

Cottage Prayer Meetings

The purpose of a Cottage Prayer Meeting is for a group of believers, who share a common heart burden, to fervently pray together in an atmosphere of trust

Cottage Prayer Meetings are a great way to get a quick win in a prayer emphasis. Some older members may remember having similar prayer meetings in preparation for revival services; it will feel familiar. They include fellowship, which is helpful in securing participation. The prayer focus of each Cottage Prayer Meetings helps members learn to pray more specifically. The focus also helps the group think outside the walls of the church. And that's where we need to begin...

Each Cottage Prayer Meeting should Have One Clearly Defined Prayer Focus.

A prayer meeting about everything is a prayer meeting about nothing.

Here are some examples of a good prayer focus:

- Lost people in our [specific] workplace
- People on our sports team
- People who will be in hell next year at this time without divine intervention
- Prospects for our class
- Salvation of those who attend Youth Bible Study on Wednesday, but have yet to receive Christ
- Our children yet to profess faith in Christ
- Christians who have gone astray
- People who need to be delivered from an addiction
- Marriages in our church: Their protection, health, & growth
- Marriages in our community currently in crisis
- Those Who Are Grieving a Loss
- Neglected and abused senior adults
- The unemployed and underemployed
- Single mothers rearing children all alone
- Grandparents rearing grandchildren
- Stay at Home Mothers
- Locals currently deployed in the military
- Children who are bullied at school
- Abused children in dysfunctional homes
- Teenagers considering dropping out of high school
- Victims of violent crimes
- Those who suffer depression and other mental health issues
- First Responders who see things people shouldn't have to see and it hardens them

Pastors may sometimes want to enlist someone to host a Cottage Meeting for a specific prayer focus.

Warn your hosts to personally enlist another couple to attend and not rely on church promotions to get people there. Sometimes, the way it falls; otherwise, a host can have no one show up. Church leaders may want to be alert to possible situations of this type and attend accordingly.

On the other hand, the best reports concerning the actual prayer times from Cottage Prayer Meetings come from those with four to six people. It helps when the groups are small enough to pray for people by name.

Impress upon the hosts, that this is a prayer meeting, not a Bible study or a "share time." Encourage them to stay on topic in regard to the Prayer Focus of their group.

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How to Conduct a Cottage Prayer Meeting

Relax.... Things you don't have to do:

- Provide a spacious and luxurious home; this is a prayer meeting, not a Parade of Homes.
- Prepare a lot of food; fasting would be more appropriate than feasting. Coffee and a few cookies are OK, but not necessary.
- Present a Bible study; we are there to talk to God, not listen to a study.
- Have a big crowd. The best reports from Cottage Prayer Groups have four to six people in attendance. If you have too many people in attendance, people open up less and tend to pray less fervently.

Sign Up!

- Cottage Prayer Meetings may be held anytime between DATE and DATE (inclusive).
- You can host the prayer meeting on any night at any time, except when church is meeting.
- You can sign up in the foyer to host a Cottage Prayer Meeting. That way, we can help people publicize your prayer meeting. Tell us your specific prayer focus (to pray for such and such neighborhood or to pray for fellow employees at the local Widget Company).
- You can enlist people from your neighborhood, your Sunday School class, the Youth Group, etc. You will want to have a core group you know will attend.

In the Prayer Meeting:

- Once everyone arrives, read (or have someone read) a brief passage of Scripture.
- Explain that the purpose of this prayer meeting is to pray for the spiritual well-being of your neighborhood (or the people you are trying to reach at work, or whatever), and that this is not a meeting to pray for the sick or new stories, but the designated focus.
- Take prayer requests that are on point for the prayer meeting. Explain when you begin taking requests, that you are seeking requests that are related to the purpose of the prayer meeting.
- Don't allow the prayer request time to drag out too long. You may even wish to use an egg timer and end requests when the bell rings. Otherwise the prayer meeting may end up being all requests and no prayer.
- Tell people they can pray more than once. If they forget something, they can pray again.
- Try to see that the meeting ends at the time you advertised.

Every Cottage Prayer Meeting Should Have One Clearly Defined, Specific Focus:

God answers specific prayer. Our prayers should be clearly defined and focused. We should pray so specifically that we know when our prayers are answered. That is why we ask each host of a cottage prayer meeting to zero in on one clearly defined focus. A prayer meeting about everything is a prayer meeting about nothing. Wouldn't you rather have one Divine

answer to one specific prayer than no answer to generalized prayers about everything?

Don't feel guilty that you're leaving something out: There is so much to pray for in our community that we could never cover it all in one prayer meeting. If we spread out our prayers in a vain attempt to cover everything, they are indistinct and indefinite. With vague, fuzzy praying like that, how would we know if God answered our prayers? How could we pray with any passion? What exactly would we ask for in praying for them all, since people have such diverse needs? That is why we have multiple cottage prayer meetings – to cover the various prayer needs in our community. So, in your prayer meeting, accept the role of being one piece of a large mosaic.

Base your focus on your heart-burden: For whom are you burdened? Start there. Find others who share the same burden. Pray about that! Are you burdened for the employees at the place where you work? Are you burdened for the people in your neighborhood? Do you feel burdened to pray for upcoming revival services? Any of these would make a great focus. God gets serious about answering prayer when we have something specific on our hearts that we are serious about seeing an answer to! “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).