and its connection to intimacy with God.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMin action research project is to create an eight-week course utilizing Bible studies, prayer exercises, journaling, and group intercession activities. The eight-week course, also called the IP workshop throughout the paper, contains eight weeks of curriculum using the teaching and activity methods mentioned above through classroom instruction and practical application. Two additional weeks will be used for administrative purposes, thus making the program a total of ten weeks. The course curriculum is designed to educate, equip, and challenge the leaders of DPM to grow in prayer and intimacy with God so that they may be confident to lead and train others in IP.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray, and the apostles continued in that tradition and taught the early church to pray. Specifically, Apostle Paul taught the believers in Thessalonica to pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17) and those in Ephesus to always pray, on all occasions, for all believers everywhere (Eph 6:18). Praying for all believers everywhere is the fundamental definition of IP. It is going to God asking for His favor, mercy, or intervention on behalf of someone else.¹³ Intercessors approach God, believing He hears and acts on their requests. Today, the local church is reminded of the mandate to intercede for others and the world.

The church has been called to pray and intercede since infancy, but what has changed? According to Chuck Lawless, churches raise leaders and lay members who do not know how to

¹³ Chuck Lawless, *The Potential and Power of Prayer: How to Unleash the Praying Church* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2020), 40. Kindle; Charlie Cleverly, *The Discipline of Intimacy: The Joy and Awe of Walking with God* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2020), 79.

pray. In other words, we have churches full of prayerless and powerless believers. Lawless asks, where are the prayer role models? Are seminaries training and sending out pastors who have not been tutored in the discipline of prayer and are struggling to pray themselves? Lawless believes so. He contends that these institutions offer courses on prayer but rarely offer any practical application or allow time to pray.¹⁴

A 2022 “Greatest Needs of Pastors” study from Lifeway Research confirmed his position. The study found that 72 percent of pastors struggle with prayer consistency in their personal lives.¹⁵ The research emphasized the urgent need for leaders to comprehend prayer and why it is vital to their survival and the church’s survival. It also addressed the need for leaders to take an active and deliberate role in learning how to pray. More specifically, it highlights the importance of leaders acquiring the skills to intercede for others in prayer.

The eight-week course aims to equip DPM leaders with the right skills and tools to intercede on behalf of others. Furthermore, the course will address these critical prayer issues by focusing on education, empowerment, and inspiration for the leaders of DPM to cultivate a deeper understanding of prayer and strengthen their intimacy with God. Over eight weeks, participants will be challenged to expand their prayer lives and develop the confidence to lead and mentor others in IP. By the course's conclusion, DPM leaders will emerge empowered to live lives characterized by prayer, echoing the disciples' plea to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Basic Assumptions

Developing an IP course that combines education, practical guidance, resources, and ongoing support to help leaders effectively integrate a life of prayer into their daily routines and

¹⁴ Lawless, *Potential and Power of Prayer*, 7-10.

¹⁵ “The Greatest Needs of Pastors Study,” Lifeway Research, October 21, 2022, <https://research.lifeway.com/greatestneeds/>.

leadership roles is crucial in shifting the attitudes and perceptions on IP among the leaders. For so long, prayer was seen as a Thursday night ritual, which became more of a burden than a privilege. The course is set up to foster a genuine and transformative experience for the leaders of DPM. Using a holistic approach, leaders will engage with the Creator of heaven and earth intentionally and purposefully to gain knowledge on how to fight spiritually utilizing the weapon of prayer. In *Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture*, William F. Cook III and Chuck Lawless voice their conviction that prayer renders the most effective way of launching an assault and using the weapons of warfare most effectively against Satan.¹⁶ John A. Bornschein echoes that when he says prayer is the way to reach God, a most powerful weapon.¹⁷

The researcher made several assumptions during this eight-week course designed to arm leaders with the necessary tools to pray fervently and effectual prayers of intercession and to teach others how to pray. The participating leaders are assumed to fully commit to eight weeks and actively engage in all the lessons and practicums, including completing all assignments. Additionally, it is assumed that all participants will gain a greater knowledge and understanding of IP from a biblical, theological, and practical perspective. The course will challenge the leaders of DPM to go beyond their comfort zones and grow a deeper and more meaningful connection with God through prayer. This challenge will increase and intensify their relationship and push them into deeper levels of intimacy with God. Because of these benefits, leaders will gain the confidence to lead and mentor others in IP.

¹⁶ William F. Cook, III., and Chuck Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), 2797e.

¹⁷ John A. Bornschein, *Prayer Warrior's Guide to Spiritual Battle* (Oak Harbor: Lexham Press, 2016), 47-48.

As the ministry grows and souls are added to the church, the leaders must be strong and capable of raising other prayer warriors and intercessors through modeling, mentorship, and internship opportunities. This project will equip them to do those things as they gain a greater understanding of the purpose and power of IP and their roles and calling in the ministry of intercession. Leaders cannot survive without prayer, and leaders who neglect the development of others in prayer will soon discover irreparable damage to the long-term sustainability of the church. The church cannot survive without prayer, no matter how good things appear. One of the fundamental assumptions about the participants' success in the course is that they will be reminded of their first love and be driven back to their knees with excitement and fervor for prayer and time in God's presence.

Definitions

This action research project looks at the problem of Divine Providence Ministries leaders lacking a comprehensive understanding of the purpose and power of prayer and its connection to intimacy with God. Some key terms used in this project carry different meanings depending on the context, so defining what these terms mean to the leadership at DPM is necessary. When specific areas in the leaders' prayer lives are studied and discussed, the understanding of key terms such as IP, intimacy, and the ministry of intercession becomes significant to the goal of this project.

Biblical/Christian Worldview. A worldview is a framework for which a person understands the world and shapes how they live out those beliefs in the world. James Sire defines worldview as "...the foundation on which we live and move and have our being."¹⁸ It is a

¹⁸ James Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 122.

fundamental orientation of the heart that encompasses the whole person and informs every aspect of their thought and action.¹⁹ For him, the heart is more than just the seat of emotions; it is the person's entirety.²⁰ Specifically, a Christian worldview wholly relies on God and what He has declared in His Word in every aspect of life.²¹ Wilkens and Stanford argue that the foundation for a Christian worldview is rooted in God's involvement with the world. They refer to God's involvement as His story to the world. God's *story* shapes the beliefs and actions of the Christian person.²² This project examines IP and its implications for DPM through the lens of a Christian worldview.

Gift of Intercession. The gifted intercessor has a special calling from God. Smith calls it a special grace from Christ to persevere in prolonged prayer rooted in an intimate relationship with Him.²³ Research shows that pastors spend less than 30 minutes in prayer daily, and the average Christian spends less than that. For the gifted intercessor, time escapes their consciousness as they are drawn to what they love to do the most. Intimacy is a crucial characteristic in those with the gift of intercession, as time spent with God brings great joy and fulfillment as He draws them closer.²⁴

¹⁹ James Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept*, 122.

²⁰ Ibid., 124.

²¹ Steve Wilkens, and Mark L. Sanford, *Hidden Worldviews* (Downers Grove IL: Intervarsity Press, 2009), 16.

²² Ibid., 17.

²³ Smith, *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God Through Prayer*, 59.

²⁴ Ibid., 59.

Intercessor. One who goes before God to act or plead for another's need or cause. The intercessor stands in the gap between God and man and asks Him to grant their requests according to His will, which may include asking Him to withhold His hand of judgment.²⁵

Intercessory Prayer. IP is going to God and asking for His favor, mercy, or intervention on behalf of someone else.²⁶ It is a petitionary or supplication prayer where the intercessor stands in the gap between God and man. The phrase *standing in the gap* implies a firm commitment on behalf of the intercessor to stand before God and plead another's case. Alice Smith, in her book *Beyond the Veil*, says that all believers have a duty or responsibility to intercede on behalf of others; it is not the responsibility of a select few in the church. DPM understands IP as their responsibility to pray for all believers everywhere.

Intimacy. The English definition of intimacy is closeness, a familiarity. Therefore, Stuart McAlpine explains intimacy as the believer abiding in Jesus and remaining in Him.²⁷ Geoff New says intimacy denotes recognition of His voice, and just as Mary recognized His voice when He called her name at the tomb, so must the individual believer hear and respond when He calls.²⁸ DPM recognizes that intimacy is only fostered in a faithful relationship cultivated through dedicated and consistent time spent together.

²⁵ Cleverly, *The Discipline of Intimacy: The Joy and Awe of Walking with God*, 79; Philip Clements-Jewery, *Intercessory Prayer: Modern Theology, Biblical Teaching, and Philosophical Thought* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2005), 17, 35, 43.

²⁶ Lawless, *Potential and Power of Prayer*, 40; Cleverly, *The Discipline of Intimacy: The Joy and Awe of Walking with God*, 79.

²⁷ Stuart McAlpine, *Just Asking: Restoring the Soul of Prayer* (Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press, 2018), Chap. 11, Kindle.

²⁸ Geoff New, *Echoes . . . The Lord's Prayer in the Preacher's Life* (Carlisle: Langham Creative Projects, 2020), 142-145.

Ministry/Role of Intercession. All believers must “Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion” (Eph 6:18, NIV). Jesus said, “When you pray....” So, it is not a matter of being called to a specific leadership role or clergy title but of being called a Christian. Every believer called out of darkness into Christ's marvelous light is called to the role of intercession.

To accurately capture how DPM leaders understand and carry out their roles in church ministry, it is vital to differentiate between the ministry of intercession and the gift of intercession, which have two distinct functions. One is a gift where believers spend significant amounts of intimate time with the Lord, and the other is a Christian duty that requires all believers to pray. Leaders must understand that just because they do not have the gift of intercession, it is not a pass to negate the command to pray for others. All believers are called to pray and intercede. Throughout the course, this principle is reiterated so there is no misunderstanding about who is called to pray.

Limitations

The research project will have the following limitations. First, the accessibility of all the members will be challenging because many leaders live out of state, and some are also business owners and contractors with hectic and unpredictable schedules. Only four out-of-towners frequently travel to the church and participate in weekly services. However, these trips occur sporadically and lack a consistent schedule. Due to the limited access to members, the course will primarily be conducted virtually, with two days held in person to ensure maximum participation.

The second limitation centers on fiscal constraints. The ministry does not have the finances to cover costs associated with its leaders participating in an extended in-person prayer course, such as housing and meals for those who do not live in the local area. Additionally, the

costs associated with members requesting time off from work and school would put an undue burden on them that the church could not offset. The decision to conduct virtual classes will likely mitigate some of the project's accessibility and fiscal limitations.

The second limitation, focusing on finances, directly links to the third limitation, which concerns securing a location for the two-day retreat. Finding a suitable and reasonably priced space in Colorado Springs for hosting the workshop is problematic. The church space may not be equipped to accommodate the various activities and guests participating in the workshop. The researcher is exploring several options and engaging in some creative problem-solving to address this challenge. One solution may be to leverage the ministry's affiliation with the military. This relationship could open an opportunity to host the retreat at a popular hotel and conference center in the city without cost.

Fourth, the prayer course will be limited to eight weeks, which will still be a sacrifice and a significant time commitment for some. With most leaders working a full-time job outside of ministry, time will be crucial, and the project will need to consider the additional burden such a long course might impose on people. The leaders will want enough time to grasp the material and enjoy the class, but at the same time, they will want to avoid being encumbered by a lengthy process where the likelihood of them quitting along the way will be greater. The goal is to generate consensus for the eight weeks, which includes the two-day in-person session during the last week of class. The final limitation is that the research will be conducted within the confines of DPM and will be practiced within its ministry context. The research will be specific to developing DPM leaders, and they will not be evaluated outside of this parameter.

Delimitations

The topic of prayer is essential for the church, especially considering the urgency and mandate for believers to pray, but it is also very broad. There is a wide range of prayers from the Bible, such as prayers of adoration, confession, thanksgiving, dedication, consecration, deliverance prayers, and more. The researcher could not examine all the different genres attributable to the subject; therefore, after careful examination and consultation with the pastor concerning the prayer ministry at DPM, the decision was made to focus on IP. This prayer area suffered the most and needed urgent attention and care.

Although the congregation will be aware of the course and continue participating in weekly prayer meetings, not all members will be official research project participants. The scope of the research focused on leaders (past, current, and future) and educating them on the purpose and power of intercessory to develop their relationship with God. The research focused on leaders because the root of the problem lay with DPM's leadership and not with its lay members. By understanding the root cause of the problem, it became clear that the blame could no longer be solely attributed to the members. This realization showed that the liability lay at the leader's feet. This shift in perspective highlighted the need to address and rectify the leadership's level of engagement and dedication to prayer within the church.

Finally, keeping in mind the challenges of the geographically separated leaders and the fiscal concerns of the project, it will be necessary to accommodate the participants or risk losing most of them due to time and logistical constraints. Using the platforms available through the Internet will eliminate all location concerns and most of the cost and scheduling conflicts as classes will be held twice a week to allow flexibility with work and home life balance. Building

flexibility and options into the schedule shows respect to the participants who have volunteered to participate freely in this project.

Thesis Statement

Leaders must be the first to volunteer to lead prayer as they must model a positive example. They must not be afraid to pray publicly because every opportunity is an opportunity to glorify God and demonstrate prayer's power. They must continue to fervently seek God on behalf of others, knowing the time spent with Him will transform their lives and those they pray for. Furthermore, they must actively pursue an intimate relationship with God by reading and praying His Word back to Him. In this more profound, intimate experience, they will find strength, purpose, and power in their prayer lives. Despite being aware of these truths, the prayer lives of DPM leaders diminished over time.

This realization underscored the need to address and rectify the leadership's level of engagement, dedication, and passion for prayer within the ministry. As a result, a plan was designed to cultivate the leaders' prayer lives through an IP course that would increase their knowledge of IP, thereby deepening their intimacy with God. The researcher created an eight-week IP course for leaders. Those weary and frustrated with their prayer lives due to a lack of results and feeling like God is not hearing them will find this course very impactful.

The workshop will offer valuable tools and lessons to deepen the understanding of IP and highlight the importance of raising more prayer warriors. Practical applications will strengthen leaders' prayer lives and confidence levels as they participate in small groups and church-wide prayer settings. The tools employed will address the issue of DPM leaders lacking a comprehensive understanding of the purpose and power of prayer and its connection to intimacy with God. The workshop endeavors to inspire greater dedication and engagement to prayer

among the leadership. If leaders attend the IP workshop and apply the lessons learned, they will experience breakthroughs, power, and greater intimacy with God.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Prayer is not an activity that started with Abraham or Moses, but in the beginning chapters of Genesis, man lifts his voice to communicate with his Creator. If prayer, in its simplest definition, is communicating with God from the heart, then Adam is the church's first role model. Adam talked with God in the cool of the day, and God and He spent time together. Adam prayed and had an intimate relationship with God. Many other great men and women of the Bible provide a lengthy testimony of the importance of prayer,²⁹ including Jesus Himself. Jesus taught His disciples to pray. The apostles prioritized praying and studying the Scripture, so they appointed deacons to oversee the church's day-to-day operations (Acts 6:1-7).

The problem with Divine Providence Ministries (DPM) leaders was that they lacked a comprehensive understanding of the purpose and power of prayer and its connection to intimacy with God, so they began to give up on prayer. Once very enthusiastic, they lost the fire and forgot prayer was their direct line to God in heaven. They needed to be reminded that to be effective leaders in the church, they would have to rekindle and cultivate their passion for prayer. This research aimed to assist church leaders with this task by addressing their lack of knowledge about IP and its benefits. To do this on a comprehensive level and to successfully unpack the purpose and benefits of IP, the researcher drew from existing literature to understand the context, theories, and methodologies relevant to the study. By studying existing literature, the research project was positioned to advance.

²⁹ Timothy Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2016), 31-32; Shana D. Goodson, "Increasing the Knowledge of Intercessory Prayer through a Seminar at On Time Breakthrough Ministries, Inc." (PhD diss., Oral Roberts University, 2020), 36, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

IP research was conducted by evaluating and discovering critical themes and gaps in current research and highlighting areas for future exploration. The following sources have been crucial in informing, grounding, and advancing this project.

Literature Review

One scholar exclaimed prayer, in its simplest form, communicates with God from the heart.³⁰ Why has the Christian community, the people of God, made it much more complicated and complex? Prayer has evolved into a ritual delegated to a select few congregational leaders. Based on this behavior, it is clear to conclude that the church has forgotten the message to which Jesus spoke to His disciples and, by extension, the church, saying that men ought always to pray and not lose heart (Luke 18:1). The literature review explored prayer and IP from the perspective of church leadership, examining both historical and contemporary understandings of the topic. It aimed to educate and equip the church with the tools and knowledge to be bold, fearless, and powerful prayer leaders.

A History of Prayer: Wisdom Passed Through the Ages

Christian prayer was rooted in a rich tradition built by men and women who laid a strong foundation for future generations. Widmer stated that whenever an intercessor stood before God on behalf of others, they joined a longstanding lineage of biblical intercessors.³¹ The church fathers were instrumental in shaping the theology, doctrine, and practices that continue to influence Christian prayer today.

³⁰ Thalia Meza, "Intercessory Prayer: What's the Point?" (PhD diss., Ave Maria University, 2021), 8, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

³¹ Widmer, *Standing in the Breach: An Old Testament Theology and Spirituality of Intercessory Prayer*, 6.

The “Church Fathers” historical period is known as the Patristic era. The term “patristic” comes from the Greek word *pater*, meaning “father.”³² This name designation signifies the essential contributions of these early leaders who have shaped and continue to shape the church's doctrine. Some great influential theologians and writers of that era include Athanasius of Alexandria, Augustine Hippo, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Irenaeus. Additionally, men like Justin Martyr and Tertullian wrote extensively about the defense of the faith. Others, such as Basil of Caesarea and Athanasius, heavily focused on prayer. Some early Church Fathers learned directly from the Apostles, absorbing their teachings and experiences with Jesus. These leaders faithfully passed on this wisdom, helping to establish and advance the early church. Even today, their writings and teachings are held in high regard, continuing to shape and inspire Christian theology and practice.³³

During this era, church doctrine was formulated, and ecumenical councils were held where leaders gathered to define core Christian doctrines and solidify the church's role. The development of the canon began when the church collected books that would be officially recognized as inspired Scripture. This period in history is considered to have begun at the end of the 1st century, when Christianity was establishing itself, and lasted until the 8th century when it became the Roman Empire's state church.³⁴

During the first five centuries of this period, a massive amount of documentation was created from all genres, including sermons, commentaries, collections of prayers, and architectural remains. These sources have outlined the practices and order of the church and are

³² Jimmy Akin, *The Fathers Know Best: Your Essential Guide to the Teachings of the Early Church*, (San Diego, CA: Catholic Answers, 2010), location 256, Kindle.

³³ Mike Aquilina, *The Fathers of the Church: An Introduction to the First Christian Teachers*, 3rd ed., (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2013), 18, Kindle.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

still guiding and dictating current practices.³⁵ Early on, the liturgy was spontaneous, and church leaders had great autonomy in the services. Priests conducted rituals with minimal structure, improvising as best they could without formal guidance. In the mid-second century, a president prayed prayers at the Eucharist service, and Justin Martyr exclaimed it was done as well as the person could do. Over time, things gradually began to change, and by the mid-fourth century, worship practices had become more organized and standardized. During that time, the Bishop of Thmuis in Egypt, Sarapion, used a book of prayers.³⁶

Praying and interceding practices were under development within the liturgy to provide a structure for the church, yet White noted that liturgical standardization at this early stage was still far from standard across various churches and regions. Considerations for public and private prayer were formulated, but the development of the practice of prayer was complex and unsystematic because so many were doing something different.³⁷ For example, Tertullian, in *Apology*, emphasized that the Church's intercessory prayers were essential for the well-being of society.³⁸ He saw prayer as an active force for change. Ignatius implored the church to keep praying for others because their prayers could cause men to come to God. He wrote about the necessity of interceding for the lost, even those the church had deemed heretics.³⁹ Gregory the

³⁵ James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 40.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Tertullian, *Apology*, trans. S. Thelwall, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume III*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), 1-55.

³⁹ Ignatius of Antioch, *The Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, in *The Apostolic Fathers: Volume I*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 134-146.

Great, in *Pastoral Rule*,⁴⁰ stressed the role of clergy and laypersons in interceding for others, believing that such prayers were a vital aspect of the Church's spiritual duties.

White highlights that Clement of Alexandria argued that Christians should live a life of prayer and did not assign specific prayer times, while others, like Tertullian, believed prayer should occur three times a day. His belief was based on the Apostle's praying at the day's third, sixth, and ninth hours. He also added prayer at daybreak and evenings. Consequently, apostolic tradition called for prayer seven times a day, and even during Constantine's reign, the practice of prayer changed yet again. Chrysostom espoused praying in the morning and again in the evening to ask forgiveness for the day's shortfalls.⁴¹

Prayer was an integral part of the early church's life, and they took deliberate measures to defend it. In his treatise, *On Prayer*, Origen defended prayer against the heretics spreading false doctrines. He illustrated the importance of prayer by pointing to Jesus as an example, showing that Jesus Himself prayed. Furthermore, he stressed the significance of prayer as essential to the Christian life and illustrated through his own life that prayer was the way to communicate with God and to create an intimate connection with Him.⁴² For him, prayer was the sole means to connect with God, a practice through which he humbly sought the Father's guidance and revelation.⁴³ Origen viewed prayer not as a mere formal event but as an ongoing way of life. Paul Bradshaw highlights that Origen embraced the command to "pray without ceasing," indicating a

⁴⁰ Pope Gregory I, *The Book of Pastoral Rule*, trans. George E. Demacopoulos (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007).

⁴¹ White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship*, 52-53.

⁴² Origen, *On Prayer*, trans. William A. Curtis (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010), chap. 3, Kindle.

⁴³ Henry Chadwick and John Ernest Leonard Oulton and in *Alexandrian Christianity: Selected Translations of Clement and Origen*, The Library of Christian Classics. Vol. II (London: SCM Press LTD, 1954), 206.

devotion that extended beyond structured prayer times and infused every aspect of life (1 Thess 5:17).⁴⁴

Although Christianity introduced a new religious path that upended the cultural norms of its time, it remained deeply rooted in Jewish influence. Early Eucharistic prayers, Christian sacraments, and worship practices drew heavily from Jewish religious traditions. While building on the foundational practices of Judaism, Christianity forged its own distinct identity.⁴⁵ The church established formal prayer times and looked to Scripture for guidance. Although the specific forms of private and communal prayers were not entirely clear, it was certain that believers gathered in prayer and prayed in Jesus' name. Their prayers were focused and ultimately structured in a pattern of thanksgiving and praise, followed by a time of supplication or intercession. This practice reflected an early church commitment to God through prayer.⁴⁶ Influential leaders in the early church, who played a pivotal role in shaping the theology and practice of prayer, continue to impact modern Christians. Their foundational prayer patterns and traditions have endured, evolving over time or taking on new names, yet remaining integral to Christian worship today.

The Starting Point: What is Prayer?

Prayer is talking to God. It is generally considered making a request, a supplication, or just spending time with Him. Merriam-Webster defines it as an earnest request or wish, an address such as a petition. In his book, *A Prayer Warrior's Guide to Spiritual Battle*, John

⁴⁴ Paul F. Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in The Early Church: A Study of The Origen and Early Development of The Divine Office* (London, UK: SPCK, 1981), 48.

⁴⁵ Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in The Early Church*, 23.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Bornschein answered whether one person could change the world through prayer. He pointed the church back to the Bible and showcased the prayers of such men as Elijah, Moses, Abraham, and Jacob.⁴⁷ He showed through the Word of God that God answers prayers, and because God answers, He will answer now. Prayer grants the people of God an audience with God in heaven. Prayer is defined earlier as heartfelt communication with God. It is essential to consider various perspectives and definitions of prayer from academic and biblical sources to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of this profound and multifaceted topic. By considering various definitions and perspectives, leaders in a church will be more informed and biblically grounded in their approach to the call and responsibility of prayer within the Christian community.

Prayer is talking to God and listening to Him. It is a powerful weapon in the believer's arsenal and an opportunity for true intimacy with the Father as the relationship grows and develops. Bornschein understood prayer as an act of submission and an expression of faith. He reminded the church that prayer was not about the individual but always about the one God of creation.⁴⁸ David G. R. Keller and Susan Toolan also agreed that prayer is an act of submission, but they understood the word and defined it as "authentic freedom."⁴⁹ Authentic freedom only comes when believers authentically submit to God. It is an act of free will where the believer dies to self to surrender to God completely. In their book *Teach Us to Pray: One Hundred Daily Reflections on Jesus' Life of Prayer*, they held, "Submission is a threshold leading toward intimacy with God..."⁵⁰ Intimacy is only possible in a relationship, and prayer is that intimate

⁴⁷ Bornschein, *Prayer Warrior's Guide to Spiritual Battle*, 35-36.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 35.

⁴⁹ Keller and Toolan, *Teach Us to Pray: One Hundred Daily Reflections on Jesus' Life of Prayer*, 195.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 196.

relationship with Abba.⁵¹ Prayer is God's plan to spend time with His children. It is an opportunity for intimacy in His presence as the relationship grows and deepens. Furthermore, this relationship draws a believer beyond the veil into that secret place where God reveals secrets.⁵²

While prayer is commonly defined as communication with God whereby man reaches out to God, Keller, and Toolan also provided a unique perspective for consideration. They offered that prayer is a response. It is rendered in response to something God has expressed or done. God initiated a conversation between Himself and man when He breathed life into man's nostrils, and man became a living being.⁵³ God initiated the prayerful relationship out of His desire to commune with man and waited for man's response. Keller agreed with them. In his book, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, he expressed that prayer is personal communication, but where he differed from traditional definitions because he viewed prayer as a response to God's initial calling.⁵⁴ He continued to say that in the natural world, babies learn to speak by mimicking the sounds and words they hear spoken by others. The more words they hear, the better they can mimic the sounds and form words. This process is identical in the Spirit as God speaks through His Word, and the ability to communicate or respond (prayer) develops out of what is first heard.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Keller and Toolan, *Teach Us to Pray: One Hundred Daily Reflections on Jesus' Life of Prayer*, 143, 155, 167.

⁵² Ibid., 144.

⁵³ Ibid., 1.

⁵⁴ Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, 47-48.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 53-56.

Levels of Prayer

Matthew chapter seven, verses seven and eight emphasize that when a believer asks, they will receive (James 4:2); when they seek, they will find (Jer 29:13); and when they persistently knock, the door will be opened (Dan 10). Asking in prayer involves approaching God with a petition for a need or desire, grounded in what He has revealed to the believer (1 John 5:14-15). Sarpey, in *Effective Intercessory Prayer Guide*, said that asking the Father is all that is required to receive at this level. This represents the foundational level of prayer.⁵⁶

The second level of prayer is seeking. At this level, the believer continues in prayer until the answer comes. It requires a persistent and intentional depth of prayer when God's will is unknown. This type of prayer carries the expectation that God will be found and His will be revealed in time. As the believer seeks God, they know He has assured them that if they seek Him, they will find Him when they search for Him with their whole heart (Jer 29:13).

Lastly, knocking prayer refers to greater persistence and boldness as the believer refuses to be stopped by a closed door. This prayer keeps knocking on God's door until He opens it up despite the silence.⁵⁷ This is a deeper level of prayer that says that although the answers take longer, the believer continues praying. The parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8 illustrates this. Here, Jesus tells the parable of the widow who kept bothering the judge. He kept telling her no, but he got tired of her continually showing up and bothering him, so he granted her request. Jesus used this story to illustrate the importance of not giving up in prayer.

⁵⁶ Jerry Sarpey, *Effective Intercessory Prayer Guide: Beginner to Advance Level* (Independently Published, 2020), 7.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 7.

Exploring Prayer: A.C.T.S. Method

After considering several definitions of prayer, a broader view of some different types of prayers will be discussed to provide context for future study and considerations. Additionally, looking at some of the significant types of prayer will reinforce a healthy foundation for understanding prayer. The ACTS prayer model stands for Adoration (praising God), Confession (seeking forgiveness), Thanksgiving (expressing gratitude), and Supplication (requesting needs or interceding for others).⁵⁸ It is a well-known method used by many novice and experienced praying Christians.⁵⁹ The model acts as a guide to structure the prayers of Christians and provides a roadmap for those unsure of what to say or how to proceed in prayer.

The ACTS model is an effective tool for prayer, helping believers stay focused and intentional in their time with God. The model guides believers to adore and honor God as Father, then confess sins and seek a pure heart. The act of confession opens the way to thankfulness for all God has done, especially for the gift of Jesus. Finally, believers intercede for others, partnering with Christ in the priestly role of bringing the world's needs before God in prayer, as Samuel Wells and Abigail Kocher suggested.⁶⁰

It fosters a balanced and purposeful prayer life by guiding attention away from self and towards God's nature and will. Consistent use of this model can deepen one's relationship with the Father and encourage a more grounded, spiritually healthy approach to prayer. Although there are many other types of prayers in the Bible, the four discussed here capture the most

⁵⁸ Samuel Wells and Abigail Kocher, *Shaping the Prayers of the People: The Art of Intercession* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 21.

⁵⁹ Lawless, *Potential and Power of Prayer*, 128.

⁶⁰ Wells and Kocher, *Shaping the Prayers of the People: The Art of Intercession*, 21.

known and practiced modes of prayer while paving a way forward for further discussion and understanding of IP.

The Lord's Prayer

Jesus taught His disciples to pray by teaching them the Lord's prayer.⁶¹ The disciples had witnessed Jesus's prayer life and wanted to be like their master and teacher.⁶² Many scholars agree that the Lord's Prayer is the model the church should still use today. They argued that this prayer was what Jesus taught His disciples, is the key to unlocking all other riches of prayer, and is a model that leads to deeper prayer.⁶³ Justo L. González, in his book *Teach Us to Pray: The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church and Today*, has written that the Lord's prayer was the foundation of the early church and is the blueprint for the church and people of God today.⁶⁴ Although many align with González, others remind the church that the Lord's prayer is not to be boxed in to explain proper prayer only because it has broader implications and significance to the Body of Christ.

One such person was Charles N. Ridlehoover, who argued in *The Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel* that the Lord's prayer is the center of the Sermon on the Mount and when studied in the context of Matthew, "is key to committing to and living by the Sermon's [on the Mount] mandated kingdom righteousness."⁶⁵ To pray in the way Jesus

⁶¹ Cleverly, *The Discipline of Intimacy: The Joy and Awe of Walking with God*, 44-46.

⁶² David G. R. Keller and Suzanne Toolan, *Teach Us to Pray: One Hundred Daily Reflections on Jesus' Life of Prayer* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 2.

⁶³ Cleverly, *The Discipline of Intimacy: The Joy and Awe of Walking with God*, 48-63.

⁶⁴ Justo L González, *Teach Us to Pray: The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church and Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020), 9.

⁶⁵ Charles Nathan Ridlehoover, *The Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 204.

mandated is to be committed to living out a life of Christian praxis that leads to maturity in Christ. Other advocates, like Mohler, replied by saying the Lord's prayer is not just a model of what prayer is or how the church is to pray but also a model of what prayer is not and how not to pray.⁶⁶ Like Ridlehoover, Mohler wanted the church to consider the context of Jesus' prayer.

Intercessory Prayer: What It Is and Why It Matters

Understanding the four forms of prayer discussed earlier is helpful when considering the definition of IP. Prayer and IP are often considered synonymous, but they are very different. Earlier prayer was defined as talking to God, making a request, a petition, or a supplication. But Smith points out that intercession is about coming to God for someone else.⁶⁷ Merriam-Webster defines IP as the act of interceding, or entreaty in favor of another. IP is a petitionary or supplication prayer in which the intercessor stands in the gap between God and man. Sarpey defined IP as one who takes the place of another or, like a lawyer, pleads another's case.⁶⁸ For Cleverly, IP is regarded as standing in the gap for humanity, acknowledging that humankind is guilty and deserving of God's wrath. In this role, the intercessor pleads for God to withhold judgment and extend His grace and mercy.⁶⁹ Smith said that all believers have a duty or responsibility to intercede on behalf of others, but not all are gifted or called to the ministry of intercession.⁷⁰ This distinction is essentially twofold. First, it removes the pressure and guilt of

⁶⁶ Albert R. Mohler, Jr., *The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down: The Lord's Prayer as a Manifesto for Revolution* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2019), 9.

⁶⁷ Smith, *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God Through Prayer*, 32.

⁶⁸ Sarpey, *Effective Intercessory Prayer Guide*, 11.

⁶⁹ Cleverly, *The Discipline of Intimacy: The Joy and Awe of Walking with God*, 79.

⁷⁰ Smith, *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God Through Prayer*, 59.

those who do not spend hours in prayer, but second, it does not negate the church's responsibility to pray and the duty to be equipped and prepared to pray for others.

The Bible is complete with examples, or role models, of great people who were given specific assignments to stand in the gap for others. God has always used intercessors to accomplish His will in the earthly realm. The Old Testament provides countless examples of people of God who took up the IP mantle and pleaded with God for others. Take Moses and Daniel, for example. Moses was called a type of Christ, a great intercessor and friend of God (Exod 33:11). He was a great man of God who lived through many challenges but also saw many victories. Moses' prayer life was exceptional. He enjoyed an intimacy with God that gave him access to God face-to-face. The Bible says Moses talked face-to-face with God, petitioning God often on behalf of the nation of Israel. He would intercede by asking God to keep His promises concerning the nation, pleading for God to withhold His anger and judgment. He reminded God of His promises to the patriarchs, His reputation, and the impact on it if He destroyed the people while appealing to God's merciful character. The people would constantly rebel and sin against God, and Moses would continuously go before the Lord on their behalf (Exod 32:1-14; 30-35).⁷¹ Moses is a role model to whom the church admires.

Daniel is another strong example of an intercessor. His prayer for the exiled nation of Israel is one of the best IP models of all days (Dan 9:1-27).⁷² Although he was led into captivity as a teenager, God used Daniel to stand in the gap for the nation and to pray for their restoration. He did several significant things once he read the Word of the Lord in Jeremiah and discovered

⁷¹ Edward M. Bounds, *Prayer and Praying Men* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 28.

⁷² Carrol Johnson Shewmake, *When We Pray for Others: The Blessing of Intercessory Prayer* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald Pub., 1995), 68.

that the 70-year period of Israel's captivity was nearly over. He prayed and fasted, then went before the Lord and prayed for forgiveness for himself and the people. Then, he reminded God of His promises and prayed for Him to move on His people's behalf. Daniel's prayer changed the course of a nation.

Understood through the lens of these great men of God, IP involves carrying the burdens of others, which can often feel like bearing the world's weight. The Hebrew word *paga*, "intercession," is translated as "to prophesy, to struggle in prayer, to fight or intrude on."⁷³ Like the prophets, who served as intermediaries between God and man and declared and prophesied the burden of the Lord, so too does the modern-day intercessor. As an intermediary between God and man, the intercessor struggles in fervent prayer, travailing, and weeping while contending with an adversary.⁷⁴ Wells and Kocher argue that intercessory prayer is so essential to humanity that it must never be neglected, even amidst other valuable pursuits. They emphasize that this form of prayer is central to the spiritual life, as it represents a selfless act of connecting with God on behalf of others.⁷⁵

Recall that the church earnestly interceded for Peter's release in Acts 12: 5-17, and God heard and answered their prayers. To plead on behalf of another is the most unselfish posture the believer can take because it completely denies the self. Once the self is out of the way, the individual can bear the load of others at the request of God. The characteristics of an intercessor are faithfulness and trust in God because He may not always provide them with complete details

⁷³ James Strong, *The Strong's Complete Dictionary of Bible Words*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), Hebrew #6293; Alice Smith, *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God Through Prayer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2010), 61.

⁷⁴ Smith, *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God Through Prayer*, 61.

⁷⁵ Wells and Kocher, *Shaping the Prayers of the People: The Art of Intercession*, 22.

and insight regarding the situation for which they have been called to intercede.⁷⁶ The church didn't know how God would deliver Peter from Herod's control; they only trusted that He could. This unwavering belief led them to pray earnestly and persistently. Scripture illustrates that they remained in prayer without understanding the specifics of God's plan or timing. Their surprise upon finding Peter at the door confirms that the outcome surpassed their expectations, underscoring their faith in God's ability despite not knowing His method or timeline.

The New Testament also provides the church with strong examples of those who interceded before the Lord on behalf of others. Like the twenty-first-century church, they stood on a rich history and legacy. Paul and Jesus are prime examples of those who prioritize prayer more than anything else. The Apostle Paul's prayer life is an excellent example of the power and purpose of IP. He prayed for the churches at Galatia, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome, to name a few. Paul can be heard telling the churches that he mentions them in his prayers without ceasing (Rom 1:8-11; Eph 1:15-23), that he can be found on his knees petitioning God on their behalf (Eph 3:14-21), and that he is travailing in birth, to see new life come forth in them. Paul volunteered to be a spiritual mother, willing to endure the pain of labor to bring God's people into spiritual maturity and ministry, even if it required great personal pain (Gal 4:19). He recalled what Christ had done for him and considered his plight unworthy of comparison.⁷⁷ Paul's use of the images of birth pangs highlights his great desire and longing to see the church at Galatia reformed in Christ even though they had fallen back into legalism.⁷⁸ Paul inspired others to pray without ceasing and to pray for all men everywhere (1 Tim 2:1-8). Paul was a great man of God,

⁷⁶ Smith, *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God Through Prayer*, 71-72.

⁷⁷ Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament*, 157.

⁷⁸ Craig S. Keener, *Galatians: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 330.

but Jesus is the only one who interceded when He was here on Earth and continues interceding for God's children in heaven. Romans 8:34 tells the church that Jesus, the risen Christ, is at the Father's right-hand, making intercession for the people of God.

Jesus is the model intercessor. The Gospel of Luke portrays Jesus as the great intercessor who prays on Earth and who now continues to make intercession for the saints at the right-hand of the Father. The writer of Hebrews describes Jesus as the interceding High Priest. He lives forever to make intercession for the people of God, and He understands every emotion they feel, every tear they cry, and every temptation they face—"He is consistent, disciplined, and passionate in prayer."⁷⁹

Jesus prioritized prayer above all else in His life, even above His relationships, food (Matt. 6:9-13), and sleep (John 4:31-32). He prayed at key moments, including the start of His ministry and His baptism. During His baptism, as He prayed, the heavens opened, the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove, and God's voice affirmed Him as His Son, expressing approval and pleasure (Luke 3:21-22). Jesus also prayed during the final moments of His earthly ministry, both in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross, demonstrating prayer's central role throughout His life and mission. Jesus stands as the great High Priest, who lives to make intercession for the people of God (Heb 7:25). Likewise, as the people of God stand interceding, they become an extension of the intercessory work of Christ.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Cleverly, *The Discipline of Intimacy: The Joy and Awe of Walking with God*, 47.

⁸⁰ Philip Clements-Jewery, *Intercessory Prayer: Modern Theology, Biblical Teaching, and Philosophical Thought* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2005), 35.

Intercessory Prayer and the Word of God

The connection between prayer and the Word of God is explored by considering how language is taught to a baby. Children learn to speak by first hearing. The child hears and then repeats what they hear; it is in this exchange that learning takes place. The Word of God is foundational to a believer's prayer life because it is through the Word of God that God's language is learned.⁸¹ Keller noted that God initiates communication through His Word, and the believer's prayer responds to this divine call. However, believers can only respond if they understand God's language—His Word.

In any relationship, communication is essential and the basis for intimacy. The same is true for God. He is the living Word and wants His people to use His Word and respond to Him.⁸² Psalm 95:8 tells believers they should not harden their hearts when they hear His voice. Instead they are to respond when His voice is heard. Through recognizing and understanding the Word, the believer becomes aware of their shortcomings and ongoing need for cleansing and forgiveness. As they engage with God's Word, they are drawn closer to Him and gradually transformed into His likeness.⁸³ Keeler and Toolan made excellent observations about Jesus and His earthly ministry. Because Jesus listened to God's voice in Scripture and prayer, He was blessed, and the world experienced the fruits of His prayers through His teaching and ministry.”⁸⁴

⁸¹ Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, 53-56.

⁸² Jennifer Eivas, *The Intercessors Handbook: How to Pray with Boldness, Authority and Supernatural Power* (Bloomington, MN: Chosen Books, 2016), 29-31.

⁸³ Craig Groeschel, *Dangerous Prayers: Because Following Jesus Was Never Meant to Be Safe* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020), 32-33.

⁸⁴ Keller and Toolan, *Teach Us to Pray: One Hundred Daily Reflections on Jesus' Life of Prayer*, 19.

Prayer has been designed so believers can constantly communicate with the God of heaven. Lawless was concerned that this generation was raising a group of prayerless and powerless believers. His response to that concern was that believers do not know God's Word. He found a correlation between a lack of knowledge of God's Word and a lack of prayer in the church.⁸⁵ He also said that as a pastor for over twenty years, he had observed people who read the Bible but have no proper understanding or recall of the Word. It is out of tradition or a Christian obligation to read the Bible, but little mental energy and concentration is given to retain the knowledge of what was read. He argued that this lack of desire to pray speaks to the misplaced motive in reading the Bible because it contains references to prayer, which should drive believers to their knees.⁸⁶

Whitney has a similar argument as Lawless and added that Christians are not praying because they do not know what to say. It is not because they do not want to pray or do not love God; instead, they get bored in prayer after repeating the same thing. He concluded that as Christians continue this practice, those prayers become memorized speeches and less exciting to pray over time. This leads to boredom and a feeling of "Am I a good Christian?" This can eventually become a sense of defeat when the Christian considers quitting. Whitney distinguished between "saying" the same old thing repeatedly and "praying" the same thing repeatedly. People are expected to pray for the same things because they are a normal part of life.⁸⁷ For example, family, church leaders and members, civic leaders, friends, and co-workers are just examples of daily prayers offered up to God. Believers need to pray about these things

⁸⁵ Lawless, *Potential and Power of Prayer*, 5.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 12-13.

⁸⁷ Sarpey, *Effective Intercessory Prayer Guide*, 11, 19-20.

daily, but what is said about them in prayer should be different. The problem is not that Christians pray for their family and church daily but rather they do not know what to say about those to whom they pray.

There is a solution to why believers are not praying and do not know what to say. Since prayer is about communicating with the Father, sharing His Word with Him is an excellent way to start a conversation. Praying the Psalms is Sarpey's recommendation for learning to pray the Scriptures.⁸⁸ The Psalms were designed to be prayed. They structure the prayer and mitigate the boredom of saying the same old thing every time. When praying the Psalms, if specific people or concerns of those people come to mind, the verse provides a framework for what to say. For example, if someone reads verse one of Psalm forty-six, they may thank God for being their refuge and deliverer when they and their family are in trouble. Allowing the Spirit of God to prompt and guide the prayer with the Word of God gives the believer's prayer wings.⁸⁹ In prayer, believers put God in remembrance of His Word and cause God to move on their behalf.

The Bible declares that the believer is to bring everything to God in prayer (Phil 4:6). God wants to hear His children's voice, which is only possible through prayer. He has designed this two-way communication so believers can always access heaven and provided a script for their use. Praying the Word of God makes prayers more biblical and reduces the chances of believers praying unbiblical and unbalanced prayers. The Spirit of God will teach the people how to pray God's will through the Word of God.⁹⁰ Other parts of the Bible, such as the New Testament letters and Paul's prayers contained within those letters, can be turned into prayers

⁸⁸ Sarpey, *Effective Intercessory Prayer Guide*, 11, 28.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 32.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 37.

and used as a catalyst for a richer and more fulfilling experience with prayer. These texts can prompt ideas on things to pray about that were never considered. Additionally, they can be personalized easily to foster intimacy in the relationship. Starting small with the Psalms can produce significant benefits as the believer grows and realizes they have more of the Bible to pray after the Book of Psalms is completed.

Intercessory Prayer and the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is God. As Jesus was preparing to return to the Father, He told His disciples that He would pray to the Father and that He was going to give them another Helper. They were going to get a helper who was just like Jesus.⁹¹ Furthermore, Jesus told them He had to go away; otherwise, the helper would not come (John 16:7, NIV). Jesus was bound by time and space, which limited where He could be and how many people He could minister to. As a human being, he had to travel on foot to different locations, eat, and sleep. In contrast, the Holy Spirit is unrestricted by human needs or limitations and is available to everyone, everywhere, at all times. Jesus knew this would be advantageous to the disciples and the church at large.

The Holy Spirit is a comforter, counselor, helper, advocate, and intercessor (John 14:26). John Bevere believed the church had mistakenly labeled the Holy Spirit and reduced Him to a mysterious being. He even referred to instances where people had called the Third Person of the Trinity “it.”⁹² Without the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in the church, the church is just another social event with no power to defeat an enemy whose sole agenda is to kill, steal, and

⁹¹ John Bevere, *The Holy Spirit: An Introduction* (Palmer Lake, CO: Messenger International), 20-21.

⁹² Ibid., 7-9.

destroy (John 10:10). A social club may be great for networking but cannot access or advance the Kingdom of God, His power, or His glory.⁹³

Jesus breathed on the disciples and told them to receive the Holy Spirit, but on the day of Pentecost, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and received power (Acts 1:8) to fulfill the Great Commission. The Holy Spirit empowers the church to fulfill its assignment on Earth. Recall that Lawless was concerned about powerless churches. He understood prayer accessed God's power through the Holy Spirit's work. Jennifer Eivas, in *The Intercessors Handbook*, said that one of the primary purposes of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is to empower the church to pray.⁹⁴ The power of God through the Holy Spirit causes men to be saved and assists God's people in doing His will.

As a Helper, the Holy Spirit assists the people of God in intercession. He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. The Holy Spirit knows the mind of God and prays His perfect will through the people of God because they do not know all things or have a complete understanding of all things. Paul referred to this as human weaknesses. He said the Spirit helps God's people in their weakness (Rom 8:26-27). In those times of weakness, the Spirit empowers the believer to pray and stand when it may be challenging to do so naturally.

Also, there are times when the Holy Spirit prompts the intercessor to intercede for someone or something they know nothing about in the natural world. When people cannot speak for themselves, knowing someone is standing for them and pleading their cause before God is comforting. The intercessor is standing before God and asking Him to help them somehow. This also speaks to the importance of the intercessor being filled with the Holy Spirit and having

⁹³ Stephen Kendrick and Alex Kendrick, *The Battle Plan for Prayer* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2015), 36-37.

⁹⁴ Eivas, *The Intercessors Handbook*, 26.

power (Acts 1:8). The ministry of intercession advances the Kingdom of God, one reason the enemy vehemently opposes it.⁹⁵ Satan would love nothing more than to silence the mouths of intercessors who stand in the gap for countless people.

At other times, the Holy Spirit will take over and pray with groanings that cannot be understood by the human mind (Romans 8:26). In these times, the Holy Spirit speaks directly to God in an unknown tongue through the believer. 1 Corinthians 14:2 says that in these times when a believer speaks in an unknown tongue, he is speaking mysteries in the Spirit. Sarpey said this is intercession at its deepest level because it is in this state that the human mind is incapable of comprehending what the Spirit is saying to the Father.⁹⁶ During these deep times of intercession, the Holy Spirit may reveal information intended to remain private, guiding the intercessor to pray more effectively for others. The intercessor must rely on the Holy Spirit to discern what to share, with whom, and when.⁹⁷ Just as Jesus relied on and partnered with the Holy Spirit when He was on Earth, so must believers today.

At His baptism, Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit, and after that, He began His ministry and doing miracles. Jesus repeatedly said that He did not speak on His own accord but only spoke what the Father told him (John 12:49). In John 14:10, He said the words He spoke were the Father's words who was living in Him (John 14:10). The Holy Spirit is everything Jesus was, and the church needs Him in every facet of life. He is not bound by space and time, nor are the effectual, fervent prayers of the righteous. They can cross oceans and break through walls,

⁹⁵ Bevere, *The Holy Spirit: An Introduction*, 179.

⁹⁶ Sarpey, *Effective Intercessory Prayer Guide*, 14.

⁹⁷ Smith, *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God Through Prayer*, 35-36.

man-made barriers and systems, and principalities to bring peoples of all nations far and wide to Christ.

Intercessory Prayer as a Mighty Weapon

Spiritual warfare is real. In the book of Ephesians, the Apostle Paul tells the saints to put on the whole armor of God. He understood the ongoing spiritual battle and that believers would be victorious only if they were fully dressed in their armor and ready to stand against the enemy's attacks. Today, believers must understand what weapons are available and how to use them effectively. Prayer is one weapon where war strategies are revealed. In *Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture*, Cook III and Lawless expressed that believers need to be strategic in dealing with the enemy, and prayer is a key to securing victory. They continued to voice their belief that prayer renders the most effective way of launching an assault and using the weapons of warfare most effectively against Satan.⁹⁸ Bornschein responded that believers must be intentional when joining the prayer fight. It is a foolish decision to go to war and fight an unknown enemy, but just as the soldier called to war in the natural must study and know their enemy, so too must the believer know their enemy, Satan.⁹⁹

Preparation is essential to prepare an effective offense and defense, and God has ensured that the believer has all the tools necessary to withstand and win every battle. Time must be set aside to train, strategize, and practice. Training requires the believer to self-examine and eliminate sin in their lives; strategizing allows the team to develop training plans and methods to win over the enemy, and practice ensures that everyone knows and follows the plan.¹⁰⁰ Although

⁹⁸ Cook, III., and Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture*, 2797e.

⁹⁹ Bornschein, *Prayer Warrior's Guide to Spiritual Battle*, 73-77.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

the battle is up close, the armor will hold up.¹⁰¹ The victories achieved in prayer on the battleground are recorded throughout the Bible, as seen in the lives of men like Elijah, Daniel, Paul, and Jesus. The church cannot deny or ignore the importance of prayer in spiritual warfare.

The Intercessor and Leader

Leaders should dedicate their best to prayer; it is the core of their strength and the essence of their anointing.¹⁰² E.M. Bounds wrote these words in his book *Power through Prayer*. He wrote nine books focused on prayer and lived and preached on its importance. A preacher's character, he said, is determined by the character of his prayer.¹⁰³ Like the apostles, Bounds understood the importance and power of prayer. The early church leaders were so committed to prayer that they turned over daily duties and chores to qualified men in the ministry (Acts 6:4). Bounds contended that though one may preach with eloquence and grace, without prayer, they will never preach like the apostles.¹⁰⁴

The Apostles understood that preaching, teaching, and miracles would be ineffective if prayer were not the first, middle, and last things. Paul said he and his team would persistently and fervently be devoted to prayer. They continually prayed for the salvation and conversion of people, but their prayers did not stop with a plea for salvation. They continued to pray for the saint's growth and maturity in Christ once they had been converted. The early church leaders understood the power of IP and never ceased to pray but instead 'gave themselves to it.'

¹⁰¹ Cook, III., and Lawless, *Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture*, 2799y.

¹⁰² Edward M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1982), 30-31.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 31.

¹⁰⁴ Bounds, *Power Through Prayer*, 86-87.

Jehoshaphat, likewise, a leader of the nation of Israel, was a man who gave himself to prayer. He led a nation of people with prayer. He looked to God for direction and solutions to life's most perplexing and problematic matters. However, he was not the typical leader. People, including believers, want strong leaders and pastors who have all the answers and simplify the hard things, but is that realistic and most desirable? Heifetz described the wrong kind of leader in his book *Leadership Without Easy Answers*. The wrong type of leader, he expressed, is the one the world and the church seek out, a savior, not the Savior.¹⁰⁵ Jehoshaphat was a leader with no answers, a man whom the Scriptures reveal was afraid (2 Chr 20:3). James C. Howell spoke of Jehoshaphat as an unlikely leader. In his book, *Weak Enough to Lead: What the Bible Tells Us about Powerful Leadership*, he described a leader who, in the "most unleader-like way," leads his people to victory from his knees. The Bible says he prayed aloud and loud enough so everyone could hear, saying, "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you" (2 Chr 20:12).¹⁰⁶ Jehoshaphat showed the best of himself in his vulnerable state and showed that leaders are broken, unsure, and afraid at times, but as long as they put it in the hands of God through prayer, victory is guaranteed. Howell mentioned several secular authors, Brené Brown and Patrick Lencioni, in this same book that are, in essence, celebrating and promoting the qualities of weakness and limitations of humankind. According to their theory, leaders who expose their vulnerabilities open themselves up to lead better.¹⁰⁷

The necessity for leaders to be transparent and prayerful is indisputable. Does the church exhibit a different reality? Daniel Henderson wrote a chapter titled "Innovative Prayer in the

¹⁰⁵ Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1994), 2.

¹⁰⁶ James Howell, C., *Weak Enough to Lead: What the Bible Tells Us about Powerful Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2017), 10-11.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

Local Church” in the book *Innovate Church: Innovative Leadership for the Next Generation Church* and said that if the church does not pray fervently, the church will never experience a great move of God in the Body of Christ.¹⁰⁸ Like other authors and scholars, Henderson was under the impression that the church was not praying because leaders did not know how to pray. Lawless claimed that there was no intentional prayer training in the churches, so many believers did not know how to pray.¹⁰⁹ Henderson pointed out the fact that the church today is falling short of Jesus’ expectation that the Body of Christ is a house of prayer (Mark 11:17) and of Paul’s instructions to Timothy that the first thing the church is to do is pray for all men (1 Tim 2:1).¹¹⁰ Many churches are talking about prayer. Still, not many churches are teaching people how to pray or operating in a culture of prayer.¹¹¹ Many like Lawless, Smith, Bounds, and Henderson are concerned that the church is becoming powerless as prayer is pushed further down the agenda.¹¹²

There is still hope. God has chosen the church to partner with, and this is a partnership that He takes very seriously, so much so that He will not do what He wants if the church is not in position, more specifically, if the church is not praying. Smith reminded the church of the story of Moses and Joshua when they were facing the Amalekites. The army was victorious as long as Moses’ hand remained lifted during the battle, but they began to lose when his hands fell. God

¹⁰⁸ Daniel Henderson, “Innovative Prayer in the Local Church,” in *Innovate Church: Innovative Leadership for the Next Generation Church*, ed. Jonathan Falwell (Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2008), 13.

¹⁰⁹ Lawless, *The Potential and Power of Prayer: How to Unleash the Praying Church*, 5.

¹¹⁰ Henderson, “Innovative Prayer in the Local Church,” 13.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹¹² Lawless, *The Potential and Power of Prayer*, 10; Smith, *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God Through Prayer*, 17.

partnered with Moses, Aaron, and Hur to secure the victory for the Israelite army. It was life and death for people on the battlefield, Smith cried.¹¹³ Let that cry not be ignored today because the church is battling life and death. If the church prays, it is victorious, but when it stops, the enemy gains ground and defeats the church. The church and its leaders are called to duty like the soldier being called to duty. The difference between the two is that the sword is the soldier's weapon of choice, and prayer is the believer's chosen weapon.

Theological Foundations

Prayer is the most powerful force on Earth. It can overcome insurmountable challenges, or as Frank C. Laubach said, "...it can accomplish anything."¹¹⁴ This alone is why prayer is an important topic that the church must not ignore. The disciples had been given authority over all the enemy's power (Luke 10:19), yet they wanted to know how to pray. Jesus said to them, "When you pray, say..." (Luke 11:2, *King James Version [KJV]*). He gave them a model to guide them in their prayers. This simple prayer became "the foundation of the early church and is the blueprint for the church and people of God today."¹¹⁵

This section will explore the biblical, historical, and theological foundations that serve as the foundation for this researcher's thesis project. The basic structure will be organized around five major themes. These themes will serve to enhance the understanding of IP. First, the biblical foundation of IP will be built to frame the history and character of prayer from a theological perspective. Additionally, the section will focus on the Lord's prayer and its role in intercession.

¹¹³ Smith, *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God Through Prayer*, 21.

¹¹⁴ Frank C. Laubach, *Prayer: The Mightiest Force in the World* (Mansfield, CT: Burtynki Books, 2020), 9, 12.

¹¹⁵ Justo L. González, *Teach Us to Pray: The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church and Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020), 9.

This methodical exploration can provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the significance of IP in the context of biblical and theological teachings. IP has been integral to God's plan to commune with man from the beginning. Walter Kaiser said that God had chosen from the beginning of man's existence to demonstrate His strength in response to the sincere and heartfelt prayers of those who seek Him.¹¹⁶

Biblical Foundations of Intercessory Prayer: From Old to New Testament

Most dictionaries define IP as a prayer or petition to God on behalf of another. In an earlier discussion, IP was broadly defined as a petitionary or supplication prayer where the intercessor stands in the gap between God and man. It was described as one going to God asking for His favor, mercy, or intervention on behalf of someone else.¹¹⁷ Widmer provided the exact definition in his book, *Standing in the Breach*, while discussing the diversity in the objectives of Old Testament intercessory prayers. He stated that prayers in the Old Testament ranged from general blessings of protection, prosperity, and health to petitioning God for divine mercy and forgiveness.¹¹⁸ However, a more interesting conversation centers around IP, as the mediation between two parties.

Intercession as mediation reflects a nuanced and complex dimension of intercession that extends beyond personal requests. Widmer stated that IP can be seen as spiritual mediation between individuals or groups experiencing strained relationships in the human realm. The

¹¹⁶ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *I Will Lift My Eyes Unto the Hills: Learning from the Great Prayers of the Old Testament* (Fort Washington, PA: Weaver Book Company, 2015), 1.

¹¹⁷ Lawless, *Potential and Power of Prayer*, 40; Cleverly, *The Discipline of Intimacy: The Joy and Awe of Walking with God*, 79.

¹¹⁸ Michael Widmer, *Standing in the Breach: An Old Testament Theology and Spirituality of Intercessory Prayer* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), 3-4.

intercessor, through prayer, seeks divine intervention to bring reconciliation, understanding, and healing to the relational dynamics. On the divine-human level, intercession often involves the believer standing in the gap between humanity and God. This can include seeking divine mercy, forgiveness, or intervention for oneself or others. It echoes the role of Christ as the ultimate mediator between God and humanity.¹¹⁹

Although the phrase "intercessory prayer" is not found in the Bible, there is a clear mandate to pray for others. The Old Testament witnesses to the church that IP is a requirement that God expects His people to meet.¹²⁰ Several instances in the Old Testament highlight the significance of intercession. One notable example is Abraham's intercession on behalf of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:22-33). Abraham pleaded with God to spare the cities if a certain number of righteous people could be found. This dialogue demonstrates the idea of standing before God and advocating for the well-being of others.

Other examples include Moses' intercession for the Israelites (Exodus 32:11-14; Numbers 14:13-19) and Job's intercession for his friends (Job 42:8-10). Moses frequently interceded for the Israelites in moments of crisis. After the incident with the golden calf and the people's rebellion, Moses pleaded with God not to destroy them. His intercession reflected a deep concern for the community and a willingness to stand in the gap on their behalf. Like Moses, Job stood in the gap for others as well. After God rebukes his friends for misguided counsel, Job intercedes for them. He prays on their behalf, and as a result, God shows mercy to Job's friends. This illustrates the redemptive power of IP.

¹¹⁹ Widmer, *Standing in the Breach: An Old Testament Theology and Spirituality of Intercessory Prayer*, 3-4.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

Men like Abraham, Moses, and Job are a few leaders who make up a long tradition of biblical intercessors. Scripture testifies of them and others like Samuel, Esther, Daniel, Elijah, Elisha, and Jeremiah, who stood as model intercessors before God and whose great prayers were recorded for the church's instruction and example. They were called upon in times of personal and national crises and never turned down a request to pray. Despite personal challenges and obstacles, they were always ready to pray.¹²¹

The ministry of IP, where individuals act as intermediaries, was not new to Jesus and the New Testament church. The New Testament continues the legacy and mandate to pray for others. Few understood this as profoundly as Jesus, the ultimate intercessor, and the Apostle Paul. The Gospel of Luke portrays Jesus as the great intercessor who prayed on Earth and who now continues to make intercession for the saints at the right hand of the Father (Luke 23:34). John 17 portrays Jesus as a High Priest, praying for his follower's protection, unity, and sanctification. The writer of Hebrews describes Jesus in His ongoing intercessory role as the High Priest who interceded for believers (Heb 7:25). The example of Jesus as the ultimate intercessor is a powerful model for believers to follow today.¹²² By emulating Jesus, believers participate in intercession, reflecting Christ's love and mercy.

Paul also understood the power and importance of prayer in general and precisely that of IP, so much so that he told Timothy that prayer must happen before anything happens. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men..." (1 Tim 2:1-4, *KJV*). Through Scripture, the church witnesses the priority placed on prayer, as Paul said, "first of all." In this pericope, four different Greek nouns for prayer are

¹²¹ Kaiser, Jr., *I Will Lift My Eyes Unto the Hills: Learning from the Great Prayers of the Old Testament*, 2.

¹²² Spencer, *1 Timothy: A New Covenant Commentary*, 64.

used. Those nouns are¹²³ supplications (*dēsis*), prayers of reference/sacredness (*proseuchē*), intercessions (*enteuxis*), and thanksgiving (*eucharistia*, *eucharisteō*). Paul's mention of intercession highlights a powerful type of prayer that focuses on standing before God to defend or help another person.¹²⁴ As the spotlight will illuminate, intercession plays a critical role in the believer's prayer life, serving as a divine partnership with God to accomplish His will.

In 1 Timothy 2:1, the Greek word *enteuxis*, used for the word "intercessions," is only found in 1 Timothy 4:5. Although these are the only two occurrences of this verb form of the Greek word in Scripture, other variations of the English word "intercession," are used throughout the Bible. For example, Romans 8:26 uses the verb *entygchanō* (to intercede). As a starting point, these verses highlight the ministry of intercession, emphasizing the command to pray for others. Scripture confirms Paul's serious commitment and pursuit of God through prayer. Paul knew the power vested in him only came through prayer and the working of the Holy Spirit, so he encouraged all believers everywhere to pray whenever he had the opportunity. Specifically speaking of the church at Ephesus, he urged them to keep praying and to pray (*proseuchē*) with all kinds of prayers (*dēsis*) for one another, and finally, he asked them to pray (*proseuchomai*) for him. Paul told them to pray general prayers and specific types of prayers that petitioned God for personal needs or the needs of others. He used the verb form of *prayer* when requesting that the church pray for him, which meant engaging in prayer on someone else's behalf. The Apostle Paul had experienced God in the third heaven yet still understood the power of IP and having the saints stand in the gap for him.

¹²³ Aida Besancon Spencer, *1 Timothy: A New Covenant Commentary* (Cambridge, England: VLutterworth Press, 2014) 63-64.

¹²⁴ Eivas, *The Intercessors Handbook*, 32.

Intercession in the New Testament

Jesus told His disciples that men should always pray, and not faint. He immediately illustrated His point by sharing the story of the persistent widow and the unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8). Through this parable, Jesus encouraged His followers to persist in prayer. The contrast between prayer and fainting highlights the importance of praying without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17). When believers give up and quit, it is equated to fainting.¹²⁵ When believers keep praying, it is equated to the King answering the widow's plea. Prayer is not a duty to be grudgingly pursued but instead a confession of the heart that says, disciples cannot make it without you, that new mercies and grace are needed daily.¹²⁶ Like breathing, prayer is a natural extension of the believer's existence. Life cannot be sustained without the ability to breathe; without prayer, spiritual life cannot be sustained.¹²⁷

So, what does it mean to persevere in prayer? What does it mean to pray without ceasing? Does it mean to walk around mumbling under the breath a prayer? Does it mean constantly repeating memorized lines of generic prayers throughout the day? Jesus warned His followers not to be like those hypocrites who rendered up vain repetitions to be heard and seen and whose hearts were insincere and far from him (Matt 6:5-15). The problem is not repetition, according to Schreiner, but meaningless repetition.¹²⁸ God is not rewarding egotistical displays of public prayer performances but is looking for people who seek Him in private. Because it is in that

¹²⁵ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook, 2007), 199.

¹²⁶ Thomas R. Schreiner, "Luke," in *Matthew-Luke*, vol. 8, The ESV Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 1358.

¹²⁷ Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament*, 199.

¹²⁸ Schreiner, "Luke," in *Matthew-Luke*, 143.

private time that intimacy is developed and cultivated.¹²⁹ Just as in the natural realm, when a new couple spends time together, their level of intimacy deepens as they learn more about each other. Over time, the time spent together becomes increasingly precious and never seems enough. Thus, it is in the spirit realm. The believer recognizes the call to intimacy and longs to spend quality time with God through private prayer.

Praying without ceasing signifies a commitment to continuous communication with God. It goes beyond designated prayer times and suggests ongoing, conversational communication throughout the day. It expresses that prayer is not locked to formal and structured moments. So whether a person is actively conversing with God or attentively attuned to His needs and desires throughout the day, the silence does not diminish the relationship or break the connection but only reaffirms the intimacy.¹³⁰ Wiersbe defined “praying without ceasing,” as continuously recurring, not continuously occurring.”¹³¹ Understanding the meaning of 1 Thess 5:17 means understanding that the believer will never stop praying. This idea reinforces the teaching in Luke 18:1, in which Jesus taught his followers to be persistent in prayer.

The importance of personal time with God cannot be emphasized enough. Scripture teaches that Jesus often escaped the crowds and disciples to pray. In Luke 11:11, the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. Schreiner stated that they had to ask because He often prayed alone.¹³² Others, like Keller and Toolan, argued that the disciples had witnessed Jesus's

¹²⁹ Keller and Toolan, *Teach Us to Pray: One Hundred Daily Reflections on Jesus' Life of Prayer*, 143, 155, 167.

¹³⁰ Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament*, 728.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Schreiner, “Luke,” in *Matthew-Luke*, 143.

prayer life and asked Him to teach them because they wanted to pray like Him.¹³³ Scripture supports both perspectives because it teaches that Jesus often prayed privately (Luke 5:16; Matt 14:23; Mark 1:35; and Luke 22:39-41) and publicly (John 11:41-42; Mark 7:34-34; and John 12:27-30).

Intercession and the Providence of God

The word "providence" comes from the Latin *providentia*, which means foresight. However, it implies more than just seeing ahead—it refers to a thoughtful ordering of things and events according to a deliberate and intelligent plan. It assumes the wisdom to devise such a plan and the power to execute it.¹³⁴ In general biblical terms, providence speaks to God's active management and care over His creation and all living beings.¹³⁵ The Bible teaches that God has had an active role throughout human creation. It provides a historical record of God's providential works. Paul Helm held that God's providential care extends to all men, yet His purpose in each individual is to bring about His will, which is different.¹³⁶ So, the age-old question remains: If God is in control of everything and omnipotent, why should men pray? What role does IP have in the providential works of God? In his book, *In Providence & Prayer*, Tiessen asked and attempted to answer questions such as those and others: Is God's power affected by men's actions? Is God and man free to act, or does one restrain the other based on

¹³³ David G. R. Keller and Suzanne Toolan, *Teach Us to Pray: One Hundred Daily Reflections on Jesus' Life of Prayer* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015), 2.

¹³⁴ Norman Hillyer, *The Essential Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2001), 179; Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1994), Kindle Edition, Location 1602.

¹³⁵ Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 1727; Terrance L. Tiessen, *Providence and Prayer: How Does God Work in the World?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 15.

¹³⁶ Paul Helm, *The Providence of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 94-95.

their actions and decisions? If God has given man free will and power to act, what does that do to His power and free will?

He readily admitted to the difficulty of discussing prayer, specifically IP, regarding God's sovereignty and His actions in the world. He concluded that IP is not about changing God's will but about man aligning with God's plans. Petitionary prayer, as referred to in his book, is a vital part of the Christian life, whether God answers prayers as prayed and hoped for or not. He said this type of prayer brings the believer closer to God, strengthening their faith, trust, and reliance on God's providence. All prayer brings the believer in alignment with God's divine purpose. Tiessen's stance is not unique, as other prominent and noteworthy philosophers and theologians adhere to this belief.¹³⁷ For example, Origen, one of the most influential Christian theologians of the Church Era, asserted that the intent of prayer was not to change God's mind or make Him do what one wanted but to bring the person into subjection to the will of God. He defended the belief that prayer could influence the plan of God but understood it in the sense that as Christians pray and connect with God, they actively partner with His divine will. God, in His great wisdom and foreknowledge, built man's free will into His divine plan and decided for man to partner with Him in creation to bring about His providential plan for creation.¹³⁸ Like most, he readily acknowledged God's providence and conceded that the same God commands His people to come to Him in prayer.

Others, like Helm, a British theologian and philosopher, firmly believed that God controls and ordains everything that happens, and that prayer is a means by which believers

¹³⁷ Tiessen, *Providence and Prayer*, 18-20.

¹³⁸ Origen, *On Prayer*, trans. William A. Curtis (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010), chap. 3-4, Kindle.

communicate with God. Still, it is not a way to change God's eternal plan. In *The Providence of God*, Helm discusses prayer within the context of God's sovereign control over the world and the relationship between divine providence and human responsibility. He believes prayer aligns the believer with God's will and allows them to participate in His providential order.¹³⁹ Prayer changes the human mind and will and aligns it with God's predetermined plans. For Helm, prayer does not alter God's will but is a tool by which God accomplishes His providential will for His creation. Robert Swinburne, another British philosopher of religion and Christian theologian known for his arguments on the existence of God, the problem of evil, and theism, also argued along those same lines; however, with a few variations when discussing the role of prayer in God's providence.

Swinburne defended the idea that prayer can affect God's actions within the framework of free will and divine providence. He agreed with Helm when he suggested that prayer is a way for individuals to cooperate with God's will but diverted a bit when he argued that God may take human prayers into account when ordering events, provided those prayers align with His greater purposes.¹⁴⁰ Unlike Helm, who does not believe prayer changes God's mind or plans, Swinburne discussed in his book, *In Providence and the Problem of Evil*, how human actions, including prayer, can influence God's providence. While the book primarily focuses on reconciling the existence of evil with divine providence, Swinburne argued that God's providential care for the world includes human participation through free will, moral choices, and actions such as prayer. He believed God does not answer all prayers, but there are times when He does answer some

¹³⁹ Helm, *The Providence of God*, 17-22.

¹⁴⁰ Richard Swinburne, *Providence and the Problem of Evil* (New York, NY: OUP Oxford, 1998), chap. 6.

prayers, but all by His will. To illustrate his point, he referenced two biblical instances where God did not answer the prayers of the Apostle Paul (2 Cor 12:7-9) and Jesus (Mark 14:36).¹⁴¹

Father Francis Selman also agreed that petitionary prayer can affect God's actions within the framework of divine providence. He contended that God integrates IP into His big plan and considers humankind's prayers when determining outcomes in the world. He views prayer and God's providence as an interactive event where God and man cooperate or team together as partners. Although he does not view God's providential plan as immutable, prayer does not force God to change His mind. Instead, prayer, he reasoned, is effective because, through prayer, man submits to cooperating with God's will. In this way, prayer is a part of God's providence.¹⁴²

Numerous scholars and theologians agreed that prayer must be by God's will and that prayer is aligning man's will with God's will. Monroe said that all prayer the believer engages in must align with God's plan for the world so that His purpose can be carried out. This idea speaks to partnering with God to accomplish His divine providence that others have adopted. He differed by emphasizing man's mandatory involvement in prayer, believing God's will on Earth would not be fulfilled without man's cooperation.¹⁴³ Like Monroe, Eivaz believes God's plan will not be accomplished unless man intercedes and invites God into the Earth's sphere.¹⁴⁴ God gave man dominion over the Earth and will not supersede His authority without permission; thus, they argued that human cooperation is essential for God's will to be accomplished on Earth.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Swinburne, *Providence and the Problem of Evil*, 115.

¹⁴² Francis Selman, *Providence and Prayer, Deeper Christianity Series* (London, England: Catholic Truth Society, 2017), 27-31.

¹⁴³ Monroe, *Understanding the Purpose and Power of Prayer*, 36-38.

¹⁴⁴ Eivas, *The Intercessors Handbook*, 46, 156.

¹⁴⁵ Monroe, *Understanding the Purpose and Power of Prayer*, 37; Eivas, *The Intercessors Handbook*, 44.

Petitionary prayer cannot be fully understood apart from God's providence, though Tiessen acknowledged it is an overlooked topic—one he hoped would be revived.¹⁴⁶ The theological question of whether and how petitionary prayer can influence circumstances or outcomes is complex and challenging. For those wondering if prayer is necessary when God has already determined His plans, there is assurance in knowing that one is partnering with the God of the universe to bring about His divine purpose.

IP is essential to the Christian life. Furthermore, it is a commandment and a powerful practice. It shapes the one praying and the world around them when understood in God's sovereign will. Jesus' confidence in prayer stemmed from His knowledge of and alignment with the Father's will.¹⁴⁷ As the church's ultimate example, believers are called to follow His lead, seeking and praying according to the Father's will.

Theoretical Foundations

Based on similar research and current literature, theoretical constructs of intercession will be reviewed. Specifically, this section will explore the doctrine, the purpose, and the power of the IP ministry. It will also consider past projects and studies on IP that have guided and informed this research. Finally, it will look at some current practices in the ministry field regarding how ministries conduct IP. The goal was not only to impart information but to cause a reaction that would produce insight, wisdom, and excitement to help cultivate a lifestyle of prayer that would be maintained. Bounds noted in *Power Through Prayer* that true ministry cannot flourish without a serious and dedicated prayer foundation.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Tiessen, *Providence and Prayer*, 15-16.

¹⁴⁷ Monroe, *Understanding the Purpose and Power of Prayer*, 40.

¹⁴⁸ Bounds, *Power Through Prayer*, 31.

The Doctrine of the Ministry of Intercessory Prayer

Believers are commanded to pray all the time (1 Thess 5:17) and to pray all kinds of prayers. Prayers of intercession are prayers that are rendered on behalf of someone else.¹⁴⁹ The ministry of intercession or praying for others is a selfless and often thankless job because most of the praying is done secretly. Intercessors are not usually center stage but are often hidden away in their secret places. True prayer must be developed in a secret place (to create that intimacy) before it can impact the public place. It must be prayed out of a sincere heart and rendered with a forgiving spirit.¹⁵⁰

Intercession is an act done on behalf of another; therefore, it is paramount that the intercessor relies on the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit because believers do not know what to pray for (Rom 8:26). Undoubtedly, the intercessor must understand the role of Christ and the Holy Spirit to be effective as one called to “stand in the gap.” Christ sits at the Father's right-hand pleading for the saints, while the Holy Spirit pleads from within the believer out to the Father with groaning that cannot be spoken in human words. Curtis Mitchell wrote, “It is the Holy Spirit that makes intercession for the believer because when it comes to prayer, Christians are ignorant.”¹⁵¹ Mitchell adopted a bold perspective on the human struggle with prayer, but it is essential to remember that the intercessor’s work is undeniably in partnership with God's sovereign plans.

¹⁴⁹ Lawless, *The Potential and Power of Prayer*, 40.

¹⁵⁰ Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament*, 22-23.

¹⁵¹ Curtis C. Mitchell, “The Holy Spirit’s Intercessory Ministry,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139, no. 555 (July 1982): 230–42, accessed September 27, 2023, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a6h&AN=ATLA0000793741&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

IP is so vital that God has called intercessors to pray to partner with Him from the beginning.¹⁵² Jesus said, “When you pray.” Every Christian has the duty to pray.¹⁵³ Without prayer as a priority of the Christian life, the believer is doomed to fail. In his book *Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church*, Onwuchekwa called it spiritual suicide when believers do not pray.¹⁵⁴ Forsyth followed suit in *The Soul of Prayer* and stated, “The worst sin is prayerlessness.”¹⁵⁵ These are strong critiques against those who call themselves Christians but disobey the command to pray. Bounds lent his voice to the conversation as well and expounded on this point when he said, “Every preacher who does not make prayer a mighty factor in his own life and ministry is weak as a factor in God’s work and is powerless to advance God’s cause in the world.”¹⁵⁶ Although he used the word ‘preacher,’ his message can be applied to all Christians because he stated that he wrote this book for Christians who want to be mighty men and women of prayer.

The intercessor's purpose and power are a force to be reckoned with. Jesus said that because He was going to the Father, His followers would do greater works (John 14:12). Jesus could only do the works He did because he spent time with the Father, cultivating an intimate relationship through prayer.¹⁵⁷ That same power is available to the church today. No Christian, especially a Christian leader, should neglect the role of intercession. Prayer is the believer's

¹⁵² Jack W. Hayford, *Prayer is Invading the Impossible*, 1st ed. (Alachua, FL: Bridge-Logos, 1977), 134.

¹⁵³ Smith, *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God Through Prayer*, 211.

¹⁵⁴ John Onwuchekwa, *Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 39.

¹⁵⁵ P.T. Forsyth, *The Soul of Prayer* (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 9.

¹⁵⁶ Bounds, *Power Through Prayer*, 13.

¹⁵⁷ Smith, *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God Through Prayer*, 17.

power source. If the church wants to see the power of God displayed in the world, the church will have to pray more fervently. It is only through the lives of praying believers that God's power is demonstrated. Although the believer does not always know what to pray for, the power of God through the working of the Holy Spirit equips the believer to pray mighty and effective prayers that reach heaven and cause God to move.¹⁵⁸

Exploring the Foundations: Past Contributions to Intercessory Prayer

Many Christians are familiar with IP because most churches have dedicated services to pray for others. Depending on the church, this may be a daily or weekly corporate or individual setting. Regardless of the scheduled time and format, most churches consistently pray for others and the world around them. Why, then, is it that so many abandon their calling as intercessors? Why are so many Christians not praying for themselves and others? Why has prayer become burdensome, frustrating, and often seen as a last resort? To pray for others is not a calling for a particular group of super-Christians but a calling given to all who believe in Jesus and follow His commandments. Many scholars have considered such questions and have set out to answer them in their research. Monroe said people give up because they start to believe that God only answers the prayers of the "super-spiritual."¹⁵⁹ The Body of Christ has a skewed understanding of prayer and what it means to pray effectively. Instead of a time of joy and intimacy with the Lord, prayer has become a spiritual chore that, at its worst, leaves people feeling frustrated and discouraged.

These misconceptions about prayer ultimately lead to unsuccessful prayer lives and lives in general. Monroe sees the connection between a lack of understanding of the how and the why

¹⁵⁸ Forsyth, *The Soul of Prayer*, 61.

¹⁵⁹ Monroe, *Understanding the Purpose and Power of Prayer*, 21.

behind prayer and a believer's lack of power and purpose in intercession.¹⁶⁰ To be effective intercessors, the believer must know and understand the principles of effective prayer.

Considering some of the ideas shared by Myles Monroe, Chuck Lawless, and Alice Smith about the importance of IP and the need for more training and development in that area of ministry, the researcher sought out other projects to gain practical knowledge about what they are doing in various ministry settings across the world. Studying their framework allowed the researcher to build a similar model by incorporating some of their teaching formats, such as online Bible lessons and a retreat event. Other things, such as lesson content and time frames, were adapted to the needs and goals of DPM leaders. Overall, an eight-week teaching format incorporating Bible lessons on prayer and practical application seemed the right fit. The researcher discovered no prevailing standard for conducting interventions, as they were in various formats—in-person, online, or hybrid. As a result, they chose a hybrid format, aiming to leverage the advantages of both methods.

Shana Goodson

Shana Goodson completed her Doctor of Ministry project for Oral Robert's University, titled "Increasing the Knowledge of Intercessory Prayer Through a Seminar at One Time Breakthrough Ministries Incorporated." Her study sought to increase the project's participants' knowledge of IP and to give them tools to identify characteristics of the gift of intercession. Intending to raise Spirit-filled intercessors in the ministry to pray effective prayers using the Scriptures, Shana developed a project methodology that consisted of Bible lessons on biblical characters who were prayer warriors, a study of the Lord's prayer, and other practical exercises related to prayer to strengthen the participants' prayer lives. These events were held over two

¹⁶⁰ Monroe, *Understanding the Purpose and Power of Prayer*, 20-21.

days in a conference room at a local hotel. The project sought to answer two questions: would teaching the Lord's prayer increase spiritual growth, and would that same teaching help Christians understand the ministry of IP and their callings as intercessors?

Goodson considered the problem of the members of the ministry due to their lack of knowledge of IP and the underlying issues that arose because of that and hypothesized that if the participants completed the intervention, they would increase their understanding of IP, they would develop a more robust prayer life by systematically praying the Lord's prayer, they would grow in their spirituality and relationship with the Lord, and finally that the Spirit of unity would bring about greater fellowship and unity among the members as they learned to pray for one another. There was a heavy focus on balancing theory and practice. Therefore, the curriculum was designed to promote active engagement in the prayer exercises over the two days.

This project takes on some of the same characteristics as Goodson's project regarding the heavy focus on using the Scripture as a foundation for prayer and the importance of incorporating a study on the Lord's prayer. The drive to seek out a lesson that broke down the components of the Lord's prayer into segments that could be studied and prayed out to bring structure and revelation to the prayers was borne from this intervention. The curriculum outlines were easy to follow and provided much lesson content that the researcher adopted for her project. For example, the information on the gift and ministry of intercession was something the researcher had never studied before, so the opportunity to study something new and then teach it as a part of the intervention was exciting and a blessing. Additionally, the focus on the Lord's prayer and the blueprint for the breakdown of how to study it line by line brought new perspectives and insights into how vital the Lord's prayer was as a starting point for building a successful and lasting prayer life.

The research studied Goodson's project and the results as she built her intervention and found many valuable ideas and study tools to incorporate into the intervention for DPM.

However, DPM of the significant differences between these two projects was the time frame of the intervention. Goodson's project only covered an 11.5-hour time frame, which the researcher believed was insufficient for the leaders of DPM. There was lesson content in the two days that the researcher believed required more class and practical application time to work through more comprehensively. There were also some great activities incorporated into Goodson's program that the researcher noted but ultimately decided not to use in this initial intervention.

Specifically, the Prayer Partner Hunt and the Prayer Wheel are two activities the researcher plans to adopt in future course iterations.

The researcher primarily drew on Goodson's curriculum to develop, guide, and enrich her project's lesson content, which was later integrated into different intervention elements.

However, using surveys before and after the intervention to evaluate growth was a critical idea that this project adopted to measure efficacy. Using the pre-and post-survey results, Goodson quantitatively measured the success of the two-day prayer seminar and retreat. Qualitative results from the interviews and testimonies of the participants also supported a successful intervention. Her hypothesis was proven true. Participants who attended the prayer seminar and retreat increased their knowledge of IP. In the end, Goodson made a profound observation that caught the researcher's attention and caused the researcher to go back and reflect on their motives and personal relationship with Jesus. Goodson said, "Ultimately, the success of the prayer seminar and retreat will depend on the leader's spirituality."¹⁶¹ The leader must lead by example from a place of relationship with the Lord and not just from a knowledge base.

¹⁶¹ Goodson, "Increasing the Knowledge of Intercessory Prayer through a Seminar at On Time Breakthrough Ministries, Inc.", 202.

Dock Su Kim

Dock Su Kim completed his doctoral project on IP, focusing on the correlation between understanding biblical IP and greater intimacy with God. The project was titled *Strengthening Biblical Intercessory Prayer Ministry in the Church*. He structured his project around several key issues: 1) a lack of understanding of biblical intercession, a deficiency in intimacy with God, 2) a failure to intercede for others, an overwhelming trend of Christians praying only for themselves, and 3) a common misconception that longer prayers are inherently more effective. The key issues he explored, except for the misconception that longer prayers are intrinsically more effective, were the concerns the researcher wrestled with regarding the leaders of DPM. The layout of Kim's project was very structured and detailed, especially since the church he studied, Heavenly Hope Church, had never had an IP ministry in all its thirty years of existence. Kim's intervention included one week of preparation, four weeks of teaching IP, four weeks of practical application conducted on Sunday mornings, and finally, one week of data collection.

Kim did not use surveys in the traditional sense to measure the effectiveness of the program; instead used a Spiritual Assessment Inventory tool and an Altruistic Personality Scale. The first tool measures relationships about the awareness of God and a relationship with God. At the same time, the Altruistic Personality Scale is a 20-item questionnaire designed to assess an individual's tendency toward altruistic behavior, particularly actions directed toward helping strangers. It measures how frequently a person engages in selfless, prosocial acts without expecting anything in return. Participants were asked to complete a pre-and post-test. Those results were compared to prove their hypotheses. His four hypotheses were a product of the critical issues surrounding his study. If participants attended his workshop, they would increase

their understanding of biblical IP, grow in intimacy with God, stop praying selfishly, and increase their capacity to love others as they intercede for others. His results showed a direct correlation between understanding IP and a greater intimacy with God. Specifically, the results showed that the mean of the post-test scores was greater than that of the pretest scores.¹⁶²

What was most impressive about Kim's intervention was that it comprised participants who had never been involved in IP and produced a higher level of intimacy in their relationships with God over an eight-week intervention. Based on the intervention's focus, time frame, and results, the researcher decided to use this structure with a few modifications to implement the DPM eight-week IP workshop.

Seeking to study the correlation between understanding prayer and intimacy with God, the researcher liked Kim's eight-week layout but decided to hold two classes a week instead of just the one he held. The researcher felt that the curriculum they had designed could be more effective by holding more weekly classes. Additionally, they concluded it should be successful based on Kim's framework since he only held four classes and four practicum sessions. Also, Kim had all his classes in person at the chapel, so the researcher added an in-person retreat to incorporate some in-person elements into the training. During the retreat, participants would have the opportunity to fellowship, pray, study, and work together to build more cohesion and unity.

Sherilyn Howard

Sherilyn Howard completed her doctoral project on a fascinating study of African American men and prayer. Titled *The Prayer Life of the African American Christian Men*, she

¹⁶² Dock Su Kim, "Strengthening Biblical Intercessory Prayer Ministry in the Church" (PhD diss., Talbot School of Theology, 2019), 79, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

looked at the man's role in the home leading prayer and found a lack of men leading their families in prayer. Her intervention was designed to challenge men to take their places as Godly men who were unafraid to stand in the power God had given them through prayer as they led their families to God. Howard found that men were leaving the praying up to women and that this was a generational problem because younger men were growing up only seeing women pray in the home.¹⁶³ The project aimed to teach the men how to pray and lead their families in prayer. She hypothesized that if African American men were better equipped, they would gain greater confidence in their prayer lives. By participating in the program, they would acquire tools to become stronger men of prayer, as the classes offered a comprehensive understanding of African American men's experiences—beginning with the impact of slavery on their mental and spiritual health and culminating in their present identity in God.

The curriculum was crafted to guide the men on a transformative journey from fear and brokenness to strength and leadership, helping them see themselves as God sees them. The intervention comprised an eight-week course containing eight Men's Prayer Classes via Zoom, focus groups, interviews, and surveys. The researcher adopted the idea of measuring results by prayer meeting attendance when reading how Howard used the men's attendance in prayer and on the prayer conference calls as a measurement. New Life Gospel Center conducted prayer five times a week, and few men attended the weekly prayer events. Howard reported that of the approximately thirty members on the call, only six were men. During prayer meetings at the church, only two to three men attended compared to twelve to fourteen women. This study

¹⁶³ Sherilyn Ann Howard, "The Prayer Life of The African American Christian Men at New Life Gospel Center Cleveland, Ohio" (PhD diss., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 12, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

categorized participants into age groups: Four men aged 18-30, 2 men aged 31-45, three men aged 46-60, and five men 60 and over.¹⁶⁴ Howard intentionally recruited a multi-generational group of men (18 to 80) to get a broad spectrum of viewpoints with specific age categories, recognizing that individuals within the same age range often share common understandings and beliefs shaped by their collective life experiences. Additionally, Howard's group was not focused on leaders but on men generally. One participant was, however, a new leader in the church.

The question before the church was why more men were not attending the prayer meetings and were not being prayer role models in their homes. She sought to encourage and mentor the men by developing a program based on books and study guides by Monroe and Evans. Through the curriculum, the men were being transformed and growing in knowledge and confidence, yet their attendance in the corporate prayer did not increase after participating in the intervention. Some of the men still felt uncomfortable praying out loud and preferred to pray in the privacy of their homes. So, their prayer time at home was the most remarkable improvement. Although all expectations were not met, the intervention plan was successful overall, and Howard said it yielded results that exceeded her expectations. She continued saying that throughout the eight-week class, most men invited others to attend, and by the end of the intervention, nineteen men were in attendance. Even after the intervention, the men committed to continuing to pray together weekly.¹⁶⁵

The researcher liked this study on prayer regarding African American men because it shed some light on Black men and women and the unique challenges they face in the church and the home. This insight contributed to the researcher knowing how to tailor lessons to the

¹⁶⁴ Howard, "The Prayer Life of The African American Christian Men at New Life Gospel Center Cleveland, Ohio," 96.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 147.

audience's experiences and be mindful of sensitive areas to navigate appropriately with respect and dignity. Although not all components were directly lent to the DPM study, the researcher found the books and workbooks by various authors and theologians in this study instrumental when seeking additional independent sources to enhance the material already gleaned from previous projects. The extra sources provided greater depth and clarity to the lesson content the researcher was developing. Also, Howard's questions, pulled from Munroe's book, *Understand the Purpose and Power of Prayer: Earthly License for Heavenly Interference*, guided the researcher in developing questions for the focus group sessions. Questions that centered on whether God hears His children when they pray. What happens when God does not answer prayers? What do participants believe about prayer? What is prayer? The eight-week format also solidified the researcher's decision to go with an eight-week format. For the content being taught, it seemed eight weeks was short enough to keep participants' attention and attendance and long enough to have sufficient time to cover the lessons in depth.

Contemporary Approaches to Intercessory Prayer Ministry

Lawless often spoke about making prayer a fundamental characterization of what he calls prayer DNA. When a church is known for its commitment to prayer, it is one with prayer in its DNA.¹⁶⁶ But how does a church develop this prayer DNA? This was an essential question for this project, as the researcher sought to emphasize the value of the leaders at DPM cultivating a life of prayer. Lawless was not proposing entirely new ideas but suggested enhancing the churches' existing practices. By prioritizing prayer in worship services, scheduling regular church-wide prayer gatherings, incorporating prayer training into new member classes, appointing prayer coordinators across ministry groups, and hosting an annual one- or two-day

¹⁶⁶ Lawless, *The Potential and Power of Prayer*, 4.

prayer workshop, he believed churches could cultivate a community of stronger prayer warriors.¹⁶⁷ The researcher would like to discuss these ideas with the leaders of DPM and ask if they might consider establishing prayer coordinators for the various ministries within the church. These ideas can be discussed during the eight-week prayer workshop. The ideal goal is to designate one leader over a ministry to teach lay members and leaders, how to pray and mentor junior members to take over and assume that role permanently.

Lastly, the researcher used several ideas from Tricia Blackford's book *Creative Prayer and Intercession: Direction and Fresh Ideas to Lead Groups in Dynamic and Effective Intercession Experiences* for the IP workshop. One idea addressed the problem of praying the Scriptures. The activity involved participants reading a passage of Scripture and then praying based on it.¹⁶⁸ Another activity utilized was praying with a partner. Blackford called this activity partner and paper.¹⁶⁹ Participants also engaged in listening prayers designed to teach them the principle of prayer as a dialogue. They not only prayed but waited to hear God's response. Blackford reported success with some of the activities in her book, so the researcher believed that using these in the intervention would bring a positive outcome.

¹⁶⁷ Lawless, *The Potential and Power of Prayer*, 128-136.

¹⁶⁸ Tricia Blackford and Lisa Purdy, *Creative Prayer and Intercession: Direction and Fresh Ideas to Lead Groups in Dynamic and Effective Intercession Experiences* (Blackford, 2020), 24, Kindle.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 26.

Spiritual Warfare Intercessory Ministry Model (SWIM)

Sentinels for Christ (SFC) is an international organization emphasizing IP and spiritual warfare. As a group of praying disciples, they have established a successful model for raising strong intercessors in the ministry. Their IP model is called SWIM, which stands for Spiritual Warfare Intercessory Ministry. The ministry focuses on four major themes gleaned from the teachings of Jesus and others who have proven effective in building strong prayer foundations. SFC's goal is to serve the Body of Christ and fight in the Spirit effectively and scripturally, basing their ministry model on Acts 13:1-2-. The reference to Acts 13:1-2 suggests that SFC draws inspiration from the early Christian community's commitment to prayer and fasting as they sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This aligns with their goal of equipping the Body of Christ to engage in effective spiritual warfare. The four essential themes are Regularity, Relationship, Training, and Proclamation. The following breakdown looks at the critical components of their ministry model, SWIM.¹⁷⁰

Regularity. The first component is regularity, which is the ingredient that produces relationships. This theme emphasizes the importance of consistent and disciplined prayer. Regularity in prayer is often seen as crucial for building a solid spiritual foundation and connection with God and other believers. For their specific purposes, SWIM defines regularity as a physical coming together regularly to worship and seek God. Believers cannot have a relationship with God or others unless significant and regular time is invested in the relationship.

Relationship. Relationship is about understanding the people being served and knowing what gifts and talents they bring to the table that will enhance the prayer group and ultimately

¹⁷⁰ Sentinel For Christ. "SWIM – Spiritual Warfare Intercessory Ministry." <https://sentinelforchrist.com/spiritual-warfare-intercessory-ministry>.

advance the Kingdom of God. Just as Jesus spent much time with his disciples over the three years He was on Earth, so must believers spend time together cultivating those relationships and getting to know one another.

Training. Training in the context of SWIM refers to educating and equipping individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective IP. This should include understanding spiritual warfare principles, learning to pray effectively, studying the Scriptures, and a hands-on component. J.R. Grier, the founder of SFC, said a great leader should never start a training program without first seeking the Spirit for direction and information on how to proceed and what training is needed.

Proclamation. Proclamation suggests boldly declaring God's truth and promises. It shares the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, his life, death, and resurrection. By proclaiming the gospel, we are proclaiming God's glory.

Overall, the SWIM model provides a simple and workable framework that can be used in the church to develop strong IP teams. As an organization, SWIM is dedicated to fostering a prayerful community committed to regular and disciplined prayer and emphasizes the importance of building strong relationships with God. Additionally, by providing training in spiritual warfare and providing the tools needed for believers to proclaim the truths of the faith boldly, they have created a framework that is capable of both providing structure and direction while also maintaining its flexibility to be tailored to the diverse ministries that seek out the program.

Spiritual Growth Through Disciplined Prayer

While understanding the importance of developing prayer leaders committed to IP, it is essential to understand the role spiritual formation has in the lives of believers and human

development in general. Christian spiritual formation, defined from a Biblical worldview, is a life-long process that requires the cooperation of the whole person with the Holy Spirit. It emphasizes the continual transformation of individuals into the likeness of Jesus Christ.¹⁷¹ This complete surrender of the entire life encompasses what Ted Ward identified as the six dimensions of the human person. They are physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual. Though Ward's primary focus was not on prayer, his ideas on spiritual formation and human development could be applied to the reasoning that prayer fosters spiritual growth and discipline across all dimensions of the human person. He argued that these components are interrelated; if one area is undisciplined, the person's spiritual growth will be affected. He pointed out that Christians cannot grow spiritually without neglecting these areas in life.¹⁷² Rather than exclusively focusing on solving problems, there exists a need to concentrate on human and spiritual development, as the problem may merely be a symptom of a deeper issue related to spiritual growth.¹⁷³ Therefore, this research project could not neglect understanding Christian spiritual formation's role and how it influenced participants' responses, capacity, and willingness to grow.

Christian spiritual formation and prayer are deeply interconnected. Praying, as Jesus teaches, engages every facet of one's being. According to Maddix, effective spiritual formation involves nurturing and developing all aspects of the human person. Physically, prayer can take on different postures, such as standing with arms raised in surrender, kneeling, or bowing—each

¹⁷¹ Mark A. Maddox, "Spiritual Formation and Christian Formation," in *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development*, ed. James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim (Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2010), 240.

¹⁷² Ibid., 262-266.

¹⁷³ Ernest T. Stringer and Alfredo Ortiz Aragón, *Action Research*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2020), 287.

representing submission and reverence. Intellectually, prayer requires focus, especially during meditation and reflection on God's Word. Many seek solitude during prayer, following Jesus' example, who often withdrew from the crowds and even His disciples to pray. Emotionally, prayer evokes varied responses, from joy to tears, exuberant praise to quiet reflection, shifting in a moment as one engages with God. The healing aspect of prayer is particularly noteworthy. It is a comforting mechanism that brings solace in times of uncertainty, pain, grief, or loss, underscoring its profound role in our lives.

Prayer deepens believers' relationship with God as they draw closer to Him and become more in sync with His will. IP likewise deepens the believer's relationship with God and man, as consistent communication with God in prayer for others produces greater empathy, unity, and awareness of the needs of others, which lends directly to the social dimension of the person. In a corporate setting, prayer brings people together and creates a common goal and purpose for the local church. This prayer turns outward, builds communities, and fosters trust and support within relationships. It concerns community and intercession, while the moral aspect turns inward and focuses on the self. Understanding how prayer engages the moral aspect of the human person is to believe it shapes a person's character and ethics. Prayer reshapes the believer in the image of Christ, stripping away the world's attitudes and beliefs. The new man being formed is deeply rooted in God's will and Word (Rom 12:2). Prayer is a spiritual discipline at its core. It strengthens faith, fosters intimacy with God, and encourages a deep reliance on divine guidance and grace. Donald Whitney said that Jesus expects believers to pray and that God's Word clarifies it.¹⁷⁴ God knows that if His people would pray, it would produce spiritual focus, insight,

¹⁷⁴ Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for Christian Life (Revised and Updated)* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014), 80.

and revelation. It brings inner transformation and increases resiliency and faith in times of uncertainty and distress. Whitney challenged his readers to take small, practical, essential steps to build a robust prayer life.

Practical Implementation

Learn to Pray

Prayer must be learned, just as a baby learns to speak. Growing from infancy to adolescence to adulthood occurs in stages, and prayer must also grow and mature in stages. This lifestyle is cultivated through a disciplined and dedicated life of praying and spending time in the Word of God.¹⁷⁵ Prayer must be learned and practiced, or it will continue to be fruitless and frustrating. Whitney suggested reading books on prayer to learn from the great prayer warriors and seeking a prayer mentor or partner.¹⁷⁶

Meditate and Pray God's Word

Whitney discussed meditation as the missing component between reading the Bible and praying. He said that after reading a passage of Scripture, meditation allows the person time to reflect and digest the Word of God before responding to God about what was just read. Meditation creates a conversation with God based on what He has said in His Word. This process brings meaning and purpose to prayer as each subsequent verse continues to speak, prompting a response.¹⁷⁷ A good rule of thumb is to pray the Word of God if one does not know what to pray. Believers put Him in remembrance of His Word when they pray it back to Him (Isaiah 43:26).

¹⁷⁵ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for Christian Life*, 84-85.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 96.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 86.

Pray and Keep Praying

Jesus commands us to pray. He told His disciples and, in turn, the Body of Christ this numerous times. In verse four of chapter four of Colossians, believers are admonished to continue steadfastly in prayer, and in First Thessalonians 5:17, they are told to pray without ceasing. Jesus said to keep praying because everyone who asks receives, referring to the words asked, sought, and knocked in Matthew 7:7-8. The answers to some prayers are not always immediate or evident because God may try to increase a person's faith, develop an aspect of their character, and cultivate a deeper appreciation. Perhaps there is something amiss in the prayer. Whatever the reason, the believer can rest knowing that when God calls His children to pray, He will always provide.¹⁷⁸ An old saying goes, "He may not come when you want Him, but He is always on time."

Make Time for Prayer

Lawless advocated for churches to become so rooted in prayer that it becomes a part of their DNA. Prayer must be prioritized in the church's life to do this. Praying pastors, leaders, and lay members must schedule personal and corporate prayer time. In his book *Potential and Power of Prayer*, Lawless offered simple solutions for churches to make prayer time structured and intentional and to hold people accountable. The number of prayer meetings has declined over the years, and often, congregations come together to pray after a crisis has unfolded. Lawless believed prayer meetings could once again become the heartbeat of the church when leaders prioritize them and put them on the schedule. These same strategies must be applied to individual

¹⁷⁸ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for Christian Life*, 86, 94, 97.

prayer lives as well. He believed those serving in the ministry should also be strongly committed to prayer and willing to grow.¹⁷⁹

Conclusion

The research project examined biblical and literary sources relating to prayer and IP, building on past studies and current practices within the ministry. Theoretical constructs and previous studies offer valuable insight into the transformative impact of intercession, serving as a foundation for developing more effective prayer ministries. These studies have revealed a consistent concern across literature: a lack of understanding of IP and prayer in general, mainly from a lack of teaching on the subject. This gap is particularly significant for the leaders of DPM, who benefited significantly from both the biblical and practical insights gained through this research. Once they experienced the intimacy prayer brings through this teaching, the church saw leaders who consistently turned to prayer as their first response and relied on it in their ministry.

Leaders experienced biblical and practical education and training throughout the project. The project aimed to equip DPM leaders with the necessary tools to make prayer a foundational aspect of their leadership and personal lives. By defining and contrasting terms such as prayer and IP, the goal was to provide leaders with knowledge and understanding of the purpose and power of prayer. By studying Scripture, the goal was that prayers would become more powerful, intentional, and effective. By spending time with God, the goal was that leaders would grow in intimacy with God, thereby reshaping their lives and the spiritual lives of the congregation.

¹⁷⁹ Lawless, *Potential and Power of Prayer*, 127-137.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The researcher's methodology addressed the problem identified in chapter one: Why do the leaders at DPM lack a comprehensive understanding of the purpose and power of prayer and its connection to intimacy with God? Here, the researcher explained the design of the project intervention created for leaders at DPM. The intervention design included the purpose and objectives, the tasks to be done, settings, participation requirements, and a detailed account of the necessary preparation and processes of the project design. A step-by-step account was essential so the researcher could broadly show the different methodologies used to gather data and what that meant to this study and the Body of Christ. The researcher collaborated with leaders across the ministry during an eight-week IP course to develop best practices that are sustainable, empowering, and beneficial to both individual leaders and the congregation at large. The methodology section concluded with a descriptive and detailed account of the DMin intervention project activities, sharing successes and challenges.

Intervention Design

The purpose of this DMin action research project was to create an eight-week prayer course utilizing Bible studies, prayer exercises, journaling, and group intercession activities. This proposed intervention plan focused on educating, equipping, and challenging the DPM leaders to grow in prayer and intimacy with God, reigniting their passion and fervor for prayer. Therefore, developing a course on prayer for the leaders of DPM needed to be practical, relevant, and relatable. The researcher knew the importance of prayer and its power to the church, so the workshop had to be based on biblical truths and practices that leaders could grasp and put into immediate practice. If the leaders could overcome their lack of knowledge concerning IP, they would be an unstoppable force in the Kingdom of God. Paul said men ought to always pray and

never faint, but the leaders at DPM had begun to lose their zeal. They needed to rekindle a heart for the passion and fire of prayer. The prayer workshop was designed to provide just that.

The workshop effectively challenged participants to step outside their comfort zones without overwhelming them, as the intervention was thoughtfully designed to avoid being overly demanding or time-consuming. The course and retreat curriculum had to be flexible enough to manage change yet structured enough to meet the research objectives successfully. The six objectives are listed below:

1. Articulate the distinction between prayer and IP
2. Enhance the effectiveness of their prayers by incorporating the Word of God
3. Participate in and lead IP sessions on Thursday nights
4. Cultivate confidence in praying publicly
5. Develop a consistent prayer habit
6. Acquire the skills to mentor a junior leader or lay member in prayer

The researcher assessed the success of this DMin thesis project by evaluating the class's proficiency in meeting each of the six-course objectives.

The curriculum included both instructional content and practical application. The weekly lessons included homework reflection questions and prompts that required participants' attention to keep them engaged with the material throughout the week. Still, the assignments could be done in thirty minutes or less. Every Sunday, a new lesson outline for the week was uploaded into Microsoft Teams so the participants could prepare for the upcoming class. The outlines were simple enough that participants could take them and create new lessons from the content or share them with friends and family as Bible or word studies.

The Set-up

The researcher believes intimacy with God through prayer should be the church's and leaders' priority. This conviction led the researcher to create a prayer course, believing that miracles occur when the prayers of the righteous move the heart of God. An example is when Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God. Their prayers and songs caused a great earthquake that opened all the prison doors and loosed all the prisoners' chains (Acts 16: 25-34). Their prayers brought deliverance to the jailhouse, not just their cell, and caused the jailer to ask, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16: 30, NIV). The power of prayer can deliver individuals and communities. Laubach declared, "Prayer can accomplish anything."¹⁸⁰

DPM leaders must be bold, step forward, and pray. Through their prayers, God manifests His presence, ushering in breakthroughs, revival, and a more profound revelation of Himself. Without the prayers of the righteous, especially those in leadership, the vital connection between God and His people is severed, hindering the transmission of divine instructions and guidance to the church. Prayer, as communication with God, is indispensable for discerning His will and receiving direction for His people. Therefore, DPM leadership cannot afford to neglect or diminish IP ministry.

Considering these deeply held beliefs regarding IP and the personal connections to some participants, the researcher was mindful of potential biases and assumptions that could cloud the project's judgment. The researcher was acquainted with several leaders personally and felt some should be more advanced in their prayer lives than they were. The researcher also assumed that some leaders who never volunteered for prayer should step up, lead some sessions, and mentor junior members. The researcher sought counsel from a local church elder not affiliated with

¹⁸⁰ Laubach, *Prayer: The Mightiest Force in the World*, 9, 12.

DPM to mitigate these biases and avoid premature judgment rooted in feelings and assumptions about what leaders should know. The elder provided advice and acted as a sounding board throughout the intervention project.

The outside counsel equipped the researcher with the skills to separate personal views from the reality of the intervention project. The church elder's wisdom brought balance to the project by continually reminding the researcher that these challenges were not unique to DPM and should not be taken personally. Although the project focused on DPM, the issues reflected a broader concern within the body of Christ. For example, Lawless cried that the church is not praying and is raising a generation of prayerless leaders.¹⁸¹ Such a statement underscores the critical importance of prayer ministries.

Bringing all things to bear, the researcher witnessed the effects of not understanding the purpose and power of prayer and its correlation with intimacy with God on the leaders and developed the IP course. The intervention project used a multi-phased approach consisting of an initial and post-focus group session, a pre-and post-survey, and an eight-week instructional and practical application curriculum. Participants also had journal assignments due weekly. These journal assignments would be a personal record of the growth and maturity of the participants as they grew in their understanding and knowledge of prayer and left behind the fear that plagued many when it came to praying in a public setting. Providing participants with a safe environment to share their experiences regarding the lack of prayer teaching and training would empower them to be open and transparent about their spiritual journeys. Additionally, facilitating discussions among participants allowed the researcher to gain valuable insights into the specific needs of the leaders.

¹⁸¹ Lawless, *Potential and Power of Prayer*, 7-10.

The participants' joint experiences provided greater clarity and insight into how to construct effective practical solutions to this problem concerning prayer. As a result, the researcher could adapt and refine lessons in response to the identified needs, ensuring the course content effectively addressed urgent concerns. Lastly, allowing the leaders to get involved in the lessons early on and giving them a voice in the material gave them a sense of ownership, creating an internal excitement and a greater desire to pray.

Project Overview

The course spanned a ten-week window with two weeks dedicated to administrative-type tasks for the researcher at the front and back of the course, seven weeks focused on curriculum instruction and practical experiences related to prayer, followed by one week dedicated to organizing a two-day modified retreat event (see Appendix A). While the original retreat was cancelled due to a lack of participation, the researcher hosted a modified version via Zoom to ensure the objective of the retreat event could still be met. Week One officially began the ten-week course and was committed to finalizing the curricula and schedule, gathering necessary materials and forms from participants, completing administrative tasks, and ensuring everyone could access the platforms needed to start class. Weeks Two through Six consisted of curriculum instruction on IP, followed by two weeks comprised of four consecutive practicum events. During this time, participants applied what they learned in previous weeks through experiential exercises and group research, culminating with a two-day modified retreat, during Week Nine. The final week, Week Ten, was for the collection and organization of the data.

The teaching of IP through a ten-week course validated the project thesis, illustrating the positive impact of IP on a believer's life and intimate relationship with God. The participants were recruited based on their status as leaders in the ministry. Leaders of DPM consisted of those

who were in a leadership role in the past, current leaders, and those currently in leadership or ministry training. The recruitment flyers and announcements provided a synopsis of the course and what participants could expect if selected. The course, on the Microsoft Teams site, officially opened on Thursday of Week One to allow participants access to lesson outlines and pre-readings. The researcher provided all course materials, which were only available to enrolled participants. On Monday of Week Two, the Zoom link was emailed out in preparation for Tuesday's first day of class, which was the next day. All sessions, except for Week Two, were held on Tuesdays and Thursdays for one hour, starting at 6 p.m. (MST). The initial two classes were scheduled for a maximum of two hours to accommodate the course introduction, the focus group on day one, and the completion of Lesson 101 on Thursday, day two. In Week Nine, the final week of class for participants, the two-day modified retreat culminated the project intervention. All participants who completed the IP workshop by attending the two-day modified retreat received a certificate of completion (see Appendix B).

All classes and events, except for the two-day retreat, were conducted using Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Microsoft Teams housed all the lesson materials that participants used in the course, and Zoom was the platform where the weekly class sessions occurred. All participants, whether local or distant, could engage fully in the course because the researcher was leveraging technology and online platforms. The goal was to ensure no leader was left behind due to geographical restraints.

The number of participants was capped at eighteen to ensure the researcher could successfully manage the time in and outside the classroom. With the lessons being one hour per session, the larger the class size, the greater the potential for class times to exceed the time allotted due to the volume of participants and in-class interactions and discussions. The

researcher did not anticipate the class reaching total capacity; however, setting the cap at eighteen still provided an acceptable margin for completing the project, even if some participants dropped out. On the other hand, having excessive participants could diminish the researcher's capacity to effectively manage both the instructional and administrative demands, thereby increasing the risk of project failure.

Considerable preparation was necessary on both the front and back ends of the course, encompassing tasks ranging from paperwork and finalizing lesson plans to collecting, organizing, and analyzing data effectively. For example, Week One (see Table 1) was busy preparing to open the course and grant student access. On Monday, consent letters were emailed to all who contacted the researcher indicating their desire to participate (see Appendix C), and welcome letters were emailed on Wednesday (see Appendix D). Welcome letters contained more information on the class schedule, assignment due dates, and a reminder of each week's time commitments. This letter also notified them of the course opening the following day. On that Thursday, several things happened. The course officially opened on the Microsoft Teams platform, and participants gained access to view all course materials. The consent letters were also due.

	SUNDAY	MON	*TUES	WED	*THURS	FRI	SAT
WEEK 1	Administrative and Prep Week.	Consent letters emailed out.		Welcome letter emailed out.	*Course access granted. *Teams is open to access assignments and pre-reads. *Consent letters due.		

Table 1. Weekly Class Schedule, Week 1

The course's efficacy was measured based on the participants' collective success in meeting the six-course objectives, which include developing a deeper understanding of IP and the leader's

role and responsibility in the prayer ministry. The intervention was evaluated using qualitative and quantitative methods. Surveys, attendance in the prayer course and retreat, Thursday night prayer meetings, journaling, and focus groups were used to collect data to determine whether these objectives had been met. The surveys compared the scores of the participants' pre-survey, administered on Tuesday of Week One, and the post-survey, administered on the last day of the retreat, which was the conclusion of the course. The surveys measured whether participants' knowledge and understanding increased due to the intervention.

Participants received an email with the survey links to access the questions (see Appendix E) and were given a deadline to complete the package. Three survey categories made up the pre- and post-survey packages. They were labeled one through three, with the survey name following for easy identification within those packages. The post-survey consisted of the original questions created by the researcher from the pre-survey. The surveys were administered using SurveyMonkey®, a management company. The company collected, compiled, and analyzed the responses from the participants in charts and graphs for interpretation.

In conjunction with the surveys, observations and field notes were used to collect data on the participants' attendance and participation at Thursday night IP meetings and during the prayer course and retreat. The journal entries were another tool to shed additional light on the participants' growth and understanding of the lessons. The focus group conversations posed direct questions to participants so the researcher could gain a deeper understanding of their knowledge before and after the course. At the onset of the course, participants were encouraged to attend and actively engage in all course activities and events. Attendance and participation were recorded and analyzed from the second to the final week to assess further the course's impact on participants' prayer lives and relationship with God.

Permission

The researcher obtained permission from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) before contacting participants or sending out surveys and consent forms. Once permission was obtained from the IRB, the researcher sought permission from the pastor of DPM to facilitate the project intervention in his church and recruit participants from his leadership staff (see Appendix F). Obtaining permission from the pastor after the IRB approval was complete was crucial because recruiting efforts are directed at his leaders. Once the pastor consented to his members participating in the study, the recruitment campaign began, and leaders within the ministry were approached. Interested participants emailed the researcher concerning their interest in participating. The researcher contacted the pastor again to confirm that all participants met one of the three criteria for participation. Once all initial criteria and permissions had been met and completed, as stated earlier, the letters were emailed on Monday of Week One (see Appendix C) and due Thursday of that week. Due to the nature of this project, there were no ethical issues related to informed consent and confidentiality of the participants in this study.

Recruitment

The goal was to target and recruit leaders in the church. Recruiting efforts began the first Sunday after the IRB approved the intervention project. Recruiting materials consisted of recruitment flyers posted on the church community bulletin board and the DPM Facebook page (see Appendix G). Announcements were also made during the weekly church services. The researcher hand-delivered and emailed recruitment letters and invitations to those in current leadership positions at the church (see Appendix H) starting on that first Sunday as well. The researcher was available after worship services to answer questions and provided contact

information so potential local and out-of-state participants could reach out with additional questions or concerns.

Recruiting tools such as flyers and letters contained a synopsis of the study, what potential participants could expect if they decided to participate, and the sign-up deadline. The sign-up deadline was two weeks before the first live session class date. The recruiting flyers told interested candidates to email the researcher at [REDACTED], indicating their interest in participating. Once the researcher received an interested candidate's email, their name was added to the research sign-up sheet (see Appendix I).

Research Participants

The researcher addressed a specific problem related to the leaders of DPM, so the research participants were pulled from particular and restricted groups within the church. The participants were leaders of DPM who fell into one of three categories. For this project, leaders in the ministry were defined by meeting one of three criteria. They were: 1) individuals who have held leadership positions previously; 2) were currently occupying leadership roles; or 3) undergoing leadership or ministry training in preparation for future leadership roles. The pastor of DPM confirmed the status of each leader and provided his consent for their participation.

All participants had to also sign a written consent form (see Appendix C) before being officially allowed to participate in the project. Participation was voluntary, and participants were told they could stop attending at any point in the course. The researcher was a leader in the five-fold ministry, an adult Sunday School teacher, and a lead intercessor at DPM. The researcher developed and taught the IP course curriculum for this action research thesis project. Over the last few years, the researcher has preached numerous sermons, taught countless adult Bible study classes at DPM, and has consistently been well-received by the congregation.

Locations

The ten-week action-oriented intervention plan consisted of seven weeks of curriculum instruction on IP, with two classes held a week. These classes were conducted via Zoom, providing a convenient and accessible platform for engagement and learning. The original plan was a two-day retreat in Colorado Springs, CO, during the final week. On Friday, the group was to meet at the Broadmoor Hotel, reserving a conference room until 5 p.m. The next day, the schedule included a 9 a.m. prayer meeting at DPM, followed by a working lunch back at the Broadmoor and a final session until 5:30 p.m. Due to the cancellation of the in-person event, the retreat was modified and conducted via Zoom.

Curriculum

The course was designed using a hybrid method of Zoom sessions and an in-person retreat. Participants completed five weeks of curriculum instruction on IP and two weeks of practical exercises to apply what they learned in previous weeks. In the final week, participants attended a two-day modified retreat, with more corporate prayer exercises, events, and projects to complete. They were asked to commit at least five hours weekly to participate in two online sessions and complete all required reading and homework. On Sundays every week, participants had a journal reflection assignment that must have been submitted in Microsoft Teams by 10 p.m. (MST). All lesson materials, assignment prompts, and additional reading resources outside of the Holy Bible were provided in Microsoft Teams by the researcher. The only items the participants were personally to supply to participate in the course were a Bible, a computer, and an Internet connection.

The course opened on Thursday of Week One to allow participants time to access the course, get familiar with assignments and homework requirements, and complete any pre-

readings (see Table 1). On Monday of Week Two, the pre-survey was emailed to participants to complete and return by Thursday of the same week (see Table 2). Also, the Zoom link was emailed to participants on Monday of Week Two, as the class started the next day. Participants attended two classes a week for seven weeks via Zoom. Live class sessions were held on Tuesdays and Thursdays for one-hour periods starting at 6 p.m. (MST), except for Week Two. The first week of classes experienced class times of a maximum of two hours to accommodate additional requirements and to ensure Lesson One was completed. Also, during this week, the pre-survey was sent out and was due. Additionally, the first pre-focus group session occurred.

Zoom hosted the actual meeting sessions, and Microsoft Teams housed all the lessons and assignments so participants could access them at their discretion. All Zoom classes were recorded using the recording option in the settings menu and stored on a password-protected computer. The recording started promptly at the beginning and ended once the class had been dismissed. The recording device did not capture conversations before the official start or after dismissal.

	SUNDAY	MON	*TUES	WED	*THURS	FRI	SAT
WEEK 2	The first week of classes begins.	*A Zoom link is sent out for class. * Surveys sent out via email and due by THURS.	*Zoom session: Intro and first focus group discussion.		*Zoom session: Lesson 101: What is the Big Fuss about Prayer? *Surveys due.		

Table 2. Weekly Class Schedule, Week 2

The lessons and practical applications were crafted to reignite the passion and hunger within the leaders of DPM. The lesson curricula were strictly based on a Christian worldview. They were a product of the researcher's journey of "praying for others" infused with the teachings of Apostle Stephen Garner from his study guide titled *Pray Without Ceasing: A Believer's Guide to Effective Intercession* and Blackford's book, *Creative Prayer and*

Intercession: Direction and Fresh Ideas to Lead Groups in Dynamic and Effective Intercession Experiences. The lessons covered include, “What is the big fuss about prayer?” “Intercessory Prayer: The Who, What, and Why,” “Lord Teach Us to Pray: True Intimacy Starts Here,” “The Leader’s Role and Responsibility in Prayer,” “Making Prayer a Priority,” and a variety of prayer activities during the practicum (see Appendix J). Table 3 below shows the schedule of those classes and activities mentioned above over seven weeks. The researcher also provided a ten-week program synopsis to inform participants about the program (see Appendix K). This helped reduce anxiety and helped them better prepare for each class.

	SUNDAY	MON	*TUES	WED	*THURS	FRI	SAT
WEEK 2	The first week of classes begins.	*A Zoom link is sent out for class. * Surveys sent out via email and due by 10:00 p.m.	*Zoom session: Intro and first focus group discussion.		*Zoom session: Lesson 101: What is the Big Fuss about Prayer? *Surveys due.		
WEEK 3	The second week of classes begins. *First journal assignment due by 10:00 p.m.		*Zoom session: Lesson 201: Intercessory Prayer-The Who, What, & Why.		*Zoom session: Lesson 201: continued and		
WEEK 4	The third week of classes begins. *Second journal assignment due by 10:00 p.m.		*Zoom session: Lesson 301: Lord teach Us to Pray-True Intimacy Starts Here.		*Zoom session: Lesson 301: continued and		
WEEK 5	The fourth week of classes begins. *Third journal assignment due by 10:00 p.m.		*Zoom session: Lesson 401: The Leader's Role and Responsibility in Prayer.		*Zoom session: Lesson 401: continued and		
WEEK 6	The fifth week of classes begins. *Fourth journal assignment due by 10:00 p.m.		*Zoom session: Lesson 501: Making Prayer a Priority.		Lesson 501: continued and completed.		
WEEK 7	The sixth week of classes begins. *Practicum Week. *Fifth journal assignment due by 10:00 p.m.	*Practicum assignments and exercises uploaded to Teams.	*Zoom session: Practicum intro and prayer partner exercises. *Details on the upcoming retreat to be discussed.		*Zoom Session: Corporate prayer and Scripture exercises.		
WEEK 8	The seventh week of classes begins. *Practicum Week. *Sixth journal assignment due by 10:00 p.m.		*Zoom session: Prayer partner exercises.		*Zoom Session: Corporate prayer and Scripture exercises.		

Table 3. Weekly Class Schedule, Weeks 2 - 8

The course concluded just as it began. However, there were some slight modifications due to the cancellation of the in-person retreat. Instead of the final focus group convening in person, it was held online via Zoom. The surveys were still sent out that Saturday. The table below shows the original schedule containing the retreat for Weeks Nine through Ten.

	SUNDAY	MON	*TUES	WED	*THURS	FRI	SAT
WEEK 9	Retreat Week. <i>*Seventh journal assignment due by 10:00 p.m.</i>					*Retreat.	*Retreat. *Surveys sent out. *Final Focus Group.
WEEK 10	*Course Completion Week.	*Surveys due.	*Course officially closes.				

Table 4. Weekly Class Schedule, Weeks 9 - 10

Retreat Schedule

Day 1: Friday			Day 2: Saturday	
Location: Broadmoor Hotel Conference Room			Location: Divine Providence Ministries and the Broadmoor Hotel	
Events	Time		Events	Time
Opening prayer and intro	8 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.		*1. Intercessory prayer meeting	9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Team building exercise	8:15 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.		travel to The Broadmoor Hotel	10:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Break	9:15 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.		Working Lunch and finalizing projects	11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
*1. Prayer partner sessions	9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.		Podcast presentations	12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.(breaks will occur every 50 minutes in this block)
*2. Project preparation	10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (break as needed during this block)		Focus group	2:40 p.m. - 3:40 p.m.
Lunch (guest speaker)	11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.		Break	3:40 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Discussion hour on the Power of Prayer	1 p.m. to 2 p.m.		Closing Remarks and course completion certificates ceremony	4 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Break	2 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.			
Prayer writing exercise and presentation	2:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.			
Break	3:15 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.			
Testimonies, and overview of next day's events	3:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.			
Notes Section:			Notes Section:	
*1 (This is a time of personal reflection, discussion, and praying for one another)			*1. Held at Divine Providence Ministries	
*2 (During this period, participants will work on their final project which will be a 5 to 8-minute podcast on prayer)				

Data Collection

Action research aims to get directly involved in social situations to create practical solutions to real-life community problems.¹⁸² This action research project went directly to the heart of that description. Creating an intervention program designed to educate and challenge the leaders of DPM was a significant step toward this goal. The project was implemented over ten weeks. It required participants to trust and have enough confidence in the researcher to let their guard down and provide truthful and transparent answers, whether in focus groups or surveys.

The data was collected using one quantitative tool and four qualitative methods. The researcher used surveying as a quantitative tool to establish a baseline for the project. The pre-survey was emailed to participants on Monday before the first class session and was due the following Thursday before class began. The post-survey was emailed after the course concluded on the final night of the retreat. It was due three days after being released. The surveys measured whether the participants' knowledge, understanding, and level of intimacy with God increased because of the intervention. The surveys were the primary means of collecting baseline data, but a triangulation methodology was used.

Considering multiple angles of vision, the qualitative research methods used numerous instruments to measure whether there was an improvement in the participants' understanding of the purpose and power of prayer. The researcher collected qualitative data through focus groups, journal assignments, participation and attendance at Thursday night prayer meetings, weekly classes, and retreats. Data triangulation increased the research findings' reliability, credibility, and validity. Like the surveys, these methods involved pre- and post-class data collection that was used to analyze the overall success of the intervention. For example, the pre-and post-focus

¹⁸² Stringer and Alfredo Ortiz Aragón, *Action Research*, 4.

group discussions and the logging of the attendance and participation of participants at Thursday night prayer meetings began at the onset of the workshop and concluded at the very end.

Measurable Result

The overall efficacy of the DMin action project was measured in two central ways: through surveys and observation. The surveys measured efficacy based on the overall difference between the participants' aggregate scores at the beginning of the intervention (pre-survey) and its conclusion (post-survey). The surveys took approximately twenty minutes to complete. The anonymous surveys did not ask for information revealing a participant's identification. No names or codes were assigned to the participants regarding the surveys because they were being administered anonymously through SurveyMonkey. That ensured the confidentiality of the participants' responses. The surveys did, however, ask for demographic information, such as age, marital status, and leadership status within the church. The researcher used SPSS to complete the descriptive analysis of the surveys in conjunction with the tools provided by SurveyMonkey. The findings should emphasize the impact of the intervention program by comparing pre- and post-course responses. Higher post-survey numbers would indicate success, whereas lower numbers may indicate the need to re-evaluate certain aspects of the program.

The researcher collected qualitative data through observation and participation in the initial focus group. The researcher used a journal to track the questions and answers during the discussion so there would be accurate notes to review later in the project. Subsequently, the researcher observed and recorded attendance and participation at Thursday night prayer and attendance and participation in the course and retreat. An upward trend in attendance and involvement in the prayer meetings would have indicated a successful intervention. Finally, participants were asked to complete weekly journals. Seven journal assignments were assigned,

requiring participants to respond to specific questions or prompts about their prayer journey and relationship status with God. These journal assignments measured their growth and confidence throughout the course. All results were first analyzed separately and then compared and evaluated holistically to determine whether there was an improvement in the participants' understanding of the purpose and power of prayer and the overall effectiveness of the course based on its objectives using the collective results from the quantitative and qualitative instruments.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

The research project was prepared, recruitment and curricula were finalized, and test measurements were developed and implemented. The project was successfully carried out but not as the researcher initially planned and discussed. Various schedule and content adjustments were necessary throughout the course to accommodate unforeseen circumstances and group dynamics. Some classes required more time than anticipated, while the retreat faced challenges with participation. As a result, modifications were made to the schedule, curriculum, and homework requirements/assignments to ensure the course's progression and participants' continued engagement and attendance.

Research Implementation and Timeline Overview

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board approved this project on December 3, 2023. Participants were recruited from December 10, 2023, to January 13, 2024. Following the recruitment of potential participants, the researcher prepared and sent consent and welcome emails and granted platform access to all participants from January 21, 2024, to January 27, 2024. The pre-survey was sent on January 29, 2024. The initial focus group was held on January 30, 2024, followed by five weeks of instructional curriculum. Classes were held every Tuesday

and Thursday from January 30, 2024, until February 29, 2024. After that, two weeks of practicum application were conducted on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The practicum portion ran from March 5, 2024, to March 14, 2024. The final week of the course was to conclude with the two-day retreat on the 22nd and 23rd of March; however, due to a lack of participation, the in-person retreat was canceled, and instead, a modified retreat was held on the 19th and 21st of March. Due to this shift in the schedule, the retreat activities were modified, and the focus of the last week was intensely conducted on practical applications, such as prayer and scripture exercises. Also, with the cancellation of the in-person retreat, all certificates of completion were mailed to DPM to be distributed by the pastor.

The final focus group was conducted on the course's final day, March 21, 2024, but not everyone could participate. Due to the absence of so many, the researcher hosted a second focus group on March 30, 2024. Before the second focus group, the post-survey was emailed to all participants on March 23, 2024. Participants had three days to complete and return the survey. On the due date, several surveys still needed to be turned in. It was not until April 5, 2024, that all surveys were completed and returned to the researcher. Finally, all data was collected and stored on the researcher's locked and password-protected computer during the week of March 31, 2024. A total of eleven weeks were used for this project.

Week One: 21 Jan to 27 Jan

Administrative and Prep Work

Weeks Two through Nine: 28 Jan to 23 March

Pre-class Activities

- The pre-survey link was sent to students via email on January 29, 2024
- Pre-survey due on February 1, 2024

Class Sessions

- An initial focus group was conducted on January 30, 2024
- First class on February 1, 2024
- Second class on February 6, 2024
- Third class on February 8, 2024
- Fourth class on February 13, 2024
- Fifth class on February 15, 2024
- Sixth class on February 20, 2024
- Seventh class on February 22, 2024
- Eighth class on February 27, 2024
- Ninth class on February 29, 2024

Practicum Sessions

- First session on March 5, 2024
- Second session on March 7, 2024
- Third session on March 12, 2024
- The fourth session on March 14, 2024

Modified Retreat Sessions

- First session on March 19, 2024
- The second session on March 21, 2024

Post-class Activities

- The final focus group was conducted March 21, 2024
- Post-survey released to students via email on March 23, 2024

Week Ten: 24 March to 30 March**Post-class Activities Continued**

- Post-survey due on March 26, 2024
- A supplementary focus group conducted March 30, 2024

Week Eleven: 1 March to 6 April**Post-class Activities Continued**

- The remaining surveys were turned in on April 5, 2024

Data Collecting Methods

Tim Sensing recommends using the triangulation method for gathering data in his book *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. The triangulation method is a multi-method approach that “explores and explains complex human behavior to offer a more balanced explanation to readers. The researcher can address validity and reliability issues by converging information from different sources. This balanced approach assured the robustness of the study, as using multiple data collection approaches/tools provided greater breadth and depth to the analysis. The researcher produced a robust and balanced study using divergent data types. By contrast, using a single approach could yield biased and suspect results.”¹⁸³

Implementing the intervention for the thesis project included quantitative data gathering using a pre-and post-course survey, qualitative data gathering using focus groups, Thursday night prayer meetings, and the weekly classes and retreat. The first approach employed was quantitative research through surveying. Pre- and post-surveys were emailed to all participants to measure their knowledge, understanding, and level of intimacy with God before and after the intervention. The pre-and post-survey packages were identical and contained three survey categories for the participants to complete anonymously via SurveyMonkey.

The second approach involved qualitative research through focus groups, Thursday night prayer participation, and weekly classes and retreats. For qualitative research, three angles of vision were considered the saturation point to support the trustworthiness criteria. Sensing correlates an increase in discernment and knowledge with an increase in the number of angles of

¹⁸³ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 61, 73, 72.

a researcher's vision on a particular problem. Having more angles of vision is akin to having a group of people at the table with diverse backgrounds and experiences, providing insights, perspectives, and information that will inform the researcher's judgment.¹⁸⁴

Five approaches were to be initially implemented to gather data for the intervention: surveys, focus groups, journals, Thursday night prayer meetings, and the weekly classes and a retreat. However, the researcher decided to stop collecting journal assignments due to a lack of involvement. Seven journal assignments were due, yet by the third week, most participants stopped completing the journal entries on time. The decision to forgo having the participants turn the remaining four in for review was necessary because reminding participants to complete tasks from previous weeks continually became increasingly challenging. Additionally, the fear of participants quitting the program due to being overwhelmed and frustrated was a factor to remember as it pertained to maintaining the right balance between the project's time commitment and their responsibilities and obligations.

Participants were given a journal assignment at the beginning of every week (see Appendix L). The assignment prompts were loaded into the Microsoft Team's Channel labeled homework folder by Monday evenings. Participants entered at their convenience, read the prompts, and completed the assignment. The journal assignments were due the following week on Sunday by midnight (MST) to the researcher's email. By providing the assignments at the beginning of the week, the participants had the benefit of attending and participating in class during the week, completing any homework and reading assignments, and answering any reflective questions on the lesson material before turning in a journal entry. However, due to the

¹⁸⁴ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 74, 75–76.

partial collection of journal assignments, they were not used in the final assessment of all the compiled data. The researcher's decision did not jeopardize or skew the project results because several data collection methods still existed. Table 5 shows the tools used to collect data for the research thesis.

Tools	Quantitative	Qualitative
Surveys	X	
Focus Groups		X
Thursday night prayer meetings		X
Course and Retreat		X

Table 5. Illustration of Tools Used in Triangulation

In the following sections, the researcher expounded upon the tools used to achieve the course objectives and discussed each measurement in detail. First, the sample population was reviewed, followed by an in-depth discussion of the quantitative and qualitative data gathering.

Sample Selection

The researcher recruited and selected leaders from DPM in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This purposeful sample of leaders was aware of the growing problems within the prayer ministry and the need to develop in that area. Hence, they met the criteria and attributes that were essential to the research being conducted on prayer.¹⁸⁵ While the sample size was relatively small, with fourteen leaders participating, Sensing emphasized that the study's significance lies more in the quality of the data gathered than the number of participants.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 83.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 85.

Course Surveys

To facilitate the quantitative data analysis, the researcher emailed the surveys before the first class and after the last class of the course. The participants completed two surveys during the project, each with three categories. The pre- and post-course surveys were identical in content and layout; only the names of the surveys were different. They were titled Survey 1: Prayer and Intercession; Survey 2: Understanding Intercessory Prayer; and Survey 3: Christian Prayer Survey. The packages contained twenty-eight questions (see Appendix E) and were administered via SurveyMonkey. The participants received an email with the survey links requesting them to complete it within three days. The researcher was notified via email once participants completed a survey. All participants completed the pre-survey on time, but the post-survey had to be sent out multiple times as several participants still needed to complete it. Some who were out of town on spring break and missed the final focus group meeting said they were unaware of the survey as they had not checked their emails while on vacation. Ultimately, all participants completed the post-survey and returned them to the researcher by April 5, 2024.

The surveys collectively rated the participants' prayer lives using a 5-point Likert scale, with five being the highest and one the lowest. The Likert scale enabled participants to express their level of agreement or disagreement and the intensity of their feelings toward the statement or question presented. One advantage of this method was that it offered more flexibility than a simple yes or no response, allowing participants to convey their feelings across a continuum of opinions. The surveys also evaluated shifts in attitudes and understanding of participants' knowledge, understanding, and intimacy level with God by calculating the percentages of each response selected. This information gave the researcher additional data to compare whether participants had grown because of the intervention.

Focus Groups

The first opportunity for gathering qualitative data was the initial focus group. Before classes began, two focus groups were scheduled: the initial one for January 30, 2024, and the final one for March 21, 2024. On the evening of January 30, 2024, the IP workshop course began with its first focus group session. There were fourteen participants present that evening. The meeting provided a brief overview of the next eight weeks and reminded the participants that all classes and meetings would be recorded on Zoom. Once the course overview was completed, the attention shifted to the primary purpose of the meeting, which was to establish a baseline of the participants' current knowledge and understanding of IP, their role and responsibility as leaders called to pray, and how to intercede for others.

The researcher created a list of questions designed to make the participants critically think through their experiences and knowledge (see Appendix M), but because of time constraints, not every question on the list could be asked. The researcher decided what questions would be most beneficial and informative to be used in the focus groups and what questions would be incorporated into the lessons. The goal was to create a conversation among the participants even though specific questions needed to be answered. The following questions were asked in the focus groups but not necessarily in the order presented below.

1. Define prayer in ten words or less.
2. Talk about the difference between general prayer and IP.
3. What do you believe about prayer? Do you believe God answers (your) prayers? Why/why not? What happens when God does not answer or move based on your prayers?
4. Leadership and ministry training programs are designed to equip and prepare Christians to serve more effectively in the Body of Christ. In your Christian experience, what education or training have you received in prayer? Do you think prayer schools or prayer training courses would be beneficial? Why/why not?
5. Do you believe prayer is the most vital thing?

After the introductions, it got quiet when participants were asked to define prayer in ten words or less. It was not a matter of the leaders not knowing what prayer was; more of them were trying to put it into concise words. On average, the participants defined prayer as talking to God and as communication/conversation with God. IP was defined as praying for others. The atmosphere gradually shifted once several participants described prayer in their own words, and soon, others relaxed and shared. As the conversation developed organically, the researcher ensured the group remained on task so they could complete all the questions selected by the researcher. Once everyone had an opportunity to answer, the researcher interjected the following question to facilitate the continuation of the discussion. The researcher assigned each participant a number so their comments could be identified while they remained anonymous.

A fascinating conversation was sparked when participants discussed what happens when God does not answer prayers, whether it is never, immediately, or when He does not answer the way one wants or for which he had hoped. A participant reminded the group of the story of Daniel waiting for an answer to his prayer (Dan 10:1-14). The answer had been delayed for twenty-one days because the angel encountered intense warfare with the prince of the kingdom of Persia and had to wait for the assistance of Michael, the archangel, to get through to Daniel in Babylon. The participant replied that God hears us the first time we pray, but sometimes the answer is delayed because of spiritual warfare. He concluded that we must remain focused and prayerful, knowing God's purpose will be accomplished despite delays. Someone else reminded the class of Hannah, who had no children but prayed every day, asking God to give her a child. She never stopped trusting her God, and like so many times before, she cried out, "Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your

servant but give her a son...” (1 Sam 1:11, NIV). The Bible says the Lord remembered her, and she and her husband conceived a son, whom she called Samuel (1 Sam 1:19-20).

Though participants shared several biblical references to why prayer was delayed or denied, one young woman showed vulnerability in telling a personal story. She revealed that God did not answer her prayer when her grandmother died. She asked God, as a teenager, if He would spare her Mamaw’s life, and yet she died. The question she asked the class was how a kid gets over the anger with God; how does one forgive God and be able to trust Him in the future? The outpouring of answers full of wisdom and experience poured in. There were other examples of initial pain and disappointment when prayers were not answered the way the participants had requested, but most were thankful God did not answer some of those prayers as they continued to walk life out. The young woman agreed that it was difficult. Still, ultimately, she said she learned to trust God through life’s experiences and came to know that He loves us so much that He would never do anything to hurt us. Even in death, she testified, we must accept God’s will because He knows best.

Other answers to why God delays or denies answers to prayer focus on humankind's role. Some participants admitted to getting too involved in making things happen themselves or praying for things outside God’s will for their lives. Another jumped in and replied that God delays answers because He is trying to get His children to trust His Word more and build the believer’s faith. One of the seasoned leaders expressed that God knows how to mature His children and teach them that whatever life brings, He is for them and that it will all work out for the good. Finally, the researcher had to shift the conversation and move on to the next and final question because the topic of unanswered and delayed prayers could have continued for hours.

The focus group concluded with a question related to prayer schools, and the answers were varied but insightful. The researcher asked if they thought prayer schools or training courses would be beneficial, and everyone shouted yes. However, as the researcher dug deeper and asked if anyone had ever attended and participated in a prayer workshop where the practical application was applied, the responses got interesting. Seven of the fourteen participants had never ‘practiced praying’ in a seminar or workshop and felt uncomfortable praying aloud. Three others had experienced church hurt concerning praying aloud and had subconsciously been silenced by their experiences. One member initially said she had attended a prayer seminar where they prayed, but upon further questioning, it was discovered that her experience did not include a portion where participants prayed together and put into practice what they had learned in the seminar. Ultimately, only three students were well-versed and confident in their prayer lives based on experiences gained from life, mentors, and ministry.

The nature of open-ended questions allowed the participants to share their experiences or lack of expertise related to prayer. Their honest and unrehearsed answers gave the researcher a baseline to measure the participants’ knowledge and understanding of prayer. Further, the knowledge gained here allowed the researcher to know how to tailor the course to expose the participants to the things they lacked the most understanding. After the conclusion of the initial focus group, the participants began classes. After eight weeks of class, what was supposed to be the final focus group was held on March 21, 2024.

The final group meeting had quite a few people missing because it was spring break week for many schools. With most participants having school-age children and planning vacations and other family events, there had to be a supplemental meeting to accommodate those unable to make the final meeting. A supplemental meeting was held on March 30, 2024. At both these

meetings, the same questions initially asked at the first focus group meeting were asked again. This allowed the researcher to compare their answers from the beginning of the course to the end, thus assessing their growth and the workshop's success.

The most significant change in the final two gatherings was that the participants were more excited about prayer and immediately jumped into the conversation about what they had learned. The participants started sharing before the researcher could introduce the first question to the discussion. Unlike the initial session, their responses were more insightful and introspective after the eight-week course. Responses to such questions as what prayer is were no longer centered on them talking to God and His listening to their petitions but on their listening to God's response. Someone said that if prayer is truly communication with God, then that implies a need to speak and listen. Participants wanted to pray to God and were excited about listening for God to speak. When asked what they believed about prayer, some responded that prayer is equally about making petitions known to God and waiting for His response. One young lady said the excitement prayer is going to God and getting instructions, wisdom, and knowledge. She continued by likening her experiences to those of the woman at the well (John 4), where God revealed insights about herself. She divulged those encounters with Christ pushed her into greater intimacy and birthed a desire to be a more dedicated prayer leader.

Many expressed a new hunger to hear from God and a push to continue developing their relationship with him by spending time in His Word and worship. The group's overwhelming consensus on whether prayer is the most vital thing for every believer was a resounding yes. In the eight weeks, many confessed to the group that they believed prayer was a critical discipline in the Christian faith before but had never put an emphasis on developing a fervent and

consistent prayer life because they felt an intense and dedicated prayer and intercession life were for pastors and members of the clergy.

As in the beginning, the final question was whether participants saw value and benefits in prayer schools or training courses. One young man shared that the workshop had pulled him out of his comfort zone, and because he felt the class environment was a safe place to release his prayers, the intimidation he once struggled with had lessened. Others echoed the newfound freedom they experienced and agreed that churches need more workshops that include practical prayer activities. The problem was one a young person equated to doing complicated math equations. The participant said if a student enrolls in an Algebra course but never practices the problems in class with the teacher, never has homework, and never has pop quizzes, they will never retain the information. Prayer, like Algebra, must be practiced daily to strengthen the skill. An older leader said the ability to practice in this classroom environment lessened the stress of praying aloud because the exercises gave targeted and deliberate topics or strategies to pray. They wanted more workshops to practice how to pray more effectively and efficiently.

Thursday Night Prayer Meetings

Every Thursday at 6 p.m. (MST), DPM conducts IP. IP is a time for the church family to intercede for others, and everyone is encouraged to pray. A DPM leader is designated to facilitate the services on a monthly rotation. The prayer leader is responsible for the night's events and ensuring enough people pray during the allotted one-hour time slot. Ideally, they wanted multiple believers to pray throughout the service, but the facilitator stepped in if there were limited volunteers.

During the eight-week course, participants were evaluated based on their attendance and participation in the prayer meetings. At the onset of the course, participants were encouraged not

only to attend but also to engage actively in these prayer sessions. Attendance and participation were recorded weekly from the first to the final week. The data would assess a participant's confidence in praying aloud in public settings and leading prayer groups by tracking attendance and participation numbers from the start to the end of the course.

When participants consistently volunteered to pray, fire and passion became characteristic of their prayer lives as they cried out to God. One young man experienced a significant elevation in his prayer life, reaching greater heights. By Week Three, his prayers were noticeably different, so much so that he even sounded different when he prayed. He was no longer timid and unsure of what to say but bold and confident as he consistently stepped up to lead prayer. Others also stepped up and prayed sincere and pure prayers out of the abundance of their hearts, shifting the atmosphere of the meetings. During Week Four, some began to weep and worship God as leaders prayed unbridled and passionate prayers of intercession. Participants were experiencing James 5:16 in their midst. The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man was availing much. God moved on behalf of His people and answered prayers. Those who remained faithful to the prayer meetings gained a new revelation of that Scripture.

Those who were once weak began praying the Word of God and watched their faith grow. The participants latched onto the Word that says, "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17, KJV), and began to pray the Word of God strategically and earnestly. As they stepped out in faith and prayed for others, God faithfully remembered them in their time of need. Week Six saw low attendance, but practically everyone present prayed, and prayers were either started with a favorite Scripture or infused with the Word of God throughout. That Thursday night, those present experienced a prayer revival and gained a new heart for prayer. The researcher received several emails about that prayer meeting, with

participants expressing their joy and excitement of experiencing God like that because of their prayers and growing relationship with Him.

As some participants drew closer to God and witnessed answers to prayers, others sometimes stopped showing up. On several nights, especially toward the course's final weeks, only three or four members were at IP. It was initially challenging to find someone willing to pray first. After the first brave heart prayed, others were put at ease and jumped right in. Often, they spoke over one another as everyone simultaneously unmuted their line to pray. Those moments were encouraging and welcoming as the researcher struggled to understand why such low participation numbers persisted. It was sometimes difficult and disheartening to see the numbers for IP meetings remain consistently low despite victories in other prayer areas.

Intercessory Prayer Workshop Course

The first class was insightful and encouraging due to strong and enthusiastic participation. The fourteen participants in the class provided a profoundly spiritual and diverse background to complete the research. The researcher encouraged the class to remain faithful throughout the course and to complete the required assignments because they would enhance the material learned in class and reinforce the commitment to developing a robust prayer life. The first four weeks of the class consisted of Lesson One, “What is the big fuss about prayer?” Parts One and Two; and Lesson Two, “Intercessory Prayer: The Who, What, and Why,” Parts One and Two. The class experienced a delay of approximately one week from the original schedule, attributed to the material covered and the participants’ enthusiastic participation level. Some class nights were filled with incredibly powerful and spiritually rich moments where the presence of God was felt tangibly, leading to an overflow of participation, worship, and enthusiasm among the participants.

As the class sought God's presence and put into practice the things being learned about prayer, God showed up, and the lessons were not concluded in the allotted time. Those moments where heaven 'interrupted' class schedules soon became frequent, indicating their deep spiritual hunger and expectancy. Most classes were extended by approximately thirty minutes, yet no one complained about the time. Despite all of this, the researcher endeavored to respect the participants' time by minimizing instances where sessions exceeded the initially agreed-upon time of one hour.

As Week Four approached, the course reached its halfway point, and the researcher scheduled a thirty-minute meeting for Tuesday, February 20, 2024, immediately before the start of class. The purpose of the meeting was to encourage the participants and address any questions, concerns, or needs. Also, the researcher wanted to use that opportunity to get course feedback on what was going well and ask if there were any topics/lessons that might enhance the curriculum and their learning experience.

Most of the feedback regarding what participants wanted to see was that they wanted to spend more time studying biblical examples of intercessors. Men like Moses, Samuel, and Apostle Paul were discussed briefly, but time did not allow a deep understanding of the many others listed in the lesson plan. Others shared that they were enjoying the lessons, and what made it so refreshing and exciting for them was that the material, although not necessarily brand-new information, was being presented from a different angle, incorporating academic and spiritual components. One participant who teaches for a living said that Lesson Two's discussion confirmed what was already in her spirit. Two younger participants said a lot of material was being covered in a night, and they wished things could slow down a bit, but they were still enjoying things.

At the close of the meeting, each participant was asked to answer three questions and to send their responses via email to the researcher at [REDACTED] within two days. The data analysis would incorporate the participants' responses to help understand their progress throughout the course. The questions were:

1. How vital is the Holy Spirit to your prayer life?
2. What is prayer?
3. What is the purpose of prayer?

The participants' active involvement in developing the course material proved invaluable. They provided critical and significant feedback, contributing significantly to their success and perseverance throughout the program.

Attendance and class participation remained strong. No one left the program, but as mentioned previously, the class was approximately a week behind schedule. With only four lessons remaining before the practicum portion began, the researcher devised a plan to get the class back on schedule. The researcher trimmed content from Lessons Three through Five to teach those classes in one night versus two, as initially scheduled. By trimming down the classes, all lessons were concluded by February 29, 2024, allowing the practicum sessions to start on schedule.

Lessons Two and Three, "Lord Teach Us to Pray: True Intimacy Starts Here," were completed in Week Five with the adjusted schedule. Lesson Three started a deeper dive as the lesson forced participants to look at intimacy with the Lord through the lens of a husband and a wife. Worship was discussed as an act of love using language that evokes a man's love for a woman. Some said they never looked at worship as intimacy, but now that they had, it brought new depth to their relationship and a new desire for the Lord. The researcher educated the participants on four critical ingredients of intimate worship.

Week Six allowed the participants to complete Lesson Four, “The Leader’s Role and Responsibility in Prayer,” taught on February 27, 2024, and Lesson Five, “Making Prayer a Priority,” on February 29, 2024. After completing these lessons, the course was back on schedule, and the researcher prepared to begin the practical portion of the project. It was emphasized that while Lessons Three through Five were shortened, the adjustment did not cut out the core content of the material. The main points of those lessons would be revisited and highlighted further during the practical portions of the course, ensuring a comprehensive understanding and application of the material.

Moreover, the practicum lessons were designed from Lessons Three through Five and provided the core lesson material for practicing in small and large group settings. For example, Lesson Three, “Lord Teach Us to Pray: True Intimacy Starts Here,” was used in the first practicum session, where participants prayed and studied the Lord's Prayer over two weeks. Specifically, they were tasked with reading a verse and then praying a short but powerful prayer based on the ideas gleaned from it. During the final week of class, participants also did a listening prayer exercise based on the Lord's prayer from Matthew 6:9-13 and the seven mountains studied in Lesson Five.

Weeks Seven and Eight were about practical application and the sharing of testimonies. The participants actively participated in prayer to learn how to pray more effectively and to become more confident in praying in public. They shared testimonies of their workshop experiences and prayer journeys throughout the week in the first fifteen minutes of class. After the sharing and reflection period, the remaining time was used to complete the two assigned activities per class. Usually, there were two twenty-minute activities per class. Every participant was encouraged to participate in the assigned prayer activity for the evening in corporate settings

and break-out rooms on Zoom. On the first night, March 5, 2024, the participants participated in two prayer activities focused on the Lord's prayer. The first activity consisted of each participant being assigned to read one or two verses of the Lord's Prayer. This activity was solely about praying the Word of God. What better way to start praying God's Word than with the Lord's prayer? After each participant had an opportunity to read a verse or two from the Lord's Prayer, the class moved on to the second activity. The second activity required that one person read a verse and then pray from the ideas in that verse. Then, the next person read and prayed from the next verse. The verse was the catalyst to generate ideas for prayer. The goal was to pray short, powerful prayers based on the Word of God in no more than two to three sentences.

A multi-faceted approach to the weekly prayer activities during the practicum was designed to enhance the lessons previously taught. Still, subsequent classes saw participation numbers drop as participants were challenged to step outside their comfort zones and pray publicly. Even with the small group sessions, people were hesitant to pray, and the numbers clearly showed that. By Week Seven, participation was down to an average of four people. No one officially dropped out of the study, but many missed several practicum sessions. The activities seemed to be a low threat, but some participants failed to show up consistently, exposing their lack of confidence and areas of discomfort. For example, the first activity assigned on March 12, 2024, consisted of praying a passage of Scriptures. Isaiah 40 was the assigned text for the activity, and each participant was given several verses from that chapter to read aloud and then pray based on the ideas from the text. The second activity for the night was to pray Psalm 91 by reading the Scripture and personalizing it for themselves or someone else. This was a partner exercise to be completed in a break-out room where people could have privacy, but still, many found it unnerving.

Modified Retreat Sessions

After two weeks of practicum sessions, the course's final week arrived, and due to participation numbers, the in-person retreat was canceled. Despite the cancellation, the enthusiasm and desire of the leaders who participated were this project's driving force and made the experience a tremendous blessing. Their constant prayers and encouragement throughout the course pushed the researcher to complete the project. The workshop's practicum continued in place of the retreat and comprised a final Tuesday and Thursday night class. This arrangement allowed the participants more time to pray together. The modified retreat classes focused on IP and providing leaders with tools to start praying for others. Other activities had leaders praying for unsaved loved ones, family, nameless neighbors and strangers, cities, regions, and government leaders.

The activity on the final Tuesday was a favorite among the leaders. It called for participants to pray for unsaved loved ones. The group wrote down the name of an unsaved loved one and then asked God for direction on how to pray for them. They had to wait in silence for three minutes, believing God would speak to their hearts concerning their loved ones. After the three minutes, they would pray about what He had given them. The goal of the activity was two-fold: to intercede on behalf of the unsaved and to learn how to wait on God to send instructions on how He wanted them to pray for that individual. Participants were told to pay attention to the leading of the Holy Spirit as He provided direction for the prayer.

The final class, held on March 21, 2024, consisted of an overview and a wrap-up that allowed participants to share testimonies or prayers they had written throughout the course. One participant had the class in tears as she prayed a powerful prayer based on lesson highlights and the revelations she gained from Lessons One through Five. She weaved together a beautiful

tapestry of IP concepts that displayed knowledge and an understanding of prayer that was not just theoretical but infused with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Her prayer ushered in a time of refreshing as the Spirit of the Lord moved. Some began to worship, and others began to prophesy and speak into the lives of others by encouraging them in the way of prayer. Her prayer was so profound yet simple and beautiful that it blessed her across generations and leadership levels. After hearing this prayer, the researcher realized it had shifted the course's trajectory and that some things would look different in future iterations.

Once the class regained its composure, others stated that their relationship had grown and that intimacy with the Lord was more passionate and meaningful. They had grown to prioritize prayer and strived to maintain that consistency and fervor. Some others restated that they wished the class could continue for another several weeks, but the researcher assured them they had the tools to be successful if they continued to apply what they had learned daily. One participant who was seasoned in their prayer life stated that he most appreciated Lesson One on praying the names of God (see Appendix J). He confessed that the lesson taught him how to address and relate to the heavenly Father for specific needs. Others mentioned the lesson on the Lord's Prayer as a model and how it brought a new understanding of how to pattern their prayers.

As the final prayer was offered for the course, one participant reminded the class that Jesus, the church's role model and example of obedience to the Father, made it a priority to slip away to pray. He said leaders must follow His example and slip away from the many church activities to spend time with God. Jesus prayed to the Father, so the church must pray to the Father in Jesus' name. The class was officially dismissed, and the recording was turned off, but people still hung around and shared testimonies and prayer reports. A leader commented that the

growth in God's people over the eight weeks was noteworthy. Of course, there is still room for improvement and further development, but the success stories were inspiring.

Summary of Intervention Implementation

The researcher identified and investigated the problem within the leadership ranks of DPM regarding their lack of a comprehensive understanding of the purpose and power of prayer and its connection to intimacy with God. In the initial investigation, there arose a realization that the leadership's role in fostering a culture of prayer was lacking. This shift in perspective from lay member to leadership underscored the need to address and rectify the leadership's level of engagement and dedication to prayer within the church community. Leaders knew what IP was, but some had never been taught to pray, so they lacked confidence. They yearned for a deeper and more fulfilling prayer life and the confidence to pray in public.

Once the root cause was determined, the researcher took a proactive approach to address it. Fourteen leaders volunteered to participate in this research project on IP, not as objects for data collection but as people of God seeking to draw closer to Him and strengthen their prayer lives. The researcher's decision to develop an eight-week course on IP was a significant step in addressing the ministry's need. The program's effectiveness was evaluated through various means, including focus groups, surveys, participation in Thursday night prayer, and the weekly classes and retreats.

This prayer course was designed to be relevant, practical, and easily executable, offering a flexible framework for learning. Its overarching goal was to equip participants with the tools to pray fervently and effectually, teach them how to pray Scripture, empower them to lead and teach others how to pray and encourage them to pray boldly and confidently. By pursuing these objectives, participants became more vibrant and effective prayer warriors, ready to lead, teach,

and inspire others in the transformative practice of prayer. This pursuit has the potential to significantly strengthen individual faith journeys and enrich and energize the broader Christian community.

The researcher was crucial in analyzing the program's measurable results, as seen in the following chapter. This was done by evaluating the quantitative data collected from the pre-and post-surveys and the qualitative data collected from the focus groups during the Thursday night prayer meetings. The analysis of all the data assessed the impact of attending the IP workshop.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The thesis project addressed and potentially resolved the issue of DPM leaders lacking a comprehensive understanding of the purpose and power of prayer and its connection to intimacy with God. The researcher executed the design as detailed in Chapter Three, and based on those measurements, specific data will be gathered, analyzed, and ultimately synthesized to present a solution to the research problem. The remainder of this chapter reported those results and discussed the significance and effectiveness of the intervention at DPM, using graphics to illustrate changes that resulted from the project's implementation. The potential implications for the leaders of DPM and other ministries facing similar challenges were explored and evaluated based on the findings of the intervention.

Understanding that prayer is a powerful weapon at the disposal of all believers, it was essential to ensure that leaders knew how to pray effectual and fervent prayers and that they could teach others how to pray. Therefore, this project specifically targeted leaders in the ministry. Those leaders who participated in the project did so because they wanted to gain more knowledge and understanding about IP and learn how to pray more effective prayers of intercession. The overarching purpose of the prayer workshop, combined with the other tools used in this project, was to equip and empower the leaders to be more effective prayer warriors.

The outcome the researcher hoped for, with the implementation of the project, was for the leaders to experience breakthroughs, power, and greater intimacy with God. This was only possible if the leaders were humble and open to addressing the factors that led them to give up on prayer so easily. The results showed that the DPM leaders are more educated, equipped, and empowered in their prayer lives and relationship with God. Furthermore, they provided insight into how the leaders can guide and train others in IP.

The methodology used in the project rekindled a passion and hunger for IP in the lives of the DPM leaders. By implementing the practicum sessions, the leaders were allowed a safe space to practice praying without judgment or fear of failure. These prayer exercises required humility and courage to achieve the desired results of a more vigorous prayer life. For some, it catapulted them into a greater dimension of prayer, and for others, it challenged them and moved them out of their comfort zones, if only a little.

The action research results are presented in three comprehensive sections. The sections are labeled as the collective results, data analysis, and the summary of results. The first section provided a thorough overview of the data collection, the demographic makeup of the leadership team, the gathering and scoring methodology, and finally, the data presentation used various visual aids. Next, the data is analyzed and interpreted. The results are presented based on the study data collected. They explained the relationships between the participants' survey scores, Thursday night prayer observations, the weekly classes and retreat, and testimonies from the focus group to gain insight into the project's success. The final section provided a final interpretation of the results using the research thesis statement as a guide.

Collective Results

At the beginning of the course, participants were assured that any information collected would be used for research and would be used respectfully and confidentially, maintaining their privacy and dignity. The upcoming sections briefly overview the quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve the project's objectives. After each collection technique is described, the results of the intervention are presented, utilizing tables and graphs for more precise data interpretation. First, the key demographics of the study participants were compared to those of the ministry.

Demographic Information

Gender

Demographic information was gathered from the pre-survey during the first week of classes. Fourteen leaders participated in the project. Of the fourteen leaders, 11 (79 percent) were women, and 3 (21 percent) were men. The church has 73 adult members, with 47 (64 percent) women and 26 (36 percent) men. The statistical comparison is shown in Figures 3 and 4 below to highlight the gender composition of the participants that mirrors the church populace. A balanced representation can effectively address the needs and perspectives of the ministry for both women and men as they grow individually and collectively.

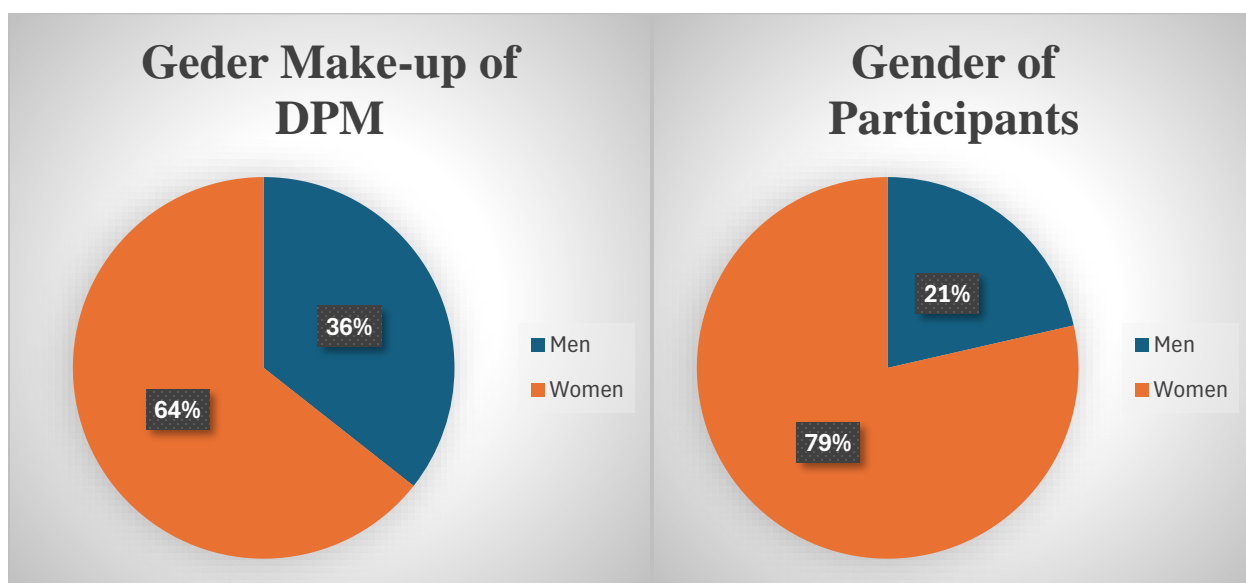


Figure 3. Gender Makeup of DPM

Figure 4. Gender Makeup of Participants

Age

The fourteen leaders who participated in the surveys showcase a diverse age range. Ages ranged from one participant (7 percent) in their twenties to four participants (29 percent) in their thirties, three participants (22 percent) in their forties, three participants (21 percent) in their fifties, and three participants (21 percent) in their sixties. The average age of adult members at

DPM is between 30 and 55 years old. The statistical comparison is shown in Figures 5 and 6 below to highlight the participants' age composition, which closely mirrors the church populace. Understanding the needs of people at various stages in life can provide them with appropriate ministry education and opportunities. For example, the young adult's ministry, the middle-aged adult's ministry, and the older adult's ministry all have different needs. Providing a cookie-cutter-type program would be detrimental to fostering a sense of unity and belonging among like-minded members based on age. However, it was crucial not to lose sight of the benefits of age diversity in the congregation. Age diversity allows intergenerational learning and mentorship from the old to the young and the young to the old.

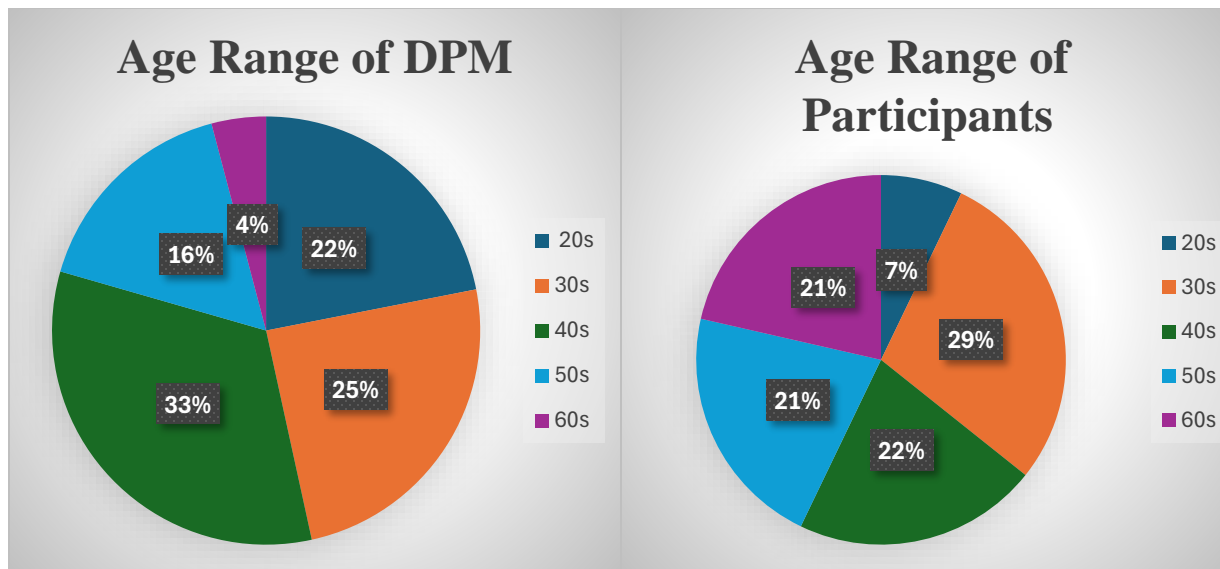


Figure 5. Age Range of DPM

Figure 6. Age Range of Participants

Marital Status

Capturing relationship status in a church setting is also vital because it allows pastors and leaders to create and tailor programs that meet the unique needs of different relationship statuses. Additionally, it fosters a sense of belonging, closeness, and encouragement when personalized

care is provided to groups of people in similar life situations. However, for this action research project, the specific question about whether a member was divorced or single, meaning not ever married, was not differentiated. The researcher believed it was essential to approach this topic sensitively and decided that the inquiry of divorce versus singleness would not impact the applicability and credibility of the project itself or its outcome.

The number of participants who were married was five (36 percent), and the number of single participants was nine (64 percent) (see Figure 7). This was nearly identical to the married-single population in the ministry. Currently, the church has a large population of single members: 66 percent, compared to 34 percent married (see Figure 8). A large single population requires a strong singles ministry that is engaging and able to support and minister to the demands and challenges of single life due to different life circumstances in the church.

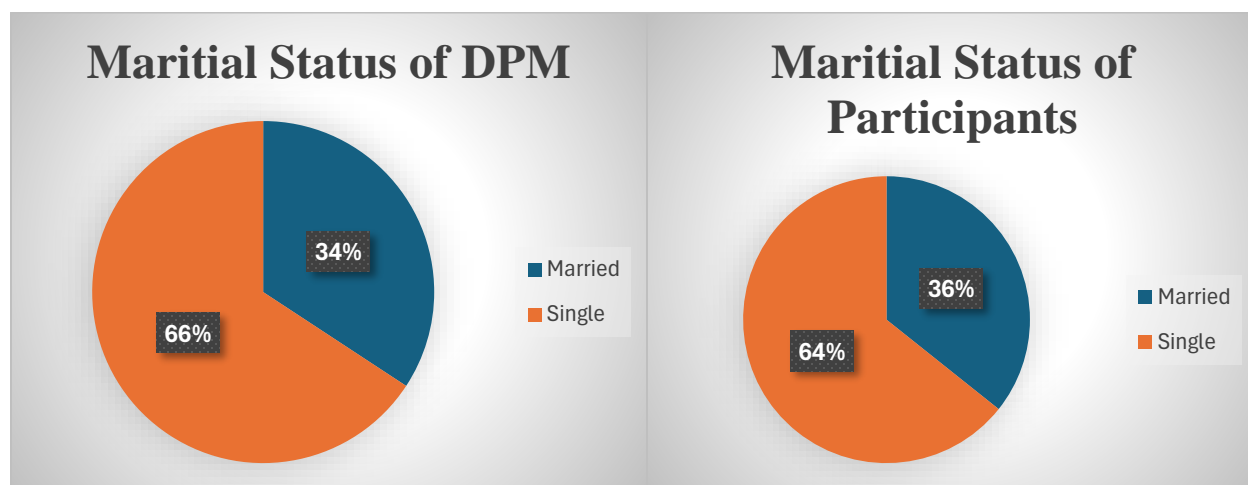


Figure 7. Marital Status of DPM

Figure 8. Marital Status of Participants

Leadership

The course participants consist of those who previously held leadership positions, individuals currently in leadership roles, and others undergoing ministerial training in preparation for future leadership roles. The ministry has eighteen leaders serving in-house, and most decided to participate in the IP workshop. The number of leaders willing to participate in

the project spoke to their commitment to the ministry and desire to elevate their prayer lives and draw closer to God. Figures 9 and 10 show a visual breakdown of the categories of leaders in the church compared to those attending the course.

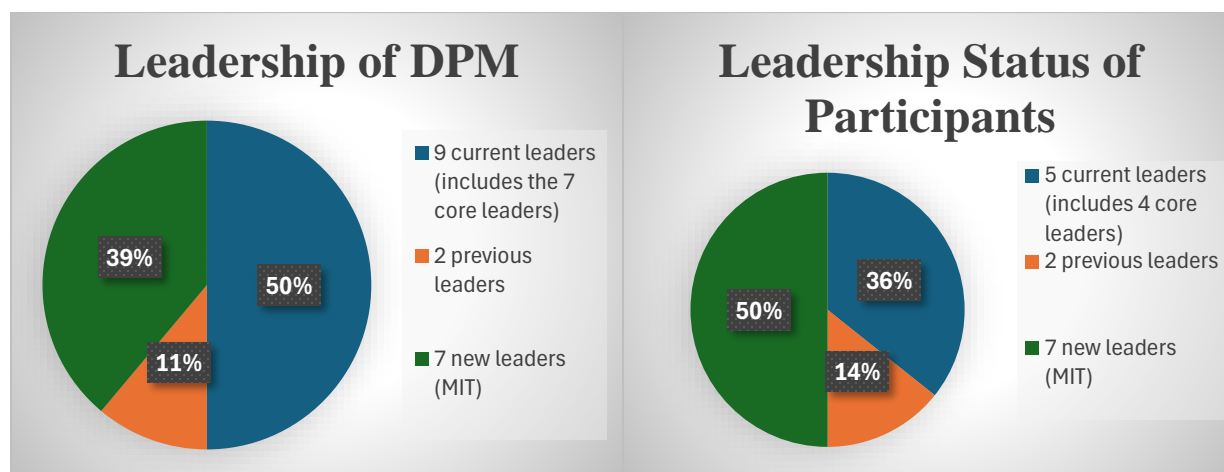


Figure 9. Leadership Status of DPM

Figure 10. Leadership Status of Participants

Quantitative Data Gathering and Scoring

The quantitative data assessed whether participants' knowledge and understanding of IP improved. The analysis was based on the average of participants' cumulative responses from both pre- and post-surveys. Both surveys were identical and administered in an exact format. The survey package was comprised of three survey categories: Survey 1: Prayer and Intercession; Survey 2: Understanding Intercessory Prayer; and Survey 3: Christian Prayer Survey. It contained twenty-eight questions related to the prayer workshop's course material. Appendix E contains a complete list of all the questions and response options.

Participants were told to consider their current knowledge and understanding of IP and their roles and responsibilities in ministry and select the option that best corresponded to their prayer lives. Additionally, they were encouraged to provide honest responses about their experiences, as this would benefit the research project and offer them a reference point to assess

their growth over time. There were five possible answers available from which participants chose. Consequently, there were no right or wrong answers to the surveys, as the questions were designed to provide insight into the participants' understanding of the purpose and power of IP and its connection to intimacy with God before and after the course.

The surveys were brief, and participants were told they should take approximately twenty minutes to complete. Some participants were concerned about how the surveys would be identified but were informed that they were anonymous. The guarantee of anonymity was based on having the surveys administered via SurveyMonkey. The researcher sent an email containing the survey links to all participants. Once a survey was completed, the researcher received an email notification from the company that it had been accomplished. Fourteen surveys were sent out, and fourteen were returned in the pre- and post-phases of the course.

The surveys were evaluated in two ways: 1) SurveyMonkey was used to calculate the percentage for each response selected to evaluate shifts in attitudes and understanding more thoroughly; 2) a Likert five-point scale format was used to analyze participants' pre- and post-course averages for each question (Q1-Q9/Q10) on the three surveys. Each response was quantified by assigning it a numerical value for analysis. The scoring scale below (see Figure 11) provides information on the numbers' representation.

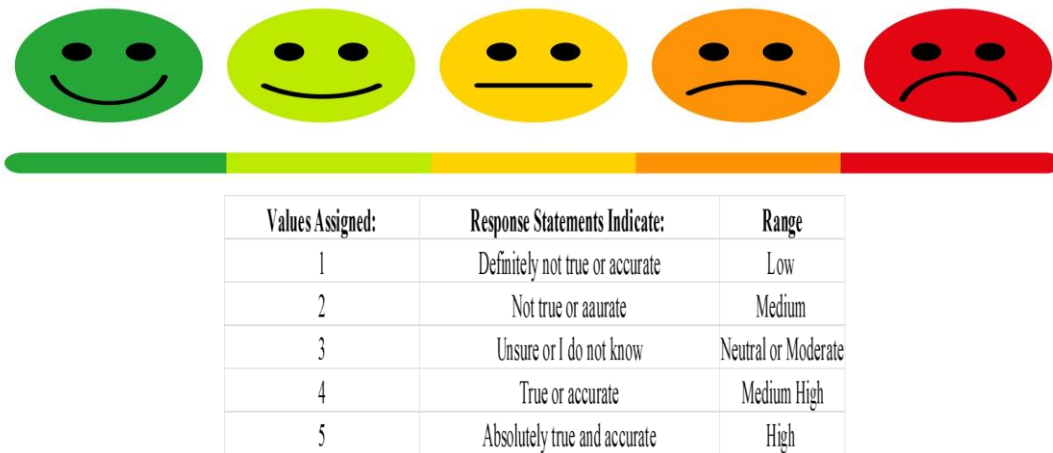


Figure 11. Scoring Scale

Presentation of Quantitative Results

This section will present the results of the DPM leaders' responses to pre- and post-course survey questions, using two distinct presentation methods containing tables and charts for more precise data interpretation. First, a broad comparison of the pre-and post-course survey data will be presented, showing averages for each question (Q1-Q9/Q10) within three categories to include percentage changes between the two surveys. Then, a detailed illustration of individual survey questions will follow, highlighting the percentage of participants' specific responses and allowing for a thorough evaluation of each. This approach transitions from a broad overview to a more focused analysis, offering a fuller and more nuanced picture of all the data points.

Comparative Results Across Three Surveys

Table 6 provides pre- and post-course averages for each question (Q1-Q9/Q10) within the three categories surveyed. The Post column shows whether participant scores increased after the course compared to the Pre column (before the course). Any decreases are shown in red, indicating a decline in certain areas. Overall, the table highlights a positive change in the participants' understanding of the purpose and power of IP in all areas. The average score change

across the ten questions is calculated for each category. Prayer and Intercession: 0.21 average change, with a four percent overall improvement. Understanding Intercessory Prayer: 0.21 average change, with a four percent overall improvement. And Christian Prayer: 0.27 average change, with a five percent improvement.

Although the overall scores indicate increased participant knowledge after the intervention, certain areas showed a decline in specific responses. For example, Q8 and Q9 from the Prayer and Intercession section, which addressed the time participants spend in prayer, saw decreases of 0.36 and 0.07, respectively. In the Understanding Intercessory Prayer section, Q7 and Q8, which focused on whether participants believed their prayers were significant and heard by God, showed a 0.07 decrease in post-survey responses. Lastly, in the Christian Prayer section, Q2, which asked if participants felt comfortable leading a prayer group, saw a 0.07 decline as well.

	1 - Prayer and Intercession		2 - Understanding Intercessory Prayer		3 - Christian Prayer	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Q1	3.29	3.43	3.28	3.43	3.07	3.21
Q2	3.43	3.93	3.43	3.93	2.93	2.86
Q3	3.71	4.43	3.29	3.79	4.50	4.79
Q4	4.07	4.43	3.64	3.86	4.21	4.86
Q5	4.07	4.29	3.79	4.07	4.21	4.29
Q6	3.71	3.93	4.29	4.50	3.71	4.07
Q7	4.43	4.57	4.50	4.43	4.57	4.93
Q8	3.36	3.00	3.86	3.79	3.71	4.00
Q9	3.21	3.14	4.29	4.50	3.29	3.79
Q10	n/a		n/a		4.36	4.57
Average	0.21		0.21		0.27	
Change %	4%		4%		5%	

Table 6. Results Across Three Surveys

Narrowing the focus from a broad overview, the subsequent graphs present each survey question in detail, highlighting the percentages of participants' specific responses. The zero

percent on the graphs indicates that none of the participants chose that response on the survey. Additionally, the researcher defined keywords in the surveys to provide clarity for participants when selecting a response because some words can have nuanced meanings. On the surveys, “rarely” is defined as only in emergencies; “sometimes” is considered a few times a month; “frequently” is a few times a week. Although the words moderately and somewhat are similar in meaning, for the Survey, “moderately” was defined as average with a higher numerical value (three) than “somewhat,” which was assigned a numerical value of two and defined as a very limited degree.

Survey 1: Prayer and Intercession Survey

Figure 12 shows the Prayer and Intercession survey results, comparing pre- and post-intervention responses across various questions related to prayer habits, understanding of intercession, and prayer effectiveness. Key areas covered include frequency of daily prayer, understanding of intercession, belief in the effectiveness of prayer, and time spent in prayer, with the results broken down by percentage for pre- and post-intervention. The data show shifts in behavior and belief, such as increased understanding of intercession and more frequent prayer sessions, reflecting the impact of the intervention.

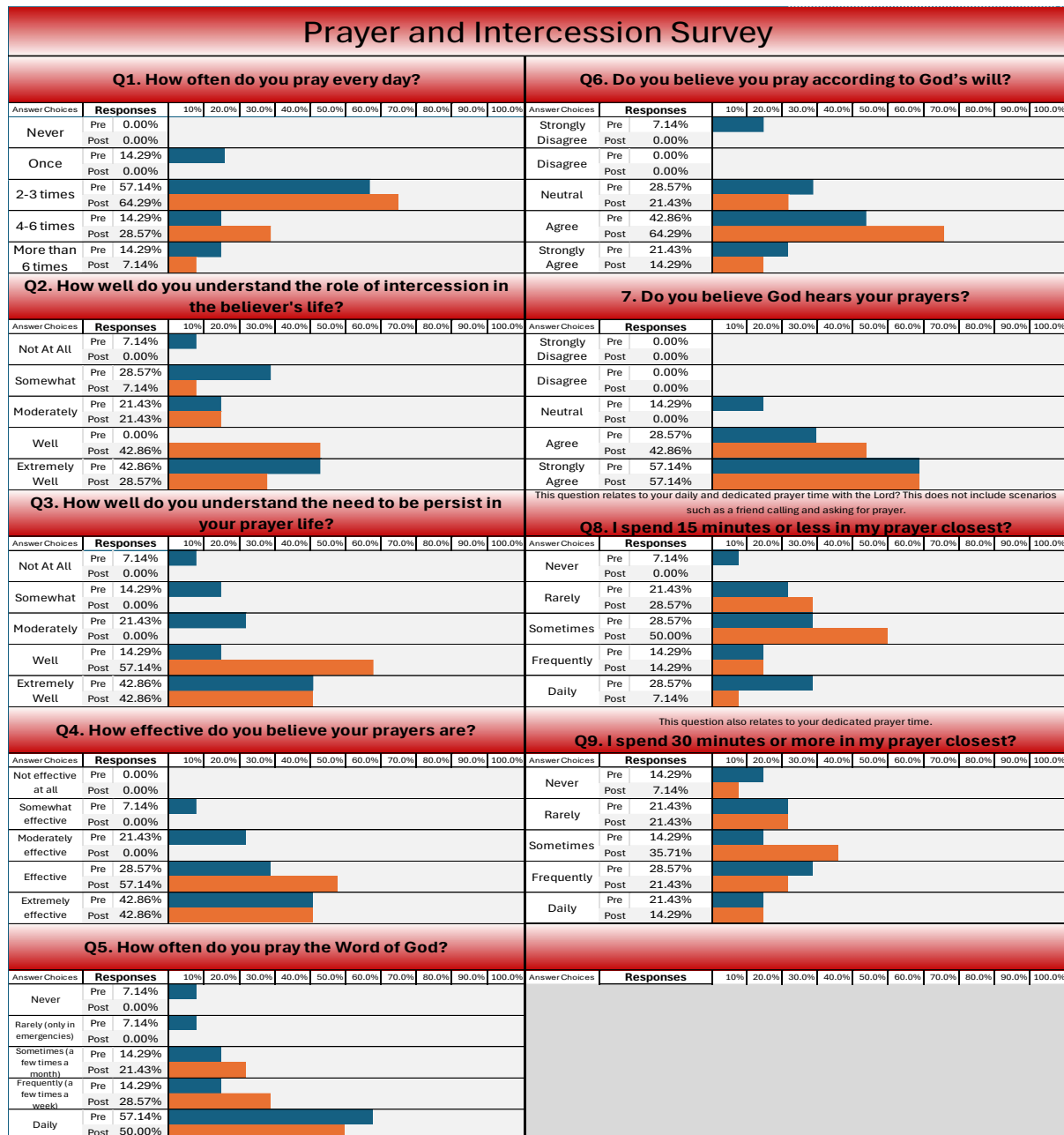


Figure 12. Survey 1: Prayer and Intercession Survey (Q1 -Q9)

Survey 2: Understanding Intercessory Prayer Survey

Figure 13 presents the results of the Understanding Intercessory Prayer Survey, which assessed participants' knowledge and practices regarding intercession before and after an intervention. The questions explored areas such as understanding the concept of intercession, the

role of the intercessor, praying for others, and belief in the effectiveness of intercessory prayers.

The post-intervention data shows significant improvement in several areas, including understanding Jesus' and the Holy Spirit's roles in intercession and a marked increase in participants believing their prayers make a difference and sensing prompts to pray for others.

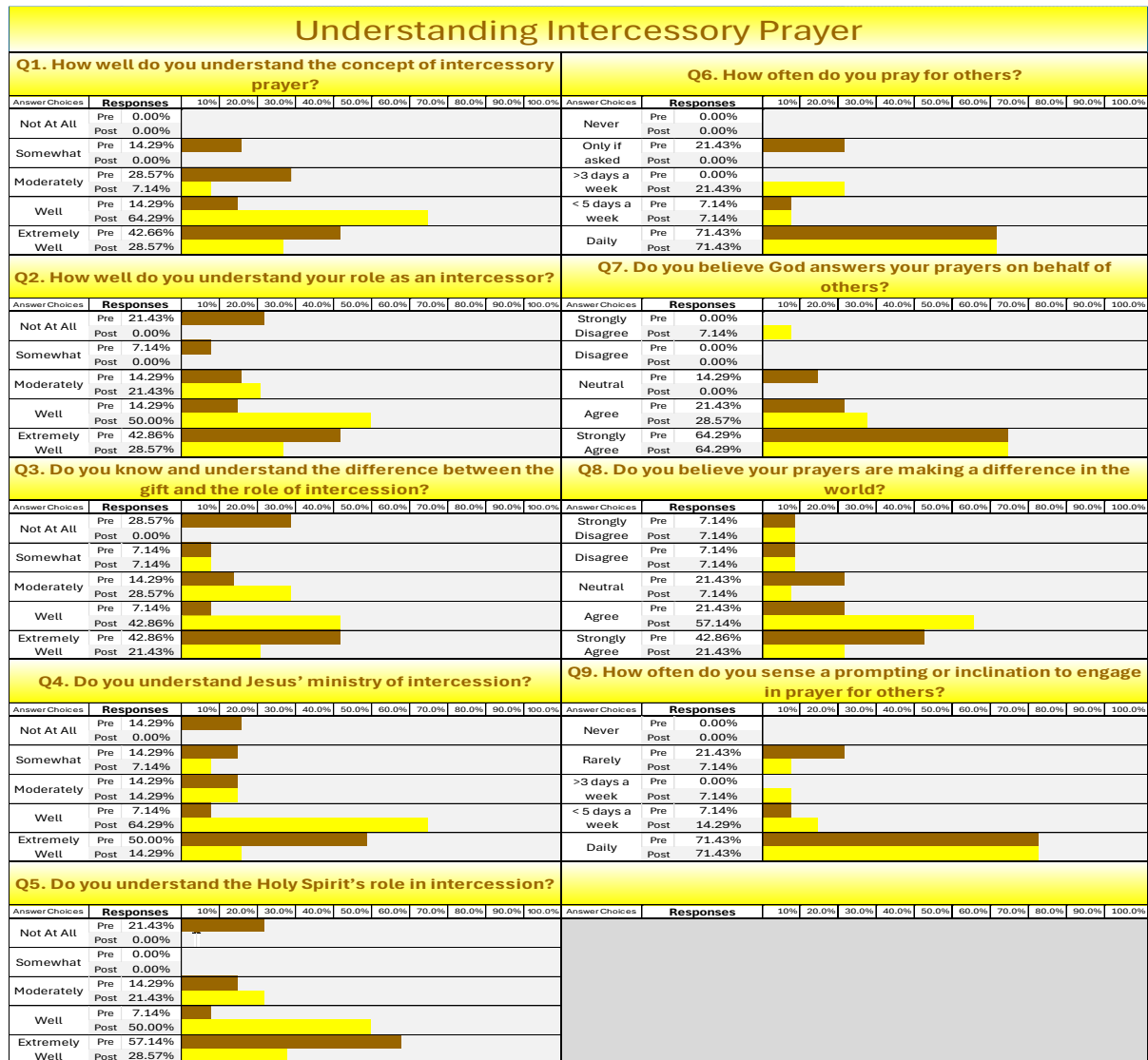


Figure 13. Survey 2: Understanding Intercessory Prayer (Q1 -Q9)

Survey 3: Christian Prayer Survey

Figure 14 displays the results of the "Christian Prayer Survey," which assessed participants' comfort, understanding, and beliefs about prayer before and after the prayer workshop intervention. The questions focused on aspects like comfort praying in public, leading prayer groups, understanding biblical principles, and belief in the power of prayer in connecting with God. Post-survey responses show improvements in various areas, including comfort with public prayer, understanding biblical principles, and confidence in God hearing prayers. Additionally, participants reported feeling a stronger connection with God and made prayer more of a priority in their Christian walk after the intervention.

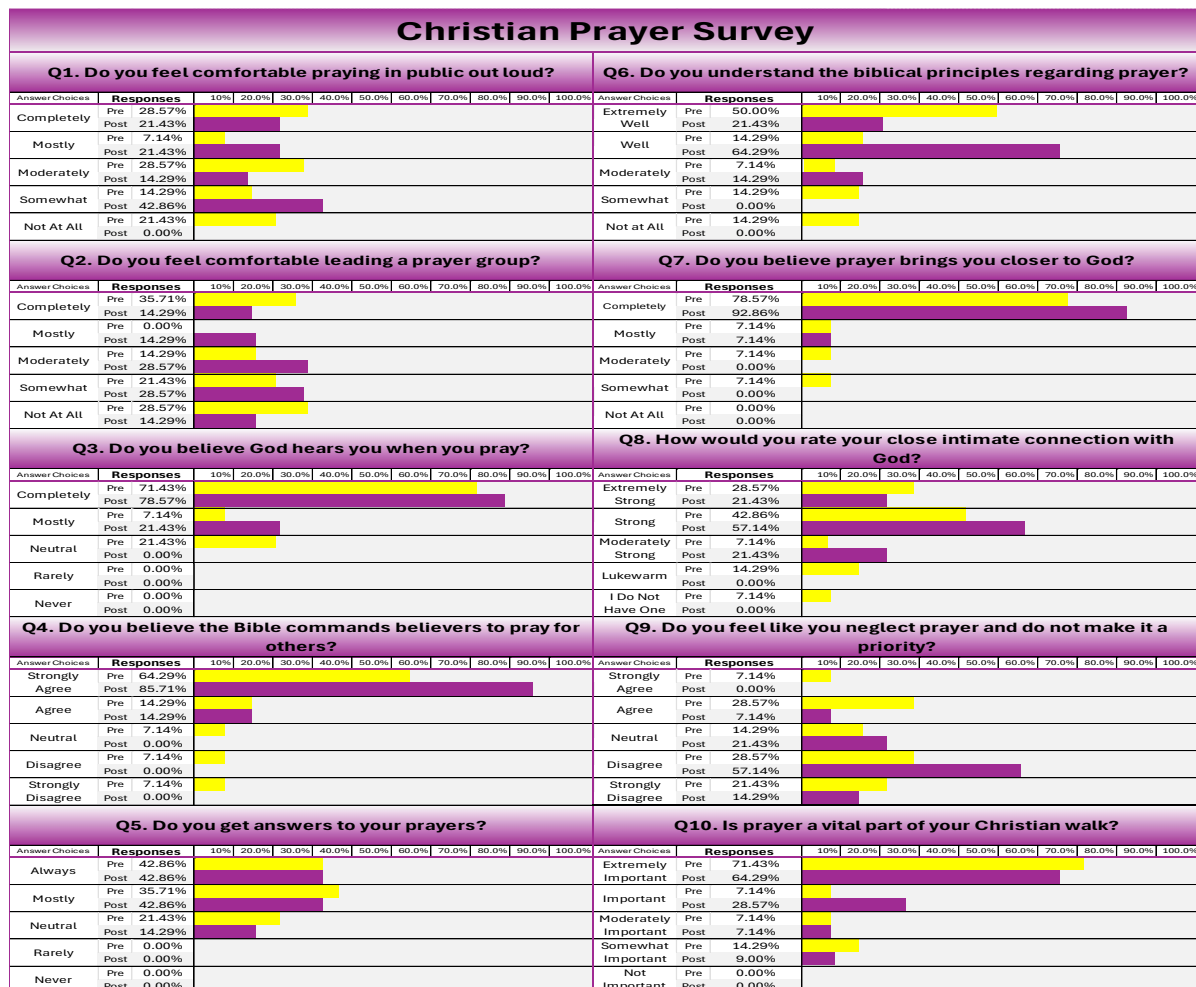


Figure 14. Survey 3: Christian Prayer (Q1 -Q10)

Qualitative Data Gathering and Scoring

Qualitative data is produced by observing human beings in a particular setting and aims to make sense of human experience. The researcher sought answers by observing and examining people in specific social settings and how they arranged themselves in those settings.¹⁸⁷ This type of research produces “culturally specific and contextually rich data” necessary to ensure the health and continued growth of a ministry or church organization.¹⁸⁸ The researcher gathered a wealth of raw data by hosting two focus groups and observing participants in Thursday night prayer and weekly classes.

The raw data from these sources and the numerous pages of field notes were transcribed, then compiled, categorized, and kept on a password-protected computer until they could be analyzed and interpreted. Careful field notes were taken to minimize bias and ensure the project's validity. The researcher understood the importance of careful notes because they knew most of the participants, if not personally, then in a ministerial context. The effort throughout the project was to take thorough notes during and after every class. That included the researcher setting aside time immediately after every encounter with the leaders of DPM to write up a summary of the events. The field notes helped bring order to the chaos of information overload.¹⁸⁹ As the weeks continued, themes emerged from conversations, testimonies, and in-class comments, revealing that what the researcher anticipated observing was not what took place.

The researcher sought to identify any slippages and silences during data analysis. Careful attention was given to the context of conversations during certain classes and specific topics on

¹⁸⁷ Bruce L. Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, 3rd ed (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998), 7; Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1990), 6.

¹⁸⁸ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 57.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 181.

IP and the Holy Spirit's role. Additionally, particular words and phrases, or lack of them, used in testimonies and questions throughout the course were given particular attention as all these elements began to paint a vivid picture of the nature of the problem and how it was not being addressed in the ministry. The goal was to analyze the raw data and findings to provide the researcher with insights into the effectiveness of the prayer workshop and its impact on strengthening the prayer lives of the DPM leaders.

All events and meetings during this eight-week course were held online. The online platform allowed those working full-time and those living in various states to participate without significantly adjusting their daily schedules. The researcher knew that enabling as many leaders as possible to participate was essential to the intervention's success. The researcher's familiarity with the participants in the research project made it possible to be empathetic and understand both their desire and fear to attend a prayer workshop as leaders. They were constantly reminded that they were in a safe space and encouraged to be vulnerable and speak freely. The trust and confidentiality of the participants were crucial, especially when it had been promised upfront.

The researcher emphasized that all written and verbal communications were anonymous and that names would never be revealed. The researcher further explained that no one would be judged, ridiculed, or slighted for not knowing something others may have expected them to know. One participant shared that often that there was an expectation that leaders, especially those who have been in church for many years, should know certain things, like how to pray. However, many were surprised to learn that research revealed that many people in today's churches do not know how to pray.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ Lawless, *The Potential and Power of Prayer*, 5; Henderson, "Innovative Prayer in the Local Church, 13.

The need to encourage the participants to engage more fully was ever-present, so the researcher learned how to inspire participants to share their prayer journeys. Each class opened with prayer followed by testimony service. A ten-minute window was usually allotted for participants to share how they had seen God move in their prayers during the week or previous weeks. Few people shared in the early stages of class. Hence, the researcher learned to discern when it was appropriate to be comfortable with the silence to allow participants time to process the questions and information before moving on and when it was proper to prompt the sessions with an opening question. The questions allowed the participants to relax and caused the conversations to flourish. The questions are displayed in Figure 15.



Figure 15. Prompt Questions

The opening questions were no longer needed in the latter weeks of class, with many participants wanting to share.

Presentation of Qualitative Results

This section provides a summary and analysis of findings gathered from observing participants in the Thursday night prayer sessions, weekly classes, and retreat. By actively engaging in these sessions, the researcher documented insights and behaviors that emerged throughout the intervention, offering a detailed portrayal of participant experiences and interactions.

Focus Groups

The focus groups were an opportunity to hear from the participants in their words. The questions were designed to allow the participants' voices to speak and not guide them in answering a certain way. There were no wrong answers; there were only answers that provided the researcher insight into the participants' thoughts and understanding of IP. The data gathered from the focus groups gave the researcher more insight into the participants' knowledge base and progression in the course.

During the focus group discussion, participants were identified by a number designated by the researcher so they could be asked to answer the same question again in the post-focus group. The researcher wanted to be able to compare individual responses as well as incorporate responses for the data analysis. Because every individual did not answer every question directly, the researcher looked for common threads in the data and found commonality among the responses. From those responses, the researcher transcribed some pre- and post-responses from specific individuals that echoed in every reply across the class.

1. Define prayer in 10 words or less. (Participant #4)

Pre-intervention response: Prayer is talking to God. Prayer expresses my heart to God. Prayer is a conversation with God. It is a vital thing.

Post-intervention response: Prayer is heartfelt communication with God. It is not only a one-sided conversation where I do all the speaking, but it is a two-way conversation between a father and a child. Prayer is the most powerful weapon. Further, prayer is the most powerful weapon; it is an act of submission and expression of faith. That is what Luke 11:12 has taught me.

2. Talk about the difference between general prayer and IP. (Participant #6)

Pre-intervention response: Prayer, in general, is talking to God about things that are on your heart, things that concern you and your family. IP is specifically about praying for other people and their concerns. Those people could be family, friends, or even people you don't know.

Post-intervention response: There are many types of prayers. For instance, there are prayers of Thanksgiving, repentance, intercession, and salvation. But when we think about prayer it is important to understand it is how believers communicate with their God in heaven. IP is when we pray on behalf of others like Christ, who makes intercession for us. We stand in the gap for others who may not have a voice to reach heaven. To be called to be an intercessor is a humbling and most important act of faith.

3. What do you believe about prayer? Do you believe God answers (your) prayers? Why/why not? What happens when God does not answer based on your prayers? (Participant #12)

Pre-intervention response: Prayer is about communicating with the Lord. It is about relationship, and it is not just talking to God but listening as well. I do believe that God hears my prayers, and I believe that God is excited about talking to me. I understand that because I am to pray the will of God in all circumstances that things may not always work out the way I anticipate or even want them to in my limited understanding of the situation.

Post-intervention response: Through this workshop, I have come to understand the true meaning of prayer and its purpose. I understand that it is not about me getting what I want but about me being a vessel in which the Lord can work in the earthly realm. With this new understanding, I am more accepting and comfortable about how God may or may not move because I know that no matter what happens, he is for me, and he hears me. The Bible tells me that when I call, he will answer, and it also tells me that he is near to me, so I absolutely have confidence in the word of God. I can absolutely be confident in how the Lord decides to work.

4. Leadership and ministry training programs are designed to equip and prepare Christians to serve more effectively in the Body of Christ. In your Christian experience, what education or

training have you received in prayer? Do you think prayer schools or prayer training courses would be beneficial? Why/why not? (Participant #7)

Pre-intervention response: I have been to a prayer class, but we did not apply the information. I was a lot younger when I went through that initial class, and they wanted me to say what they wanted me to say. I did not like that whole experience.

Post-intervention response: As I previously mentioned, I have been to a prayer class, but we did not apply the information we learned. But in this workshop, we had opportunities to practice the tools that we were given. I was really turned off by these types of classes, so initially, coming into this, I had some doubts because of an experience I had before. They wanted me to say what they wanted me to say. It was not like I had an opportunity to pray as the Holy Spirit was leading me. Instead, it seemed more scripted. Going through this workshop, though, I felt like I opened up and allowed myself to be used by the Holy Spirit more to pray according to God's will. I find that in my prayer life now I'm getting strategies and battle plans, and it is an experience like never before. This was a great class, and I wish it were longer.

5. Do you really believe prayer is the most vital thing? (Participant #3)

Pre-intervention response: Yes, I believe prayer is a vital link. I believe that prayer is not just one thing, but it is a function of many things.” The researcher asked participant #3 to define what they meant by a function of many things. “When I say it's a function of many things, I mean that there are all kinds of prayers, so there are times when you might be interceding for people, but there are other times when you might be praying about something for yourself or times when you might be praying prayers of healing or deliverance from something physical, spiritual, mental, or emotional in your own life. I just mean that there are many ways to pray and many things to pray for.

Post-intervention response: Yes, prayer is the most vital thing. I have really gained a deeper insight into the various layers and types of prayers and really how to pray more effectively. I understand that intercession is a calling or requirement that is not very visible but is mostly done in private. But because God has decided to partner with me in this life, I am sure that he hears me. God has given me the weapon of prayer, and I can use it to defeat the enemy in every circumstance that I might face in this life. Prayer connects me to the heart of God, and I want to know his heart, and I want him to know mine.

Themes

The researcher noticed that throughout conversations and testimonies given, specific keywords or ideas continued to merge. Those keywords led to six significant themes being born.

The themes identified were: 1) Understanding of Biblical Prayer, 2) Prayer and Scripture

Knowledge, 3) Intercessory Prayer Knowledge, 4) The Role of the Holy Spirit, 5) Types of Intercessors, and 6) Being yourself.

Understanding of Biblical Prayer. The research underscored the significance of biblical literacy in theological principles of prayer. This ensured that participants not only practiced praying during the intervention but also comprehended the purpose and power of prayer as outlined in the Bible. A substantial amount of practicum time was dedicated to praying the Bible. As Whitney articulated in his book, *Praying the Bible*, Scripture shapes our prayers, and without it, people are more likely to pray in a manner inconsistent with biblical teachings. The Holy Spirit, as the research found, plays a crucial role in using the Word of God to direct believers' prayers back to the will of God.¹⁹¹ Most participants identified that they had some knowledge of prayer, but that knowledge was not wholly based on the Scripture. It was mostly from growing up in church and being told something was right or just hearing other people pray. The course emphasized the need to pray the Word of God. One participant said, "I felt I had been told some wrong things in church, but due to this intervention, I understood prayer the way the Bible taught it. And this is something I need to continue studying."

Another participant admitted that the most exciting part of the course for them was the lesson that broke down the names of God. They said it was important to know the names of God because His names reveal His character and nature. Names are about identification, a person's nature, and character; our heavenly Father is no different. When believers address the heavenly Father in prayer using the appropriate name for the situation, He responds accordingly. For example, when one needs peace, they call on Jehovah Shalom, the Lord of Peace. When believers acknowledge who God is in each situation and revere His name when they engage Him

¹⁹¹ Donald S. Whitney, *Praying the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 36.

in prayer, it causes Him to respond based on that specific need. The participant expressed that knowing how to approach God and what name to use when approaching Him brought more confidence to his prayer life.

Prayer and Scripture Knowledge. Many shared that they knew what prayer was, but after going through the workshop, they had a deeper and richer meaning of prayer. They also expressed a new understanding of their role as leaders to pray for others. A comment was made by a seasoned leader that people should not be afraid to pray behind anyone if they were praying as God had led them to. He continued by stating that prayer was not a competition sport, and that God was not sitting around judging prayers to crown the “best” sounding or worded prayer. He concluded by saying God was looking for someone willing to talk to Him. A young woman replied, “I am excited because this new understanding of prayer has pulled me out of being intimidated. I always compare myself to others and feel my prayers are not as good as theirs, so I remain silent.” She said the course moved her out of her comfort zone and into a place with God where she was experiencing His presence. Others expressed that the workshop and the modified retreat were a safe place to release their prayers even when they felt they should have been further along in their prayer lives. Many said they did not feel intimidated or judged in the class environment but were so grateful for the opportunity to learn more about prayer.

Praying the Scriptures was a significant part of the course, and participants mentioned the importance of constantly including the Word of God in their prayers. A seasoned leader commented that there were benefits in praying the Word of God, and he was now praying entire chapters during his prayer time. Not everyone agreed that Scripture memorization was a priority for them, but everyone agreed that praying Scripture was a priority. Some said they wrote down key scriptures or took their Bibles into prayer and read from it. One gentleman said he ultimately

memorized passages from the Book of Psalms by reading them regularly—not by intentionally setting that goal. Praying the Psalms was the best thing because it is a songbook full of songs about God. God wrote it for Himself so His people would have a cheat sheet of the exact words He wants them to say to Him.¹⁹²

Intercessory Prayer Knowledge. The Model Intercessor, Jesus, stood in the gap between God and sinful man when He was on Earth. Even now, He intercedes for the saints in heaven. “For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5, NIV). Like the Old Testament priests, intercessors stand before God and man. However, before intercessors can stand in between, Sarpey said they must first stand before God to develop an intimate relationship.¹⁹³ As the course progressed, the participants learned the importance of the intimacy component. “I never realized how vital this intimacy piece is,” one young lady said. Another replied, “Wow! I never considered the real value of IP. Jesus did it and is still doing it. Intercessory prayers have no boundaries or limits; they can go anywhere and do anything. Wow!”

One participant spoke up and shared with the class a revelation he received about IP. He gave the example of a lawyer in a courtroom. He posed the following question to the class, “Does the lawyer go to court and approach the judge to discuss their problems? No, the lawyer never goes before the judge to speak about themselves but to speak on behalf of the client. No matter what the lawyer is going through in their own life, they never walk into court and talk about themselves, and this is the way an intercessor should be. The intercessor should go before God to stand in the gap for someone else.”

¹⁹² Whitney, *Praying the Bible*, 45.

¹⁹³ Sarpey, *Effective Intercessory Prayer Guide*, 13.

The Role of the Holy Spirit. “Then God said, let us make man in our image, in our likeness.” (Gen 1:26, NIV). The Bible makes it clear that three distinct Persons were involved in creation. In the beginning, God refers to Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead; he is not an “it.” So many people refuse to recognize and honor Him as a person Bevere responded in the book, *Holy Spirit*, so they forfeit a genuine intimate relationship with Him.¹⁹⁴ A senior leader in the workshop also stated that the church must stop referring to the “Holy Spirit” as if He is being introduced and call Him by His divine name, Holy Spirit. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would teach God’s people all things and help them remember everything He said (John 14:26, AMP). He is a helper, intercessor, friend, and advocate, among other things, but most importantly, He is God.

The Father sent the Holy Spirit to help the church to pray. The Bible teaches that the believer does not always know what to pray for, but the Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (Rom 8:26-28, NIV). The Holy Spirit also brings the Scripture to the believer’s remembrance so they can pray according to the will of the Father. One participant said, “I learned I need to lean more on my relationship with the Holy Spirit and treat Him as a companion and not some far away and mysterious being of the Trinity.” The Holy Spirit is standing by, waiting to get involved in the lives of God’s people to help them be more effective and powerful when they pray.

Types of Intercessors. The lesson on the different types of intercessors was based on Smith’s discussion in *Beyond the Veil*.¹⁹⁵ She understood the gift of an intercessor is a special

¹⁹⁴ Bevere, *The Holy Spirit: An Introduction*, 7-9.

¹⁹⁵ Smith, *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God Through Prayer*, 63-64.

calling from God that calls certain people to pray for extended amounts of time.¹⁹⁶ Like any other gift of the Spirit, this gift does not make one person more special than another. She continued by describing several types of intercessory gifts. She used the term, one ministry, many gifts. One participant who has an evangelistic calling said she understood the difference between the ministry and the gift of intercession after the lesson was taught. She revealed that this distinction was something she had never heard of or considered. “I feel like I am called to be a cafeteria-style intercessor because I feel like I can pray however the Spirit of the Lord leads me, and I am not glued to one style of praying.” Another echoed and said he believed he was a prayer list guy. He said, “Give me a list, and I got you. Lists keep me focused and faithful to prayer.” Others shared experiences about their prayer lives and how God used them to pray for others and even nations. Someone replied, “This class helped me to understand and be OK with the fact that my style is different, so I am not going to pray like some other people, and that is OK. If God is using me in another way, I must learn to embrace that.”

Being Yourself. It was stressed that leaders were to be imitators of Christ and no one else (Ephesians 5: 1, NIV). Most participants commented on the importance of remaining true to oneself in prayer. Still, many others shared that they lacked confidence in their prayer lives, especially when praying aloud and behind certain people. An older participant who had been a leader in the church for over thirty years said it had been frustrating and confusing at certain junctures in life when she tried to pray like other people or other leaders she admired. “I would try to mimic their sound and style but soon found myself tired and disappointed in the results.” The theme of being OK with yourself came up early when no one volunteered to pray at the first prayer meeting. Most everyone in the intervention was there, but only three people prayed.

¹⁹⁶ Smith, *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God Through Prayer*, 59.

Some shared that they had been fearful and unprepared, while others were still dealing with trauma over being embarrassed by leaders in other ministries who had belittled or even ridiculed their prayers. The most shared thought from the group was summed up in Paul's words found in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 where it states there are many kinds of gifts, but it is the same God who works through everything and everyone. Participants took that Scripture and coined the phrase, "Be Yourself." The concluding thoughts came from the youngest person in the group. She said, "The world needs you just like you were made to be. So just be you and watch how God uses you."

Thursday Night Prayer Service

Figure 16 shows the eight-week Thursday Night Prayer Service data on attendance and participation. The Number in Attendance indicates the number of people attending the service each week, ranging from three to thirteen attendees. The percentage in Attendance shows the percentage of people attending the service relative to the total expected attendance (fourteen), with percentages varying from 21.42 percent to 92.85 percent. The Number Participated in Prayer showcases the attendees who actively led a prayer during the service. Finally, the Percentage of those Who Attended and Participated shows the percentage of those who not only showed up to prayer but also took a lead role in praying. This percentage fluctuates from as low as 20 percent in Week Two to as high as 75 percent in Week Six.

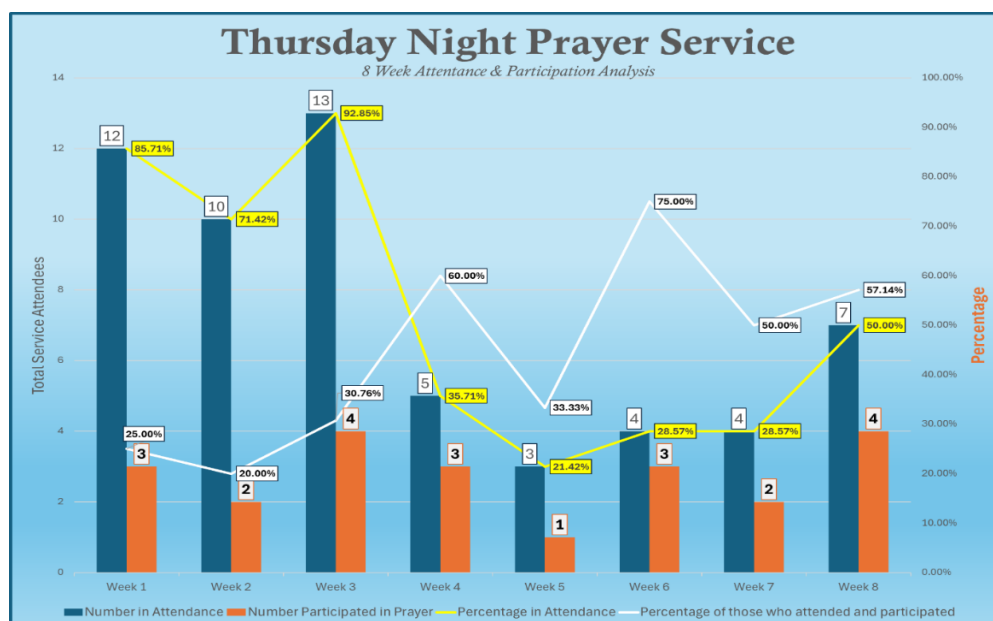


Figure 16. Thursday Night Prayer Service Metrics

Workshop Classes and Retreat

The workshop classes and modified retreat were designed to educate, equip, and challenge the DPM leaders to grow in prayer and intimacy with God to be confident in leading and training others in IP. The classes and modified retreat were evaluated based on participation and feedback throughout the eight weeks. Five lessons were taught within five weeks, with two classes weekly. The curriculum was designed to meet the overall objectives of instilling in the leaders of DPM more confidence and more knowledge of the purpose and power of IP. The lesson's central focus was on the biblical definition and understanding of prayer, specifically IP, from a Christian worldview perspective. Figure 17 outlines the progressive structure of the eight-week course.

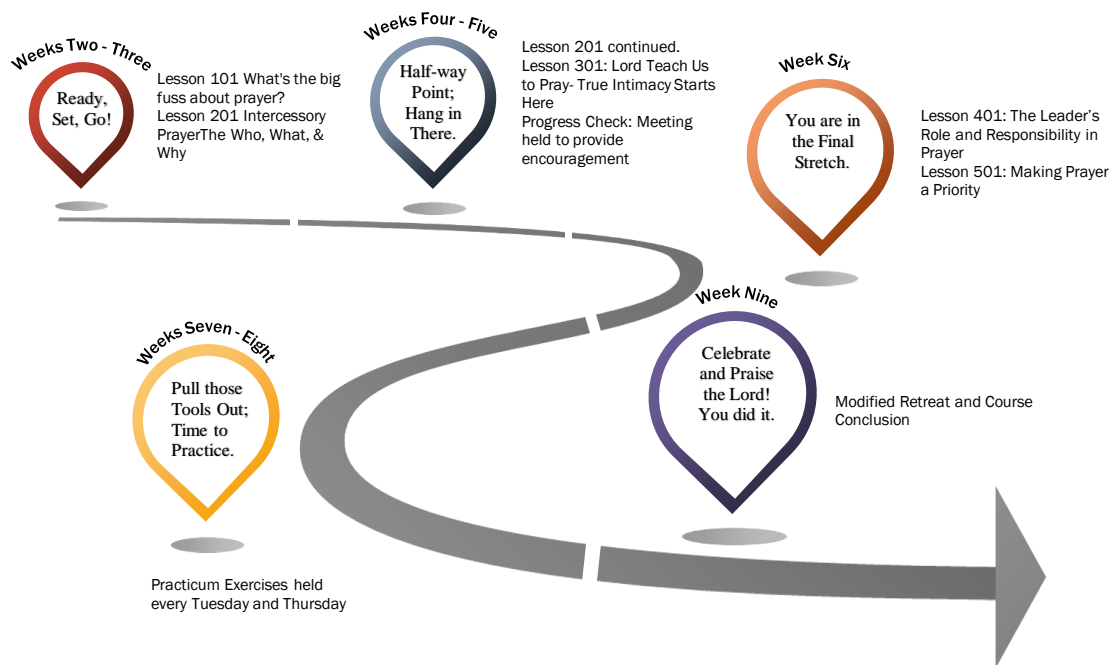


Figure 17. Journey Map of Lesson Content

Data Analysis

The following sections analyze, interpret, and present the data results to measure the intervention design's success. The quantitative data, consisting of the surveys, are reviewed first, followed by qualitative data gathered from field notes recorded during the focus group sessions and observing participation in Thursday night prayer services and the weekly classes and retreat.

Quantitative Analysis

This quantitative analysis discusses responses to the pre- and post-course surveys using tables and charts to provide clearer data interpretation. The analysis begins with an overall comparison, displaying average scores for each question (Q1-Q9/Q10) across three categories, alongside the percentage differences between pre- and post-course surveys. Following this overview, each survey question is examined individually, highlighting the specific response

percentages from participants. Moving from general trends to detailed insights, this layered approach provides a comprehensive and nuanced view of the findings.

Comparative Results Across Three Surveys

The purpose of Table 6 was to measure participants' knowledge and understanding before and after a course on three topics: Prayer and Intercession, Understanding Intercessory Prayer, and Christian Prayer. It provides a quick visual snapshot of the areas that showed positive trends and areas needing improvement. Overall, most questions show a slight increase, indicating that the course had a positive impact across the board. The Prayer and Intercession survey saw the most significant improvement and the most extensive challenge area, suggesting that although the course was engaging and provided participants with the tools they needed, it needed to be refined in some key areas where participants did not show growth.

For example, Q3 saw a substantial jump from 3.71 to 4.43 (.72 percent increase), suggesting that participants understood “extremely well” the need to persist in prayer and not give up. However, Q8 dropped from 3.36 to 3.00 (.36 percent decrease), signaling that participants were praying less. This question may not necessarily indicate a negative trend because the course taught participants the value of incorporating short, powerful, intentional prayers into daily routines. They may be praying for less time per session but praying more frequently, which is still a good thing overall. Question eight of the Understanding Intercessory Prayer survey might better illustrate a need for curriculum refinement because this question was about participants believing their prayers made a difference, and the post scores decreased by .07 percent. This may have been a slight decrease, but the researcher was surprised that some participants felt pessimistic about their prayers and the effectiveness of those prayers.

The researcher continued analyzing the survey data by comparing the percentage of each response choice from the pre-survey to the post-survey. The first segment examines the results of Survey 1: Prayer and Intercession, followed by Survey 2: Understanding Intercessory Prayer; and Survey 3: Christian Prayer Survey. Each segment concludes with a summary interpreting the importance and impact of the survey's findings.

Survey 1: Prayer and Intercession

The overall results from the pre- and post-survey responses reveal mixed results. There are nine questions in this survey. The questions measured the participants' prayer habits, how they pray, what they believe about prayer and their prayers, and the frequency and duration of their prayer times. While it is true that more participants reported praying multiple times a day after the intervention (Q1), the duration of each prayer session decreased slightly (Q9). On average, the duration of each prayer session decreased, with most sessions lasting fifteen minutes or less (Q8). Specifically, there was a 28 percent decrease in those who prayed frequently or daily for 30 minutes or more (Q9). The data also shows a 28 percent increase in those participants who prayed for fifteen minutes or less.

Across Q1, Q2, Q8, and Q9, a common trend is the shift from longer prayer durations to more moderate levels of prayer activity. The intervention did not significantly increase the number of participants engaging in frequent or prolonged prayer sessions. Instead, more participants fell into middle categories ("sometimes" or 2-3 times daily), indicating an increased awareness of the importance of short but powerful prayers throughout the day. This contrasts with leaders who, aiming to pray for extended periods, become frustrated and weary when they struggle to meet their time goals. The data supports this even in small numbers because before

the intervention began, only two participants (14.29 percent) prayed once daily, but after the course, that number decreased to zero percent (Q1).

After the intervention, the number of participants who better understood the role of intercession (Q2) and believed their prayers were more effective (Q4) increased significantly. Over half the class (57.14 percent) reported feeling that their prayers were effective, compared to only 28.47 percent before the course. Despite this progress, the researcher was surprised that the number of participants who prayed the Word of God daily was not higher. Many participants fell into middle categories (such as "sometimes" or "frequently"), which suggests that more time may be needed in the course to develop these habits fully. It also points to the potential benefit of assigning homework to reinforce the discipline and value of praying Scripture. While overall growth was positive, the specific breakdown of responses revealed areas for further development that surprised the researcher.

Summary of Overall Results of Survey 1: Prayer and Intercession

The results showed that after the intervention, 28.57 percent of participants were praying the Word of God more frequently than 14.29 percent of participants before. This can be attributed to the fact that they all now believe that God hears their prayers. Initially, 14.29 percent were unsure if God heard their prayers as believers. The researcher also indicated that 28.57 percent of participants believed their prayers were more effective. The increase in the frequency of prayers suggests a firm belief in the participants' belief that praying the Word of God has made their prayers more effective, and because of these things, they are convinced that God hears them when they pray. It can be inferred that there is a heightened passion and dedication to pray more, even though the duration of each session has shortened.

This shift in participants' time spent in prayer could result from several factors, such as time constraints. While participants may have initially had more time in their day, now they may be busier with children, homework, or work obligations, which caused them to have to pray shorter prayers. Additionally, if participants started to emphasize content, consistency, and effectiveness over duration, this could also explain the change in scores. Over time, however, the researcher believes that the time spent in prayer will increase as they continue to be consistent in their prayer routines.

The willingness of leaders to be transparent and engage in the course gave them a better understanding of the role of prayer and gave them more confidence in their prayer lives. Even though some participants initially believed they had well-established prayer lives, the intervention overall revealed a significant shift in their mindset and prayer routine. The overall score increase indicates that the course effectively enhanced participants' understanding of prayer and intercession. However, the declines in specific areas, like Time Spent in Prayer, highlight potential gaps that might require additional focus or follow-up. It could also mean that participants have adopted strategies to pray more throughout the day for shorter amounts of time instead of praying for longer periods, which the evidence supports (Q1). The researcher does not believe this is a negative indication of the program or the participants' progress, but further investigation is required to uncover the root cause. Instead, it speaks to the fact that because of the intervention, they realized that although they knew a lot, there was still more to learn and gain through the course.

Survey 2: Understanding Intercessory Prayer

This survey was administered to measure the participants' understanding of IP and their roles as intercessors. After the intervention, those who understood IP “well” rose from 14.29 percent to 64.29 percent (Q1). Significant growth was observed in this area based on pre-survey responses. However, it was equally important to pay attention to the results showing that those who understood the concept of IP “extremely well” decreased from 42.86 percent to 28.57 percent after the intervention (Q1). Participants spoke about the new knowledge and information gained in the class on worship and intimacy. During the earlier classes, it was clear that the participants were excited about the lesson content and the new perspectives they embraced on IP. Participants recognized that worship was a significant component of IP and that they would get far in their prayer lives with it.

In addition, the number of those who understood the concept of IP and their role as intercessors significantly increased. Initially, 21.43 percent of participants did not understand their roles as intercessors, but that number rose, and, in the end, 50 percent understood their role well (Q2). There was a 14.29 percent decrease in those who went from having an “extremely well” understanding of their role as an intercessor. The researcher did not find these results shocking because there seemed to be a trend developing where participants initially rated themselves high and, in the end, rated themselves more modestly. The researcher does not believe this is a negative indication of the program or the participants' progress, but further investigation is required to uncover the root cause. Instead, it speaks to the fact that because of the intervention, they realized that although they knew a lot, there was still more to learn and gain through the course.

Summary of Overall Results of Survey 2: Understanding Intercessory Prayer

The participants' understanding of IP significantly grew based on pre-survey responses. The percentage of students who understood the concept of IP “well” increased from 14.29 percent to 64.29 percent after the intervention (Q1). However, those who understood IP “extremely well” decreased after the intervention, suggesting that participants began to look at and consider different perspectives they never had in their previous understanding of IP and what it meant to be an intercessor. This shift from an extremely high understanding to a more moderate understanding shows that the participants, as leaders in a ministry, were humble enough to realize that they did not know as much as they thought they knew coming into the intervention. Additionally, their honesty and transparency in pre- and post-surveys reflect their willingness to learn and grow as leaders.

In the area of understanding their roles as intercessors, there was a significant increase as well. Initially, 21.43 percent of participants did not understand their roles as intercessors, but that number jumped significantly to 50 percent of participants understanding their role well after the intervention (Q2). The data also shows that participants significantly improved their understanding and practice of IP. Twenty-one-point three percent of participants who only prayed for others, if asked, started praying for others at least three times a week (Q6). The participants who increased the frequency of their prayers also showed some growth in sensing prompts to pray for others (Q9), which shows that the program had a positive effect. For example, while both daily prayer and promptings remained constant at 71.43 percent, the intervention led to notable improvements in those who initially prayed or sensed promptings less frequently, particularly those who moved from praying only when asked to pray several days a

week. This suggests that the intervention helped participants become more attuned to the need for intercession and more responsive to internal promptings to pray.

The researcher believes this was a direct result of teaching and having the participants practice praying the Scriptures and listening for the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Additionally, they were charged with applying the lessons learned in class throughout the week. Some participants were working on their confidence levels while others were still dealing with hurt and rejection from past situations when asked to pray, so with this in mind, the researcher did not force anyone to do anything they were uncomfortable doing but instead challenged people out of their comfort zones. The researcher told them to do what they felt they would be most effective at and then, the following week, try something they were least effective at to work on those skills.

The intervention significantly improved the participants' understanding and practice of IP by effectively communicating the core principles of biblical prayer, presenting biblical IP role models, and discussing the different callings of intercessors. The participants learned the differences between the gift and the ministry/role of intercession, which allowed some to let go of fear and anxiety. They thought something was wrong with them because they could not pray for long durations of time like those gifted in that area. The significant increase in participants who understood their role as intercessors highlights the intervention's ability to clarify those roles and responsibilities.

One area the researcher found challenging to understand and interpret without further clarification from participants was that one participant who initially responded that they were unsure if God answered their prayers on behalf of others, indicated post-survey that they now did not believe God answered their prayers (Q7). The researcher was initially shocked because the

assumption was that participants would have gained a new level of understanding from the multiple discussions and focus group conversations on God answering prayers. A central theme and topic of discussion was that just because God does not always answer prayers the way believers hope for does not mean He ignored the petitioner's request. Considering the troubling response, the researcher studied it in the context of the whole survey, concluding that despite the slight increase in disagreement, the sizable majority (64.29 percent) strongly agreed that God answered their prayers, showing overall stability in belief. The participant who strongly disagreed may have experienced specific prayers not being answered as they had hoped and changed their belief.

Another area of surprise was Q8. This question addressed whether participants believed their prayers were making a global impact. One participant remained unmoved in their strong belief that their prayers were not making a difference. In contrast, three participants were firmly convinced that their prayers effectively changed the world, indicating post-class that they still believed it but not as strongly as before. Like Q7, those results were strikingly unsettling because the other data did not support the responses. The drop in those who believed their prayers were making a difference in the world could stem from experiencing unanswered prayers as well, recognizing that the results of their prayers may not always align with their will or that the impact of prayer is complex and requires endurance in faith because the results may not always be immediately visible or tangible.

This survey indicates that the intervention substantially impacted the participants' understanding and practice of IP, but it also highlighted some areas of concern and further reflection. While there were shifts in the experience levels, this is most likely due to personal challenges and even disappointments regarding prayer outcomes. The overall increase in

comprehension and the frequency of IP suggests positive outcomes and deeper reflection on the power and purpose of prayer.

Survey 3: Christian Prayer Survey

The Christian Prayer survey assessed the participants' ability to pray publicly and lead others in prayer and their relationship with the Lord. The workshop aimed to teach about prayer and foster a closer and more intimate relationship with God. At the start, three participants (21.43 percent) out of 14 participants were uncomfortable praying aloud. However, by the end of the program, these participants showed a significant increase in their comfort levels (Q1). The most substantial increase was in the "somewhat comfortable" category, which rose from two participants (14.29 percent) to six participants (42.86 percent). This indicates that participants progressively stepped out of their comfort zones and became more confident praying aloud.

Moreover, the survey indicated that more participants felt confident leading a prayer group post-intervention. Initially, four participants reported that they were not comfortable at all with leading a prayer group (Q2). However, after the intervention, this number decreased to just two participants, indicating a significant increase in their confidence. Interestingly, five participants initially claimed they were "completely comfortable" leading a prayer group, but this number dropped to two participants post-intervention. This decline is likely due to participants realizing, through the course, that effective leadership requires more knowledge and skills than previously assumed. This self-reflection and humility were evident in their responses on the overall post-survey.

One of the most intriguing findings was related to the participants' understanding of biblical principles regarding prayer (Q6). Pre-survey responses varied widely, with two participants indicating "no understanding" and seven claiming an "extremely well"

understanding. Post-survey results, however, showed that the intervention significantly enhanced the participants' knowledge. The most substantial increase was in the "well" category, which rose to 64.29 percent (nine participants) from 14.29 percent (two participants). This significant increase in understanding, particularly among those who initially believed they had an "extremely well" grasp of the principles, reaffirms the effectiveness of the intervention.

The survey also explored the participants' intimate connection with God (Q7, Q8). This aspect was central to the project, aiming to help participants deepen their relationship with the Lord. The results were overwhelmingly positive. Initially, six participants felt their relationship with God was "strong." By the end of the intervention, 57.14 percent (eight participants) felt their relationship was "strong." All categories showed significant growth, except for a slight decrease in those who initially felt their relationship was "extremely strong" (from four participants to three participants). However, when Q7 is factored in with this data, it illustrates that the participants "completely" believed their prayers brought them closer to God; therefore, intimacy would inevitably increase if they genuinely continued this trajectory.

Summary of Overall Results of Survey 3: Christian Prayer

Participants experienced substantial growth in their comfort with public prayer, ability to lead prayer groups, understanding of biblical principles, and intimacy with God. Overall, there were significant shifts upward, and the correlation was evident that as their knowledge and understanding of biblical principles on prayer increased, their relationship with God grew. These outcomes suggest that the workshop provided valuable tools and insights that contributed to participants' spiritual development and practical skills in prayer. Furthermore, the results demonstrate holistic growth among participants, encompassing practical skills, knowledge, and

spiritual depth. Participants became more comfortable and effective in praying aloud and leading prayer groups, and they gained a deeper understanding of prayers' biblical foundations.

Moreover, their relationships with God were significantly strengthened. While the overall trend is positive, some areas need continued improvement. For instance, the decreasing number of participants who felt completely comfortable leading a prayer group suggests a deeper awareness of leadership challenges and responsibilities. For many leaders participating in the intervention, self-awareness was a significant growth area. This study revealed that leaders can benefit from spiritual development in prayer and continued development in leadership and followership. Leaders face numerous challenges in and outside the church and require appropriate and relevant skills, training, and education to lead in every capacity effectively.

Qualitative Analysis

This section analyzes the data from observing the focus group participants in the Thursday night prayer sessions and the weekly classes and retreat. Through active observation and participation in the intervention, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of the participants, which allowed for a more meaningful interpretation of the data.

Focus Groups

The qualitative data was derived from the participant's responses to the focus group questions and any additional information they chose to share, like their experiences and testimonies. The results of the focus group were very positive. Based on the pre- and post-intervention responses, participants increased their knowledge and understanding of prayer and IP, its purpose, and its ability to foster a more intimate relationship with God. During the initial focus group, the conversation was slow, and participants answered questions robotically or provided what could be considered a church answer. A church answer is akin to someone not

truly understanding the depth of a topic or biblical principle but simply repeating what has been taught through tradition. However, after the intervention ended and the last focus group session was held, participants were more reflective in their responses and able to explain theological concepts on prayer coupled with a greater commitment to prayer and God. It was a great balance of knowledge and zeal.

The results of the focus group overwhelmingly supported the evidence gathered from the quantitative study. Still, the focus group provided more depth than just the surveys alone because, in the group conversations, the researcher could watch the participants' facial expressions and body language and ask clarifying or follow-up questions to reveal more profound levels of thought. For example, when asked if prayer schools or prayer training courses would be beneficial, one participant shared that she had been to a class, but there was no practical application in the class. What she got out of this class allowed her to open up and grow in some areas of her life that had been shut down. However, when the researcher asked her to speak more about the benefits of being in this program, she shared prayer strategies and plans God had been downloading since attending the intervention. Many said it encouraged practical application and allowed them to experience praying in a safe environment. The vulnerability and transparency in sharing the testimonies caused many to cry and rejoice because the changes that had taken place in their prayer lives were tangible, and they were so excited. The data from the focus group overwhelmingly highlights the participants' enhanced knowledge and comprehension of prayer in biblical prayer, prayer knowledge, and IP knowledge.

Thursday Night Prayer

The data from the prayer group measured participants' confidence levels in praying aloud in public settings. The researcher used the attendance and participation records to compare the

metrics from Weeks One through Eight. It was clear those who attended the regular Thursday night sessions were being blessed and growing stronger in their prayer lives, and their confidence and stamina in prayer were ever-increasing. However, many participants stopped consistently attending. On average, only four members attended IP meetings during the course's last four weeks. The researcher never considered asking the participants why they stopped attending IP meetings regularly but assumed other commitments, such as family, children, or work, took precedence. Still, seeing low attendance at the services consistently was disheartening and surprising, especially since the data from the surveys, focus group conversations, and their testimonies told of great victories being won because of prayer.

The researcher anticipated significant growth in the Thursday night prayer meetings because one of the main reasons revealed by the leaders of DPM was that they did not consistently attend and participate in prayer services because they were uncomfortable praying aloud. This discomfort derived from several sources, but some major reasons stemmed from a lack of knowledge of IP, not knowing what to pray about or how to pray about it and intimidation. The intimidation came from some leaders feeling like they did not sound like others when they prayed. The researcher was told that some leaders did not want to pray after certain leaders because their prayers were not strong enough or they did not know enough Bible scriptures to quote. The researcher believed the excitement and enthusiasm surrounding the class would spill over onto the Thursday night prayer sessions and drive participants to come out and grow in their comfortableness, but the data told a different story. Instead of experiencing an increase in the number of participants attending and participating in the prayer meetings, the numbers consistently decreased over the eight weeks.

The attendance was strong at the first Thursday night prayer meeting with twelve of the fourteen participants in attendance. Weeks Five through Seven saw meager participation, and the researcher believed this could be due, in part, to the practical portion of the workshop being held immediately after prayer. The two events were held on the same evening with class immediately after prayer. However, prayer attendance consistently remained lower than class attendance because if participants missed prayer, they would attend class but not the opposite. It never occurred that someone was present for prayer meetings and skipped class.

Despite the challenges with attendance, the numbers were more positive regarding the percentage of those participating in the service by leading a prayer segment. The data showed a significant shift upward in participation compared to the number of participants present. For example, twelve participants were at the prayer meeting during the first week, but only three of the twelve led prayers. Then, in Weeks Six through Eight, although the numbers were low for people showing up, the number of those who prayed was high. Those weeks saw more than 50 percent of those present leading prayer. Significantly, three of the four people who showed up during Week Six prayed, which was a 75 percent participation rate. This was the highest rate of participation based on the number of people who showed up for the entire intervention. The graph reveals that participation increased, although attendance decreased.

Those who were showing up were growing in their prayer lives. They were both leading prayer segments and consistently praying aloud with more confidence. Two participants, in particular, demonstrated significant growth and development in their prayer lives. These participants overcame challenges to achieve greater effectiveness and power in their prayers. They ushered in a genuine move of God among the participants who consistently showed up and participated in Thursday night prayer services and persevered in their personal prayer time.

The data gathered from the Thursday evening prayer meetings revealed two significant but possibly contradicting insights. The number of attendees on Thursday nights was dropping significantly, but the participation of those attending increased. Perhaps the decrease in the number of participants who attended Thursday night prayer meetings and felt “completely comfortable” leading prayer groups post-intervention could suggest a need for ongoing corporate and personalized leadership and prayer development. On the other hand, the increased comfort with praying aloud and an enhanced ability to lead prayer groups suggested the intervention was doing what it set out to do and was producing an effective result. Although disheartening in some aspects of the data, the data showed that the intervention caused the leaders of DPM to grow collectively and individually in their knowledge of IP and intimacy with God.

Workshop Classes and Retreat

Most students enjoyed the first lesson and responded with many positive comments. One of the most memorable comments was, “I absolutely enjoyed the lesson on the Lord's prayer. I have been saying the Lord's Prayer since I was a kid, and now I am an adult, and I never heard the Lord's Prayer taught in such a dynamic and simplistic way. It was broken into six components, and every component was explained and elaborated on. We were given relevant examples, which I could easily pick up and live out the next day. It was incredible!”

The researcher taught participants how to pray at a basic level and then built on that throughout the rest of Lesson 2, which was the foundation of everything that occurred during the intervention. Lesson 3 revealed for many participants the most striking pictures of intimacy between God and His people in both the Old and New Testament in the image of a groom and a bride or husband and a wife. One participant said, “I never thought about prayer this way before. I thought prayer was talking to God, but understanding the intimacy piece brings prayer

into a new focus for me.” Another participant shared, “I never looked at the intimacy that occurs between me and God, but this lesson has caused me to see things differently, and now I want to spend more time with God, talking but also listening and getting to know him.”

The positive feedback continued into Lessons Four and Five. However, during these final two lessons, participants began doing practical exercises in preparation for the practicum portion, and attendance saw a slight drop in numbers. It was clear that some preferred the lecture method and wanted to steer away from any prayer activities. However, these final lessons provided participants with tools to assist them in their leadership roles, with prayer primarily focusing on the Word of God. Significant amounts of time were spent on the leader knowing the Word of God and then praying the Word of God. Techniques were shared to deepen personal prayer time and overcome obstacles to maintain a healthy and consistent prayer habit. Lesson Five continued with more tools and strategies to assist leaders in developing a consistent prayer life. The class taught participants how to build a prayer schedule and incorporate small yet powerful and intentional prayers into daily routines. Small but deliberate steps were taken to reduce nerves and build confidence in public praying before the class delved into the practicum portion. One of the male participants later shared with the class that these small exercises allowed him to hear from God concerning how to pray for others. In this setting, participants had to seek God on behalf of someone else intentionally, listen for a response, and then intercede on their behalf based on what God had said. He and several others were excited about their small encounters with God during these class times and shared their desire to have this type of connection with God in their everyday lives. Great care was taken to create and sustain a welcoming, family-friendly prayer environment for those new to such practices.

The modified retreat experience continued to allow participants to practice the newly acquired skills for leading others in prayer and forming and mentoring effective prayer groups. The final class saw all participants in attendance. During the final thirty minutes, the researcher posted a question to the entire class to get their feedback on the effectiveness of the eight-week course and its impact on their prayer lives. However, before the question was posed, the importance of providing honest answers was reiterated to all the participants. They were also reminded that the researcher's project was not based on a successful intervention project but rather on their honest assessment of the intervention. The closing question to the participants was: Did the eight-week course utilizing Bible studies, prayer exercises, journaling, and group activities educate, equip, and challenge you to grow in prayer and intimacy with God? Secondly, are you more confident leading and training others in IP after participating in this intervention? Ten of the fourteen participants responded with a resounding yes. Participant number five said, "It was too short. Can we keep going?" Participant number seven asked, "Will there be a part two? Sign me up." The remaining two participants, who were new leaders (MIT), collectively articulated that the class had caused them to grow and that having more knowledge of how to pray appropriately and effectively using the Word of God would support them as they continued to grow as Christians and as new leaders in the church. Participant number ten specifically disclosed, "I was nervous about attending the classes because I did not know what to expect. I wanted to learn more about prayer, but I did not want to be put on the spot and forced to pray if I was uncomfortable doing so. But this class was great, and I am glad I did it. I enjoyed it."

The responses to the final question asked at the close of the course highlighted the workshop's effectiveness and corroborated the evidence gathered quantitatively. The intervention addressed the personal prayer concerns of the leaders of DPM by providing education and tools

to ensure their continued growth. Twelve of the fourteen participants provided direct confirmation, with their collective yes, of their success and development due to their participation in the workshop. The remaining two leaders, new to leadership and currently in ministerial training, elaborated more on the program's effectiveness in supporting them and their growth as intercessors. They also noted that the course boosted their confidence and were glad they participated. The overall results of the project provided in-depth insight into the positive impact on the participants' lives. The last section will provide a summary evaluation of the comprehensive IP workshop, describing its impact on the leaders of DPM.

Summary of Results

This chapter presented the methods to accomplish the project's objectives and the results of this intervention project. Data analysis was obtained from the sample population of fourteen members of DPM. The sample population consisted of both men and women who were all leaders in the ministry. The leadership levels consisted of those previous leaders who had come from other ministries, those who were in current leadership roles, and finally, those who were in ministerial training. Quantitative and qualitative data collected during the research project were analyzed, and the results were reported. After the results for each data collection method were discussed, the research was summarized, highlighting the changes between the baseline and the collected data and any change directly attributed to the intervention plan. Graph analysis was completed to compare the observations before and after the pre-and post-surveys, and descriptive statistics were used in the research report to narrate the participants' recorded testimonies and experiences. All sessions were recorded and kept on the researcher's password-protected computer. Ultimately, this chapter presented and evaluated the results of the IP workshop attended by the leaders of DPM and assessed its impact on their prayer lives.

The researcher knew that some DPM leaders struggled to be effective and consistent in the ministry of intercession but believed that by creating an eight-week course utilizing Bible studies, prayer exercises, journaling, and group activities, members' prayer lives would grow, and they would become more effective and powerful prayer leaders in the ministry. The goal of the intervention was two-fold: 1) to challenge the DPM leaders to grow in the ministry of intercession, bringing them to a place of breakthrough, power, and greater intimacy with God, and 2) to instill in them the confidence to lead and train others in IP.

The researcher hypothesized that if the DPM leaders attended the IP course and applied the lessons learned, they would experience breakthroughs, power, and greater intimacy with God. By assessing the research objectives, the researcher could determine whether the thesis statement was sufficiently supported by evidence and analysis. A key measure of the success of this DMin thesis project was the proficiency of leaders in the following specific areas upon completion of the course.

1. Articulate the distinction between prayer and IP
2. Enhance the effectiveness of their prayers by incorporating the Word of God
3. Participate in and lead IP sessions on Thursday nights
4. Cultivate confidence in praying publicly
5. Develop a consistent prayer habit
6. Acquire the skills to mentor a junior leader and/or lay member in prayer

The aggregate results of the DMin project support the success of this project based on the course objectives. The participants spent hours in a classroom environment studying the Word of God, understanding biblical principles of prayer, and applying the Scriptures to their prayers to pray more effectively. They also spent hours discussing the difference between prayer and IP,

studying biblical role models in IP, and understanding their roles as intercessors and mentors. Immediately after the classroom instruction concluded, participants began applying the tools they gained through practical activities. During the intervention's focus group sessions, they shared testimonies and details of their prayer journey, and multiple themes emerged that allowed the class to dive deeper into some topics.

The participants showed a greater understanding of the importance of praying the Word of God and immediately put the knowledge into practice. After the intervention, 28.57 percent of participants prayed the Word of God “more frequently” than 14.29 percent of participants before. Their understanding of IP and their role as intercessors also increased, indicating a proper biblical understanding of what it meant to be an intercessor. The percentage of students who understood the concept of IP “well” increased from 14.29 percent to 64.29 percent after the intervention. Likewise, the overall percentage of participants understanding their role as an intercessor saw a significant jump. The “well ” response saw a considerable jump from 14.29 percent (two participants) to 50 percent (seven participants). This was a 28.57 percent decrease in the “somewhat” and “not at all” responses. Participants deepened their understanding and practice of prayer by realizing that standing in the gap for others was a heavenly privilege and assignment.

Other significant growth areas were captured in their comfort level regarding praying aloud and leading prayer groups and sessions. The researcher expected these numbers to increase significantly and remain high based on the conversations among participants in and out of the classroom and the excitement buzzing in the air, but what emerged was surprising. There was a decrease in the number of participants who attended Thursday night prayer meetings (see Figure 16) and a slight decline in those who felt completely comfortable leading prayer groups (see

Figure 14, (Q2). Still, the data provided good news and verified that those who participated consistently on Thursdays saw exponential growth in their lives.

This downward participation trend can suggest several things, such as a need for ongoing leadership and prayer development, a change in the prayer meeting day and time, or a conversation about what is causing people to miss Thursday night meetings. For example, some leaders may work late or have other family obligations to attend on those nights. Without further inquiry into the possible reasons, through direct questioning in a focus group setting or additional survey questions, the researcher could only make an educated guess based on the consensus of the collected data. The data concluded that some still did not feel “mostly” or “completely comfortable” praying aloud and continued to feel uncomfortable leading a prayer group. The good news was that leaders were praying more, but more work was needed as some still struggled to pray in public settings.

The researcher understood that some questions were unanswered because they had not been considered in the project's original design. For example, silences existed regarding attendance issues with the prayer meeting and the practicum. Knowing the actual cause of participants not showing up could have shed more insight into the intervention's direction. That kind of information could have told the researcher what areas to focus on or what areas to add or remove based on the participants' needs. Everyone talked about how good the intervention was, but there was no direct feedback on what was missing. Knowing what the leaders want more of in a course like this is invaluable information.

In conclusion, despite some individual drops in scores, the general trend across the surveys, the focus group responses, the participation in the prayer meeting, and the weekly classes and modified retreat suggested that the intervention had a positive effect, particularly in

fostering a better understanding of the purpose and power of prayer and its connection to intimacy with God. With all the success of the intervention, participants were reminded that the goal was not only to complete the prayer workshop and get a certificate but to continually and purposefully practice these spiritual disciplines learned in the last eight weeks further to grow their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. In the end, data analysis supported the successful outcome of the course objectives, thus proving the thesis statement true.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Prayer is an essential part of the believer's lifestyle. It is how we communicate with our God and how He communicates or responds to His people. When Christ died, He made it possible for all believers to access God at any time. Prayer is more than an option; it is a command. Paul told the believers in Colossians to devote themselves to prayer (Col 4:2) and to those in Thessalonica to pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17). He instructed those in Ephesus to always pray, on all occasions, for all believers everywhere (Eph 6:18). Believers have a great responsibility to pray for themselves and their families but for others just as equally.

Jesus' life and ministry are the model of IP, which involves asking God for His favor, mercy, or intervention on behalf of someone else.¹⁹⁷ Throughout Scripture, Jesus is found interceding on behalf of the needs of humanity. His greatest IP was on the cross when He cried out, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." (Lk 23:34). Not only did He intercede for humankind with His prayers, but with His life. He died for the world's sins so that the world could be reconciled to God. Now, the risen Christ sits at the right hand of God, making intercession for the saints (Romans 8:34).

As a ministry founded on prayer and fueled by prayer, it was important not to let the foundation collapse. Prayer meetings had become optional, but the leaders of DPM had been taught otherwise. Paul told Timothy that prayer was the first thing to be made for all men (1 Tim 2:1-2). Likewise, the pastor of DPM shared with his congregation that prayer is the first, middle, and last resort. The teaching that the church received on prayer year after year showed the pastor's conviction. The ministry had a solid foundation, but there were some things the leaders

¹⁹⁷ Lawless, *Potential and Power of Prayer*, 40; Cleverly, *The Discipline of Intimacy: The Joy and Awe of Walking with God*, 79.

did not understand about the purpose and power of prayer. When taking on this project, the researcher considered how best to reignite the leader's passion for prayer and commitment to filling the gap for others. Ultimately, the researcher believed creating the IP workshop would be essential in leading the leaders back to their knees.

The tools used in the study to accomplish the objectives set forth were identified in the literature review. The literature discussed several models and tools that believers could use daily to strengthen their prayer lives, and the researcher used a combination of academic and practical methodologies to develop the activities and lessons for this project. Primarily, using the Word of God and studies on biblical examples of intercessors, the researcher modeled the practical activities off the work of Blackford, *Creative Prayer, and Intercession: Direction and Fresh Ideas to Lead Groups in Dynamic and Effective Intercession Experiences*. The lessons designed were based on the workbook, "Pray Without Ceasing, A Believer's Guide to Effective Intercession," by Apostle Steven A. Garner. The researcher established a theological framework for the IP workshop using these tools.

After the intervention was completed and the data collected and analyzed, the aggregate results supported the hypothesis of the DMin action project. The project's success was inspiring and encouraging as the leader's understanding and passion for prayer increased. However, the researcher showed that further study and commitment are needed to continue and sustain the spiritual growth and success of a leader's prayer life. The humility and willingness of each leader in this project spoke to their commitment to their calling, not simply as leaders in DPM but as believers called by God to intercede for others. This project's success will benefit ministries as they can utilize this teaching model to nurture and develop leaders of varying stages on various platforms in the church.

Research Implications

DPM is a non-denominational church in Colorado Springs, Colorado. It is situated between a sizable, diverse neighborhood and a shopping area. This urban area offers convenience and accessibility, attracting a wide range of people. The ministry's journey began on May 22, 2016, with its inaugural service at the Radisson Hotel. Responding to God's call, the senior pastor and his wife left their familiar surroundings and moved to Colorado Springs, based on the Word of the Lord from Gen 12:2. This act of obedience and faith is a cornerstone of the ministry's values. Operating as a fivefold ministry, the leadership encourages and equips every believer to live out the gift and calling God has placed on their lives. DPM is a dynamic, engaging, and intentional ministry focused on doing God's will.

The church has endured many trials and tribulations throughout its history. From having to relocate several times to severe illnesses and injuries to members coming and going suddenly, the way has not always been easy, but God has remained faithful through it all. The ministry has a permanent home in a building with office space and daycare facilities. In the past three years, the church has seen consistent growth. Initially, the DPM membership roster consisted of eight people, including the pastor and his wife, working side by side and carrying most of the ministry's duties. Over the last several years, however, the ministry has grown and now has a seventy-three-member membership, including eighteen ministerial leaders.

Through the collective efforts and commitment of DPM leaders and members, it continues advancing its mission and impacting lives within the community. For example, the ministry holds multiple and varying services, such as children's church every third Saturday and adult Bible classes on Monday and Wednesday nights. With church attendance and membership growing, more services can be offered to support the area's diversity. The ministry's vision

continues to grow and take root as the gospel message of Jesus is preached and proclaimed in the territory in which God has planted DPM. Those connected to DPM are witnesses to Gen 12:2 being fulfilled as God blesses this ministry to bless others.

As the ministry continued to grow and produce more leaders, the callback to prayer became more urgent, but it became clear that not everyone felt the urgency of the call. Initially, the prayer problem was believed to be a problem among the lay members, but a closer examination revealed that the root of the problem originated at the leadership level. The leaders of DPM needed a revival in their lives to rekindle a heart and passion for prayer. They also needed to be reminded that prayer is about having and continually developing a relationship with God, which requires time in His presence. Once the root cause was determined, the researcher developed a plan to implement in the ministry. This DMin action research project aimed to create an eight-week course utilizing Bible studies, prayer exercises, journaling, and group intercession activities. Through this project, the problem of DPM leadership's lack of a comprehensive understanding of IP and its connection to intimacy with God was addressed by fostering a safe environment where leaders could be vulnerable and open to learning to be confident and consistent in prayer.

In the gospels, Jesus provides the church with the roadmap to reach the ears and heart of God. He tells His disciples that prayer is about the right attitude and motives. Why one prays determines how one prays. Jesus was not concerned with believers praying repetitive prayers, but His concern was with believers praying empty, vain, and worthless prayers for public show. In Matt 6:5-9, he told the disciples what not to do and who not to emulate. He says, do not be like the hypocrites and Gentiles, but pray like this. "Our Father in heaven . . ." (Matthew 6:9). Jesus

teaches His disciples to pray, and He starts by teaching them to acknowledge their Father in heaven.

It was essential to go back to the basics with the leaders of DPM and teach them how to pray, model the Lord's prayer, and understand the importance of building a solid foundation. It would be a challenge for some to unlearn incorrect information and teaching, but the researcher knew if the leaders could encounter Jesus, He would give them a new heart for prayer. The earnest and effectual prayer of committed leaders would usher in a mighty move of God's power being displayed. The groundwork was laid through the creation of the IP workshop. The project's premise was that if leaders attended the IP workshop and applied the lessons learned, they would experience breakthroughs, power, and greater intimacy with God.

Before the project could begin, the IRB had to approve the project. The approval was granted on December 3, 2023, and recruitment for potential participants began immediately. Fourteen leaders agreed to participate in the research project and received welcome and consent emails in the weeks following. On January 29, 2024, the researcher emailed the participants pre-survey links to complete via SurveyMonkey. On January 30, 2024, the IP workshop officially began with the initial focus group. All fourteen leaders were present for the first meeting. The researcher opened with a word of prayer and then asked the participants questions from the question bank explicitly created for the focus groups. The initial focus group went well; participants answered questions but were slow to respond and careful with their answers. The researcher could tell many were nervous and uncomfortable with the unknown, yet there was excitement among the participants. They collectively stated they wanted to participate in the course and looked forward to starting the lessons.

All classes and prayer meetings were conducted over Zoom weekly, and all the lesson materials that participants used in the course were posted on Microsoft Teams. Lesson One was taught on February 1, 2024. The eight weeks of class consisted of Bible lessons, prayer exercises, and group intercession activities (see Appendix A). On Thursday evenings before class, IP meetings were held. The biblical foundation portion equipped leaders with the tools to pray more effectively using Scripture and built a solid foundation on which participants could stand. The workshop's practicum allowed participants to apply the knowledge and tools gained from the five-week curriculum instruction. Petitioning God about real-world situations and needs was how participants applied practical skills. For example, they spent class time praying for unsaved loved ones and over their communities, government, media, and religion.

The final lesson was taught on March 21, 2024. A few days later, the final focus group was held. Unlike the first focus group, the final session was filled with conversations and sharing. No one needed to be prompted, and participants spoke freely and confidently when answering the researcher's questions, the same questions asked in the first meeting. The participants' excitement was still there, and many did not want the workshop to end; others wondered if there would be a part two. The culmination of the course was the completion of the post-survey. The pre-survey conducted before the course began was readministered as the post-survey to determine whether the workshop succeeded. All participants completed the post-survey and returned them to the researcher by April 5, 2024.

Course Objectives

The researcher assessed the success of this DMin thesis project by thoroughly evaluating each of the six-course objectives, ensuring that they effectively supported and defended the

thesis. The aggregate results of the DMin project supported the success of this project based on the course objectives. Upon completion of the course, leaders improved in the following areas:

1. Articulate the distinction between prayer and IP
2. Enhance the effectiveness of their prayers by incorporating the Word of God
3. Participate in and lead IP sessions on Thursday nights
4. Cultivate confidence in praying publicly
5. Develop a consistent prayer habit
6. Acquire the skills to mentor a junior leader or lay member in prayer

Over eight weeks, participants were successfully challenged to pray more effectively and fervently by using the Word of God and positioned to experience a more intimate relationship with the Lord by being exposed to new knowledge and spiritual tools. The qualitative and quantitative measures taken during the eight-week intervention, which included six weeks of curricula and a two-week practicum, showed a successful outcome, producing leaders who were committed and excited about their futures as prayer leaders. Based on the survey data, there was a four percent increase in understanding Prayer and Intercession. In Understanding IP, there was a four percent increase. In their growth related to Christian Prayer, participants experienced a five percent increase. The overall success of the course and its ability to produce growth in the participants was essential as ministries considered ways to engage, encourage, and inspire their leaders in prayer.

The IP workshop conducted for this DMin project would work for any size congregation, whether a small storefront church or a large mega-church, because one facilitator per every fifteen students is appropriate to host a class. Larger congregations could host several sessions concurrently to meet the needs of the participants or host sessions throughout the year to meet

the congregation's needs. The researcher recommends having no more than fifteen students per class to ensure a classroom environment conducive to learning through discussion and practice. Having too many students may put a heavy workload on the instructor and create an environment where students do not feel comfortable sharing due to the large number of participants in their group. Studies show that smaller, more intimate group settings make people more relaxed and allow them to feel more at ease and share more freely.¹⁹⁸

DPM and other ministries, small and large, should implement continuous leadership training that includes mentorship, peer feedback, and advanced courses to ensure leaders feel fully equipped to guide others. The findings from the intervention showed that not all leaders are identical in their understanding and execution of prayer. Further, the results showed that some leaders thought they had a firm grasp of prayer but, after going through the course, realized they still had a lot to learn and were honest about that journey. Therefore, ministries should adopt a personalized approach to training, assessing individual strengths and weaknesses, and tailoring programs to address specific gaps in knowledge and skills. Catering to participants' diverse needs and starting points in any ministry setting will only develop skilled and effective leaders who can serve and train others in various ministry settings.

This researcher's findings are significant to current and future practice because they highlight the continued need for leadership training in prayer for the seasoned and novice. The prayer problem at DPM is not unique but is common across many churches in various denominations. Not only were the ministers in training learning about the power and purpose of prayer, but also seasoned leaders. Although the surveys did not capture the data on specific

¹⁹⁸ Stetzer and Rainer, *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations*, 36-37.

individuals, the data supported that leaders across the spectrum were critically thinking through their beliefs, ideas, and biases and, in some cases, correcting wrong understandings and teachings on IP.

Areas for Intervention Design Improvement

Although the DMin project identified areas of improvement in the intervention design, this did not cause a divergence in the expected results of the project's goals and objectives. There is room for growth and improvement. Throughout the project, the researcher noted some areas for improvement in methodology and implementation that will increase the effectiveness of the project for other ministries to use in the future. The project was initially planned to be conducted online and implemented using Zoom. The online platform was conducive to the class and allowed leaders out of town to participate. However, the researcher believes meeting in person will result in better communication and allow for observation of the participants in settings outside of the classroom environment. Hosting the workshop outside the local church would make participants more relaxed and open to learning and sharing, but the local church would be fine if that is not possible. Finding a convenient and affordable location for some ministries might be challenging, especially since the length of the program was a factor.

The current intervention ran for eight weeks, but the researcher felt that eight weeks was insufficient to explore some more intense material. For the first several weeks, the class was behind based on the schedule, and some later classes had to be consolidated or moved through quickly to get back on schedule toward the end. Expanding the course by two weeks is the recommendation of the researcher. Expanding the course would allow for seven weeks of the instructional curriculum instead of the five weeks previously conducted. Expanding the course two weeks would only add four more days of actual class time, allowing more time for Lessons

One and Two to be taught and discussed as these were the program's most popular and extended segments. The practicum and retreat time frames would remain the same.

Along with an extended class time frame, the project should be advertised as a long-term project with several milestones after the course ends. First, participants should be asked to keep a prayer journal for one year after the course to track prayer requests on behalf of others and themselves. Additionally, at the 6-month mark, the researcher should send out a survey to assess the continued effects of the intervention. The survey will seek to determine whether participants are in the same place spiritually, whether they have continued to grow, or whether they have lapsed in their prayer lives since the intervention and explore the reasons behind these aftermaths. The final milestone would be at the one-year mark, and participants would be invited to participate in a focus group session to provide additional feedback on their prayer journey and share testimonies and stories from their prayer journals.

Regarding feedback, the researcher did not provide an end-of-course survey for participants to complete. By administering an end-of-course survey, better results could be achieved by the ability to ask further clarifying questions based on previously gathered data that had been analyzed. For example, when attendance at the Thursday night prayer meeting dropped, a targeted question on an end-of-course survey would ask why a participant stopped attending prayer meetings or classes. The end-of-course survey would differ from other surveys administered in that they would take place a few weeks after the initial data had been collected and analyzed. This process would allow the researcher to ask additional questions to fill in any missing gaps in knowledge and understanding. This area of improvement would assist in making more sense of the data to achieve more precise results.

Another factor that can be added to make more sense of the data would be to restructure the surveys and assign participants a number to use on the surveys so they can remain anonymous. Some survey questions and responses could be worded differently to remove ambiguity and align more directly with the course objectives. For example, Q8 in the Prayer and Intercession survey asked if participants spent fifteen minutes or less in prayer. Then, the very next question, Q9 asked if they spent thirty minutes or more in prayer. These questions could easily be misread, causing a participant to select the wrong response, thus skewing the overall results.

Assigning participant numbers for the surveys would match the numbers the researcher assigned to individuals to collect data during focus groups and classes. This method would allow the researcher or facilitator to capture individual assessments for analysis. Those results would be a part of the research findings, but they could also be shared with the individual if they wanted to track their progress. Currently, the project captured the collective growth of the class, but having the additional perspective of individuals would provide further perspectives on the effectiveness of the intervention. The researcher would still be able to use the SurveyMonkey platform to ensure the anonymity of the participants.

Two final areas of improvement the researcher considered were that the journal assignments would be eliminated and the focus placed on the participants answering the reflective questions at the end of each lesson as part of their homework for the week. The reflective exercises would not be required to be turned in to the facilitator but would be incorporated into the class discussions. They would serve to reinforce and enhance the lesson material each week. Lastly, the researcher felt the mentoring aspect of the course was the weakest. Although the objectives were met through discussions on responsibility, the need, and

how to mentor and develop new prayer warriors, the emphasis must be more direct and deliberate. Incorporating scheduled feedback and mentorship into the retreat schedule would be a start. During that dedicated time slot, leaders would teach those coming behind them to pray.

Research Applications

During this project, the researcher reviewed and considered existing literature on IP to better highlight this important topic in the Body of Christ. Current literature about IP shows that believers acknowledge the importance of prayer in their daily lives and the corporate body of Christ. Still, those same studies show that prayer is more neglected than not. Research shows that leaders in the church are not praying because they have never been adequately taught how to pray. The literature shows a gap between believers' understanding of IP and their actual practice of the spiritual discipline. Most believers acknowledge that prayer is essential, but few prioritize prayer. This study was conducted to help close the gap by bringing more awareness to the importance of IP and to provide training opportunities to raise praying leaders.

If the church continues to raise a generation of prayerless leaders, the Body of Christ will ultimately become spiritually compromised, weakened, and vulnerable to the enemy's attacks. This is not God's will for His church and not for the leaders he has called to be His representatives on the Earth to lead others. Leaders must be role models and examples for others to emulate and follow. Furthermore, leaders must prioritize and demonstrate a commitment to prayer. Bornschein declared prayer is the way to reach God, a most powerful weapon.¹⁹⁹ Laubach echoes that sentiment and says, "...it can accomplish anything."²⁰⁰ Prayer is the most

¹⁹⁹ Bornschein, *Prayer Warrior's Guide to Spiritual Battle*, 47-48.

²⁰⁰ Laubach, *Prayer: The Mightiest Force in the World*, 9, 12.

powerful weapon available to believers and the primary means of communication with the Father in heaven.

Prayer is private and corporate for believers, and the Bible instructs believers to do both. The DPM leaders' prayer lives were deficient due to a lack of understanding of IP and its purpose. Still, after the participants attended the IP workshop and applied the lessons learned, they experienced breakthroughs, power, and greater intimacy with God. The surveys were essential in measuring participants' growth and assessing the intervention's success in achieving its objectives. They provided a baseline for data analysis, allowing for comparison with post-intervention results. The results were overwhelmingly positive. Initially, three participants felt their relationship with God was lukewarm or non-existent, but eight participants (57.14 percent) felt their relationship was strong post-intervention.

The quantitative data supported the positive impact of the intervention through numerical evidence. At the same time, the qualitative study revealed the positive effects through testimonials and the participants' experiences. It also highlighted some of the struggles in a tangible way. Most participants reported feeling more confident praying aloud or leading prayer groups, yet many continued to miss prayer meetings. They reported having a strong desire to learn more about prayer and how to pray more effectively, but life's demands often made it difficult for them to realize that goal fully. The intervention, however, helped some recognize the disconnect in their lives, motivating them to be more intentional about private prayer and participating in corporate prayer and intercession for others.

The intervention also revealed that those who persevered through life's challenges and showed up for prayer experienced a significant elevation in their prayer life. One young man took Thursday night prayer meetings to higher heights as he passionately and courageously cried

out to the Lord like a fanatic fan cheering for their favorite sports team. Others took the Word of God, saturated their prayers with it, and watched their faith and confidence grow. Those faithful saw noticeable differences in their prayer lives to the point that their prayers had a different sound associated with them. Participants realized the impact of the course and the transformation it brought to their lives in a few weeks. However, those who attended all the Thursday night prayer meetings experienced something even more incredible as their prayers soared to new heights and glorified God.

All participants felt the immediate effect of the intervention, but the lasting impact would not be known for a while. The researcher stressed that the long-term impact would depend on the participants not losing the enthusiasm and motivation they gained by attending the course. They were charged with maintaining an active and vibrant prayer life to ensure that the lines of communication between heaven and Earth remained open, enabling them to navigate through the challenges of life with divine guidance and intervention. If the leaders continue to develop in the areas assessed in the prayer course, they will continue to experience breakthroughs, power, and greater intimacy with God.

Research Limitations

Within the confines of the research context, things that were outside the researcher's control occurred. Understanding that the project centered around people and their lives, there were times when adjustments were needed to ensure the project continued successfully. Those adjustments were based on the following limiting factors illuminated by the intervention project within the context of DPM. These limitations were 1) time, 2) attendance and participation, and 3) accessibility and location. Although the project took eleven weeks, only eight were dedicated to the curricula. The two months of class time provided the time needed to complete the objectives, but more time would have allowed for greater conversations and more in-depth discussions during some of the more popular lessons at the beginning of

the course. Also, regarding time, the researcher tried to limit the classes to one hour a session. Most nights, this time frame was exceeded. The eight-week course timeline was designed with the participants' busy lives and family commitments in mind.

The respect for participants' times directly correlated to overall attendance and participation in the intervention project. The researcher initially considered developing a more extended program but ultimately decided to limit the time to eight weeks to ensure consistent attendance and participation. With a small sample population, the researcher feared losing too many and being unable to complete the project on time. Although the project did not have anyone withdraw, there was, on some occasions, low participation at events. Attendance was sometimes low because participants had family obligations to attend as they related to children and their extracurricular activities and hobbies. Others were enrolled in college courses that met periodically during the study, with some not attending on certain nights because of the scheduled activities, mainly during the practicum portion of the course. Although discouraging on some nights, the researcher continued the course and remained confident that those coming consistently were being helped.

One of the most significant limiting factors was the accessibility of the participants and the retreat's location, which ended up being canceled due to low numbers. Most of the participants in the program were not living in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the juggling of various time zones needed to be considered as class times extended their one-hour slot. Also, with participants all over the country, online platforms had to be used, and there were times when technology issues caused frustration and disappointment in members. Early in the course, some members had trouble setting up Microsoft Teams accounts, and multiple members never accessed the platform.

The accessibility of participants ultimately led to many being unable to attend a retreat in Colorado Springs, Colorado. During the initial focus group, the researcher asked for a preliminary head count of those who would be able to attend. Those numbers were strong, with ten of the fourteen participants saying they would be there. Over time, the numbers dwindled, and the researcher decided to cancel the in-person retreat session and adjust the schedule to add two more practicum sessions over Zoom on Tuesday and Thursday of the final week. Most of the activities scheduled during the original retreat could be duplicated on the Zoom class as they were mainly opportunities to make more practical applications in small group settings. Although limitations existed, the researcher could adjust when needed to ensure that the objectives of the DMin action project were met and that, through the workshop, participants gained the tools, knowledge, and new skills to grow their prayer lives.

Further Research

The next step in addressing the lack of understanding of the purpose and power of IP and how it fosters intimacy with God was for leaders to be honest about their understanding and commitment to prayer as a spiritual discipline. The church has assumed that all believers knew how to pray because it was just a matter of talking to God. The reality was that most leaders had not been taught to pray and, therefore, lacked a personal commitment to prayer and the knowledge to educate and equip others to pray. The church must realize that prayer is not an inherent trait like breathing, but like a baby, it is taught to speak by hearing words, so the believer must be taught to pray by hearing the Word.²⁰¹ As parents teach their babies to talk, they continually and deliberately use words and sounds, coaching the child to repeat what they hear. As this behavior is repeated, the ability to communicate grows. Like a parent, God teaches His

²⁰¹ Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, 47-48.

children to pray to Him. He uses the church and the leaders He has placed in position to accomplish this.

The ability to respond in prayer is only possible if the language spoken initially is understood. The believer must first recognize the Word and then consistently repeat it. It is difficult if they learn without the rearing of the local church. The Lord called Samuel, but in his youth, he had to be taught to recognize the voice of the Lord and how to respond to God. Eli, the priest, was the vessel God used to train young Samuel for the work in the ministry. Eli reared the young priest and prophet and instructed him how to respond to the voice of the Lord (1 Sam 3: 10). Like Samuel, most leaders want to be able to respond to the call of God in prayer properly, but they need mentors and leaders that will develop and train them. The church needs an established plan to provide development and training for its leaders continually.

Many churches offer schools and seminars on training teachers, ministers, and those working in ministries like the usher board, music department, and hospitality. However, permanent and consistent training or classes on prayer with practical application are being offered across ministries. Prayer training needs to be as common as weekly choir rehearsal. Leaders should dedicate their best to prayer. It is at the core of their strength and the essence of their anointing.²⁰² The researcher would like to propose a research project to tackle the problem of a lack of trained believers who can develop and facilitate prayer training courses. After believers are taught to pray, they must continue the tradition by teaching others. The skills and ability to build prayer programs and training are necessary to prepare the next generation.

²⁰² Bounds, *Power Through Prayer*, 30-31.

Some participants expressed concern about being in environments where they did not feel safe and supported enough to be transparent about their desire to learn how to pray more effectively or even share their fears about praying aloud. One participant mentioned they had been shamed in a prayer meeting when they prayed aloud at the request of the evangelist hosting the conference. The evangelist told them the prayer was not long enough for what was needed then. This humiliation caused the participant to shut down and shy away from public opportunities or requests to pray. This one situation caused the believer to be hesitant and fearful about the course and the public prayer requirements infused into the curriculum. Research is needed to determine how many believers have experienced such public displays of humiliation and the long-term effects on them so an intervention can be designed to give them the tools and skills to build their confidence.

Finally, when leaders of different statuses want to participate in prayer studies, some might find it uncomfortable to integrate with those more seasoned or beginners in the faith or even with specific people from the same ministry. For example, suppose the pastor's wife wants to partake in a prayer course to strengthen her personal prayer life. In that case, she may find it uncomfortable to be completely transparent if the class contains a group of women from her church. Alternatively, the women may feel uncomfortable with the first lady listening to everything they say or do not say. In sensitive cases, hosting private classes where specific criteria are required would be helpful. Being a pastor would remove some of that pressure and anxiety. This intervention could focus on specific topics related to the particular group, calling, or role in the church.

Ultimately, all future research points to creating an environment where leaders can grow together by developing deeper spiritual and familial connections. These connections will build

trust and respect among participants, crucial for fostering a unified spiritual atmosphere. Leaders will be free to apply and practice the tools and lessons learned in this atmosphere, thereby growing spiritually and personally without fear of judgment.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FULL COURSE SCHEDULE

	Full Course Schedule						
	SUNDAY	MON	*TUES	WED	*THURS	FRI	SAT
WEEK 1	Administrative and Prep Week.	Consent letters emailed out.		Welcome letter emailed out.	*Course access granted. *Teams is open to access assignments and pre-reads. *Consent letters due.		
WEEK 2	The first week of classes begins.	*A Zoom link is sent out for class. *Surveys sent out via email and due by THURS.	*Zoom session: Intro and first focus group discussion.		*Zoom session: Lesson 101: What is the Big Fuss about Prayer? *Surveys due.		
WEEK 3	The second week of classes begins. *First journal assignment due by 10:00 p.m.		*Zoom session: Lesson 201: Intercessory Prayer-The Who, What, & Why.		*Zoom session: Lesson 201: continued and completed.		
WEEK 4	The third week of classes begins. *Second journal assignment due by 10:00 p.m.		*Zoom session: Lesson 301: Lord teach Us to Pray-True Intimacy Starts Here.		*Zoom session: Lesson 301: continued and completed.		
WEEK 5	The fourth week of classes begins. *Third journal assignment due by 10:00 p.m.		*Zoom session: Lesson 401: The Leader's Role and Responsibility in Prayer.		*Zoom session: Lesson 401: continued and completed.		
WEEK 6	The fifth week of classes begins. *Fourth journal assignment due by 10:00 p.m.		*Zoom session: Lesson 501: Making Prayer a Priority.		*Zoom session: Lesson 501: continued and completed.		
WEEK 7	The sixth week of classes begins. *Practicum Week. *Fifth journal assignment due by 10:00 p.m.	*Practicum assignments and exercises uploaded to Teams.	*Zoom session: Practicum intro and prayer partner exercises. *Details on the upcoming retreat to be discussed.		*Zoom Session: Corporate prayer and Scripture exercises.		
WEEK 8	The seventh week of classes begins. *Practicum Week. *Sixth journal assignment due by 10:00 p.m.		*Zoom session: Prayer partner exercises.		*Zoom Session: Corporate prayer and Scripture exercises.		
WEEK 9	Retreat Week. *Seventh journal assignment due by 10:00 p.m.					*Retreat.	*Retreat. *Surveys sent out. *Final Focus Group.
WEEK 10	*Course Completion Week.	*Surveys due.	*Course officially closes.				

APPENDIX B

CERTIFICATION OF COMPLETION

Certificate of Completion

This is to Certify that

Add Recipient

has successfully completed the 8-week Intercessory Prayer Course.



I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them...1 Timothy 2: 1

DATE



SIGNATURE

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

Consent

Title of the Project: The Power and Purpose of Intercessory Prayer: Equipping and Educating the Leaders of Divine Providence Ministries Through an Intercessory Prayer Course

Principal Investigator: My name is Tammanica S. Muse, and I am a Doctoral Candidate at the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University. You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a leader at Divine Providence Ministries. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

The purpose of the study is to educate, equip, and challenge the leaders of Divine Providence Ministries to grow in prayer and intimacy with God so that they may be confident to lead and train others in intercessory prayer. If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Complete a group of surveys that will take no more than twenty minutes.
2. Participate in a Zoom focus group meeting that will take no more than an hour and a half. The session will be recorded.
3. Participate in Zoom lessons. The first lesson will be capped at a maximum of two hours. The session will be recorded.
4. Participate in sixteen additional Zoom classes that will take no more than one hour. All sessions will be recorded.
5. Attend a two-day retreat. Each day will take no more than 8 hours. Only certain segments of the retreat will be recorded. Those segments are the final focus group and the final project, which will be a Podcast on Prayer.

Participants should expect to receive direct benefits from this study, including a deeper intimacy with God through a greater understanding of the purpose and power of intercessory prayer. Benefits to the ministry include a renewed excitement and desire to pray, which will usher in a season of revival.

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

I am a mandatory reporter. During this study, if I receive information about child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, I will be required to report it to the appropriate authorities.

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only

the researcher and members of her doctoral committee/the study team will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies and/or shared with other researchers. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted and/or all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then deleted. The researcher/the researcher and members of her doctoral committee/the study team will have access to these recordings.

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and not included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

The researcher conducting this study is Tammanica S. Muse. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her a [REDACTED] and/or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, [REDACTED].

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB). [REDACTED]

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

APPENDIX D

WELCOME LETTER

*Divine Providence Ministries
A Leader's Prayer Workshop and Retreat. You can be a part of this opportunity.*

Date

Dear Ma'am/Sir,

Welcome to Divine Providence Ministries Leader's Prayer Workshop and Retreat. I am so excited you have decided to join the class and believe this will be a blessing to you in your spiritual walk with Christ.

I realize that participating in this study will be a commitment of your time and therefore I want to prepare you as much as possible before the start date, so you are prepared to hit the ground running. Below I have highlighted a few key dates and events but please read the attached schedule for a comprehensive review of the course and requirements. The class schedule covers the entire ten-week period laying out specific details with dates and times.

The course will officially open tomorrow and that will allow you access to all the course material. Please read the schedule carefully as it will provide important information (Teams information and ZOOM links) as well as dates and times of live sessions, homework, and retreat dates and schedules. The schedule will be your roadmap to success so please read it and be prepared to submit your first assignment by (date). Remember I ask that you commit a minimum of five hours a week to participate in two weekly online sessions and to complete all required reading and homework. Your contributions will help others because of the knowledge gained from your participation.

Thank you again for your commitment to the action research project titled, "The Power and Purpose of Intercessory Prayer: Equipping and Educating the Leaders of Divine Providence Ministries Through an Intercessory Prayer Course." I look forward to seeing you on (date class starts).

Sincerely,

Tammanica S. Muse

APPENDIX E

PRE- and POST-SURVEY PACKAGE (SurveyMonkey will be used to administer)

The following pages contain several statements to evaluate where people are in their prayer lives. Please consider how much or little these questions and statements reflect your current knowledge and understanding of intercessory prayer and your roles and responsibilities in ministry. Then, select the option that best corresponds to your situation. No answer is right or wrong; honestly assess your current prayer life. **Please do not share your name on this survey.**

*The numbers in parentheses next to each response represent the assigned values for research purposes and are not related to the response's content.

Demographics

- Gender:
- Age:
- How long have you been a believer?
- What is your leadership status at DPM? Circle one: I am a past, current, or future leader.
- How long have you been a leader in DPM, or how long have you been in ministerial training classes?

Survey# 1: Prayer and Intercession

Q1. How often do you pray every day?

Answer Choices

- (1) Never
- (2) Once
- (1) (3) 2-3 times
- (2) (4) 4-6 times
- (3) (5) More than 6 times

Q2. How well do you understand the role of intercession in the believer's life?

Answer Choices

- (1) Not At All
- (2) Somewhat (a very limited degree)
- (3) Moderately (average)
- (4) Well
- (5) Extremely Well

Q3. How well do you understand the need to be persistent in your prayer life?

Answer Choices

- (1) Not At All
- (2) Somewhat (a very limited degree)
- (3) Moderately (average)
- (4) Well

(5) Extremely Well

Q4. How effective do you believe your prayers are?

Answer Choices

- (1) Not effective at all
- (2) Somewhat (a very limited degree)
- (3) Moderately (average)
- (4) Effective
- (5) Extremely effective

Q5. How often do you pray the Word of God?

Answer Choices

- (1) Never
- (2) Rarely (only in emergencies)
- (3) Sometimes (a few times a month)
- (4) Frequently (a few times a week)
- (5) Daily

Q6. Do you believe you pray according to God's will?

Answer Choices

- (1) Strongly Disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly Agree

Q7. Do you believe God hears your prayers?

Answer Choices

- (1) Strongly Disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly Agree

Q8. This question relates to your daily and dedicated prayer time with the Lord. This does not include scenarios like a friend calling and asking for prayer. I spend 15 minutes or less in my prayer closet.

Answer Choices

- (5) Never
- (4) Rarely (only in emergencies)
- (3) Sometimes (a few times a month)
- (2) Frequently (a few times a week)
- (1) Daily

Q9. This question also relates to your dedicated prayer time. I spend 30 minutes or more in my prayer closet.

Answer Choices

- (1) Never
- (2) Rarely (only in emergencies)
- (3) Sometimes (a few times a month)
- (4) Frequently (a few times a week)
- (5) Daily

Survey# 2: Understanding Intercessory Prayer

Q1. How well do you understand the concept of intercessory prayer?

Answer Choices

- (1) Not at all
- (2) Somewhat (a very limited degree)
- (3) Moderately (average)
- (4) Well
- (5) Extremely well

Q2. How well do you understand your role as an intercessor?

Answer Choices

- (1) Not at all
- (2) Somewhat (a very limited degree)
- (3) Moderately (average)
- (4) Well
- (5) Extremely well

Q3. Do you know and understand the difference between the gift and the role of intercession?

Answer Choices

- (1) Not at all
- (2) Somewhat (a very limited degree)
- (3) Moderately (average)
- (4) Well
- (5) Extremely well

Q4. Do you understand Jesus' ministry of intercession?

Answer Choices

- (1) Not At All
- (2) Somewhat (a very limited degree)
- (3) Moderately (average)
- (4) Well
- (5) Extremely well

Q5. Do you understand the Holy Spirit's role in intercession?

Answer Choices

- (1) Not At All
- (2) Somewhat (a very limited degree)
- (3) Moderately (average)
- (4) Well
- (5) Extremely well

Q6. How often do you pray for others?

Answer Choices

- (1) Never
- (2) Only if asked
- (3) >3 days a week
- (4) < 5 days a week
- (5) Daily

Q7. Do you believe God answers your prayers on behalf of others?

Answer Choices

- (1) Strongly Disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly Agree

Q8. Do you believe your prayers are making a difference in the world?

Answer Choices

- (1) Strongly Disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly Agree

Q9. How often do you sense a prompting or inclination to engage in prayer for others?

Answer Choices

- (1) Never
- (2) Rarely
- (3) >3 days a week
- (4) < 5 days a week
- (5) Daily

Survey#: 3: Christian Prayer Survey

Q1. Do you feel comfortable praying in public aloud?

Answer Choices

- (5) Completely
- (4) Mostly
- (3) Moderately (average)
- (2) Somewhat (a very limited degree)
- (1) Not At All

Q2. Do you feel comfortable leading a prayer group?

Answer Choices

- (5) Completely
- (4) Mostly
- (3) Moderately (average)
- (2) Somewhat (a very limited degree)
- (1) Not At All

Q3. Do you believe God hears you when you pray?

Answer Choices

- (5) Completely
- (4) Mostly
- (3) Neutral
- (2) Rarely
- (1) Never

Q4. Do you believe the Bible commands believers to pray for others?

Answer Choices

- (5) Strongly Agree
- (4) Agree
- (3) Neutral
- (2) Disagree
- (1) Strongly Disagree

Q5. Do you get answers to your prayers?

Answer Choices

- (5) Always
- (4) Mostly
- (3) Neutral
- (2) Rarely (only in emergencies)
- (1) Never

Q6. Do you understand the biblical principles regarding prayer?

Answer Choices

- (5) Extremely Well
- (4) Well

- (3) Moderately (average)
- (2) Somewhat (a very limited degree)
- (1) Not at All

Q7. Do you believe prayer brings you closer to God?

Answer Choices

- (5) Completely
- (4) Mostly
- (3) Neutral
- (2) Somewhat (a very limited degree)
- (1) Never

Q8. How would you rate your intimate connection with God?

Answer Choices

- (5) Extremely Strong
- (4) Strong
- (3) Moderately Strong
- (2) Lukewarm
- (1) I Do Not Have One

Q9. Do you feel like you neglect prayer and do not make it a priority?

Answer Choices

- (1) Strongly Agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Disagree
- (5) Strongly Disagree

Q10. Is prayer a vital part of your Christian walk?

Answer Choices

- (5) Extremely Important
- (4) Important
- (3) Moderately Important
- (2) Somewhat Important (a very limited degree)
- (1) Not Important

APPENDIX F**PASTOR PERMISSION LETTER**

*Divine Providence Ministries
A Leader's Prayer Workshop and Retreat. You can be a part of this opportunity.*

Date

Pastor Marcos Kendall



Dear Pastor Kendall,

I am a doctoral student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, and I am conducting an action research project titled, "The Power and Purpose of Intercessory Prayer: Equipping and Educating the Leaders of Divine Providence Ministries Through an Intercessory Prayer Course."

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research in Divine Providence Ministries and to contact leaders of your church to invite them to participate in my research study.

Participants will be asked to participate in an eight-week prayer workshop. The curriculum will include both lesson content and practical application. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please respond by email to [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Tammanica S. Muse

APPENDIX G

RECRUITING FLYER

Research Participants Needed

Leaders do you want to experience greater intimacy with God?

Cultivating Intimacy with God through Intercessory Prayer Study

- Are you a previous leader in the ministry?
- Are you a current leader at Divine Providence Ministries?
- Are you in training or preparation to take on a leadership role at Divine Providence Ministries?

If you answered **yes** to either of the questions listed above, you may be eligible to participate in a research study.

The purpose of this research study is to educate, equip, and challenge the leaders of Divine Providence Ministries to grow in prayer and intimacy with God so that they may be confident to lead and train others in intercessory prayer.

Participants will be asked to participate in a ten-week course consisting of five weeks of core curriculum, a four-week practicum, and finally, a two-day retreat during the final week of the course. The course will utilize Biblical and Scriptural studies, prayer exercises, journaling, and group intercession activities.

Benefits include a deeper intimacy with God through a greater understanding of the purpose and power of intercessory prayer.

If you would like to participate, contact the researcher at the phone number or email address provided below. Also, in the email please indicate what is a good email address for you and one that you would like me to use to set up your TEAMS access.

A consent document will be emailed to you one week before class starts/date, which will be on a Monday.

Tammanica S. Muse, a doctoral candidate in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Please contact Tammanica S. Muse at [REDACTED] for more information

APPENDIX H

RECRUITING LETTER AND INVITATION

Divine Providence Ministries

A Leader's Prayer Workshop and Retreat. You can be a part of this opportunity.

Date

Dear Ma'am/Sir,

I am a doctoral student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, and I am conducting an action research project titled, "The Power and Purpose of Intercessory Prayer: Equipping and Educating the Leaders of Divine Providence Ministries Through an Intercessory Prayer Course" as a part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. As a leader of Divine Providence Ministries you are invited to take part in a prayer workshop and retreat.

The course is designed to educate, equip, and challenge the leaders of Divine Providence Ministries to grow in prayer and intimacy with God so that they may be confident to lead and train others in intercessory prayer. The course is ten weeks total, but it is broken into three distinct segments. The first nine-weeks of the course is all online, with the first five-week's session consisting of on-line guided discussions, formal lecture, and individual research, followed by the four-week's session comprising of the practicum portion where participants will get to apply what they learned in previous weeks through experiential exercises and group research. The final week or segment will conclude the intervention with a two-day retreat in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Live Zoom class sessions will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays for one-hour periods starting at 8 p.m. (CST), except for the first week. The first two classes will be capped at a maximum of two hours to account for additional requirements and materials on both days. Nine journal assignments are due on Sundays: five written journals and four video journals. A commitment of five hours a week would be required to complete readings, attend classes, and do homework.

Would you be interested in participating? If these conditions are suitable and you can make a commitment to participate in a ten-week course, please indicate your acceptance to participate by emailing me at [REDACTED]. The invitation will be open until (date).

In the email, please indicate what is a good email address for you and one that you would like me to use to set up your Teams access.

Lastly, a consent document will be emailed to you if you meet the study criteria one week before the course begins, which will be on a Monday. The consent document contains additional information about the research project. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me by the following Thursday.

Sincerely,

Tammanica S. Muse

APPENDIX I

SIGN-UP ROSTER

I WANT TO VOLUNTEER

Organization	Time	Event Date	Location
DPM Intercessory Prayer Research Study			Colorado Springs, CO

APPENDIX J

CURRICULUM LESSON PLANS

Lesson One

2 Chronicles 7: 14

What is the big fuss about prayer?

Tammanica S. Muse

Divine Providence Ministries

INTRODUCTION

There are many different types of prayers and many ways to pray. Some of these patterns include the prayer of thanksgiving, supplication, forgiveness, repentance, salvation, and intercession. The list is endless. However, this first class is designed to provide biblical truths that will help you build a solid foundation of prayer and further your mission to remain persistent and vigilant in prayer.

From your personal prayer life to a corporate setting, prayer is the key to reaching heaven and stirring the heart of God.

WORD STUDY & DISCUSSION ON PRAYER

- I. Defining Prayer (many types of prayer and many ways to pray); defining intercessory prayer
- II. Approach Prayer with The Right Attitude (Matt 6:5-8)
- III. Use the Model Jesus Gave Us (Matt 6: 9-15)
 - A. The Six Parts of Effective Prayer
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
- IV. Ask, Seek, Knock Model (Matt 7: 7)
- V. Identification – Declare Who God Is
 - A. Our Father...
 - B. The Names of God
- VI. Hindrances to Prayer
- VII. The Role of the Holy Spirit

FOUR PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRAYER

I. Humble Yourself: Subdue and Become Low

II. Pray: Make Petitions

A. Believers should pray with diligence, awareness, and thanks.

1. Praying with diligence.
2. Praying with awareness.
3. Praying with gratitude.

III. Seek His Face: Worship

VI. Turn from Your Wicked Ways: Repentance

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

--It is the believer's responsibility to operate in the earth by the power that is in the name of Jesus! Additional study references: John 15: 16; 16: 23-26; and 1 John 5: 14-15.

--Reflect on what's the big fuss about prayer and understand why you must not neglect prayer.

Prayer is to establish a relationship with God.

Prayer changes our focus.

Prayer places our needs in correct alignment with God's will.

--Applying the four principles of effective prayer: Meet with/call three people this week with the sole purpose of praying for them. Ask them how you can pray for them and pray.

Lesson Two**James 5:16****Intercessory Prayer- The Who, What, & Why**

Tammanica S. Muse

Divine Providence Ministries

INTRODUCTION

Whenever you pray for others in fervent intercessory prayer, you can trust that your petitions are powerful, mighty, and effective (Js 5: 16). As Jesus intercedes for you, He has given you the authority to make intercession for those in need of His divine help. Through your prayers, *you* can connect others to Christ; through your prayers you bring heaven to earth; through your prayers you partner with God and declare His will in the earth so that lives and situations can change.

WORD STUDY & DISCUSSION ON INTERCESSORY PRAYER**I. The Who – Jesus, Our Role Model**

- A. When We Embrace Jesus as Our Role Model, We Will Get the Kind Of Results He Did

II. The What – Defining Intercessory Prayer**III. The Why – When We Pray for Others, We Stir the Heart of God**

- A. Christ Forever Lives to Make Intercession (Heb 7: 25)
- B. The Holy Spirit Makes Intercession for Us (Rom 8:26-27)
- C. The Believer is Called to Pray for Others (Eph 6: 18; 1 Tim 2: 1-2)

BIBLICAL MODELS OF INTERCESSORS

- I. Moses
- II. Samuel
- III. Daniel
- VI. Jeremiah
- V. Hannah
- VI. Apostle Paul
- VII. The Early Church (Prayer for Peter)
- VIII. Anna

REFLECTION & APPLICATION

--Reflect on the meaning and purpose of intercessory prayer and understand why you must not neglect praying for others.

Intercessory Prayer is... .

Intercessory Prayer changes... .

Intercessory Prayer places our needs... .

--Applying this week's lesson as well as keeping in mind the four principles of effective prayer (from last week's lesson): Pray and ask God to give you three specific people to intercede for this week. When people come to mind to pray for, write their names down and specific areas where you want to see God move in their lives. Be persistent, be emphatic, and BELIEVE GOD will answer your prayers.

*Lesson Three***Exodus 30: 1, 6-8, 34-36****Lord Teach Us to Pray: True Intimacy Starts Here**

Tammanica S. Muse

Divine Providence Ministries

INTRODUCTION

One of the most striking pictures of intimacy between God and His people in both the Old Testament and the New Testament is the image of a groom and a bride/husband and a wife.

Judaism abounds with such images of intimacy and love; for instance, the Lord says that He chose Israel in the first place because of love: “The LORD set His love [**khashak—חֶשֶׁק**] on you and chose you ... because the LORD loves [**ahavah—אָהָבָה**] you....” (Deuteronomy 7:7–8)

This verse describes God’s love for the Jewish People using language that evokes a man’s love for a woman. The verb **set His love (khashak—חֶשֶׁק)** means to **love, to be attached to, to cling to**.

Ahavah is also translated throughout Scripture as **love** (between man and woman, God and mankind, intimate friends, and father and child).

- I. Every process and journey of God has key components; we will look at the components God gave to Moses in our key Scriptures
 - A. Recall importance of altars
 - B. Altar of Incense
- II. Four Key Ingredients for Intimate Worship in Prayer
 - A. Stacte (Hebrew word *nataph*) – oozing substance
 - B. Onycha (Hebrew word *shekh-ay-leth*) – to peel off by concussion of sound
 - C. Galbanum (Hebrew word *kheh-led*) – odorous gum as if fatty
 - D. Pure Frankincense (Hebrew word *leb-o-naw*) –whiteness/that of smoke
- II. Intimate Worship in Prayer
 - A. Music – Nathaniel Bassey, Darryl Coley
 - B. Prayer CD – Apostle Stephen A. Garner

*Lesson Four***2 Chronicles 7: 14****The Leader's Role and Responsibility in Prayer**

Tammanica S. Muse

Divine Providence Ministries

INTRODUCTION

Every leader's role and responsibility in prayer is to raise other prayer warriors. The need to pray has never been greater—especially the need to pray the Word of God. Leaders must intentionally mentor and encourage other believers to pray without ceasing.

I. Tools to Assist the Leader in Their Role

- A. Let Go of Fear (2 Tim 1: 7)
- B. Pray Aloud (in your home; publicly when opportunities arise) (Rom 10:17)
- C. Mentor Someone (Titus 2: 7-8; 1Peter 5: 2-3; Phil 4: 9) Heb 5: 12-14
- D. Join a Prayer Team and Pray (Lk 18: 1)
- E. Pursue Spiritual Growth (2 Peter 3: 18; 1 Tim 4: 15; Heb 6: 1)
- F. Know Who God Has Called You to Be
- G. Understand the Connection Between Intercession and Intimacy with God & the Holy Spirit

II. The Leader Must Know the Word of God Because There Are Benefits in Praying the Word of God

- A. Releases the Spirit of God Jn 6: 63; Acts 10: 44
- B. Releases the Nature of God 2 Pet 1: 3-4
- C. Releases Joy and Rejoicing Jer 15: 16; Ps 119: 162
- D. Releases Divine Healing Pro 4: 20-22; Ps 107: 20
- E. Releases the Wisdom of God 2 Tim 3: 15; Ps 19: 7
- F. Releases the Judgement of God 1 Pet 3: 5-7; 2 Thess 2: 8
- G. Grows the Believer 1 Pet 2: 2
- H. Strengthens the Believer's Discernment Heb 5: 14
- I. Releases the Glory of God Jn 1: 14
- J. Upholds All Things Heb 1: 3
- K. Like Consuming Fire Jer 23: 29
- L. Supplies Faith for the Believer Rom 10: 17
- M. Releases Creativity Heb 11: 3; Ps 33: 6
- N. Cleanses the Believer Ps 119: 9
- O. Sanctifies the Believer Jn 17: 17
- P. Lightens the Believer's Pathway Ps 119: 105
- Q. The Lord Hastens to Perform His Word Jer 1: 12
- R. The Lord Confirms His Word with Signs Following Mk 16: 20

Lesson Five
Matthew 6: 5-8
Making Prayer a Priority
Tammanica S. Muse
Divine Providence Ministries

INTRODUCTION

Praying for the bigger things can feel overwhelming. How can you pray for matters that feel distant to you, such as a tragedy you hear on the news or the state of our nation? The Seven Mountains of Influence are the primary spheres of culture that make up a nation. They are: business, arts/entertainment, media, government, family, education, and religion.

“Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” is a great general prayer to pray for your country. If you want to get more specific, you can pray for the 7 “spheres” that make up a flourishing nation.

I. How to make Prayer a Priority

A. Have a plan/schedule

B. Use your tools/use the exercises we have gone through, i.e.:

- pray a mountain every day
- pray a psalm
- choose a favorite scripture and pray that
- use the scriptures provided throughout this class
- find a prayer mentor/partner to push and challenge you spiritually
- join the Thursday night prayer team...start small, but start.

II. Discuss 7 mountains of influence...see the website

<https://www.wealthbuilders.org/7-mountains-of-influence-prayer-guide-prayers-for-the-seven-mountains-of-influence/>

Practicum (Lessons 6-9) **Leadership in Action**

Practicum Session #1

- A. Music and Opening Prayer
- B. Praying with Scriptures Activity – Praying the Lord's Prayer – see event #P2 below
- C. Listening Prayer Activity – see event #L3 below

Practicum Session #2

- A. Music and Opening Prayer
- B. Praying with Scriptures Activity – see event #P3 below
- C. Listening Prayer Activity – see event #L2 below

Practicum Session #3

- A. Music and Opening Prayer
- B. Praying with Scriptures Activity – see event #P1 below
- C. Listening Prayer Activity – see event #L3 below

Practicum Session #4

- A. Music and Opening Prayer
- B. Praying with Scriptures Activity – see events #P2 & P3 below
- C. Listening Prayer Activity – see event #L1 below

Event Descriptions and Details

Praying Activities:

Event P1:

Group size: Small Group

Supplies: Bible, A passage of scripture about 15 verses long. (Longer or shorter may be more appropriate depending on the time and number of people.)

Instructions: One person reads/prays a specific number of verses, and then the next person does the same thing until everyone has had an opportunity to pray from the verse. This will continue for 15 minutes. When you finish praying through the passage, start over from the beginning.

Event P2:

Group size: Small Group

Supplies: Bible, the Lord's prayer from Matthew 6: 9-13.

Instructions: One person reads a verse and then prays from the ideas in that verse. The following person in the circle reads and prays from the next verse. The verse is a means to generate ideas for prayer. Pray short, powerful prayers, no more than 2-3 sentences. This will continue for 15 minutes.

Event P3:

Group size: Large group or medium-sized groups

Supplies: Bible

Instructions: Write down an unsaved loved one name. Ask God for direction on how to pray for them and wait for 3 minutes. Pay attention to the thoughts that go through your mind, physical sensations that you experience in your body, emotions that you feel, pictures you see in your mind's eye, verses that pop into your mind, etc. When the timer goes off, pray concerning what the Lord has given you.

Listening Activities Portion:

Event L1:

Group size: Large group or medium-sized groups

Supplies: Bible

Instructions: Write down one of the seven mountains (refer to Lesson Five). Ask God for direction on how to pray in that area and wait for 3 minutes. Pay attention to the thoughts that go through your mind, physical sensations that you experience in your body, emotions that you feel, pictures you see in your mind's eye, verses that pop into your mind, etc. When the timer goes off, pray for 3 min concerning what the Lord has given you.

Event L2:

Group size: Small Group

Supplies: Bible, A passage of scripture Isaiah 44: 6-8; 40: 28-31

Instructions: Read it and wait 3 minutes to hear the Lord speak. Pay attention to the thoughts that go through your mind, physical sensations that you experience in your body, emotions that you feel, pictures you see in your mind's eye, verses that pop into your mind, etc. When the timer goes off, pray concerning what the Lord has given us.

Event L3:

Group size: Small Group

Supplies: Bible, the Lord's prayer from Matthew 6: 9-13

Instructions: One person reads a verse and then listens for the HS to guide the prayer based on the ideas in that verse. The following person in the circle does the same thing with the following verse. The verse is a means to allow the HS to guide the prayer based on the Word of God. Pray short, powerful prayers, no more than 2-3 sentences. This will continue for 15 minutes.

APPENDIX K

TEN WEEK PROGRAM SYNOPSIS

Week 1: Administrative and Prep Week. During this week, participants will receive consent and welcome emails and be granted access to the Teams course platform.

Week 2: The first class will be held on Tuesday. The session will include the course Intro and the first focus group discussion. On Thursday, Lesson 101: *What is the big fuss about prayer?* will be taught. The lesson consists of a word study on prayer, a look at various prayer models, and a discussion on the four principles of effective prayer and the names of God. The first journal assignment is due on the following Sunday.

Week 3: On Tuesday and Thursday, Lesson 201: *Intercessory Prayer—The Who, What, & Why* will be taught. This two-day lesson consists of a word study on intercessory prayer and a close examination of several biblical models of intercessory prayer. The second journal assignment is due on the following Sunday.

Week 4: On Tuesday and Thursday, Lesson 301, *Lord Teach Us to Pray—True Intimacy Starts Here*, will be taught. This lesson looks at the intimacy between God and His people through the lens of a bride and groom. Using language that evokes a man's love for a woman, the lesson discusses four critical ingredients for intimate worship. The third journal assignment is due on the following Sunday.

Week 5: Lesson 401: The Leader's Role and Responsibility in Prayer will be taught on Tuesday and Thursday. This lesson focuses on leadership, mentorship, and the word of God. The highlight of this lesson is re-emphasizing the need for leaders to know the Word of God and the benefits of praying it. The fourth journal assignment is due on the following Sunday.

Week 6: This is the final week of core curriculum classes. The final lesson, Lesson 501: Making Prayer a Priority, will be taught on Tuesday and Thursday. This lesson lays out a plan for students to prioritize prayer by providing tools and exercises that can be easily incorporated into their daily lives. The fifth journal assignment is due on the following Sunday.

Week 7: This week, the practicum section of the course will begin, and on Monday, the researcher will upload practicum assignments and exercises for the participants to access. During Tuesday's class, there will be a short introduction to the practicum phase and discussions centering around practicum assignments and expectations for the following four weeks. Details about the upcoming retreat will also be provided. Thursday, the class will begin corporate prayer and Scripture exercises. Moving forward, Thursdays will be dedicated to corporate work and activities. The sixth journal assignment is due on the following Sunday. The remaining journals will be video journals.

Week 8: Tuesday classes moving forward will consist of prayer partner exercises. Participants will be assigned to break rooms with a partner to collaborate, pray, and complete a prayer exercise together. This will be a thirty-minute block. The remaining time on Tuesdays will be a time of testimonies and reflection. On Thursday, the group

will continue with the corporate prayer and Scripture exercises. The seventh journal assignment is due on the following Sunday.

Week 9: The course will culminate with a two-day retreat in Colorado Springs on the last Friday and Saturday. The retreat will be held in a conference room at the Broadmoor Hotel and will include approximately eight hours of daily events and activities.

Week 10: Course Completion Week. The post-survey is due by Monday, and the course closes the next day.

APPENDIX L

WEEKLY JOURNAL PROMPTS

- Week 1 - Answer the following question: Is prayer really a big deal?
- Week 2 - Am I called to be an intercessor? What does being an intercessor mean to you?
- Week 3 - Study the Lord's prayer this week, and write a prayer based on what you learned from your studies.
- Week 4 - Write a prayer on the topic of prayer and leadership.
- Week 5 - Write a prayer based on your favorite Scripture.
- Week 6 – Add to your prayer from last week as you consider what new revelation and information you have gained since writing the first prayer.
- Week 7 - Write a prayer on the topic of making prayer a priority.

APPENDIX M

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Define prayer in 10 words or less.
2. Talk about the difference between general prayer and intercessory prayer.
3. What do you believe about prayer? Do you believe God answers (your) prayers?
Why/why not? What happens when God does not answer or move based on your prayers? What does that do to your theology--your relationship with him?
4. Do you pray? Why do you pray?
5. Why should you pray? How do you pray (potential answers for the final question: posture, formal, informal, etc.)
6. How does the Holy Spirit help when you pray? How vital is the Holy Spirit to your prayer life?
7. What is the purpose of prayer?
8. There are leadership and ministry training programs designed to equip and prepare Christians to serve more effectively in the Body of Christ so in your Christian experience what education or training have you gotten in prayer? Do you think prayer schools or prayer training courses would be beneficial? Why/why not?
9. Do you really believe prayer is the most vital thing?

APPENDIX N

FAITH DEVELOPMENT AND CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Timothy Paul Jones and Michael S. Wilder, authors of chapter six titled, “Faith Development and Christian Formation,” in *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development*, aim to address essential questions about faith and offer a Christian formation model. And then link the model to the process of sanctification. The big questions this chapter seeks to explore are, “What is faith?” and “How does faith grow?” James W. Fowler’s theory on faith development will be the foundation on which the discussion primarily rests on. His theory attempts to answer the question of faith development by characterizing faith as something that evolves and matures gradually, progressing through various life stages and transitions (one pre-stage of infantile development followed by six full-fledged stages of growth),²⁰³ ultimately resulting in a more profound and enriched expression.

Furthermore, in this quest to understand faith, Fowler defines it as a commitment to a divine being without acknowledging specifically the object of said faith. He proposes the idea that early Christians did not require specific religious content for their faith; he claims they would have inherently understood it without the need for explicit teachings. But from a theological and biblical perspective is this *faith* Fowler is describing? The authors, in considering Scripture, historical perspectives, and the research of various other Christian theologians throughout the centuries, fill in the empty spaces left by some faith development theories.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Timothy Paul Jones and Michael S. Wilder, “Faith Development and Christian Formation,” in *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development*, ed. James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim, (Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2010), Chapter 6.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

So, the question is asked and answered, “What is a Uniquely Christian Approach to Faith Development?” Jones and Wilder contend that authentic faith is tied to Jesus Christ, sanctification, and the larger community of faith. With absolute certainty, for the Christian community past and present, faith is tied to Jesus Christ. And it immediately produces justification and sanctification, but it also continues the work of sanctification until the day of Jesus. The continued work is done in partnership with the Holy Spirit and the church. It can be argued that faith does not grow in fixed stages to be mastered and discarded but instead, faith grows and develops through love of others and of God, and in suffering.²⁰⁵ Faith is dynamic and forever being developed in the life of the Christian.

By understanding this theory on faith development is there a connection to the theological growth of the future participants, as it concerns intercessory prayer, in the researcher’s intervention plan? Intercessory prayer is an unselfish ministry because it is one that by its very nature is about other people. Chuck Lawless, states, that prayers of intercession are prayers that are rendered up on behalf of someone else.²⁰⁶ The ministry of intercession or praying for others is a selfless and often thankless job because most of the praying is done in secret. Intercessors are not called to the spotlight but instead are tasked with slipping away to meet with God in their secret place. This unique ministry flows out of a love for God’s people, and a desire to see God move on their behalf. As the participants continuously seek God and seek Him on a more regular and consistent basis their love for people and their hunger for the things of God will increase. Christian faith necessitates both an ever-deepening theological foundation and a

²⁰⁵ Jones and Wilder, “Faith Development and Christian Formation,” Chapter 6.

²⁰⁶ Chuck Lawless, *The Potential and Power of Prayer*, 40.

progressively evolving lifestyle of faithfulness.²⁰⁷ This desire (love for people) to see people saved and set free from sin will drive them into the arms of Jesus and by this action, intimacy will be cultivated and deepened. The stronger and more fervent the prayer life of the participants, the greater the growth and development of their faith.

Recall faith grows and develops through the love of others and God. Faith is tied to Jesus and the revelation of who He is and what He has done. A Christian by their relationship prays to their God in whom they have faith and believe will and can answer prayers. If they did not believe God hears them, there would be no need to pray but as the participants pray more and experience God answering their prayers on behalf of others, the more motivated they will become to continue to seek Him out. And the more they seek Him out the stronger their relationship becomes. This cycle of seeking and pursuing God causes faith to grow and develop.

Finally, through the intervention, the participants will come to experience the blessing of God uniquely and powerfully. Because as God blesses others on behalf of their sacrificial prayers, he will in turn bless them. The unselfish prayers of the intercessor not only bring breakthroughs and deliverance for the one standing in need but it also in a powerful way meet their unspoken needs.²⁰⁸ Consider Job who prayed for his friends when he was in a position of great need. Instead of petitioning God about his dilemma, he went before God about others, and what did God do for him? God met his needs and delivered him out of all his afflictions.

The participants' faith development will genuinely grow as their prayer life increases, serving as a clear indicator of spiritual growth, particularly as their level of intimacy with their

²⁰⁷ Jones and Wilder, "Faith Development and Christian Formation," Chapter 6.

²⁰⁸ Knute Larson, *Holman New Testament Commentary - 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 163.

faith deepens. But is it possible to authentically assess whether or how an individual's faith is developing? This is a critical component that the researcher's action-oriented intervention plan will seek to answer. The plan will measure their faith development and growth based on the overall difference between the participants' scores at the beginning of the intervention (pre-survey) and after the intervention has concluded (post-survey). By administering the same surveys, the researcher will determine the course's effect on their prayer life, spiritual growth, and overall relationship with God. Currently, the survey questions consist of three sections, prayer, intercessory prayer, and general prayer concerns, but by adding a fourth section, the researcher will be able to target specific questions relating to faith development and Christian formation.

Addressing the issue of leaders at Divine Providence Ministries lacking an understanding of the purpose and power of intercessory prayer for nurturing intimacy with God, the researcher proposes an eight-week course that incorporates Bible studies, prayer exercises, journaling, and group intercession activities. This initiative is designed to make a substantial contribution to Christian formation. First, it provides practical tools and guides for the participants in their process of being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Secondly, it is occurring within the community of faith/believers. Jones and Wilder speak of the church as the gathering place where Christians come together to collectively pursue their shared commitment (Phil 1:27).²⁰⁹ It is in this gathering that believers encourage one another through faith (Romans 1:12). Thirdly, the participants are not only gaining knowledge and understanding about the purpose and power of prayer, but they will be actively applying that knowledge in the local ministry and community. Specifically, they will grow as they serve by praying for their church and community during the

²⁰⁹ Jones and Wilder, "Faith Development and Christian Formation," Chapter 6.

two-day prayer retreat in Colorado Springs, CO. And lastly, in this environment leaders will face the challenge of being open and vulnerable as they are urged to let their guard down. The goal here is to let iron sharpen iron.²¹⁰ Because Christians cannot grow in isolation, the participants will gain strength and confidence through the encouragement, testimonies, and experiences of their peers as their lives interconnect.

²¹⁰ Jones and Wilder, "Faith Development and Christian Formation," Chapter 6.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Akin, Jimmy. *The Fathers Know Best: Your Essential Guide to the Teachings of the Early Church*. San Diego, CA: Catholic Answers, 2010. Kindle.
- Allen, Charles L. *All Things Are Possible Through Prayer*. Ada, MI: Revell, 2013. Kindle.
- Aquilina, Mike. *The Fathers of the Church: An Introduction to the First Christian Teachers*. 3rd ed. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2013, Kindle.
- Alves, Elizabeth. *Becoming a Prayer Warrior*. Minneapolis, MN: Baker Publishing Group, 2016.
- Arthur, Kay L. *Teach Me to Pray: Practicing a Powerful Pattern of Prayer*. Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 2007.
- Bauman, Edward. *Intercessory Prayer*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1958.
- Beilby, James K. Eddy, Paul Rhodes. *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012.
- Beliefnet. "U.S. News & Beliefnet Prayer Survey Results: What is the purpose of Prayer? What do people pray for? The fascinating results of our online prayer survey."
<http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/FaithTools/Meditation/2004/12/U-S-News-Beliefnet-Prayer-Survey-Results.aspx>.
- Berg, Bruce L. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. 3rd ed. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1998.
- Bevere, John, P. *The Holy Spirit: An Introduction*. Palmer Lake, CO: Messenger International, 2013.
- Blackford, Tricia and Lisa Purdy. *Creative Prayer and Intercession: Direction and Fresh Ideas to Lead Groups in Dynamic and Effective Intercession Experiences*. Independently Published, 2020, Kindle.
- Bornschein, John. *A Prayer Warrior's Guide to Spiritual Battle*. Oak Harbor, MA: Lexham, 2016.
- Bounds, Edward M. *The Necessity of Prayer*, Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 2018.
- Bounds, Edward M. *Power Through Prayer*. New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1982.
- Bounds, Edward M. *Prayer and Praying Men*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991.

- Bradford, Eugene. *Intercessory Prayer: A Ministerial Task*. Boonton, NJ: Simpson Pub. Co, 1991.
- Bradshaw, Paul F. *Daily Prayer in The Early Church: A Study of The Origen And Early Development Of the Divine Office*. London, UK: SPCK, 1981.
- Britannica, Editors of Encyclopedia. "Adulthood." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, June 6, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/science/adulthood>.
- Brummer, Vincent. *What Are We Doing When We Pray?: On Prayer and the Nature of Faith*. London, UK: Routledge, 2008.
- Butts, David. *The Devil Goes to Church: Prayer as Spiritual Warfare*. Murrell's Inlet, S.C.: Covenant Books, 2003.
- Byun, Eddie. *Praying for Your Pastor: How Your Prayer Support Is Their Life Support*. Westmont, IL: InterVarsity, 2016.
- Caldwell, Mary. *Praying for Fishhooks: Understanding Intercessory Prayer*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1994.
- Chadwick, Henry and John Earnest Leonard Oulton. *Alexandrian Christianity: Selected Translations Of Clement and Origen*. The Library of Christian Classics. Vol. II. London, UK: SCM Press LTD, 1954.
- Chavda, Mahesh. *The Hidden Power of Prayer & Fasting: Releasing the Awesome Power of the Praying Church*. Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1998.
- Clements-Jewery, Philip. *Intercessory Prayer: Modern Theology, Biblical Teaching, and Philosophical Thought*. Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2005.
- Cleverly, Charlie. *The Discipline of Intimacy: The Joy and Awe of Walking with God*. Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2020.
- Cook, William F. III., and Chuck Lawless. *Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2019.
- Copeland, Germaine. *A Call to Prayer: Intercession in Action*. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 2001.
- Deaton, Todd. "Prayer: No. 1 Issue in Churches, Survey of Leaders Shows." *The Courier: Informing and Inspiring South Carolina Baptists*. March 7, 2006. <http://baptistcourier.com/2006/03/prayer-no-1-issue-in-churchsurvey-of-leaders-shows>.
- Duewel, Wesley L. *Touch the World Through Prayer*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018.

- Dunn, Ronald. *Don't Just Stand There, Pray Something*. San Bernadino, CA: Here's Life, 1991.
- Early, D. *Prayer: The Timeless Secret of High-Impact Leaders*. Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 2008.
- Eckhardt, John. *Deliverance and Spiritual Warfare Manual: A Comprehensive Guide to Living Free*. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2014, Kindle.
- Eivas, Jennifer. *The Intercessors Handbook: How to Pray with Boldness, Authority and Supernatural Power*. Bloomington, MN: Chosen Books, 2016.
- Floyd, Ronnie. *How to Pray: Developing an Intimate Relationship with God*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2019.
- Forsyth, P.T. *The Soul of Prayer*. Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013.
- Garner, Stephen. *Pray Without Ceasing: A Believer's Guide to Effective Intercession*. Chicago, IL: Rivers Publishing, 2013.
- Goll, Jim W. *The Lost Art of Intercession: Restoring the Power and Passion of the Watch of the Lord*. Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2007.
- Goodson, Shana D. "Increasing the Knowledge of Intercessory Prayer through a Seminar at On Time Breakthrough Ministries, Inc." PhD diss., Oral Roberts University, 2020. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- González, Justo L. *Teach Us to Pray: The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church and Today*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020.
- "The Greatest Needs of Pastors Study." Lifeway Research, October 21, 2022. <https://research.lifeway.com/greatestneeds/>.
- Greenway, Tyler S. "A review of theories accounting for the relationship between intercessory prayer and prosocial behavior: Current research and future directions." *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 12, no 1 (2020): 66-76.
- Gregory I, Pope. *The Book of Pastoral Rule*. Translated by George E. Demacopoulos. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 2007.
- Grenz, Stanley J. *Theology for the Community of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1994, Kindle Edition.
- Groeschel, Craig. *Dangerous Prayers: Because Following Jesus Was Never Meant to Be Safe*.

- Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020.
- Hayford, Jack W. *Prayer is Invading the Impossible*. 1st ed. Alachua, FL: Bridge-Logos, 1977.
- Heifetz, Ronald. *Leadership Without Easy Answers*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1994.
- Helm, Paul. *The Providence of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994.
- Henderson, Daniel. "Innovative Prayer in the Local Church." In *Innovate Church: Innovative Leadership for the Next Generation Church*, edited by Jonathan Falwell, Chapter 16. Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2008.
- Hill, Wesley. *The Lord's Prayer: A Guide to Praying to Our Father*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2019.
- Hillyer, Norman. *The Essential Bible Dictionary*. Chicago, IL: Moody, 2001.
- Howard, Sherilyn Ann. "The Prayer Life of The African American Christian Men at New Life Gospel Center Cleveland, Ohio" PhD diss., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Howell, James C. *Weak Enough to Lead: What the Bible Tells Us about Powerful Leadership*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2017.
- Hybels, Bill. *Too Busy Not to Pray: Slowing Down to Be with God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008.
- Ignatius of Antioch. *The Letter to the Smyrnaeans*. In *The Apostolic Fathers: Volume I*, edited by Bart D. Ehrman. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2003.
- Jones, Timothy Paul and Michael S. Wilder. "Faith Development and Christian Formation." In *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development*, edited by James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim, Chapter 6. Nashville, TN: B&H, 2010.
- Kaiser, Jr., Walter C. *I Will Lift My Eyes Unto the Hills: Learning from the Great Prayers of the Old Testament*. Fort Washington, PA: Weaver Book Company, 2015.
- Keller, David G. R., and Suzanne Toolan. *Lord, Teach Us to Pray: One Hundred Daily Reflections on Jesus' Life of Prayer*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015.
- Keller, Timothy. *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2016.
- Keener, Craig S. *Galatians: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019.
- Kim, Dock Su. "Strengthening Biblical Intercessory Prayer Ministry in the Church." PhD diss.,

- Talbot School of Theology, 2019. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Kendrick Stephen and Alex Kendrick. *The Battle Plan for Prayer*. Nashville, TN: B&H, 2015.
- Larson, Knute. *Holman New Testament Commentary - 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*. Edited by Max Anders. Nashville, TN: B&H, 2000.
- Laubach, Frank C. *Prayer: The Mightiest Force in the World*. Mansfield, CT: Burtynki Books, 2020.
- Lawless, Chuck. *The Potential and Power of Prayer: How to Unleash the Praying Church*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2022, Kindle.
- Maddix, Mark A. "Spiritual Formation and Christian Formation." In *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development*, edited by James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim, Chapter 8. Nashville, TN: B&H, 2010.
- McAlpine, Stuart. *Just Asking: Restoring the Soul of Prayer*. Bloomington, IN: WestBow, 2018, Kindle.
- Meza, Thalia. "Intercessory Prayer: What's the Point?" PhD diss., Ave Maria University, 2021. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Miller, Patrick D. *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1994.
- Mitchell, Curtis C. "The Holy Spirit's Intercessory Ministry." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139, no. 555 (July 1982): 230–42. Accessed September 27, 2023. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a6h&AN=ATLA0000793741&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Mohler, R. Albert, Jr. *The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down: The Lord's Prayer as a Manifesto for Revolution*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2019.
- Murray, Andrew. *The Ministry of Intercession: A Plea for More Prayer*. Abbotsford, WI: Anneke, 2016.
- Monroe, Myles. *Understanding the Purpose and Power of Prayer: How to Call Heaven to Earth*. New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2002.
- New, Geoff. *Echoes . . . The Lord's Prayer in the Preacher's Life*. Carlisle, UK: Langham Creative Projects, 2020.
- Onwuchekwa, John. *Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018.
- Origen. *Origen on Prayer*. Translated by William A. Curtis. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010.

- Patton, Michael Q. *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1990.
- Peckham, John C. "The Influence Aim Problem of Petitionary Prayer: A Cosmic Conflict Approach." *The Journal of Analytic Theology* 8 (2020): 412-432.
- Ridlehoover, Charles Nathan. *The Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel*. London, England: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2019.
- Rinker, Rosalind. *Prayer: Conversing with God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.
- Sarpey, Jerry. *Effective Intercessory Prayer Guide: Beginner to Advance Level*. Independently Published, 2020.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. "Luke." In *Matthew-Luke*. Volume 8, The ESV Expository Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021.
- Selman, Francis. *Providence and Prayer, Deeper Christianity Series*. London, England: Catholic Truth Society, 2017.
- Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011.
- Sentinel For Christ. "SWIM – Spiritual Warfare Intercessory Ministry." <https://sentinelforchrist.com/spiritual-warfare-intercessory-ministry>.
- Shewmake Carrol Johnson. *When We Pray for Others: The Blessing of Intercessory Prayer*. Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1995.
- Shields, Ann. *Intercession: A Guide to Effective Prayer*. Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 2004.
- Sire, James. *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004.
- Sos, Stefan. *Understanding 5Fold Ministry: Theological Perspectives on Fivefold Ministry*. Bloomington, IL: AuthorHouse, 2006.
- Smith, Alice. *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God Through Prayer*. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2010.
- Smith, Eddie and Hennen, Michael L. *Strategic Prayer: Applying the Power of Targeted Prayer*. Bloomington, MI: Bethany House, 2005.
- Spencer, Aida Besancon. *1 Timothy: A New Covenant Commentary*. Cambridge, England: VLutterworth, 2014.

- Spurgeon, Charles. *Spurgeon on Prayer & Spiritual Warfare*. New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1997.
- Stetzer, Ed, and Thom S. Rainer. *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations*. Nashville, TN: B&H, 2010.
- Stringer, Ernest, T. and Alfredo Ortiz Aragón. *Action Research*. 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2020.
- Strong, James. *The Strong's Complete Dictionary of Bible Words*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996.
- Swinburne, Richard. *Providence and the Problem of Evil*. New York, NY: OUP Oxford, 1998.
- Tertullian. *Apology*. Translated by S. Thelwall. In *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume III*, edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1885.
- Tiessen, Terrance L. *Providence and Prayer: How Does God Work in the World?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000.
- White, James F. *A Brief History of Christian Worship*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993.
- Whitney, Donald, S. *Praying the Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.
- Whitney, Donald S. *Spiritual Disciplines for Christian Life*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014.
- Widmer, Michael. *Standing in the Breach: An Old Testament Theology and Spirituality of Intercessory Prayer*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2015.
- Wilkins, Steve, and Mark L. Sanford. *Hidden Worldviews*. Downers Grove IL: Intervarsity, 2009.
- Wilkinson, David. *When I Pray What Does God Do*. Oxford, England: Monarch Books, 2015.
- Wiersbe, Warren W. *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament*. Colorado Springs, CO: Cook, 2007.
- Willard, Dallas. *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. Chicago, IL: InterVarsity, 2021.
- Wright, Catherine J. *Spiritual Practices of Jesus: Learning Simplicity, Humility, and Prayer with Luke's Earliest Readers*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2020.

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

December 3, 2023

Tammanica Muse
Robert Lytle

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY23-24-926 The Power and Purpose of Intercessory Prayer: Equipping and Educating the Leaders of Divine Providence Ministries Through an Intercessory Prayer Course

Dear Tammanica Muse and Robert Lytle,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds that your study does not meet the definition of human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research because it will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application. Any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

For a PDF of your IRB letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study Details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so.

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office