



THE PRAYER NETWORK

Equipping women to cover their communities in prayer

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Have you noticed there is a progression in Baptist Women resources?

Room to Pray and Soul Sisters 1 and 2 are meant to strengthen the core of our communion with God. They include spiritual formation practices that develop our ability to hear from God. They help us gradually talk more about our spiritual life and listen to others without feeling pressure to try to fix their problems—or them. These are important skills for reaching outside our Christian community. Soul Sisters 3 will focus on learning how to recognize God working in our own neighbourhoods.

*We realize that for many of us, moving out of the circle of Christian community can be daunting. That's why we are creating resources that focus on intercession. **Intercessory prayer can be the bridge between personal communion with God and mission.** Intercession helps us see and care about what is happening in our communities. God develops our discernment and increases our faith. Most importantly, He works!*

So let us introduce . . . the Baptist Women's Prayer Network.

*by Diane McBeth, executive director,
Baptist Women*

ALTHOUGH PRAYER IS ESSENTIAL, we know that some of you more seasoned ladies can no longer get out to prayer meetings and you younger women just can't add another thing to the schedule. That's why we are creating a prayer network where you can pray from home, at a time

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that works for you, and where you don't have to pray out loud in a group. Of course, if you do want to get together, that is great too, but this won't be your traditional prayer meeting.

Deep down, you may be wondering how your prayer could make much of a difference. Your prayer matters because the God of the universe waits for you. He could easily do everything Himself but He holds back so we can co-labour with Him. Think of Saul's blindness after his encounter with God. God could have easily healed him instantly at any time. Instead He tells Saul that someone named Ananias is going to come and pray for him; He has to convince Ananias to pray for a persecutor who terrified him; and then He goes to all the trouble of giving Ananias directions to the house where Saul is staying (Acts 9:10-19). God's preference is to have someone pray in faith before He responds. God looks for someone to intercede (Ezekiel 22:30, Isaiah 30:18-19).

Why does God tell prophets to say something before He does it? Why doesn't He just do it? God has Ezekiel walk back and forth through the valley of dry bones so he is truly convinced of just how dead they are . . . and then God tells him to command the bones to come to life (Ezekiel 37:2, 4-5). Three times in that passage God says, "Then you will know that I am the LORD (verses 6, 13-14), the first time referring to Ezekiel and

GETTING STARTED

- First, recruit a few other women from your church. This isn't just for your Baptist Women group.
- Create a prayer list including your pastor, young adults, leaders and needs in your church.
 - Add needs from your neighbourhood.
 - Include young adults and family members who are distant from God.
- Divide the list so each person has several names and needs to cover.
- Have each person call the people they've been assigned (if appropriate).
 - Explain that you want to pray for them and ask if they have any specific requests.
 - Be sure to keep these absolutely confidential. Don't even tell the rest of the team unless you have specific permission.
- Pray every day or as often as you can.
- Check back with people for updates and new requests every month or so. You may be surprised at the relationship that develops over time.

the other times referring to the people. When we co-labour with God we come to know and believe Him in a deeper way, and those who see it also come to know what God is truly like.

He brings life into the people we are praying for. When you pray, God will do things in your family, church and neighbourhood that He might not do otherwise. He is waiting for you. They say John Wesley once said, "God does nothing but by prayer, and everything with it."

We hope that many of you will form prayer teams. Eventually we hope to link the teams into a network. Please e-mail Renée James the contact information for your prayer team leader so we can

include your group. You can reach her at rsejames@gmail.com.

Download the *Prayer Network* guide at baptistwomen.com/resources. It lays out the vision, details on start-up, leader/team responsibilities and optional group activities like Prayer Walking and how to host a Prayer Sunday. We will also produce prayer resources throughout the year to support you. ■