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## **PRAYER PARTNERS: BUILDING GOD'S HOUSE OF PRAYER**

**Jesus' Prescription for the Believer, the Pastor, and the Church**

**From: Doug Silvis**

**For: Pastors and Churches**

*I asked the Lord to give me a tool to help pastors, and believe he showed me that your counseling and telephone work load would be minimized greatly if every church member had a prayer partner. This prayer partner teaching outline is submitted in hope it will be a vehicle to reduce your work load, and spur maturing of your members, as you implement Jesus' Plan for building a "House of Prayer". If "sold" I claim a "work product copyright" but to you, as pastors, I freely "give" this work product to be "given" to others to help encourage and build God's "house of prayer" as you deem it appropriate, subject to the fact that if "they" who received it want to market and "sell" it, they will owe me royalties.*

**PRAYER PARTNERS: BUILDING GOD'S HOUSE OF PRAYER**

*By Douglas K. Silvis J.D. (all rights reserved)*

**"IF TWO OF YOU SHALL AGREE ON EARTH AS TOUCHING ANYTHING THAT YOU SHALL ASK, IT SHALL BE DONE FOR YOU OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN." – Matthew 18: 19**

**I. AN "IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME": PRAYER PARTNERS**

**1.1 NOT A "CLEARLY DEFINED COMMAND", BUT AN IMPLIED COMMAND TIED TO A PROMISE OF BLESSING AND MULTIPLIED FAVOR WITH GOD.**

There is no specific teaching in the Bible that says: "You shall have prayer partners". However, there are abundant promises and practical examples in scripture that strongly imply it is God's intention for those who really want to grow as Christians and have favor with God in prayer that they pray in agreement with at least one other person. **Matthew 18:19** above and **James 5:16** below clearly reveal God's heart toward His people and prescribe a means for us to appropriate certain blessings through prayer. These verses suggest that dynamic answers to prayer and church success will be greatly enhanced if we have some kind of prayer, accountability and ministry **partners** with whom we can **agree in prayer** together and to whom we can eventually become **willing to confess our faults** and sins and submit for prayer.

The application of the "**partner principle**" can be found by implication and example throughout the scriptures.

### **1.1.1 FIRST PARTNERS: HUSBAND & WIFE/ADAM &**

#### **EVE:**

God created Eve for Adam when he decided it **“was not good”** for **“the man to be alone”**. **Genesis 3:18**. For those who are married, our first prayer partner should be our spouse. However, many married people in the Bible, such as Moses, David, and Peter, had other prayer and/or ministry partners.

### **1.1.2 AARON AND HUR SUPPORTED MOSES**

For example, Aaron and Hur lifted up the hands of Moses as he interceded for Israel (**Exodus 37:12**); Moses alone could not have kept his hands up in prayer and Israel would have been defeated. Perhaps, that is why Moses later wrote that **“one can put 1,000 to flight but two can put 10,000 to flight”**, **Deuteronomy 32:30** and Solomon wrote that **“one may be overpowered, but two can defend themselves; and a three-fold cord is not easily broken”** in **ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10 & 12**.

### **1.1.3 DAVID AND JONATHAN WERE “ONE” IN SPIRIT**

We read in **I Samuel 18:1** that **“Jonathan became one in the spirit with David”** (NIV) or **“the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David”** (KJV). Presumably, that would mean they were able to **“agree”** with one another in prayer.

### **1.1.4 SENT TWO BY TWO IN NEW TESTAMENT:**

We also have the example of Jesus in sending out his disciples **“two by two”** with **“authority over unclean spirits”** (see **Mark 6:7-13**), and the later examples of teams such as **Peter and John, Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Silas, and Barnabas and John Mark** in the book of the **Acts of the Apostles**.

### **1.2 GOD LOVES EACH OF US BUT IS ESPECIALLY MOVED BY AGREEMENT OF TWO OR THREE (IT SEEMS TO START WITH “TWO” OR “THREE” TO LEARN TO “AGREE”).**

Unfortunately, much of the church and many Christians have failed to grasp or appropriate the benefit of having prayer partners. Like it or not, God really wants us to be dependent on each other and declines to give us - **3** -

maximum blessing via personal prayer alone. He won't allow us to be fully empowered based solely on our “vertical” relationship with Him because He wants a “bride” for His Son composed of all Christians, not just one of us. **He really wants us to have to agree with other Christians and get our “horizontal” relationships right** in order to have powerful prayer lives.

### **1.3 “PRAYER PARTNERS” HELP PROVOKE US TO DO THE FOLLOWING THINGS THAT GOD CONSIDERS ESSENTIAL:**

#### **1.3.1 AGREE WITH ONE OTHER IN PRAYER:**

Agreement is at the heart of Jesus' teaching on prayer and spiritual authority when He said: **“IF TWO OF YOU SHALL AGREE ON EARTH AS TOUCHING ANYTHING THAT YOU SHALL ASK, IT SHALL BE DONE FOR YOU OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN**

## **HEAVEN.” MATTHEW 18: 19.**

The word “**agreement**” in Matthew 18:19 is the Greek word from which we get “**symphony**”. It means “to produce a sound together” or “to harmonize”. With regard to prayer, it’s **blending our voices together** to make a pleasing sound in God’s ears, by both or all **asking or proclaiming what God perceives and hears as agreement from our hearts.**

### **1.3.2. CONFESS TO ONE ANOTHER FOR PRAYER:**

It is also noteworthy that, while we all should confess our sins to God, He also especially commands and promises:

**“CONFESS YOUR FAULTS TO ONE ANOTHER AND PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER AND YOU SHALL BE HEALED.” JAMES 5:16.**

We are told that many “**are sick among you**” because of commemorating Christ’s sacrificial death and resurrection through the Lord’s Supper without first “**examin(ing)**” ourselves and getting right with God so we will “**not come under judgement.**” **I COR.11:28-32.** While Paul does not say that examining ourselves requires us to do so with “each other”, James makes it clear that the opposite positive result of “**be(ing) healed**” comes from “**confess(ing) to one other.**”

So, while **praying with another** is not the “only way” to “get straight” or “get healed”, it is a **blessed “opportunity”** and “tool” for doing so. In small accountable groups (where we are, and can more easily be, honest), we can encourage each other to repent, - 4 - pray for each other, and may save or heal each other from many consequences of sin.

### **1.3.3. GET RIGHT WITH ONE ANOTHER BEFORE PRAYER:**

Jesus also told us not to bother worshipping God if we “**remember that (our) brother has something against us**”. Rather, he tells us: “**LEAVE YOUR GIFT BEFORE THE ALTAR (of worship) AND GO YOUR WAY; FIRST BE RECONCILED TO YOUR BROTHER (or sister) AND THEN COME AND OFFER YOUR GIFT (worship).**” **MATTHEW 5:23-24.** Prayer partners can often provide valuable encouragement to deal with offenses and give us a confidential, “gossip free” environment in which to discuss and pray. (Obviously, prayer partners must agree to pray and not repeat, even as “news” for “prayer by others” without permission.)

## **1.4 OTHER REASONS WHY GETTING AND PRAYING WITH A PRAYER PARTNER IS AN “IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME”.**

A non-Christian philosopher named Voltaire once wrote: “There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.” Why is this such an idea?

### **1.4.1 YOUR PASTORS AND ELDERS BELIEVE IT IS GOD’S WILL FOR THE CHURCH AT THIS TIME**

In military training, a soldier may be taught the theoretical value of soldiers protecting one another. However, when they go to war and a superior tells the troops to “**buddy up**” it is no longer just an idea, it becomes a life-preserving command. If your pastor and others in church authority want us to “buddy up”, and the idea is at least consistent with and arguably even mandated by what the Bible says, then we better “**obey those in authority**” as those who “**must give an account**”. (See **Hebrews 13:17**). **Your pastor does think this idea is from God. IS GOD SPEAKING TO YOU RIGHT NOW ABOUT CULTIVATING PRAYER PARTNERS?**

### **1.4.2 IT LINES UP WITH GOD’S WORD TO BLESS US AND**

## **MAKES US A BLESSING**

As stated above, prayer partner scriptures are commandments “with promises” attached.

**“Confess your faults to one another, and pray for one another, and you shall be healed.”**

**James 5:16. “...Agree ...as touching anything that you shall ask, it shall be done for**

**you....” Matthew 18:19. “...walk in the light...and you shall have fellowship with one an-**

**other...blood of Jesus will cleanse you from all sin.” I John 1:7 - 5 -**

These blessings have been experienced by many praying believers who have obeyed these commands. Why shouldn’t we all experience these blessings regularly? **Doesn’t it make sense that we should all have prayer partners with whom we get honest, pray and agree regularly?** Yet many, perhaps even “most” church members, most pastors, and most elders, do not have regular prayer partners.

The blessings of prayer partners won’t be realized unless or **until we all or at least most of us have prayer partners and prayer partnering becomes a reality and a habit** in our individual lives.

### **1.5 CHURCH-WIDE ADHERENCE TO THE PRAYER PARTNER**

#### **DISCIPLINE WILL PROVIDE THREE RELATED BENEFITS:**

##### **1.5.1 FIRST, IT WILL FREE BELIEVERS OF BURDENS AND PREPARE THEM TO GO ON THE OFFENSIVE, “WITH JOY” AND “GOOD NEWS”;**

Why? Prayer partners will pray together, patch each other up, and “cover” one another, applying the truths of James 5:16, Ephesians 5:21 and Galatians 6:1-2. The psalmist David lamented “no man cares for my soul.” **Prayer partners will care for each other’s souls so nobody is missed. The resulting sense of well-being will restore to many the “joy of salvation” and make us full of the “good news” of the gospel.** Naturally, we will then share the good news, the lost will see it, and be attracted to the light of the church.

##### **1.5.2. SECOND, THE PRAYER PARTNER BUDDY SYSTEM WILL FREE PASTORS AND COUNSELORS TO CONCENTRATE ON MINISTRY AND STRATEGY THAT WILL ATTACK THE GATES OF HELL, RATHER THAN SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME PATCHING UP THE WOUNDED.**

While pastors try to shepherd the church, they can’t give individual attention to every person, especially as the church grows, any more than a general can individually train and converse with each soldier, or **pick up every wounded soldier** and take him to safety. That is why we have various officers and groups of different sizes in both armies and churches, and **why we need a “buddy system”** as the smallest “groups” of which we are members.

In one on one relationships, we will become accountable to one another and may get close enough to fulfill the encouragement of **Galatians 6:1-2. “If a brother or sister is overtaken by sin, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness - 6 - considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.”**

##### **1.5.2 THIRD, AS WE LEARN TO “AGREE” AND TO “BEAR ONE ANOTHER’S BURDENS,” WE WILL ALL “COVER ONE ANOTHER” AND THEN BE ABLE TO PRAY FOR OTHERS FROM A POSITION OF AGREEMENT, COVERING, AND STRENGTH.**

In Caesar's commentary on the Gallic wars, he writes of a situation where his troops were surrounded. He commanded them to "get in square formation" with their backs toward the center of the square and their shields (of faith?) facing outward or over the heads of those in the center, creating a "phalanx". Then **"every man fought harder because his back was covered"**. Many of us are too busy "covering our own backs" to fight the enemy. **Prayer partners cover each other.**

## **II. THE VISION IS OF LIVING STONES BEING PRAYER PARTNERS "FITLY JOINED TOGETHER" BY CLUSTERS OF TWOS AND THREES (OR FOURS) TO BUILD THE WALLS OF THE CHURCH (THE "TEMPLE") AND CITY OF GOD.**

### **2.1 CHURCH WIDE IMPLEMENTATION IS NEEDED**

The idea of prayer partners is as old as the Bible. **But, it is the idea of church wide implementation that is an idea whose time has come.** This teaching is based on the desire of our pastor to implement this strategy. The idea of church wide implementation came as part of an answer to prayer for how **to help overwhelmed pastors.** The study of Nehemiah, especially Nehemiah 4:1 reveals the truth that we **need to "rebuild walls"** that are broken down, as Nehemiah did the walls of Jerusalem **by putting the stones back** in place with one another. When the walls of the city (of God) are broken down and its (living) stones, its people, are **not joined together** to form walls, what appear to be good living stones (people) that are **not "fitted into" a wall**, can be **lying alone** and, by not "fitting" into Christ's body, be **part of the "rubble"**. **Rubble "tires out" laborers as shown in Nehemiah 4:10.**

### **2.2 PRAYER PARTNERS ARE THE BASIC BUILDING BLOCK OF**

#### **THE CHURCH:**

**Prayer Partners are the basic building block of the church.** It's as simple as the concept that building a wall is done by placing two stones together, and one on top, over and over again. You can't have an entire unified church unless unity begins two people at a time.

### **2.3 WE ARE LIVING STONES IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD:**

From whom do we get the idea that we, the church, are "living stones" that compose the temple of God? We get it from the same **Peter** to whom God gave the revelation that Jesus was **"the Christ, the son of the living God,"** which revelation was **"the rock"** on which Jesus said He would **"build His church"**. **Matthew 16:18.**

Peter later wrote: **"You, also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices (worship and prayers), acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."** **I PETER 2:5.**

It was first revealed to Peter that Jesus was the Christ, the chief cornerstone and foundation rock of the church. Later, building on the same metaphor, it was revealed to him that we are "living stones". Accordingly, we are to see ourselves as **living stones in the house of God.**

### **2.4 LIVING STONES ARE TO COMPOSE A HOUSE OF PRAYER:**

What did Jesus say was to be the material of which God's house was to be built? We read in **MARK 11:17: "Is it not written, My House shall be called a House of Prayer?"** If the temple of God is made of people who are living stones, and His temple is a "house of prayer", it makes sense that the **living stones are people of prayer joined together on all sides with other people of prayer.**

### **2.5 WHAT DO PRAYER PARTNERS HAVE TO DO WITH FITTING**

## **GOD'S PEOPLE TOGETHER AS LIVING STONES?**

### **2.5.1. STONES WERE MORTISED TOGETHER.**

Stones in Bible days were **“mortised” or “fitted” together** in such a way that they would stay together unless some force tore them apart. Prayer partners are living stones **“fitly joined together”**.

The Apostle Paul had the same vision of us as **“members of God’s house, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him, you, too, are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.”** Ephesians 2:19-22.

### **2.5.2. PRAYER PARTNERS RUB EACH OTHER UNTIL THEY “FIT” TOGETHER.**

- In God’s eyes, what does it take to sculpt and fashion stones so that they “fit together”? **“As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.”** Proverbs 27:17. Some people call it the “anointed rub”. God puts us together with people who “rub” us until we both get worn smooth enough to “fit together”.

For the married, **our first prayer partner and “anointed rub” should be our spouse.** That’s why God generally puts opposites together. But each married couple would only account for one cluster of two stones, and a wall, especially one on which two chariots could pass each other as in some walled cities, suggests we living stones have “many sides on which to be rubbed” until we fit together into the walls where God puts us. We and our spouses each need other prayer partners “on our other sides” to pray for us and with us about our marriages.

Women need women and men need men to “agree” with them in prayer.

Of course, as we all get rubbed smooth, it is much easier, if God chooses to move us around, for us to fit in with other “smoothed” stones wherever He puts us.

### **2.5.3 PRAYER PARTNERS DEVELOP ACCOUNTABILITY**

#### **TO EACH OTHER**

As we pray for one another, we often begin to develop the accountability to one another that comes from naturally “submitting to one another in the fear of Christ”. **Ephesians 5:21** As one prayer partner observed, “submitting” to others simply means “being willing to receive from” them. As we pray for one another, we may develop the freedom and responsibility discussed in **Galatians 6:1-2; “Brothers and sisters, if a fellow Christian be overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.”**

### **2.6 PRAYER PARTNERS ARE ALSO JOINT RELATIONSHIPS IN THE BODY OF CHRIST:**

Perhaps, you may ask, why are we just talking about stones and walls and buildings? Didn’t the apostle Paul talk about us being **the “body” of Christ**, with some being one part and some being another? (See, for example, **I Corinthians 12 and 14**). Yes, in fact, Paul, in His letter to the Ephesians, not only called us stones **“fitly framed together”** in a spiritual house (**Ephesians 2:21**) but also referred to us being part of the **“whole body fitly joined together”**. **Ephesians 4:16.**

#### **2.6.1. UNITING WITH PRAYER PARTNERS CAUSES US TO BEGIN TO “UNITE”**

## **THE CHURCH AND MOVE TOWARD THE PERFECT “UNITY” GOD DESIRES IN HIS “HOUSE OF PRAYER” AND HIS “BODY”.**

**Prayer partners are not an end in themselves, but a beginning point for us to become “joined” to the rest of the body of Christ - and to the other “living stones” in His spiritual house. If we agree to the prayer partner vision, it should increase, not decrease, our love for and feeling of being connected to the rest of the church.**

**2.6.2. We all need to be connected to somebody who is connected to somebody else until we form the Body of Christ.**

Of course, the church is far more magnificent than can be expressed in only one metaphor or illustration. **The “body” illustration is applicable to prayer partners, too.** We recognize that all parts of the body are indispensable, yet they are not all directly joined to each other. The foot is a long way from the hand, most of the time, but they do come into occasional contact. The head is a long way from the knee, and they seldom come into contact, but the head feels pain when the knee is hurt. On the other hand, various bones are directly joined together at “joints” by ligaments and tendons, and nerves conduct communications from one part to another. Prayer partners are a little like all of these different joining illustrations. (Remember the words of the Negro “spiritual”: “... **the knee bone connected to the thigh bone, the thigh bone connected to the hip bone, now hear the Word of the Lord!**”

**2.6.3. SO, WHO ARE YOUR *JOINT* RELATIONSHIPS?**

**2.6.3.1 TO WHOM ARE YOU SO CLOSE YOU**

**SHARE THE LIFEBLOOD FLOW OF THE BODY OF CHRIST? - 10 -**

**2.6.3.2 WITH WHOM ARE YOU SO HONEST AND**

**REAL THAT YOU LET DOWN YOUR DEFENSES AND ACT AS ONE?**

**2.6.3.3** The next step is to find or recognize or forge such

relationships and encourage each other to find and pray with prayer partners.

**III. PRACTICAL PRAYER PARTNERS: “WHO, WHAT, WHEN AND HOW”, RELATE TO THE QUESTION OF “HOW MANY?”**

**3.1. HOW MANY? JESUS “SUGGESTED” THE BENEFITS OF TWO OR THREE. WHO ARE WE TO ARGUE?**

Perhaps, you say, “**I pray with a lot of people.**” Maybe you even say, “I’m a prayer warrior. I pray in the „war room” before church. **Why do I need „one or two” prayer partners?** I can „pray with anybody.” Reconsider the following words of Jesus Christ:

**3.1.1 MATTHEW 18:19: “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that you shall ask, it shall be done for you of my Father which is in Heaven”.**

**3.1.2. MATTHEW 18:20:”For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.**

## **3.2. “WHAT” PRAYER PARTNERS DO AND “HOW” THEY DO IT RELATES TO THESE PRACTICAL REASONS FOR JESUS TO SUGGEST WE “AGREE” WITH “TWO OR THREE”:**

### **3.2.1. HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN “REALLY AGREE” ON**

#### **ANYTHING?**

Jesus could have said six or seven, but He did not. Why? Probably, the “practical” reason is that it is **hard to “agree” with more than one or two** people on anything, especially in prayer.

### **3.2.2. AGREEMENT INVOLVES SUBMITTING TO ONE ANOTHER:**

**True agreement implies being really “tuned in” to one another, of the same spirit, heart, and soul, in prayer and faith and receiving from one another.** (See David and Jonathan above and **Ephesians 5:21**)

### **3.2.3. “TRUE” AGREEMENT IS NOT EASY:**

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- Consider the chances, **as a group becomes greater than two or three** (or at most, four), **how hard it is to pray without one of the following** occurring to at least one of the group to destroy or “**break**” the **unity of agreement**:

#### **3.2.3.1. Somebody’s faith wavering** as to a particular prayer

request;

#### **3.2.3.2. Somebody slightly disagreeing;**

#### **3.2.3.3 Somebody thinking of his own needs or prayer**

#### **burdens?**

#### **3.2.3.4. Somebody “getting distracted”** (by being hungry, thirsty, tired, curious, thinking about work, playing golf, or getting home to watch a game or meet an appointment?)

#### **3.2.3.5. Somebody even “judging” a particular prayer request, or the requester?**

## **3.2.4. WITH HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN YOU BE “REALLY HONEST” AND, TO HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE YOU “REALLY WILLING TO CONFESS” YOUR FAULTS?**

**It is critical that we be with partners with whom we can truly agree and to whom we will really confess if we are to appropriate the promises:**

### **3.2.4.1 AGREEMENT PRODUCES PRAYER ANSWERS:**

See **Matthew 18:19** above.

### **3.2.4.2 CONFESSION AND PRAYER PRODUCES HEALING:**

**SEE James 5:16** above It’s easiest to do both in small, intimate groups made up of persons you trust.

### **3.2.4.3. HONESTY PRODUCES FELLOWSHIP & CLEANSING:**

**I JOHN 1:7: If we walk in the light** as He is in the light (being honest), we have **fellowship** (Koinonia: or “community” or “oneness”) with one another and the **blood of Jesus Christ**, His Son, **cleanses us** from **all sin**.

Some people can “tell it all” to a bigger group, but **for most it is easier to start with one or two partners to - 12 -**

**build mutual openness and trust and to maintain confidentiality.** Usually, this takes time and requires mutual sharing and proof of each partner’s commitment to maintain a “confidential” relationship for prayer, not repeating confidences even to “other prayer groups” without permission. (Remember “gossip” is a “sin”. Gossip is probably another reason Jesus suggests “two or three”. Those of us who have held a “top secret” military security clearance are aware that even those with a “clearance” only receive information on a “need to know” basis).

On the other hand, once a person learns to humble himself and be willing to “**walk in the light**”, it becomes easier to share with larger groups when the Spirit of the Lord leads. When we walk in light, we **become “pure” and “transparent” like glass stones**. When “**clusters of living stones**” that are “**walking in the light**” are joined to other “clusters of living stones” that are “walking in the light” (or have worn each other until they have become smooth), it is easier to **become a “transparent wall of glass”** through which light passes easily.

Taken to the full extreme, we may even get a picture of the NEW JERUSALEM “CITY OF GOD” where “**THE GLORY OF GOD GIVES IT LIGHT AND THE LAMB IS ITS LAMP**”! **Revelation 21:23** and where “**NOTHING IMPURE WILL EVER ENTER INTO IT.**” **Revelation 21:27.**

Why? Because we will have **learned to be accountable to one or two, and then to others**, to the point where no sin will go unconfessed or unforgiven, and we will have **learned to be people of light** cleansed continually by the blood of Jesus Christ. **I John 1:7**

### **3.2.5 HOW MANY PEOPLE’S BURDENS CAN YOU BEAR**

#### **OR SHARE?**

##### **3.2.5.1. How many are included in “one another”?**

It is stated in **GALATIANS 6:2: “Bear ye one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.”**

It would be nice if we could bear everyone’s burdens. However, **as a practical matter, “one another” probably means one or two at a time, not a dozen or a hundred. - 13 -**

##### **3.2.5.2. We help others by taking their burdens and casting them upon Jesus:**

As someone once pointed out, we don’t carry our own burdens if we have learned to “**cast all (our) cares upon Him who cares for (us).**” **FIRST PETER 5:7**). Accordingly, as we come along side our prayer partners or others to bear their burdens via intercession, we don’t “keep them” but, as **their burdens become our burdens, we, in turn, “cast (those burdens) upon Him who cares for (us).”**

#### **IV. FOLLOWING ARE SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR CHOOSING PRAYER PARTNERS “WHO” WOULD BE RIGHT FOR US:**

##### **4.1 WILLINGNESS AND COMMITMENT ARE THE ONLY ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS:**

The only critical requirement is to find somebody willing to commit to be your prayer partner,

to be confidential, to meet regularly, to talk as necessary, and to pray for you and with you.

#### **4.2 AFFINITY HELPS:**

Someone with whom you have **something in common** helps. People with little in common can still be great prayer partners, although common interest and experiences often helps us to “understand” and “agree”. That could mean almost anything. For example:

**4.2.1** Both homeschool children

**4.2.2** Both have children in same school

**4.2.3** Work together or in similar jobs

**4.2.4** Common activities or hobbies

**4.2.5** Both own businesses

**4.2.6** Both went to Tres Dias, Living Water, Restoring the Foundations or other similar Christian experience.

**4.2.7** Involved in similar calling or ministries.

#### **4.3 PARTNERS SHOULD BE SAME SEX UNLESS YOUR SPOUSE IS PART OF THE GROUP:**

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- For practical reasons, especially to allow confession of sins that may involve sexual impurity, jealousy, and the like, it is logical and, therefore, wise to have a “same sex” partner to whom to confess sins for these sound reasons:

**4.3.1** To allow freedom to confess without embarrassment, and,

**4.3.2** To avoid the temptations that may arise out of such confessions to members of the opposite sex, especially among intimate partners who may exchange confessions of personal or marriage problems, and

**4.3.3** What about spouses? Some spouses may be able to handle such confessions, i.e., may be able to confess or receive confession from their own spouses about such matters, but others are “wounded” by such confessions. Loving discernment should be exercised.

#### **V. WHERE & WHEN SHOULD YOU MEET?**

Ideally, agree to meet at a place and time that will **be private, neutral, and regular** to minimize distractions. Consider the following:

**5.1 Early times can make it private.** At 5:00 AM, a “prayer walk” in the neighborhood is “private”. If it is early enough, there is little traffic and nobody is awake. Of course, the same may be true of meeting anywhere before daylight in “the womb of the morning” see **Psalm 110:3** and other scriptures indicating Jesus, the psalmist David, the prophet Jeremiah, and others often prayed before daybreak.

**5.2** A “**Sunday School room**”, a private room in a home, or even a

telephone appointment with each party undistracted, may be private.

**5.3** A “**neutral place**” where nobody feels the need to “entertain” is important to some. Because nobody has to “be hospitable” or “clean the house,” is more conducive to “single-minded” conversation and prayer. However, it depends on the people. “**Agree**” not to “**care**” so as not to “**inhibit prayer**”.

**5.4** However, a “**private place**” is better than a “**public place**”.

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- Restaurants are good for eating, but distract from serious confession and prayer unless private rooms are available.

## **VI. NEXT, LET’S DISCUSS SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR CONDUCTING PRAYER PARTNER GROUPS:**

**6.1.** Agree on the length of time for which you will each be available

and committed and start the prayer time in plenty of time.

**6.2. Minimize “talking”, maximize “praying”.** It is often distracting and time-consuming to discuss all the details of a need or problem. Especially if it involves prayer for someone outside the prayer group, **time can be saved by just “praying for the person or need” without prior discussion.** However, if you have had discussion of a situation or need, treat God as part of your group, and redirect the focus from talk to prayer. E.g. “Lord, you heard what we have just discussed. We lift it up to you and ask you to move by your Spirit to meet the need.”

**6.3.** To promote unity and agreement, **pray short topical prayers, not long run-on prayers.** You can pray more than once, but stop so others can keep their focus and agreement, and can participate.

**6.4** Praise God, **offer thanks, or offer prayer in one area** or for one need or group of related needs, **then stop.** See if others are led to add to it. E.g., Pray for pastoral staff. Stop. See if others are led to add their prayer for pastoral staff, before switching to praying for a different person or group of people.

**6.5** Wait for the Holy Spirit to lead you to “change” topics. Be patient. If God wants you to get to your next topic, you will. God may want you to spend your time on a subject that will surprise you. Remember that “The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” I Corinthians 14:32. “Let everything be done decently and in order.” I Corinthians 14:40.

## **VII. FINALLY, LET’S CONSIDER HOW HAVING AND BEING PRAYER PARTNERS LEADS US TO BECOME PRAYER WARRIORS:**

Essentially, all the benefits we have discussed point to make us people of prayer to whom God can delegate spiritual authority to rule and reign over the earth through prayer. - 16 -

**7.1** GROUPS OF TWO OR THREE HAVE HAD THEIR PERSONAL BURDENS AND NEEDS MET BY:

**7.1.1. THEIR OWN CARES HAVE ALREADY BEEN “CAST UPON HIM” WITH CONFIDENCE THAT “HE CARES FOR THEM”;**

**7.1.2. THEIR SINS AND FAULTS HAVE BEEN “CONFESSED” TO GOD AND TO ONE ANOTHER AND THEY HAVE BEEN HEALED AND CLEANSED BY WALKING IN THE LIGHT;**

**7.1.3 THEY HAVE LEARNED TO “AGREE” WITH ONE ANOTHER AND FOCUS ON ONE PRAYER NEED AT A TIME AS GOD LEADS IN THE GROUP, RATHER THAN LET THEIR MINDS WANDER INTO DISTRACTION OR DISAGREEMENT;**

**7.1.4 THEY HAVE LEARNED TO “SUBMIT THEMSELVES TO ONE ANOTHER IN THE FEAR OF CHRIST” (EPHESIANS 5:21) AND PUT THE NEEDS OF OTHERS AHEAD OF THEIR OWN FOR PRAYER.**

**7.2 THEN, THEY CAN “FORGET ABOUT THEMSELVES AND CONCENTRATE ON GOD” AND “GO TO WAR FOR THEIR BRETHREN” AND EVEN FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES, STATES AND NATIONS.**

As did the builders in Nehemiah’s day, we can learn to build and be watchful and ready to fight.

**SEE NEHEMIAH 4:6,9,13,14,20** “...we built the wall...set a watch...**fight for our brethren...wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, come...our God will fight for us...**”

As “prayed up” prayer partners, we should be ready to hear God’s trumpet and come into agreement where needed to mend breaches in the wall.

(Ultimately, **groups of prayer partners, whose personal prayer needs are mostly met in small group**, can become spiritual warfare units **on call by God’s trumpet**.)

**7.3 OCCASIONAL or SITUATIONAL PRAYER PARTNERS: - 17 -**

**AS WE BECOME PEOPLE OF PRAYER, ACCUSTOMED TO CONFESSING OUR SINS, HAVING OUR ROUGH EDGES SMOOTHED, WE BEGIN TO LOOK TO “PRAY WITHOUT CEASING” AND WILL SUGGEST AND ENTER INTO PRAYER WITH VARIOUS PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND BECOME THEIR “INSTANT PRAYER PARTNERS” TO BEAR THEIR BURDENS AND SO FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST.**

**7.4 AGREE BY FAITH WITH OTHERS PRAYING THE SAME PRAYERS AROUND THE WORLD**

7.4.1 Recognize those times you are praying what others must also be praying, e.g., wisdom for our President or repentance and revival for our nation.

7.4.2 Confess to God that you “agree” with all those others who are praying the same thing and appropriate the promised answer to your agreement.

**VIII. CHURCH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRAYER PARTNER CONCEPT WILL BE A “TOP DOWN” PROJECT**

**8.1 LEADERS WILL HAVE AT LEAST ONE PRAYER PARTNER WITH WHOM HE**

**OR SHE CAN BE CONFIDENTIAL AND HAVE HIS OR HER OWN NEEDS MET VIA PRAYER.**

**8.2 COUNSELORS WILL ASK EVERY COUNSELLEE “WHO IS YOUR PRAYER PARTNER?”**

**8.3 PEOPLE WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO KEEP THEIR “PERSONAL” PRAYER PARTNERS, BUT ALSO TO MULTIPLY BY FORMING MORE THAN ONE PRAYER GROUP AND THUS TO HAVE MORE THAN ONE PRAYER PARTNER.**

**8.4 NEW BELIEVERS WILL BE ADDED TO THE PRAYER PARTNER GROUP WHO LED THEM TO THE LORD OR WITH WHOM THEY MAY HAVE A MENTOR TO LEARN “HOW TO PRAY” OR WILL HAVE SOMEONE TAKE EACH OF THEM AS A NEW PRAYER PARTNER FOR A SEASON, THEN MAYBE “SPLIT” WHEN READY. “ONE GROUPS” WILL DIFFER FROM PRAYER PARTNER GROUPS BUT ONE MAY LEAD TO ANOTHER AND VICE VERSA.**

**IX. THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS:**

**9.1 HABIT OF PRAYER “WITHOUT CEASING”.**

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- As we all become use to confessing to and praying for those closest to us, we will become personally “prayed up”.

**9.2 HOUSE OF PRAYER: PEOPLE OF PRAYER.**

Prayer is communion with God. We will begin to see Jesus our Lord in each other, and develop a deeper, more intimate personal prayer relationship with Him. Why? Because **“if you have not loved your brother who you have seen, how can you love God whom you have not seen?” I John 4:20.**

God knows that intimate prayer partner relationships lead us to become the house of love as well as the house of prayer. **And God is love. I John 4:8.**

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**From: Doug Silvis**

**To: Pastors of Churches and your congregations**

*I asked the Lord to give me a tool to help pastors, and believe he showed me that your counseling and telephone work load would be minimized greatly if every church member had a prayer partner. This prayer partner teaching outline is submitted in hope it will be a vehicle to reduce your work load, and spur maturing of your members, as you implement Jesus' Plan for building a "House of Prayer". If "sold" I claim a "work product copyright" but to you, as pastors, I freely "give" this work product to be "given" to others to help encourage and build God's "house of prayer" as you deem it appropriate, subject to the fact that if "they" who received it want to market and "sell" it, they will owe me royalties.*

Douglas K. Silvis J.D.