

Building a Personal Prayer Network

How to identify and support prayer partners for you and your ministry service.

Pray for God to direct you—

- Pray, and begin making a list of those you will ask. Include family, friends, people in Sunday school or cell groups. Don't limit your list by your impression of whether they will want to pray for you or not—give God a chance to open their hearts.
- You might pray about it for a few days, asking God to bring additional names to mind. As you add to your list, pray over them by name (you can quickly name them and then pray one general prayer for all, asking God to prepare their hearts, and to help you be sensitive to His leading).
- Be sensitive to watch for clues that someone might be willing to become a prayer partner, such as the comment “I prayed for you the other day” or a question or comment about your service or work with e3, or perhaps someone will ask you to pray for him.

Think through how you will keep in touch with your prayer partners—

- We recommend email, because few people have time to call one another personally with prayer requests. (See notes re: Managing your prayer partners with email.)
- Keep in touch regularly, but don't overdo it, unless you have a situation that warrants it. You might aim for weekly, but realistically, it may be every 2-3 weeks.
- Keep your prayer requests brief and personal; model what you want their prayer requests to you to look like.
- Set some boundaries—“I'm looking for personal prayer partners who want to share personal needs for themselves or their immediate family, and those are the requests I intend to share myself.” (If you don't set the focus, you may receive requests for people you don't know.)
- Keep it pressure free—All I'm asking is that you pray a quick prayer when you see the email, and then as God brings me to mind. I'll do the same.

How to manage your prayer partners with email—

- One easy way is to put the names of those with email addresses on an email distribution list. If you don't have all their email addresses, when you ask them in person, have a card handy for them to give you their email address.
- When you send your invitations, and later as you send out prayer requests, be sure to put the title of your distribution list in the bcc line of your email—this way they will each receive an email without everyone else's email address showing.

- Make a new contact to send your prayer partner requests to—

Name: My Prayer Partners

Email Address: yourname@youremailaddress.net

(Example: johndoe@att.net)

Invite people on your list to become a prayer partner—

- Send each one a personal email invitation. (Make up a simple email invitation to explain what you are inviting them to do. Use copy and paste, and add a personal word at the beginning.)
- It's a good idea to begin with a distribution list titled "Invitation to Prayer Partners"—then create a second distribution list as you receive positive responses from those who accept your invitation.

Tips for your email prayer requests—

- Begin sending prayer requests as soon as you have several prayer partners identified.
- Always send with a word of appreciation for their prayers.
- Include brief answers to prayer when they come.
- Send them numbered or with bullets, separate them with space to make them easy to read at a glance.
- Avoid long sentences or paragraphs.

Use 11pt or 12pt font for easy reading.

- Always include a reminder for them to send you a specific request, something like "I pray for you as the Lord brings you to mind, but please send specific requests as you have them."
- Provide a way to "unsubscribe" as a prayer partner. Include a line at the bottom of each email, saying "If you no longer want to receive these email prayer requests, simply reply with the word 'unsubscribe' in the subject line."
- When someone replies he or she has prayed for you, acknowledge that with a quick one sentence word of thanks for their prayers.

Praying for your partners requests—

- Pray for them as you ask them to pray for you—as soon as you see their requests, pray a quick prayer. Print them if you like, and keep them available to pray for again later.
- Keep a list of your prayer partners (print out your distribution list) and pray over it as often as you can (aim for once a week).
- Here's one way to pray through a list of prayer partners quickly, yet meaningfully:

Open your prayer by reading through the list of names and asking God to hear your prayer for each one of them, then pray a general prayer of blessing for all of them at once. You can pray for a long list of names in just a couple of minutes.

As you have time, go back through the list and pray a one-sentence specific prayer for each one as you recall their requests.

Try not to set yourself too high a standard in terms of how often or how long you pray for your partners. If you will pray when you see their email request, you have done as you said you would. It's a good thing to pray for them generally as a group or as God brings them to mind, but if you let it become too big a chore, you may begin to feel frustrated or guilty that you don't pray for them more often, and ultimately it won't work.

Keep it simple for you—and for them.

Keeping Connected with Prayer Partners—

As you have time, send a personal email to your prayer partners.

- Compose a generic message, perhaps with a scripture verse or encouraging quote from a devotional book. Tell them how much you appreciate their prayers.
- Use copy and paste, and briefly personalize the message to each one.
- You don't have to go through your whole list of prayer partners at once, just do two or three when you have time. It doesn't take long, and it will maintain contact.