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**A**s a Stonecroft leader, you are part of a vast, worldwide prayer network. During *Launch—Set a Fresh Course* events in spring 2008, we were challenged to examine both our personal and corporate prayer times and pursue God-centered, Holy Spirit-guided, purposeful prayer.

**T**his piece is designed to equip you as a leader to apply these principles in your personal life and your local prayer gathering. The first section, *Principles of Prayer*, is for your personal reflection and to prepare you to communicate Stonecroft's vision for prayer. The second section, *Developing the Vision for Prayer*, is designed to assist you in opening a dialogue about prayer with your Planning Team and other local Stonecroft leaders.

**P**rayers is the foundation of Stonecroft Ministries. As a ministry, our primary vision for corporate prayer is:

*To worship God and give thanks; to pray for one another, those in authority, and for the Gospel to impact our communities.*

(1 Timothy 2:1-4, Hebrews 12:28; Colossians 4:2-4)

**O**ur secondary vision is:

*To mentor women in the power and practice of corporate prayer.*

(Luke 11:1)

**A**s we join together to pray, the *Principles of Prayer* found on the following pages will help us seek God's heart and pray effectively. Ask God to give you His vision for prayer as you read the associated verses and prayerfully answer the questions.

# PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

## God-Centered

*“The only enduring motivation for prayer: God is worthy to be sought.”*

—Daniel Henderson

*“If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”*

—2 Chronicles 7:14, NIV

- According to 2 Chronicles 7:14, what is our part as we pray?
- What does it mean to seek God’s face? See also Psalm 63:1-5.
- As you consider your own prayer life, how is God encouraging you to seek His face (a deeper relationship with Him) more than His hand (His answers to your prayers)?

### Additional Thoughts about God-Centered Prayer:

2 Chronicles 7:14 encourages us to examine our prayers. Sometimes we seek God’s hand rather than His face. In God-centered prayer, instead of asking Him to change our circumstances, we long for Him to change us. When our prayers are birthed out of Scripture, we are reminded of the character of God. We are changed, and our prayers are aligned with God’s heart.

This Scripture also makes clear that an attitude of humility and repentance of our sin are essential elements of prayer. These are appropriate responses when we recognize the holiness and majesty of our God.

GOD-CENTERED

## Holy Spirit-Guided

*“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”*

—Romans 8:26, NIV

*“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

—John 14:26, NIV

- According to Romans 8:26, what is the role of the Holy Spirit as we pray?
- John 14:26 tells us that the Holy Spirit teaches and reminds us of truth. As we yield to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, what does Ephesians 6:17-18 indicate will characterize our prayer lives?
- When we allow the Holy Spirit to guide our prayers, and when we give our requests to God with a thankful heart, what happens? See Philippians 4:6-7.

### Additional Thoughts about Holy Spirit-Guided Prayer:

At Stonecroft prayer gatherings, we provide a structure for corporate prayer, which gives direction, unity, and clarity, and can bring order and confidence for those who participate. At the same time, this structure is flexible. As we trust the Holy Spirit to be our Guide, we will learn to discern His promptings.

Holy Spirit-guided prayer:

- is willing to wait on God (Psalm 27:14).
- is motivated by love (Romans 5:5).
- removes anxiety or fear (Philippians 4:6-7).

## Purposeful

*“Devote yourself to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.”*

—Colossians 4:2-4, NIV

- According to the above verses, what are we encouraged to pray for?
- What does it mean in our own prayer lives to be watchful and thankful while we pray?
- As we pray for other believers, what are some of the things we can ask God to do in their lives? See Colossians 1:9-12 and Philippians 1:9-10.

### Additional Thoughts about Purposeful Prayer:

Who are the people God has put in your life whom you can pray for? A woman who is purposeful in her prayer life is humble, keeping her eyes on the needs of others more than herself. In prayer, she seeks to know the heart of God and surrenders herself and those she prays for to His perfect will. Ask the Lord to help you notice others as you go through your everyday activities so you can pray for them.

*“Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.”*

—William Carey

## *Tips for Using*

# DEVELOPING THE VISION FOR PRAYER

**A**s Prayer Coordinator, you help provide the spiritual leadership for the Planning Team. Joining together for prayer strengthens our individual prayer lives and fosters a deeper desire to see others come to know Christ.

**T**his tool is designed to assist you in opening a dialogue about prayer with your Leadership Team and Planning Team. You may want to contact your Chair and ask her for some time at one or more Leadership Team meetings to discuss the questions on the next page. It may be best to facilitate discussion with your Leadership Team first, then the Planning Team, and finally the Prayer Connection participants.

**W**ith each discussion, try to create an environment that allows each person to process these ideas at her own pace. These discussions may initially generate additional questions. As a ministry, on both the national and local level, we will continue to dialogue on this eminently important subject of prayer.

**W**e encourage you to continue seeking the Lord's direction for your prayer ministry. If you'd like to connect with other Prayer Coordinators and Prayer Leaders and continue the dialogue online, you can access the Prayer blog on the Leaders section of [www.stonecroft.org](http://www.stonecroft.org).

# DEVELOPING THE VISION FOR PRAYER

## *A Resource to Share with Your Team*

- Prayer is the foundation of Stonecroft Ministries. As a ministry, our primary vision for corporate prayer is:

*To worship God and give thanks; to pray for one another, those in authority, and for the Gospel to impact our communities.*

(1 Timothy 2:1-4, Hebrews 12:28; Colossians 4:2-4)

- Our secondary vision is:

*To mentor women in the power and practice of corporate prayer.*

(Luke 11:1)

### Discuss the following questions together:

#### **God-Centered Prayer:**

- a. How would you describe God-centered prayer?
- b. How do the following scriptures describe God-centered prayer?  
Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 63:1-5
- c. What differences would there be in our Prayer Connections and other times of prayer if they became more God-centered?
- d. What could we do to pursue a more God-centered focus to our prayer times?

#### **Holy Spirit-Guided Prayer:**

- a. How would you describe Holy Spirit-guided prayer?
- b. How do the following scriptures describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit?  
John 14:16, 26, Ephesians 6:17-18, Romans 8:26
- c. What differences would there be in our Prayer Connections and other prayer times if they became more Holy Spirit-guided?
- d. What could we do to be more responsive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit during our prayer times?

#### **Purposeful Prayer:**

- a. How would you describe purposeful prayer?
- b. What do the following Scriptures encourage us to pray for?  
Colossians 1:9-11, 4:2-4; Philippians 1:9-10
- c. What differences would there be in our Prayer Connections and other prayer times if they became more purposeful?
- d. What could we do to encourage more purposeful prayer during our prayer times?

Continue to pray as a team and seek the Lord's guidance for the prayer life of your group. If you'd like to connect with others and continue this dialogue online, you can access the Prayer blog on the Leaders section of [www.stonecroft.org](http://www.stonecroft.org).