

Compendium of Local Church Exercises to Help us Grow in the Lord

Prayer Focused Sundays

What / How: Prayer focused Sundays are something we are trying out at Edmonton Southside once a month. We strip the Sunday AM service down to 2-3 hymns (no band, just piano and vocal) and create intentional space for prayer as a church body. The scripture reading and prayer so far has been led by the Pastors and lay people of the church (having the pastors lead this initially is best as it gets the ball rolling and sets the tone of expectations). With potential 'newbies' in the church on any given Sunday, it is important at the start of the service to explain what will happen in the prayer focused service and we remind the church that prayer is for all, including children. We have used the formula of A.C.T.S for our prayer time: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication (sometimes we may mix it up). This format is easy and it flows well. We first share a scripture that is of adoration and then invite the congregation, whether on their own or as families, to pray prayers of adoration. It is helpful to have prompts on the screen to help people who may find all of this quite daunting. For example, some of the prompts we use are: 'God is mighty, God is loving, God is Savior'. We have music softly playing for a couple of minutes before the leader closes in prayer. We then repeat for confession, thanksgiving and supplication; the supplication portion can be as general or specific as you like. We have also mixed adoration and thanksgiving together. We are intentional to say that this isn't rushed and that this will take up 15 or so minutes in the service. We close with saying the Lord's prayer together.

Pictures:



Why: Prayer, unfortunately, is something that does not come naturally to us as a local church. When we organize Sunday evening 'prayer services' often the attendance is very low. We believe prayer is essential to the church body, so therefore feel it's worth creating space on a Sunday morning for it. The desire is that people see the blessings of prayer as individuals, as families and as the Church body. Our desire is to cultivate this healthy habit. Our hope is that it becomes more natural for us as a Church body. We want prayer to be less daunting and something that people look forward to. We also hope that in this space and over time we can teach on 'listening prayer'. We want to invite the church to not feel pressured to fill prayer time with our voices but to be open to listening to God's voice. Encouraging people to bring their Bibles for these Sundays is a good practice as well.

Testimonial: This is still something fairly new to us as a church but we have had people share already that they appreciate the intentionality of the prayer focused Sunday and that they look forward to seeing this become a habit of the Church.

Resources available: Prayer prompt video & images

Contact: Pastor Jonny / Edmonton Southside Church of the Nazarene
pastorjonny@southsidenazarene.ca