Port of Call

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Called to Prayer

INTRODUCTION TO TRAINER

The purpose of this workshop is to train women to have more effective prayer times both in private prayer and corporate prayer. There is an emphasis on intentional prayer, a disciplined private prayer life and the role of scripture in prayer.

INTRODUCTION TO WORKSHOP

At the heart of a purpose filled PWOC is prayer. Scripture assures us that unless the Lord builds the house those that labor, labor in vain (Psalm 127:1). This is true in PWOC as well. Unless we spend time in prayer both personally and corporately, we can be sure that any plans we make in our PWOC will fall short of what God has in mind to do. In fact, although our PWOC may seem successful (which is more form than substance) it will not be effective (which can be measured in terms of impact on lives) unless we pray.

Prayer is more than merely presenting a list of requests to God. Prayer is at the heart of our relationship with God and our usefulness in His ministry. In effective prayer, we intentionally share our hearts with Him allowing Him to work in and through us.

> "You can do more than pray, after you have prayed but you can never do more than pray until you have prayed." – AJ Gordon

THE PRIORITY OF PRIVATE PRAYER

Purpose filled prayer requires that we are intentional in our prayer time. Privately we need to set aside time with God every day. Just as a body cannot grow and be healthy with a diet of snacks, our spiritual lives cannot grow and be healthy with only "snack" prayers – a quick thanks or request here or there. That is not to say that in an attitude of "praying constantly" we won't have those quick moments of prayer. Rather, it is to say that we also must have a "full-course" meal of prayer to give us the sustenance we need. Christ, Himself, modeled this by often going off alone to pray. We can be sure that if Christ needed that intentional time

alone with God, then we do too. In fact, if the bulk of our prayer time is spent in public prayer (at Church, at Tuesday night Bible Study, or at PWOC meetings) then we are missing the mark.

If you struggle with having a disciplined prayer life, here are some ideas that may help:

1. Ask someone to be a prayer accountability partner with you. Give them permission to ask you how you are doing.
2. Set aside a specific time and place to pray.
3. Keep a prayer journal. Don't forget to record the answers to your requests.

THE PRIORITY OF PUBLIC PRAYER

Public prayer is an opportunity to agree with one another in presenting our requests and it is an opportunity to encourage one another by the expression of faith we make when we pray. The disciples provide an example of this in Acts 1:14, "They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers."

> "When we pray with others, we realize our own weaknesses and needs and we find the encouragement and the grace that God has placed in the people who make up the body of Christ."
>
> ~ Brian Dodd

We exercise our faith with one another when we pray together. Acts 16:25, *"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them." Others saw evidence of their faith through their prayers.*

We are intentional in public prayer by being mindful of who we are praying to and why. If we are not careful our focus can change from talking to God to giving information out to those around us. Jesus modeled this by not praying to impart statistics and opinions to those around Him, gossiping more than praying. He had a conversation with God that others were invited to agree with. The Lord's Prayer is very succinct but gets right to the heart of how we should approach God in prayer. Always it is directed to God, seeking His good in our lives and the lives of those around us.

In prayer, simplicity is best. Here is a pattern of prayer presented by Laurence Hull Stookey in, "Let the Whole Church Say Amen: a Guide for Those Who Pray in Public", that you may want to share with your ladies for them to use in public prayer… the idea is to break your prayer into five segments:

1. Address – whom are you addressing?

2. Attribution- what in the nature of God allows you or encourages you to ask this request?
3. Petition – simply, what are you asking for?
4. Purpose – why are you asking this?
5. Closing – by what authority do you pray? (In Jesus' name)

Let's look at a Bible prayer and see how it fits this pattern. I Thessalonians 5:23,24 *"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it."*

Put into proper order it would sound something like this:

"O God of Peace, (Address)
You have called us and you are faithful. (Attribution)
Sanctify us entirely (Petition)
That our spirits, souls and bodies may be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Purpose)
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen." (Closing)

Petition, Purpose and Attribution are especially important in becoming intentional in prayer. We are forced to evaluate our requests to make sure that they are in accordance with His will. For those who are uncomfortable with the idea of praying out loud, you may encourage them to start by writing their prayers down (perhaps using the method just described) and reading them in the group at prayer time. A prayer that is written can be just as sincere as one that is prayed spontaneously. As women become more at ease with group prayer by reading their prayers, they will eventually move more readily into spontaneous prayer. Either way, the goal is to help women grow in their prayer life.

PURPOSE-FILLED PRAYER

Another part of being intentional in corporate prayer is being conscientious of the reason we are at a particular gathering. While prayer should never become just an obligatory remark, it must not keep us from accomplishing what we are there specifically to do. If our purpose is to study the Word then we need to make sure that women get to their Bible Studies on time. When we have a guest speaker, we need to make sure that he/she has adequate time to share what God has given them. Because PWOC women are praying women, and because not every meeting is a prayer meeting, we should offer opportunities for corporate prayer at other times: as with the PWOC Prayer Mondays. Undoubtedly, we need to offer a time for women to pray with others. When we

> Prayer is a focus upon God whereby all things come into focus. By centering attention upon God the center, all things become centered.
> ~Eugene Peterson

get together for a specific prayer time other than just at our scheduled meetings, we model that prayer is important enough to stand on it's own, not just a "point in the meeting's agenda".

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

One significant way to ensure that we engage in effective prayer both privately and corporately is to pray His Word. Praying Scripture helps focus our prayers. Many of us mistakenly separate God's Word from our prayer lives. At best we might see them as two parts of a devotional time. However, while prayer is sharing our heart with God, the Bible is God sharing His heart with us. The two can never be separated in effective prayer. We anxiously wait for God to speak and yet we are tempted to ignore that through which He most often speaks. Psalm 119:130, *"The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple."* There are several books out right now, like Beth Moore's Praying God's Word, that they may find helpful in learning to pray God's Word.

Included in your resource packets are three prayers (prayer of unity, prayer against prejudice and prayer against hypersensitivity) which model Scripture-based prayer. These prayers address the need for unity within the Body. They are meant as opportunities to agree with one another in prayer, whether privately or corporately, seeking His will and ways in our relationships with one another. We are sure you will find them useful both as prayers to pray and as models of Scripture prayer.

Note To Trainer:
Ask, "What are specific ways prayer is implemented in your PWOC? Invite participants to share ways that prayer requests are handled in their local PWOC meetings.
You may have an opportunity to share some suggestions such as:

- *Prayer Notebook with prayer requests and a place for answers*
- *Prayer Easel for all to write requests*
- *Prayer Forms for women to write requests and given to the Prayer Chairperson*
- *Can be prayed for publicly by the Prayer Chair during Monday prayer or an email prayer vine*

(If good ideas are shared here please pass them on through your evaluations so they can be shared on the website.)

PRAYER IN PWOC

So, what does all this mean specifically for your PWOC?

1. We need to have a disciplined private prayer life.
   We cannot hope to be filled with the light of His glory if we aren't going to Him for regular "fill-ups". We need to spend time with Him (through prayer and His Word) so that we become like Him.
2. We need to encourage our PWOC women to have regular prayer time alone with God each day.
3. We can train our PWOC ladies to be intentional in public prayer: considering the words they choose and the reason for the gathering.
4. We must encourage the emphasis of the role of Scripture in prayer.

FINAL THOUGHT

Please remember that there is a PWOC-USA national prayer vine, a PWOC-USA Prayer Team that women may be a part of. For further prayer questions please contact Christina Wood at cpotea4me@comcast.net

Note handout on "Cures for Humdrum Prayer Times" and Prayer Resources in the installation packet. We have also brought magnets to help you in praying for leadership throughout the week.

Remember, nothing we do in PWOC is of true value unless it is done through the cooperation of the Word and prayer.

CLOSING

Scripture Prayer Modeled by Trainer

Trainer - Begin by praying these verses, inviting women to offer up phrases of adoration…

Blessed are You, Lord God, the God of Israel,
Who alone does wonderful things.
Blessed be Your glorious name forever;
May the whole earth be filled with Your Glory.
(Psalm 72:18-19)

Trainer - Continuing in prayer, pray these verses and ask women to respond with a silent reflection time afterward…

Search me, O God, and know my heart.
Test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.
(Psalm 139:23-24)

Trainer - say, "Your word tells us…

Come now, let us reason together;
Though your sins are like scarlet,
They shall be white as snow;
Though they are red as crimson,
They shall be like wool.
(Isaiah 1:18)

My soul blesses You, O Lord;
And all that is within me blesses Your holy name.
My soul blesses You, O Lord,
And I will not forget all our benefits;
You forgave all my iniquities
And heal all of my diseases;
You redeem my life from the pit
And crown me with love and compassion;
You satisfy my desires with good things,
So that my youth is renewed like the eagle's.
(Psalm 103: 1-5)

Trainer - Wrap up prayer time by praying the following verses…

Blessed are You, Lord God, the God of Israel,
Who alone does wonderful things.
Blessed be Your glorious name forever;
May the whole earth be filled with Your Glory.
Amen and Amen.
(Psalm 72:18-19)

PRAYER / DEVOTIONAL RESOURCE LIST

The following books/CD's were recommended by PWOC women for enhancing your prayer /devotional time. Please share them with your PWOC ladies.

Books:

Praying the Scriptures for Your Children by Jodie Berndt
The Power of a Praying Wife by Stormie Omartian
Praying the Scriptures by Judson Cornwall
In His Presence by E.W. Kenyon
Beyond the Veil by Alice Smith
Hearing From God by Mary Ruth Swope
Intercessory Prayer by Dutch Sheets
The Rules of Engagement by Charles Kraft
Prophetic Intercession by Barbara Wentroble
The Power of Covenant Prayer by Francis Frangipane
Intercession: Thrilling and Fulfilling by Joy Dawson
Kneeling on the Promises by Jim Goll
Lord Teach Me To Pray by Kay Arthur
A Hunger for God by John Piper
E. M. Bounds on Prayer published by Whitaker House
Face to Face: Praying the Scriptures for Intimate Worship by Ken Boa
A Time to Pray God's Way by Evelyn Christenson
Partners in Prayer by John Maxwell
Desperate for God by Nancie Carmichael
52 Fun Family Prayer Adventures by Mike and Amy Nappa
Praying Jesus' Way by Brain Dodd
Deepening Your Conversation with God by Ben Patterson
Let the Whole Church Say Amen by Laurence Hull Stookey
I Am by Steve Fry
A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and His Prayers by D.A.Carson
A Passion for Prayer by Tom Elliff

CD's:

Peace Vol I by Juanita Bynum
Help Me to Remember by Dennis Jernigan
Worship by Michael W. Smith
Sonic Praise by Sonic Flood
Experiencing God by Various Artists
Listen to our Hearts Vol. 1 by Various Artists
My Utmost for His Highest by Various Artists
WOW Worship by Various Artists