

ALTARS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH (adapted from pray.nyc)

VISION

*Lord, I have heard of your fame;
I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord.
Repeat them in our day,
in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy. - Habakkuk 3:2*

By building an altar of prayer and worship in the church, we want to create a space to seek the tangible presence of God, to be transformed by meditation on His Word, and to partner with His will through intercession for revival.

CORE VALUES

Unity

“In essentials unity. In non-essentials liberty. In all things love.” - Augustine of Hippo

Faith

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, for anyone who comes to Him must believe He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.” - Hebrews 11:6

Praying the Word

“And take up the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, and pray in the Spirit on all occasions and with all kinds of prayers and requests.” - Ephesians 6:17-18.

THE CULTURE WE'RE LOOKING FOR

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast." - Peter Drucker

Who > What

We want people to be more aware of Who they are praying to, more than what they are praying for. (Psalm 121)

Known > Seen

We value being known by God more than being seen by people. Authority comes from the secret place. (Matthew 6:5)

Beauty > Brokenness

The beauty of Jesus is what compels us to contend for the broken places in our world. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Reaching > Settling

We reach for God on behalf of our city and region. We intercede for what is happening in our state and New England, not just settling for who is in the room. He hears. He acts. We ask. (Isaiah 64:7, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

Contend > Concern

We go beyond the place of common concern, and take our concern to the place of contending for God to break in on behalf of others. We want to see the fame and deeds of God renewed in our day, nothing less. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5, Matt 6:10)

Consecration > Separation

We live our lives set apart to God in the midst of our world. We are not retreating from it, but invading it with a counter-cultural lifestyle. (John 17:15-19)

The Word > Our word

We value praying God's word, more than just our words. We pray from the richness of God's word rather than the poverty of our own hearts/circumstances. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

Jesus's intercession > Our intercession

We want to know what is on His heart and mind regarding what we are praying for. He ever lives to make intercession for us, so we desire to agree with him in prayer. (Hebrews 7:25, Romans 8:26)

His voice > Our voice

We desire to create an atmosphere and space for people to hear His voice, and allow us to pray in line with that. (Psalm 29, John 10:27) His sheep hear his voice

Our voice > My voice

There is power in a corporate gathering of believers. We create space for an individual to hear from God, but also for people to gather and pray based on what they are hearing. (Matthew 18:19-20)

PRAYER LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK: HOSTING

“Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.”

- Psalms 84:10

Prayer leadership is fundamentally about hosting. Our primary task is to host the presence of God and then to invite others into that space. We are simply doorkeepers in the house, meant to open the doors (from within) so that other people can encounter the Living God.

WHY HOST GOD?

“He waits to be wanted.” -A.W. Tozer

Because He is Worthy

“My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations,” says the Lord Almighty.” - Malachi 1:11 NIV

When we Host Him He Speaks

“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” - Acts 13:2 NIV

When we Host Him He Acts

“After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: “Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever.” As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.” - 2 Chronicles 20:21-22 NIV

HOW TO HOST PEOPLE?

Prepared Hearts. Prepared Spaces. Prepared People.

Consider when you invite people into your home. You prepare the space ahead of time, you think about the atmosphere, and what you are going to do. You do not just assume people know what to do or where to go. You prepare your space and yourself for them, and we want to carry that heart into hosting a prayer Altar in your church.

Prepared Hearts:

Are you hosting the presence of God in your own heart?

We can't lead people to a place that we have not been ourselves. Hosting a prayer altar is about cultivating an internal atmosphere of welcoming Jesus that allows us to invite others in. We want to bring something with us to the room, rather than hoping to find something there.

Prepared Spaces:

Excellence creates comfort.

The external atmosphere of a prayer altar has an affect on the experiences people have within it. We want to make people feel like welcomed guests that we are not only excited to see, but ready to see.

Prepared People:

Does everyone know what is going to happen? Do they know to Whom they are praying?

The biggest mistake we can make is assuming the people know or remember what is going to happen. Take the time to explain it to them. When inviting people into something, clarity is key.

HOSTING ROLES

Each prayer altar role has unique parts to play, but the same purpose. Hosting the presence of God, and hosting people as they encounter Him

- **Prayer Leader**
- **Worship Leader (if in person)**
- **Room Manager (if in person) / “Zoom” Manager (if on zoom)**
- **Doorkeeper (if in person)**

PRAYER ALTAR FORMAT

There is the freedom to flex with this framework as needed, however, always make sure to bring clarity to the room through explanation. Without consistency people don't feel safe, so avoid radical changes week to week.

[Beforehand] Leaders Prepare Themselves

Arrive, Prepare yourself 30 minutes before your prayer altar.

1. How are you encountering Jesus this week?

-What attribute of Jesus is stirring your heart?

-What scriptures have been stirring you up this week?

2. What was the Holy Spirit highlighting in this set last week?

3. Remind people what we are going to do:

- Lift our Eyes
- Hear from God
- Contend with God for our city and the region

4. Consecration prayer

- Repent of sin & receive the blood (Psalm 24 / who may ascend?)
- Cast off distractions (1 Peter 5:7 / cast your cares on him...)
- Renounce names, titles, and gifting - ask Jesus to be the center
- Ask for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit

[During] Prayer Altar (60 minute example)

0:00 Countdown

0:02 Prayer Leader sets up the set and lifts their eyes. Invite the Holy Spirit.

0:05 Worship for 15 to 20 minutes, depending on the day/set.

0:25 Prayer Leader shares scripture again, and creates space in the room for people to hear from the Lord. Put a few handles or prayer points out for people to use.

0:30 Bringing the room together to pray for what is being highlighted.

0:45 Prayer & Worship Leaders decide if going back into a song is needed or continuing to pray.

0:55 Wrap the Set.

0:56 Optional Debrief at Leader's Discretion: How did the Spirit lead us to pray?
What are we learning?

0:59 Bless & Send

[Afterwards] Reflection Debrief for Prayer Leaders -

What Revelation did we sense from God?

Did we create space for people to hear from God for themselves?

Did we create space for people to talk to God for themselves?

Did we reach for God?

Did we reach outside the room?

Do we have any opportunities for how we could have invited people to encounter what God was doing in the room?