

## A Prayer Triad: Prayer In Community

### What is a Prayer Triad?

A prayer triad is a group of three people who meet on a regular basis to pray together for each others' spiritual burdens, needs and struggles, unsaved friends and family, and the Harbor church body.

### Why prayer?

Scripture is clear that as believers we should be spending time in prayer to the Lord. Prayer is an acknowledgment of our need and of the reality that the Lord is the one with power to work change in our circumstances and our hearts.

**Colossians 4:2** *Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.*

**Philippians 4:6** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

**Ephesians 6:18** *Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints*

### Why Together?

We need each other. Praying together as the body of Christ builds our faith, grows us in love and humility, encourages us in our weakness, and lifts our eyes to the needs of and God's work in the world around us. Praying together in triads provides an opportunity to know and be known on a more personal, intimate level than a small group affords. A personally chosen group of three encourages members to develop the degree of trust and committed affection necessary for safely sharing deeper needs and concerns.

**Ecclesiastes 4:12** *Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*

**Galatians 6:2** *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ*

**1 Thessalonians 5:14** *And we urge you, brothers, admonish (warn) the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.*

### What Should This Look Like?

A prayer triad should meet on a regular basis as agreed upon by the members. Frequency of gathering will depend on the schedule and availability of group members, and may occur on a weekly, bi-weekly, or even a monthly basis. Long-term consistency and "staying current" with fellow members should be your goal. When a prayer triad meets, a significant portion of the time should be spent with the members sharing about their own needs and heart struggles, and a significant portion of the time should be spent in prayer. We would suggest the following areas of focus:

### Prayer Triad Focuses

#### 1. Prayer for each others' spiritual burdens, needs, and struggles

Life is hard, but there is great beauty and encouragement in caring and being cared for in the community God has given us. We grow spiritually as individuals and as members

together in the body of Christ when others encourage us and point us toward the truth of God's care for us in the midst of difficulty. The forgiveness and grace we have received from Christ through the gospel also frees us to be honest with each other about our sins and struggles. We often benefit from others helping us see our sin clearly (sin is deceitful!).

**James 5:16** *Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working*

**Romans 15:30** *I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf*

**Ecclesiastes 4:10** *For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!*

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

**2. Prayer for our ministry to unbelieving friends or family.** We know that the Lord is the one who works to draw people to Himself in salvation, but we also know that He uses us in that process. We would love for our Prayer Triads to prioritize faithful-over-the-long-haul intercession for the salvation of our friends or family (focusing on 2 or 3 close relationships per member) and to pray also for the Lord to use us in that process, opening doors into which we can speak the gospel.

**Philemon 6** *And I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ*

**Colossians 4:3** *At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison*

**Acts 1:8** *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to The end of the earth.*

**Acts 20:24** *But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.*

**3. Prayer for Harbor as a church body.** While the needs of our church body at Harbor certainly include the needs of its individual members, our needs as a particular congregation of the church of Jesus Christ extend beyond the individual. As Paul often prayed in his letters for the church bodies to which he was writing, we want to take the opportunity to pray specifically for the corporate spiritual and physical needs at Harbor church.

**Ephesians 1: 16-19a** *I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe...*

**Matthew 28:19-20a** *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing*

*them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*

**How do I find one?**

Because of the personal nature of Prayer Triads it seems most beneficial to encourage groups to form by mutual agreement and interest rather than by assignment. Usually an individual will approach one other person asking about the possibility. When a prayer partner is found, the two then decide together who to approach about becoming a third member of the group. Sometimes one person will approach two others at once.

If you would like to be part of a Prayer Triad but are unsure where to start, the Women's Care Team would be happy to help you consider who you might feel comfortable with and how to approach them.

**Please make use of the sample questions and prayer suggestions found below!**

### *The Prayer Triad - Suggestion for Group Commitments to each other*

- *Meet regularly*
- *Share openly and honestly*
- *Be aware of needs and pray for one another regularly, even when not together*
- *Encourage each other with the truth of scripture, taking care to handle God's promises carefully and faithfully*
- *Make the group a safe place for personal sharing: While we often struggle with others in our sin, the Prayer Triad should not only be a "safe place" for us to share personally and intimately, but also a "safe place" for those with whom we are in close relationship. This is a place to share YOUR heart struggles, seeking prayer that God would help you in them by the power of his spirit. LOVE "always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." We do not want our personal sharing to be unloving.*
- *Keep shared information confidential, with a few specific exceptions. Members of a prayer triad should be able to expect that the needs and struggles they share will not be shared outside the group. The exception is certain matters of sin or being sinned against which cannot be kept in confidence. Issues of abuse or unrepentant sin must be brought to the elders and, for abuse, to the appropriate authorities, as this is the most loving way to address these situations. Aside from these rare exceptions, items shared within the group should be kept in confidence there.*

## Sample Questions to Facilitate Prayer Triad Time<sup>1</sup>

Here are an abundance of possible questions you can choose from to talk about. They are simply a guide for you to help facilitate depth in your time with your triad. Feel free to pray about and experiment with what works best for you and your triad.

### **Questions to start**

- What are you thankful to God for this week? (What went right?)
- What problem has consumed you this week (what went wrong?)

### **Spiritual Life – How is your time with the Lord?**

- God's word – have you read it consistently? How would you like to grow in this area? How can we encourage you or help you be accountable to that? What has God been teaching you? What are you studying/learning? How is what you are studying impacting you?
- Prayer – Describe your prayers – for yourself, others, praise, confession, gratitude. How is your relationship with Christ evolving?
- Temptation – How have you been tempted this week? How did you respond? In what area can we pray for you to see victory over sin?
- Confession – Do you have unconfessed sin in your life?
- Worship – Did you worship in church this week? (Was your faith in Jesus strengthened? How do you see yourself growing in honoring Christ during corporate worship?) How is your affection for the Lord in general?
- Witness – Have you shared your faith? In what ways? How can you improve?

### **Ministry**

- In what ways do you most enjoy ministering to the Body of Christ?
- What do you see God equipping you to do?
- Are you ministering in this area? If not, what is hindering you?
- How can we encourage you in your ministry?
- In what ways do you believe God has gifted the other two people in your prayer triad to minister in the Body of Christ?
- Do you see them ministering in this area?
- How would you encourage them to grow in this ministry?

### **Home Life**

- Husband – how is it going with him? (time, meaningful conversations, attitude, irritations, intimacy, disappointments, his relationship with Christ)
- Children – How is your relationship with children? What concerns do you have for them? (giving encouragement, quantity and quality time, values, education, spiritual welfare)
- Finances – How are your finances? (debts, sharing, saving, spending, stewardship)
- Time – How have you invested your time in your home? With regard to home management? With regard to your relationships?

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Uptown Church (Charlotte, NC) Prayer Triad Guidelines

### **Critical Concerns**

- God's Will – Do you feel you are in the center of God's will? Do you sense His peace? How are you doing at accepting God's will for you each day? Are you generally peacefully or anxious? Are you joyful/thankful or critical/unthankful? Are you coveting anyone else's life?
  - Thought life – What are you wrestling with in secret?
  - Service – What have you done for someone else this week which can't be repaid? (the poor, encouragement, mercy, service)
  - Priorities – Are your priorities in the right order?
  - Integrity – Is your moral and ethical behavior as it should be? In what areas are you most challenged in this regard? Is there a particular community or context you are a part of where this is difficult?
  - High-Risk – How are you doing in your personal high-risk area?
  - Transparency – Is the "visible" you and the "real" you consistent in our relationship? (if not, in what ways?)
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- **What is one other area in your life that you need prayer for** ---health? children? family? work? attitude? husband? discipline? etc.
  - **What is the one question we should ask you next week that you are secretly hoping we will not ask you?**
  - **Is there anyone you are trying to share the gospel with that we can pray for?**

### **Ideas for how to pray for Harbor as a church body**

- Pray for our leaders: for wisdom, for guidance, for wise use of the church's resources of time, effort, money, for hearts of compassion for the body, for relating and making decisions with understanding and care for one another, for Christlikeness and charity in areas of disagreement
- Where does Harbor as a body have weaknesses? Pray for growth in those areas
- Are there places we as a church need to better let the truth of God's grace impact our actions? Pray for the Lord's work in those areas
- Pray for boldness in proclaiming the gospel and that the Lord would bring lost people to Harbor
- Pray that our relationships with others outside of the church would be used by the Lord to draw others to Christ and to Harbor
- Pray for the Spirit's work and leading in our congregation: in the hearts of every member to better understand the gospel and walk in its implications by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the message of the gospel being shared in preaching, in Sunday school, in Bible study, during our various teaching times (Men's, women's, youth, children), etc.
- Pray for growth in spiritual health: a deeper understanding of the gospel and its implications, for humility and love in relating to one another as the body of Christ.

## **Prayer Resources**

### **Books:**

Megan Hill     *Praying Together: The Priority and Privilege of Prayer in Our Homes, Communities, and Churches*

Paul Miller     *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*

Tim Keller     *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*

### **Other Resources:**

Matthew Henry's Method for Prayer Web site: <http://www.matthewhenry.org/>

Prayer Mate – a phone/tablet app for iOS & android [www.prayermate.net](http://www.prayermate.net)