

### Creating Your One-Year Plan

As you create a full plan for the year ahead, be sure to cycle your efforts and activities through every aspect of congregational life—from the worship service and small groups to plans for individuals and families at home. Allow time for checking in with your leadership team to ask questions about what the experience has been thus far, where change has been observed, and where the obstacles have come.

Feel free to use the following sample one-year plan or adapt it as you wish to meet the needs of your particular congregation. (Note: The following chart is available on the DVD-Rom to print and customize.)

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Instruction</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Begin prayer and preparation	The pastor/s and staff begin a renewed daily prayer practice using <i>When You Pray</i> .	Months 1 & 2 (8-week duration)
Form leadership team	Identify two or more key leaders who can join the pastor and/or staff to form a leadership team. (Consider groups/leaders such as spiritual formation committee, administrative board, key Sunday school class or small group.)	Month 1
Leadership team begins renewed daily prayer practice	Invite leadership team to join you in using <i>When You Pray</i> .	Month 2 (4-week duration)
Hold prayer retreat	Take the leadership team on a prayer retreat for several hours, a day, or longer. Spend time discussing the meaning of prayer, questions about prayer, and personal prayer practices and experiences.	End of Month 2  Read Rueben Job's helpful guide to retreat (page 50) for ideas.
Set goals	With the leadership team, identify and outline your goals for the next three, six, and twelve months.	Month 3 (Post-retreat)
Plan sermon series	Work with your worship planners to schedule a sermon series.	Months 3 & 4 (4–6-week duration)

<b>One-Year Plan continued . . .</b>		
Focus on worship	Work with your worship team to identify one or two changes you can make in the service that will help people encounter God in worship.	<p>Month 4</p> <p>See K. C. Ptomey’s article on silence and liturgy, “All of Worship as Prayer,” on page 74. Pamela Hawkins’ article on “Modeling Prayer on Worship’s Main Stage” (page 69) explores how people are invited into prayer.</p>
Launch <i>When You Pray</i> , encouraging the congregation in personal prayer	Invite the congregation to begin using <i>When You Pray</i> as a daily prayer guide. During your sermon series, present the book and lift up the themes used in the series. Share quotes in the bulletin or newsletter each week for three weeks to introduce the congregation to the book. Once the books are distributed, find ways through testimonies from your leadership team, references in worship, or articles on your church website to talk about the experience of daily prayer and to continue lifting up quotes. Seeing references to words from their daily practice will be a unifying experience for the congregation.	<p>Month 4</p> <p>Read the article “Creating Space for Authentic Living Creates Space for Authentic Prayer Lives” by Connie and Joseph Shelton on page 99.</p>
Begin small-group study	As individuals begin a daily prayer practice, suggest a six-week emphasis on <i>When You Pray</i> among Sunday school classes, small groups, women’s groups, and men’s groups. Committing to a daily prayer practice as a group may help members to adopt the habit. (A leader guide, <i>When You Pray as a Small Group</i> , is available for those who want session plans.)	<p>Months 5 &amp; 6 (6-week duration)</p> <p>Explore Laurie Barnes’ article on “15 Ways to Pray in a Small Group” on page 160 (also on DVD-Rom) for ideas to share with group leaders.</p>

<b>One-Year Plan continued . . .</b>		
Reflect	<p>Meet with your leadership team and ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are we seeing?</li> <li>• What changes have taken place?</li> <li>• What needs more attention?</li> </ul> <p>Don't be discouraged. If the team doesn't sense any change, take a collective look at worship. Consider inviting at least two committed small groups to begin using <i>When You Pray</i>. Ask for their help.</p>	<p>Month 6</p> <p>Are you reaching the diverse members of your congregation? Read Nancy C. Reeves' article, "Prayer for All Personality Types," on page 147. Think about where obstacles lie in prayer formation. Kim Thomas, on page 79, describes a return to simplicity for her congregation.</p>
Make time for the children and their prayers in worship	With your children's teachers and worship team, work to include the children in special moments in worship.	Barbara Davis' article on children's prayer time in worship on page 93 may offer ideas to your team.
Consult with Administrative Board/ other decision making group	Work with the leaders of your congregation's board or leadership group to find ways to begin meetings with a time of meaningful prayer.	<p>Month 7</p> <p>Read K. C. Ptomey's story on beginning meetings with prayer on page 40. Share Tyrone Gordon's excerpt from <i>F.O.C.U.S.</i> on page 45 with your board.</p>
Plan an emphasis on children/teens and prayer	<p>Explore new ways to teach children/teens about prayer; introduce creative prayer methods and tools; and equip parents, grandparents, Sunday school teachers, and others for encouraging children/teens to . . .</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(cont. next page)</i></p>	<p>Share and discuss Leanne Ciampa Hadley's "Prayer and Children" (page 135), and "Teens and Prayer" . . .</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(cont. next page)</i></p>

<b>One-Year Plan continued . . .</b>		
	<p>. . . pray. You might have a special study or emphasis on prayer for children and youth during the month, as well as involve children/youth in worship. Consider having a prayer event designed especially for children or youth.</p>	<p>. . . (page 141) with your children's, youth, and leadership teams.</p>
<p>Reaching young adults</p>	<p>Plan a prayer experience for young adults. Try experiential prayer stations, media meditation (see the prayer loops on the DVD-Rom), or an online interactive prayer site.</p>	<p>Sally Dyck's method of using beads as a prayer ritual on page 156 has been very popular with 20-somethings. Ben Simpson's article on prayer and the Internet offers ways to begin to connect online (page 116).</p>
<p>Encourage praying couples</p>	<p>Host a "Praying Couples" class. (Class session outlines and materials for couples to use at home are provided on the DVD-Rom.) Find a setting for couples and more experienced mentors to meet and share their experiences a few weeks later.</p>	<p>Month 8 (2-week class; 15-week duration)</p> <p>Laurie Barnes and Shirley Yarick provide curriculum for "Praying Couples" on the DVD-Rom.</p>
<p>Reflect on your progress</p>	<p>Meet with your leadership team and ask again:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are we seeing?</li> <li>• What changes have taken place?</li> <li>• What needs more attention?</li> <li>• What groups within the life of the church will we lift up as our focus for the next few months?</li> </ul>	<p>Month 9</p> <p>Stacy Hood shares three experiential activities for worship in her article "Experiential Prayer in Worship" on page 87.</p>

<b>One-Year Plan continued . . .</b>		
Equip families for prayer at home	Encourage families to pray together at home. Plan a sermon on the importance of spiritual instruction and leadership in the home. Consider holding a class or workshop for parents and other caregivers on how to teach children to pray and how to lead prayer in the home.	Read “Encouraging Praying Households” (page 163), “Praying at Home” (page 170), and “Parents Teaching Children to Pray” (page 178). A family devotional guide, <i>When You Pray as a Family</i> , is available for those who would like plans and ideas for family devotions.
Prayer event	Plan and hold a special prayer event that invites participation from the entire congregation. Consider inviting individuals, leaders/staff, and/or groups to share experiences and observations from recent weeks at this event or in worship during the month.	Month 10  Andy Langford’s article on “Healing Services” (page 111) may offer ideas for special emphases.
Reach out to others	Prayer and service are a natural partnership. Work with your missions committee—or a new group eager to begin—to set aside a time of prayer about your community and world. Look for new ways to offer aid and comfort.	Month 11  Andy Langford’s article on prayer shawls on page 114 tells a story of tangible signs of prayer. Stacy Hood’s church assembled mission kits during morning worship; see article on page 87.
Celebrate your journey	Meet as a leadership team and look back on the year. Recognize the accomplishments and the new areas of vitality in a public way—testimonials from lay leaders, couples and families, recognizing small groups, celebrating the journey of children and youth.	Month 12