



Passionate Praying Pastors

All across America there are a proliferation of successful churches and ministries where Christ is lifted up and glorified and the word of God is effectively preached and taught to hungry congregations. The sad side of the story is that they are few and far between and not the normal. The average American church is in a sad state of affairs; about 70 or less are in attendance, most are elderly, most are dwindling in size year after year, and often the Jesus Christ and the saving Gospel of Christ is not mentioned and word of God is not taught with power and authority.

What is true nationally is also true of the churches of our own denomination. In our district alone we have 50 churches under fifty (most with less than thirty attending), 100 churches under one hundred (most under 70 in attendance). The remaining churches are of larger sizes but even some of those are plateaued or declining. Too few churches are healthy, vibrant, and filled with the presence of God as God intended.

It is our belief that as goes the pastor so goes the church. In most cases the pastor makes the church. The pastor is often the primary problem and the pastor is also the primary solution. Churches will not be more passionate for Christ than their pastor. Churches will not be more prayer-filled than their pastor.

The sad truth is that most pastors are part of the problem, if not the problem. The reality is that most pastors are well-meaning men who attempt to pastor their churches the best they can but without ever having been trained how to do it prayerfully and successfully and few have ever witnessed a church that is truly on fire for God and filled with the manifest presence of God.

The pastor is part of the problem if...

- Prayer is his duty but not his delight
- Prayer is an afterthought rather than his first thought
- He has few or no specific prayer disciplines
- His love of ministry exceeds his love for the Master

- He loves preaching but isn't so fond of prayer
- He does not have a clear vision from God for his ministry
- He is relatively satisfied with the way things are
- He rarely exalts the cross or the Savior in his preaching
- His sermons lack anointing – there's little passion, fire or urgency
- He doesn't clearly present the message of salvation in each sermon
- He is undisciplined in his work, his study habits, and his pastoral ministries
- He does the work of the Lord half-heartedly and without enthusiasm
- He has no clear and compelling call that drives him
- His congregation doesn't respect him or see him as a man of God
- He rarely, if ever, goes away to be seek God's face alone

The pastor is part of the solution if...

- He loves Jesus more than his ministry (or anything else)
- His prayer life is his passionate life-line to God
- He gets his vision from time alone with God in fasting and prayer
- He listens to God's voice and leading in his preaching and ministry initiatives
- He spends significant quality and quantity time alone with God
- He prays regularly for, with and over his people
- He genuinely loves the people of his congregation and tells them so
- He is convicted by his own messages before he preaches them to his people
- He has a disciplined daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly prayer life
- He weeps over the lost in his congregation and prays for them by name
- He passionately and clearly presents the message of salvation in each sermon
- He regularly invites people to "receive" and "invite" Jesus Christ into their lives
- He regularly invites people to come to the altar for prayer and anointing
- He orders his steps according to God's word
- He systematically preaches the word of God from the word of God
- He often goes away on personal prayer retreats to be alone with God
- He is filled with the Holy Spirit and has an anointing on his life and preaching
- He teaches and models prayer for his people
- He prayerfully plans his work and works his plan
- He knows God's vision and plan and clearly articulates it again and again

The pastor is to be first and foremost a high priest over the house of God to offer up prayers, intercessions, and strong crying for his people. He is to be first and foremost a lover of God rather than a love of men or ministry. He is to be passionate about prayer and intimacy with God more than he is passionate about preaching.

Yet the average pastor today is willing to wait on tables but not willing to wait on God. They have traded the throne room for the board room and think that God is pleased.

Acts 6:4 states the pastoral priorities precisely and succinctly, "*We will give ourselves continually to prayer, (and then) and to the ministry of the word.*"

The ministry of the word is to be an outgrowth of the closet of prayer. Messages are to be birthed on our knees, not pecking at computer keys. Sermons that are born from fire from off the altar tend to enflame hearts to seek God at an altar. Altar work breeds altar results. Messages received from God on our knees tend to end with people on their knees.

If this resonates with your heart then I want to enter into a partnership with you and your congregation for the next twelve months. But pastor, it begins with you. It cannot be done without you. You are the solution! You must be motivated. You must be willing to make substantial changes in your prayer disciplines and in the way you do your pastoral ministry. You must be willing unlearn old habits and to learn new healthy and more productive ministry habits.

Pastor, here is what I can do for you. I will teach you, lead you, and show you how...

1. To make prayer your passion and priority
2. To get a vision from God for your church for the next 10 years
3. To articulate that vision in demonstrable ministry steps
4. To make seeking God on the mountain your highest priority and calling
5. To do three prayer and planning retreats individually or with your staff
6. To prepare your messages on your knees and preach with passion
7. To pray with, for and over your people
8. To reactivate the altar as a place of victory, not a place of shame
9. To pray more enjoyably and effectively than ever before
10. To teach your people to pray joyfully and expectantly
11. To choose praying elders (not elect) and couples anointed by God to pray
12. To build a prayer saturated church that permeates with the presence of God

Pastor, we will work with you on three areas of transformation; your praying, your preaching and your planning. This will require your participation in the coaching program and attendance at three coaching and training retreats. The cost for this coaching is \$1,200 a year.

Pastor, here is what I can do for your congregation. Working hand in hand with you to bring a passion for prayer and the presence of God to your services, I will ...

1. Join you each year for extended weekend series on prayer and passion for Jesus
2. Teach your church family to pray all over again with six steps of prayer
3. Lead a church-wide "quiet prayer retreat" for seeking intimacy with God
4. Train your elders to pray and anoint people and operate spiritual gifts at the altar
5. Demonstrate prayer and anointing at the altar after every service
6. Resource you and your people for making your church a house of prayer
7. Be available to you and your elders throughout the year by phone or e-mail to resolve issues that may arise that hinder the presence of God in your services.

To learn more about how to partner with us and see more details please check out our web site at www.MinistryToday.org and request a complete brochure of our ministry possibilities.