

# UNIFIED THROUGH PRAYER

**I had been serving in Pakistan, mostly as a homeschooling mother, for 23 years when God started challenging me to become more involved in the national church. He was very specific about what He wanted me to do – start a prayer meeting for all the pastors in our town.**

“You’ve got to be kidding, God! There’s no way!” I protested. “Me? Start a prayer meeting for all these pastors?”

With all their fragile egos, backbiting, infighting and competitive spirit, I could not imagine their getting together and praying! And I was a *woman*, without a seminary degree – why would they listen to me? When I ran the idea by some colleagues, their reactions were similarly sceptical.

“I hate to say it, but those guys are almost a lost cause. They are more concerned with church politics than prayer,” said one.

“There’s just not much life in them. Why not concentrate on the ordinary parishioners?” asked another.

“If you’re going to start it, just start small, with pastors from within our denomination, and see how it goes,” suggested yet another.

Even my husband, a missionary pastor, was dubious. So I brought it back to the Lord. He

was adamant – yes, the *pastors*, and not just those of our denomination, but *all* of them. And He wanted *me* to do it. God and I argued over the next five months.

In the meantime, God started changing my own heart. Whereas before I would often sit in church with a judgemental spirit, mentally criticising the pastor’s poor preparation and lacklustre sermon, now God started helping me to see these pastors through His eyes. They were His chosen vessels, but they were like scattered sheep without a shepherd, with little encouragement and few opportunities for growth. I started to see them as feeble lights in the midst of a great darkness, struggling to stay alight, like burning sticks separated from a fire and slowly growing cold. They were wide open to the darts of the evil one. Their congregations were not supporting them much in prayer (at least that seemed the case in our church!). The local Bishop over them did not seem to pastor or disciple them but only had critical words for them. It was no wonder that their faith was growing cold and they were discouraged! As I started praying for them, my critical spirit diminished and my compassion for them grew.

The Lord showed me that if they gathered

in prayer, their feeble lights would increase manyfold, like firebrands returning to the fire. I realised that they, as the spiritual authorities over this town, could have a tremendous impact on the area if they joined together in prayer. The Lord instructed me to have a different church host it each time, to encourage the pastors themselves to start to take ownership of it. And He wanted all the pastors to pray for the blessing and fruitfulness of the host pastor’s church and ministry, to counteract the spirit of competitiveness among them. The ideas grew, and the Lord finally talked me into it.

We’ve been meeting for a year and a half now, Baptist, Catholic, Pentecostal and Church of Pakistan pastors, for monthly three-hour prayer retreats. I see now that my being a non-seminary-trained woman was actually a huge advantage. The pastors aren’t threatened by me as they probably would have been by another pastor trying to organise this. I am simply there as one to serve, encourage and occasionally teach. Each retreat can have a variety of activities: sharing joys and trials in ministry, prayer in twos for personal needs, listening intercession to see how the Lord would have us pray over our town and nation, Bible teaching, soaking prayer, worshipping quietly through music, and intercession for one another. The time flies. Our hearts are slowly growing together and the pastors feel less alone in their struggles.

What a joy it was to see pastors gather around and pray for a colleague who had shared that



**How good and pleasant it is  
when God's people live together  
in unity. (Psalm 133:1)**

the numbers in his church were really down. Rather than gloating that their own churches were doing better, they cried out for God to move in that neighborhood, to draw people to Himself through that church and to bring revival. And then we were able to celebrate together when the pastor reported the following month that attendance had significantly improved.

The pastors have even started collaborating on projects. Recently we held a 'Purity Seminar' for about 70 teenage girls, the first seminar of its kind offered to people across denominations in our town. The girls were so enthusiastic they wanted to have meetings like this regularly! I wondered how to do follow-up prayer ministry with some of the Catholic girls who requested it, fearing we may step on denominational toes by coming to minister in neighborhoods that are traditionally Catholic. But the Catholic Father in our prayer group offered to organise a follow-up meeting for us so we could help those girls who really wanted some prayer for inner healing. We hope it will be another step in bringing the different Christian communities together. A similar multi-church seminar for teenage guys is planned for November.

The pastors are beginning to ask, "How can we start prayer meetings like this in our churches? How can we teach our people more on prayer? How can we encourage revival? Should we start a meeting for all our churches to get together for prayer?"

One pastor said, "I can sense the presence of the Lord in these prayer times. It brings a freshness."

Another said, "Our burdens seem lighter when we come to these meetings."

"We in the NGOs are all doing our own thing," was another feedback. "We're all

Christian organisations. Why aren't we sharing ideas and resources more, and praying together? Can you start these kinds of meetings for the Christian NGOs in this area?"

I am tempted to protest to the Lord that I am inadequate for the task, but figure it will probably be futile. It is God's delight to use inadequate people. And it is my delight to have a small part in seeing the Christian unity in our area grow. ✨

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