

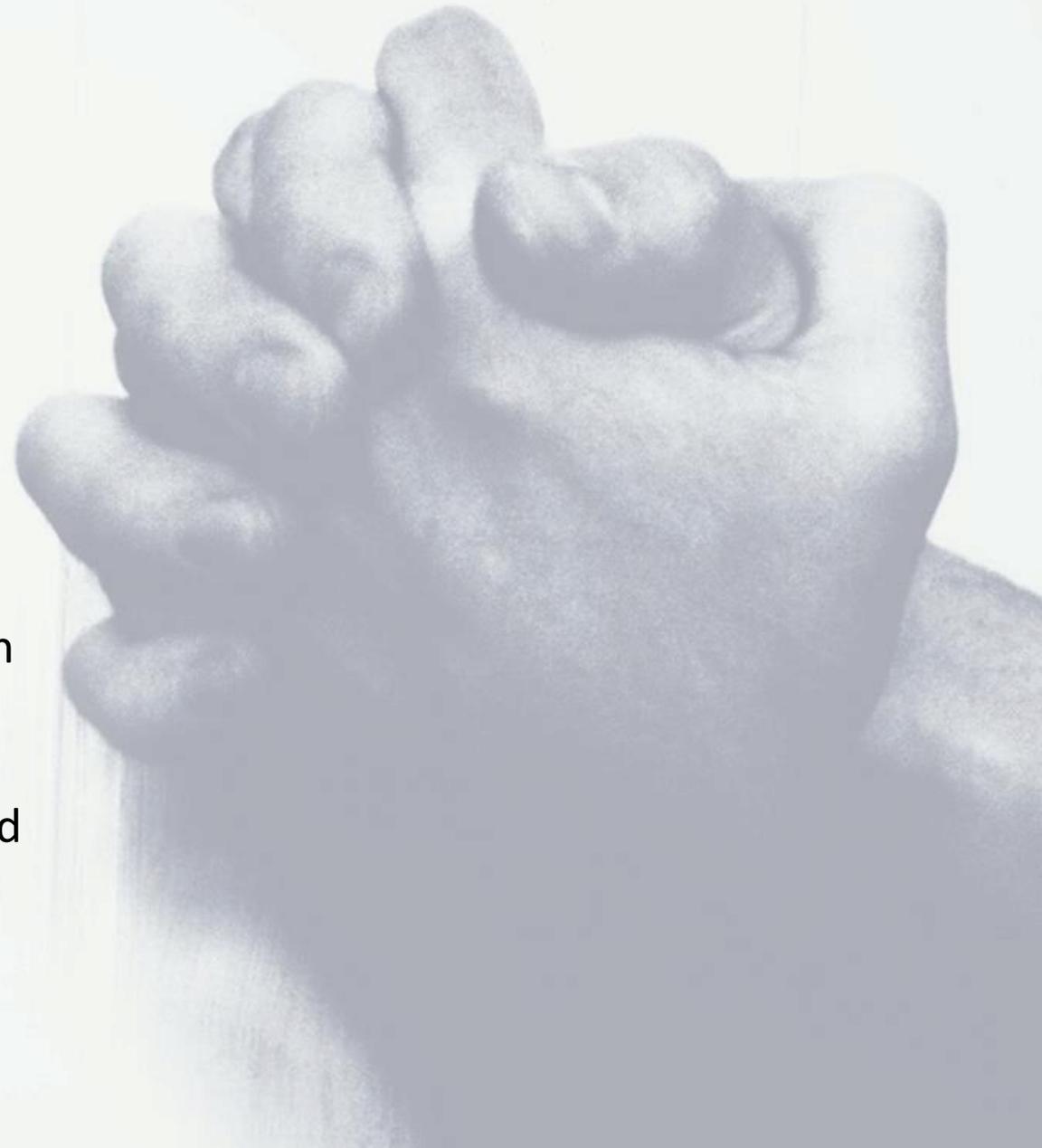
Starting Point For Effective Prayer:

Understanding prayer is not the issue ...
Knowing God is the issue!

Prayer is *our* reply to God ... as *He* seeks to develop an individual, personal connection with us.

Christian prayer is the continuation of a conversation that God has started ... and seeks a real, personal connection with our Creator – not simply to get information about Him, but to actually meet Him and hear what He has to say to us.

Tim Keller



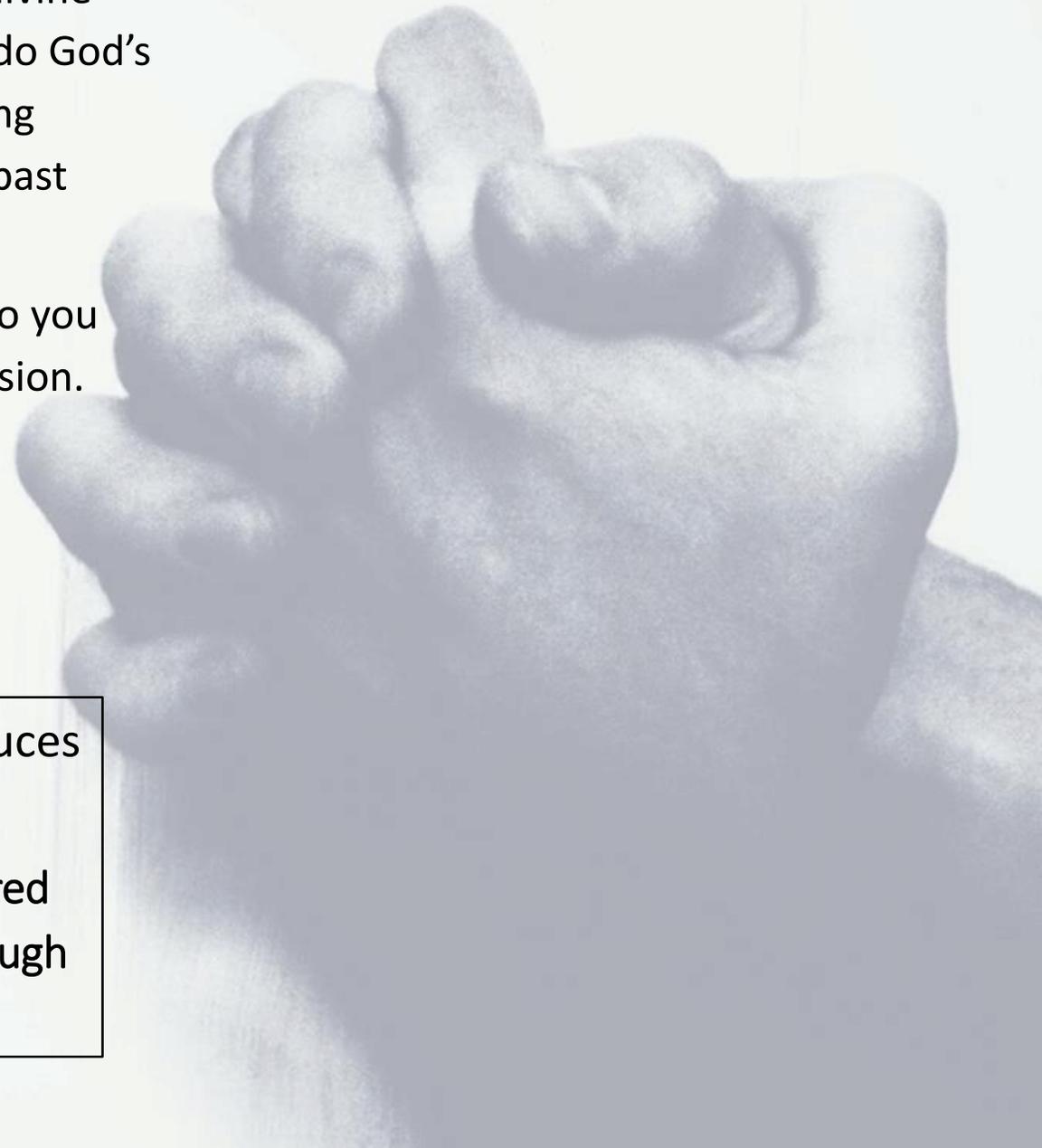
Perhaps the greatest lack in the lives of most Christians is the divine bestowal of the Spirit's empowerment. We are attempting to do God's work depending only nominally upon God, but in fact depending primarily upon ourselves – our training, our personalities, our past experience, our knowledge, and our sincere efforts.

The greatest and most revolutionary change that can happen to you is for you to receive & continually experience the divine dimension. Once you receive it and experience the difference it makes in your daily living for Christ, you will not want to live without it.

Wesley Duewel – President, OMF International

Truth: Prayer is the mechanism, the activity, that produces the *“divine experience”*.

- we are not *trained* to be anointed & empowered in Christ ... it is bestowed by Him upon us through times of prayerful intimacy with Him.



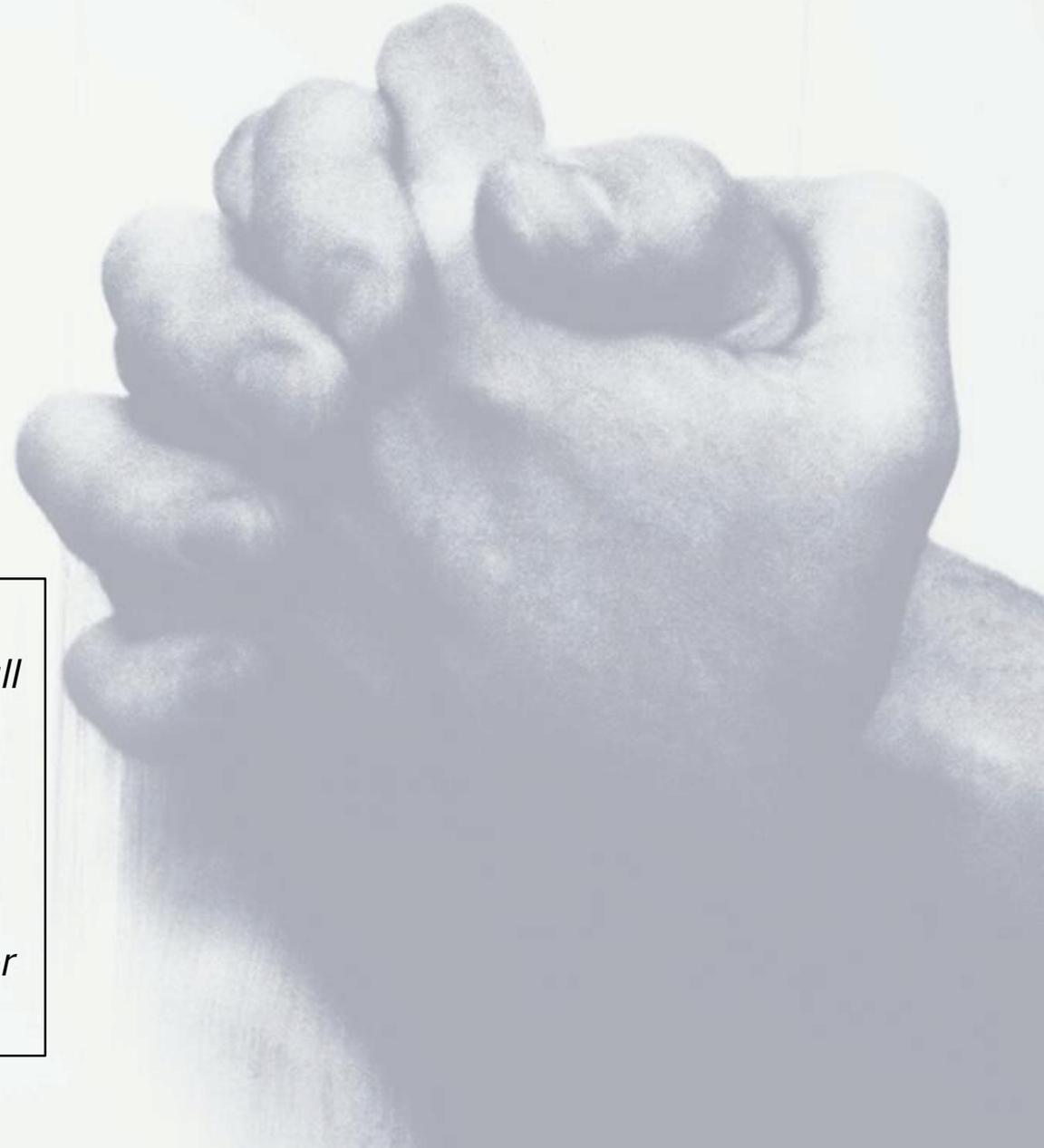
2. Corporate Prayer.

Corporate Prayer is what preserves the authentic spirituality of the people of God, and corporate prayerlessness is not considered normal for God's people. On the contrary, by the witness of Scripture, we find that extravagant night & day prayer is more normal for the people of God than a lack of corporate prayer.

Samuel Whitefield

¹ I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— ² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. ³ This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth ... ⁸ Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.

1 Timothy 2



When we look at the life of the local church in Acts it is clear that corporate prayer played a prominent role in the daily life of the church: The Holy Spirit was poured out on the church in response to a corporate prayer meeting (Acts 1:14). The early church gathered house to house for corporate prayer (Acts 2:42). The response of the early church to the challenges they were facing was a corporate prayer meeting (Acts 4:23-31). The apostles refused to minister to the widows so they could give themselves to prayer together (Acts 6:4). The greatest missionary of the New Testament, the apostle Paul, was sent by the Spirit out of a corporate prayer meeting (Acts 13:2-3). The early church was found in corporate prayer when Peter was released from prison (Acts 12:5, 12).

Whitefield



Six Truths About Corporate Prayer:

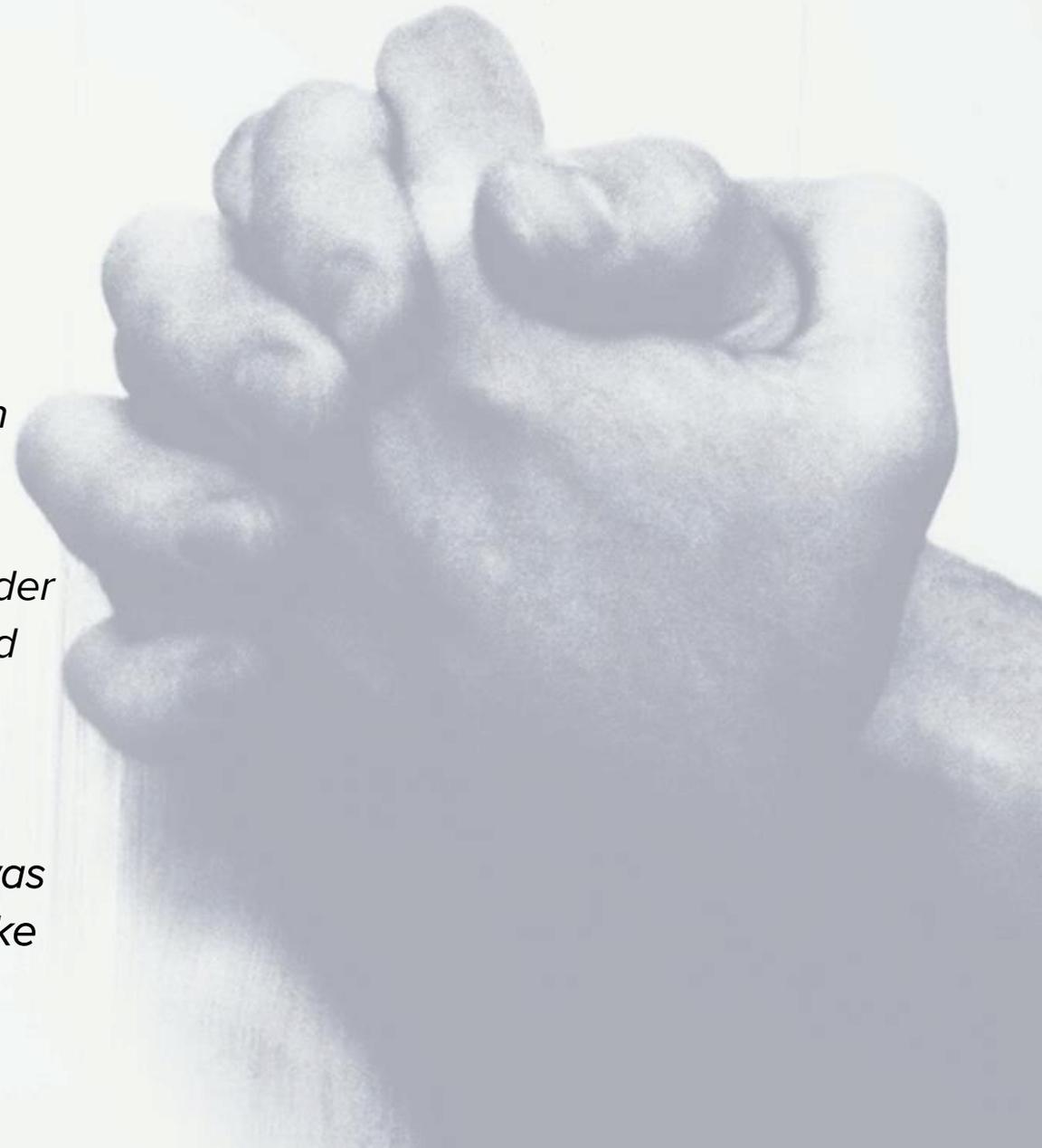
1. Corporate Prayer invites God to lead His people.

a. in supernaturally “loaded” moments.

²³ On their release, Peter and John reported to the church all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, ... ²⁹ “Consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs & wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

³¹ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit & spoke the word of God boldly.

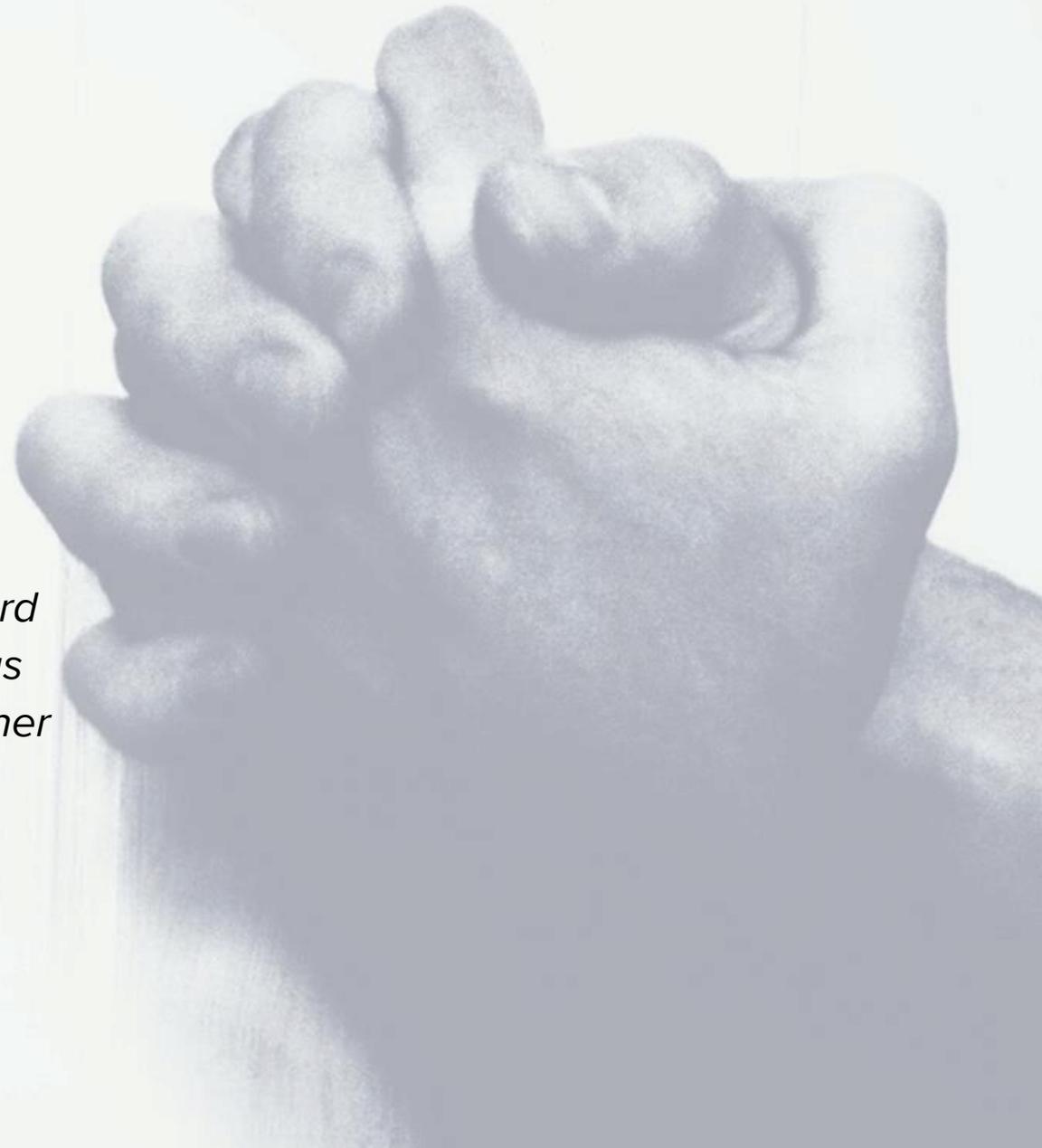


Six Truths About Corporate Prayer:

1. Corporate Prayer invites God to lead His people.
 - a. in supernaturally “loaded” moments.
 - b. in supernatural “daily” moments.**

²⁴ Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another all the more as you see the moment of our Lord’s return approaching.

Hebrews 10



Six Truths About Corporate Prayer:

2. Corporate Prayer focuses God's people on God's priorities.

a. **sharing Christ to the world.**

¹⁹“Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you.

Jesus – Matthew 28



Six Truths About Corporate Prayer:

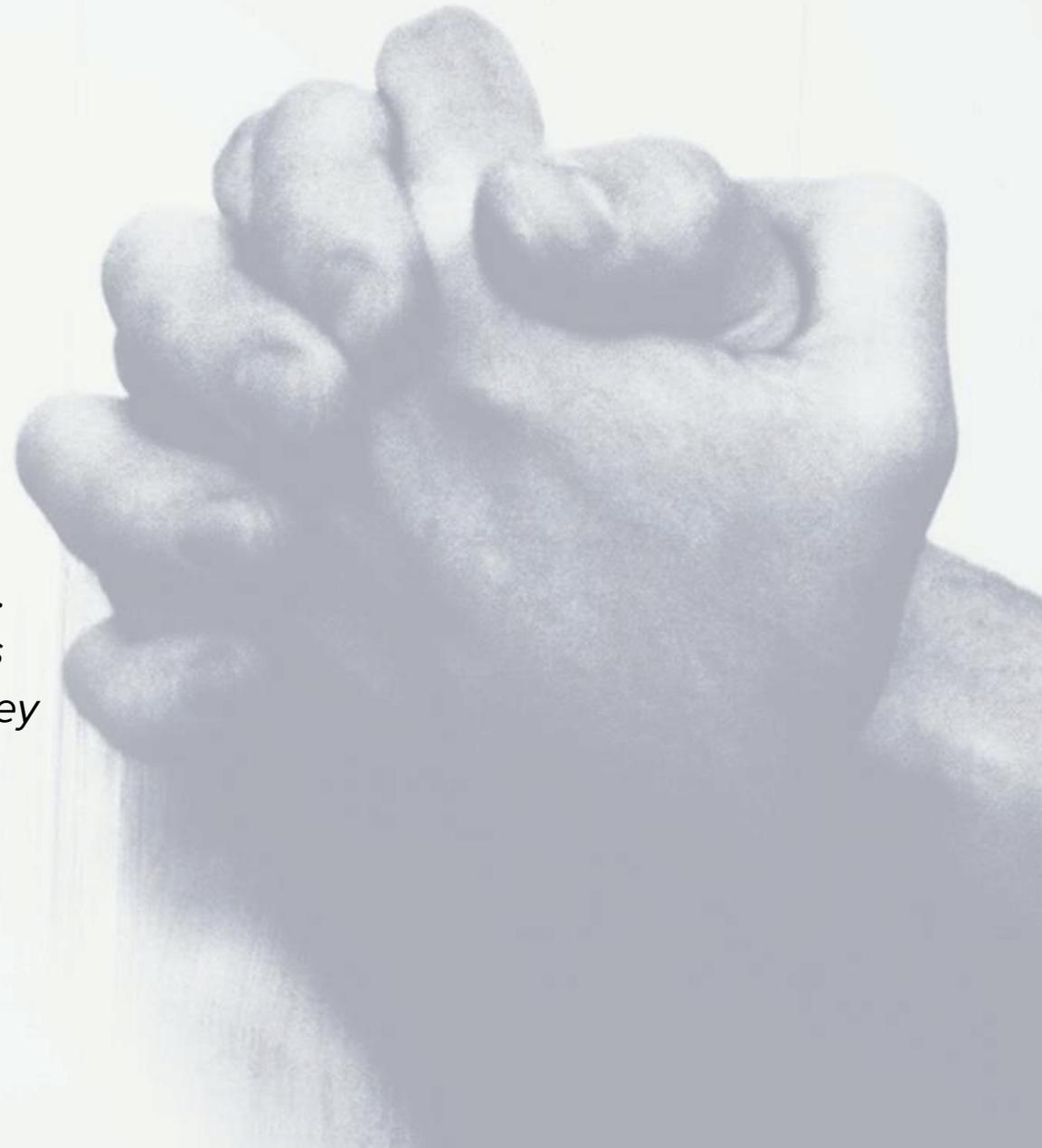
2. Corporate Prayer focuses God's people on God's priorities.

a. sharing Christ to the world.

b. demonstrating love & unity within the most diverse group of people on earth.

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had with great joy ...

(Acts 4)



Six Truths About Corporate Prayer:

2. Corporate Prayer focuses God's people on God's priorities.

- a. sharing Christ to the world.
- b. demonstrating love & unity in the midst of great diversity.
- c. faithfully awaiting the return of the King.**

¹³"I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have so that no one will take your crown."

(Revelation 3)

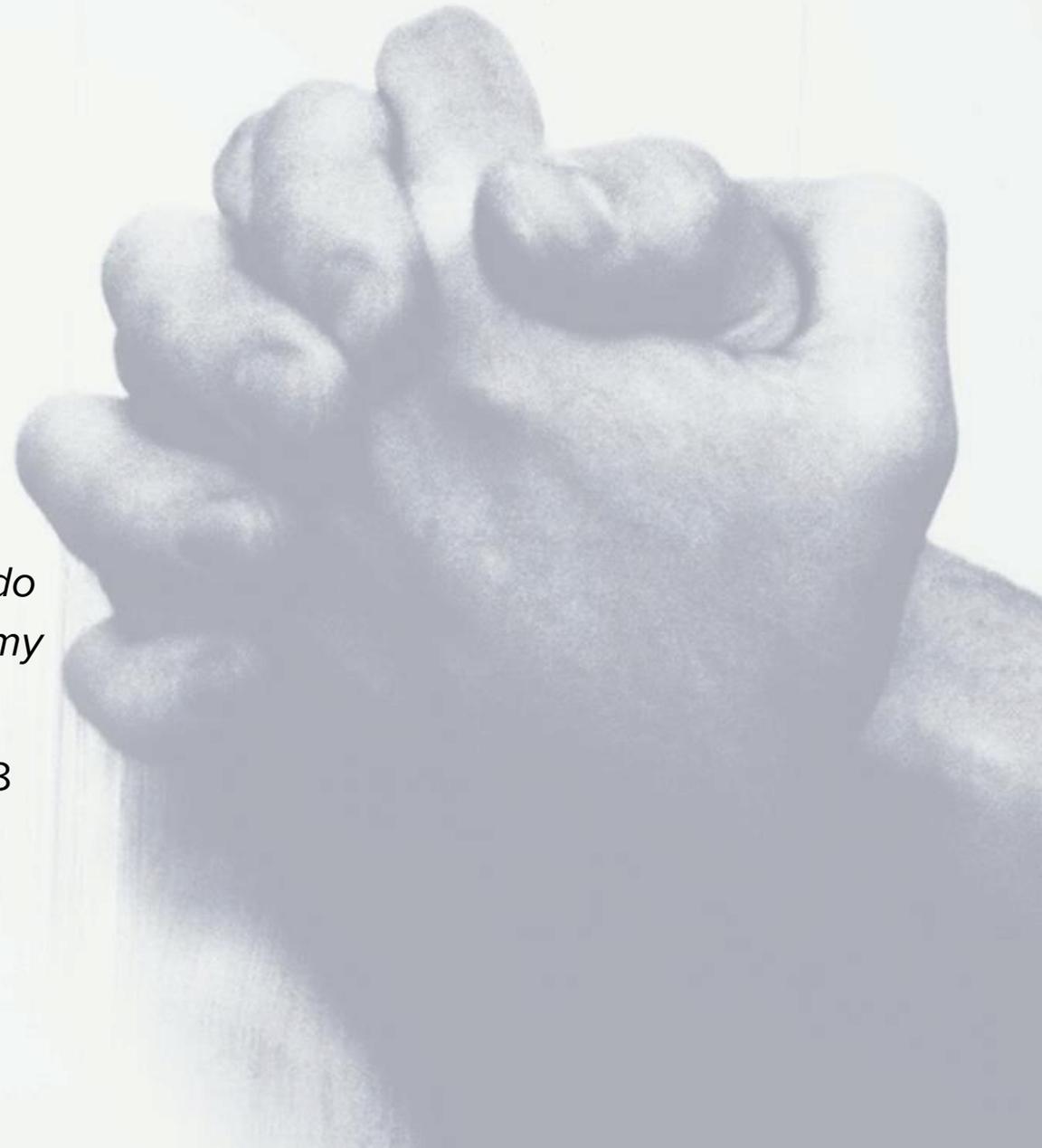


Six Truths About Corporate Prayer:

3. Corporate Prayer guarantees that Jesus is with us.
 - it's the one thing that our Master promises to join us in.

¹⁹ “I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. ²⁰ For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.”

Jesus – Matthew 18



Six Truths About Corporate Prayer:

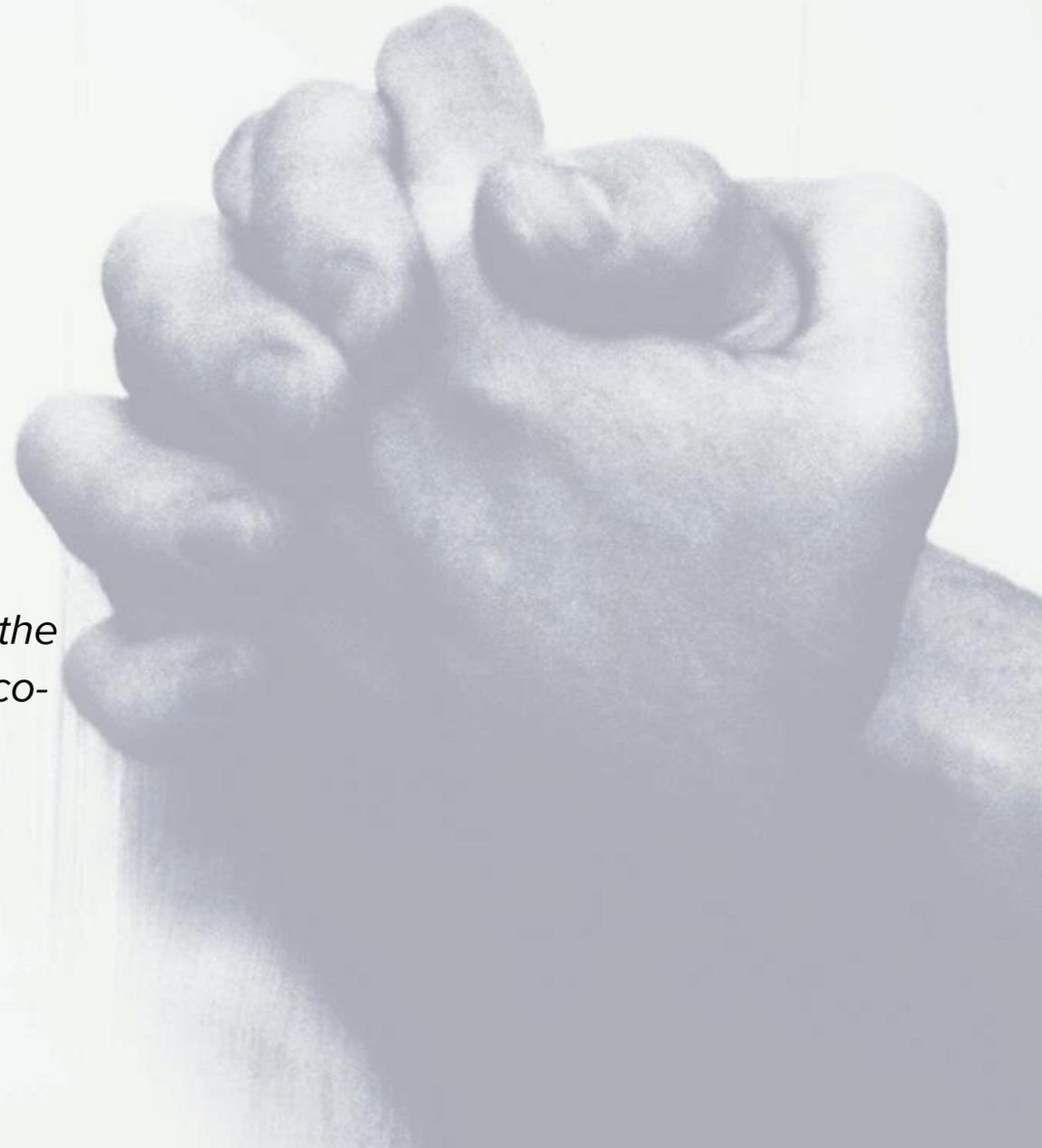
4. Corporate Prayer measures congregational unity.

- you cannot pray together with someone you have a broken relationship with.

² I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ Yes, and I ask you, my dear friends, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Paul – Philippians 4



Six Truths About Corporate Prayer:

5. Corporate Prayer is a leadership responsibility.
 - a. **your leaders – elders & pastors – must model it.**

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

Hebrews 13



6 *As the church grew, the Greek-speaking believers complained that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food.*

² So the apostles called a congregational meeting and said, “We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. ³ And so, select seven men who are well respected and full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility.

⁴ Then we apostles can spend our time teaching the word of God and prayer.”

⁵ Everyone liked this idea, and they chose seven men & presented them to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them.

Acts 6



Six Truths About Corporate Prayer:

5. Corporate Prayer is a leadership responsibility.

a. your leaders – elders & pastors – must model it.

b. much of corporate prayer is for their work.

¹Now in the church at Antioch ... ²while they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” ³So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 13

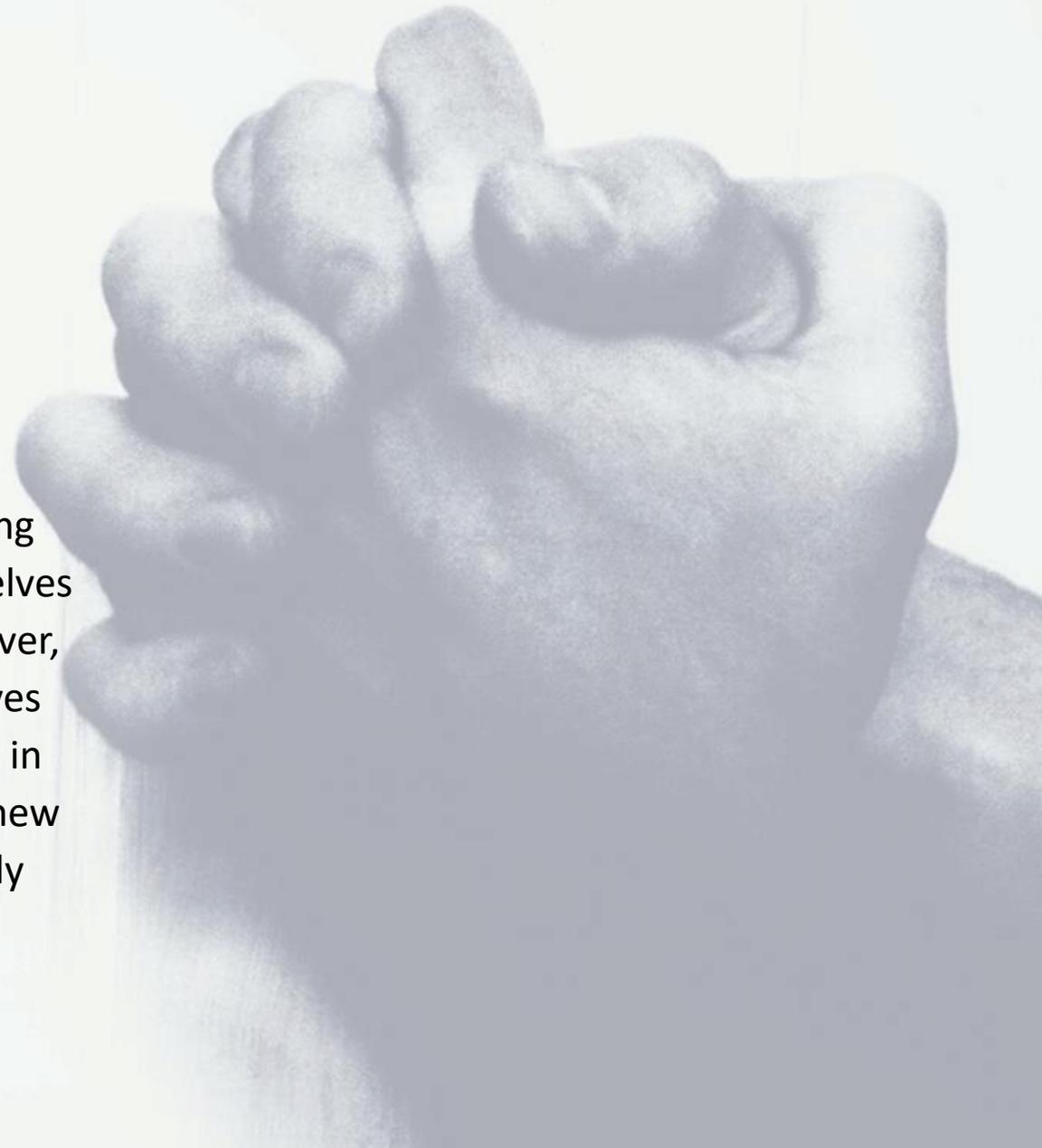


Six Truths About Corporate Prayer:

6. Corporate Prayer reflects private prayer.

- a high temperature of private prayer in a congregation will almost always produce the same temperature corporately.

Most of us believe we pray more than we actually do, and focusing only on “hidden” and “secret” prayer allows us to convince ourselves that we are given to prayer far more than we actually are. However, you will never hear this sentiment from those who give themselves to long periods of private prayer. Men and women of prayer pray in secret, but also know the value of praying together. When Matthew 6:6 is used as an argument against corporate prayer, it is not really being used as an exhortation for extravagant private prayer, but almost always as an excuse for prayerlessness.



SO ... What do we do about corporate prayer at New Life?

1. We are commanded to gather and pray together.

- we must adjust our lives to do this ... all of us!
- to refuse praying together is to rely on our own resources in a fight that only God can win.



SO ... What do we do about corporate prayer at New Life?

1. We are commanded to gather and pray together.
2. When we pray corporately, it's important to make God's "main things" the agenda of our prayer.
 - witnessing Christ to the world.
 - demonstrating unity together.
 - faithfully enduring until He returns.



SO ... What do we do about corporate prayer at New Life?

1. We are commanded to gather together and pray.
2. When we pray corporately, it's important to make God's "main things" the agenda of our prayer.
3. We must urge our leaders to show us the way of prayer.
 - this is why God has set them apart.
 - their spiritual maturity will be reflected in their prayer life.
 - we should expect their leadership in prayer.



Truth: A congregation that will not pray together is a neutered church ... that cannot reproduce itself.
... but a congregation praying together and full of the Spirit is unstoppable!

The feature that is supposed to distinguish Christian churches, Christian people and Christian gatherings is the aroma of prayer. The Bible says nowhere “My house shall be called a house of preaching, or a house of music”, but it does say, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” These other things are fine, but they must never override prayer as the defining mark of God’s people gathering together. The honest truth is that I have seen God do more in people’s lives during ten minutes of real prayer than in ten of my sermons.

Jim Cymbala

