

24/7 PRAYER “HOW TO”

How to choose a prayer room

The base for every 24/7 prayer week is the prayer room. Every prayer room will look different and be of a different size. The important thing is to have a designated space which can be used by everyone.

Choose a room that is large enough for several people to be in there at the same time, with room to move around, but not so big that one person on their own would feel lost. If you don't have a room in your building to spare, think about using an emergency canteen parked outside or a tent. Don't hesitate to be creative!

It's not the type or location of the room that matters most – it's what happens IN the room. Whatever location you use will become a special place as God begins to do amazing things.

Essentials for the prayer room

Ventilation: Provide a room that is well ventilated. Think about air-conditioning for hotter climates and heaters for the winter months.

Accessibility: Make sure that the prayer room is accessible for everyone.

Security: We want the 24/7 week of prayer to be a good experience for everyone. Take time to consider the safety implications for all participants, from the youngest to the oldest. Here are some suggestions to help your planning:

- For overnight coverage of the prayer room, consider a “lock in” for the entire night:
 - Entire youth group with appropriate leader ratio
 - A married couple
 - Two guys or all guys group
 - Two girls or all girls group
 - No unsupervised mixed gender groups
 - One person alone
- Arrange for someone to sleep on-site (in another part of the building), in case of emergency.
- Select a room with direct access to a bathroom (rather than down the hall or in another part of the building).
- Have a locked door which can only be opened from the inside, and use an electric doorbell (easy to install temporarily) to signal the arrival of the next person/group.
- Have a copy of the sign-up list in the prayer room each night, to verify who is coming in next.

- In a summer camp or youth center setting, you might find it easier to designate alternating “guys days” and “girls days” with appropriate supervision.
- Post emergency contact numbers in the room.
- Have someone on call 24h, in case of a problem or if someone doesn’t show up for their time slot.
- Let the police know that the building will be in use 24 hours a day for a week. You might even ask if they have anything that they would like you to pray for!

Refreshments: Have hot and cold drinks available.

Mess. Be sure that the room can cope with mess, as people will be popping in and out. You don’t want ‘mess’ to detract from people praying. It helps to have someone designated to keep the prayer room clean and ‘fresh’.

What’s in the prayer room?

24/7 is an opportunity for creative prayer. Resources should be provided to encourage this. The following are some suggestions.

Prayer wall: This is a wall covered in paper for people to write on. Encourage people to write their prayers on the prayer wall. Other people can then come into the room and pray for these subjects, and then also add their own prayer topics. You might want to divide the prayer wall into sections, such as a friend’s wall (to share needs of a particular friend) a prodigal’s wall, an answered prayer wall.

Bibles: Encourage people to bring their own Bible into the prayer room, but it never hurts to have some Bibles in the room for general use.

Art material: You will find that by having paper, paints, pens, Playdoh, stickers, etc. available, people of all ages will use them to express their prayers. You will be amazed at what people create!

CD player: All kinds of music can be played. Have some CDs available that will cater to the musical preferences of all ages (i.e. children, classical instrumental, contemporary Christian, etc.). It’s not essential to have music playing the whole time!

Symbolic items: For example, a cross or candles may help people maintain their focus while praying.

Newspapers: People can read local and world news, cut out articles and paste them on the prayer wall, as they pray about them.

Answered prayer board: Hearing about answered prayer is a great motivator! Make a space available somewhere in the room for people to write down answered prayers. This will encourage others to continue to pray passionately.

Seating: As people may be in the prayer room for a length of time, make sure that the seating is comfortable. Lounge chairs and bean bags may be helpful. The room needs to be arranged in a way that feels comfortable – but not so comfortable that sleep becomes a temptation!

24/7 prayer journal: Keep a journal of your week of prayer – something that you record together – as a reminder of all that God has done in your midst.

Other items to include: You might want to consider using a TV/DVD with short clips that focus on specific themes for prayer (www.sermonspice.com). Consider including a map of the world or a globe.

How to schedule the week

As you promote the week of prayer, create a schedule for people to sign up for the various time slots. Some people may prefer to pray alone, others may prefer to pray as a group. In most cases, you will ask people to commit to one hour at a time, but you can be flexible and adapt the schedule to your local situation.

Consider having time for corporate prayer during the week.

- use the prayer room for your regular corps prayer meeting
- designate a time for “praise & prayer” with live music
- encourage other corps groups (such as the Home League, youth group, Men’s Fellowship, etc) to participate in the prayer room at the time of their weekly meeting
- schedule a prayer breakfast for leaders in the prayer room
- organize a sleepover for the young people and invite them to ‘keep watch’ through the night

How do I convince people to sign up for the prayer room?

Prayer is vital to our personal and corporate spiritual life. In his book, The Great Omission, Robertson McQuilkin reminds us that “a praying church is a victorious church. A prayer-less church is a defeated church, defeated even before the battle begins. (The disciples) knew their source of strength. Every time there was testing or opportunity they gathered in prayer. In fact, they were together daily in prayer. And their leaders apparently spent most of their time praying when they were not teaching and preaching.”

Like the early church, we need to be a praying church! Prayer is both conversation and communion. It is talking to God, listening to Him and just ‘hanging out’ with Him.

Share stories of past experiences and cast a vision for the future. The Salvation Army's mission is to save souls, grow saints and serve suffering humanity. We will most effectively achieve this mission by being a people who are wholly committed to God, obediently responsive to the Holy Spirit, strongly committed to each other, compassionately engaged with people in need and totally committed to reaching people with the Good News of Jesus Christ and leading them to faith. A 24/7 week of prayer is an ideal time for your corps to pray about their part in God's vision for The Salvation Army in your community.

As the organizer of a week of prayer, your task is to extend an invitation; the Holy Spirit's task is to convince people to accept!

How do I explain what happens in the prayer room?

The idea of coming to a specific place at a specific time to pray may be a new one for many people. It might be a bit uncomfortable at first. More than anything else, the prayer room is about prayer. The location and the elements in the room can help us to focus, but are not intended to be the main attraction!

DO:

PRAY ALONE OR WITH OTHERS

BE STILL OR DANCE

BRING YOUR OWN MUSIC OR PLAY SOME OF OURS

FOCUS ON GOD'S GREATNESS AND POWER

CLAIM GOD'S PROMISES

IDENTIFY WITH GOD'S PURPOSES

MAKE YOUR REQUESTS TO GOD

LEAVE YOUR MARK IN THE ROOM

INVOLVE EVERYONE

BE RESPECTFUL OF OTHERS

LEAVE THE ROOM IN GOOD CONDITION

TALK TO GOD

LISTEN TO HIM

PRAY

PRAY!

Prayer topics

Some people may come into the prayer room with a willing heart but not sure how to get started. Providing prayer topics will help them to focus their thoughts as they enter into prayer. The list of possible topics is unlimited, but here are some suggestions to start you thinking:

Praise and worship

- praise the Lord for who He is, our Creator and source of Life
- offer prayers of thanksgiving for what He has done in the past

- read verses from the Psalms to express praise to God
- pray the Lord's prayer and mean it!

Self

- pray for forgiveness for sin
- pray for acceptance of people who walk through the doors of our church
- pray for a deeper passion for lost people
- pray that God will reveal more of His plan for our lives and grant us the courage to be obedient to that call
- pray for a deeper relationship with Him
- pray that our lives will resemble that of Christ

The Salvation Army

- pray that God will be the center in all activities of The Salvation Army worldwide
- pray that we will be an Army of humility
- pray that 24/7 will help foster a global passion for God
- prayer that The Salvation Army will be relevant to all cultures that it strives to reach with the Gospel

Community

- pray that the Lord will help us to take His love to our community
- pray for unity with other churches
- pray that we will honor the world that God created and respect the environment
- pray that God will grant us boldness to share the gospel with people in our community

Our corps

- pray that this corps will discover God's vision for them
- pray for each member of the corps to become better servants
- pray that our corps will be mobilized for mission
- pray for the return of prodigals

Leadership

- pray for all the leaders of The Salvation Army
- pray for the leadership team in your corps
- pray that the Holy Spirit will be poured out on leaders who have lost their passion for Jesus
- pray that God will give the people He is calling into leadership the courage and strength to carry out that calling