

How To Pray Our Way Forward

Intro: (Video) As exciting as progress is, there comes with it an added measure of responsibility. When a church moves forward, so must our commitment to pray. We are moving into enemy territory, therefore we must engage at a spiritual level. This expansion project is not about bigger rooms / sheetrock / new offices or a Café'. It is about advancing the Kingdom of God in our geographic area and the enemy is not going to like it!

- There are 3 prayer commitments we need to make as a church if we are going to move forward successfully. Churches move forward successfully on their knees! We must be committed to pray our way forward. I am asking you to make 3 commitments today.

I. Will You Commit To Pray For Your Pastor?

A. Pray for my protection

(from temptation from Satan)

I Chron. 21:1, 7 “Satan rose up against Israel and caused David to take a census of the people of Israel...God was very displeased with the census, and he punished Israel for it.” (NLT) (Explain story and context – not sure why he wasn’t supposed to do this but he knew better.

1. I need you to pray for me in this area. I am not beyond temptation or Satan’s influence. This is so significant: When the leader sins it is the people who pay the price! (70,000 people died because David sinned!)
2. When a leader falls, it not only discredits the ministry, but scatters the people / causes them to walk away from Christ / wounds them – Think about all the scandals we have had in the past decade of religious leaders?
3. Some of you think; “Oh, Pastor Dale could never do things like this!” Under the right set of circumstances, we are all capable of doing things that normally, we would never do. Satan is a master at waiting till an opportune time!

B. Pray for my people (My family)

I Tim. 3:1-2, 4-5 “This is a trustworthy saying: “If someone aspires to be an elder, he desires an honorable position.” So an elder must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife...He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God’s church?” (NLT)

1. If Satan can’t get to me he will go after my family. How I manage my family / my relationships / my marriage is what gives credibility to my message.
2. I need you to not only pray for me but for Lisa...for my daughters...It will be impossible for me to bear up under the weight of leadership if my home life isn’t a refuge.
3. I don’t want to just be an effective Pastor, I want to be a successful husband / father as well. Being a Pastor puts pressure on them as well. I am not the only one living in the fishbowl. They live in it with me! Can you imagine everything you do being

scrutinized by others? Your life is always on display? This is the world my family lives in.

- I need you to pray for my family! (protection / growth / peace n our home)

C. Pray for my preaching

Col. 1:25 "God has given me the responsibility of serving his church by proclaiming his entire message to you." (NLT)

1. I have a tremendous responsibility to speak to all of you weekly that I take very seriously. I have talked to some Pastors over the years who have said, "Preparing my message is the least important thing I do all week." To me, this is appalling!
2. I believe preparing my message is the #1 priority of my week. WHY? Because I believe this is a supernatural event. It's not just a speech. This is the word of God. It is eternal, powerful and life altering. God shows up in this time!
3. This is why I am so strict with my study time. In the mornings, you can't just walk into my office. Sorry if that bothers you but it is my study time and I protect it. I believe God has called me to give you the best I have each week. (My "A" game)
4. If I preach / speak poorly, you all pay the price. My performance affects you. Therefore I take this responsibility very seriously and I desperately need you to pray for me in this area that God would guide me in this. (How does He know?-explain)

D. Pray for my perception

Col. 1:9 "So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding." (NLT)

1. This is all about asking God to give me wisdom so that I can make the right choices and decisions. I cannot lead effectively without having the knowledge of His will.
2. I am not smart enough / gifted enough / talented enough to lead this church on my own. I must have spiritual wisdom and understanding. This only comes from God.
3. God is blessing Foothills because we are following Him. God will continue to bless Foothills only as we continue following Him. Therefore, I need you to pray that I can continue to hear God clearly. Pray I can have the knowledge of His will.

E. Pray for my passion

II Cor. 11:28 "Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches." (NLT)

1. There is a tremendous burden that comes with being the Pastor of Foothills. There is a heavy weight of responsibility that is placed on my shoulders. I love what God has called me to, but it's weighty.
2. Added to this burden is the growing ministry of Foothills that demands constant attention. The potential for burn out is huge. By far this is the #1 reason Pastors leave the ministry.
3. Statistically, the majority of all Pastors leave the ministry before they reach

retirement age. Once again, most people think I have an inexhaustible supply of passion. Yes, God did give me my fair share. BUT, even I can get burned out.

4. I need you to pray for me in this area. Pray I set good boundaries / maintain balance / stay emotionally healthy / so I can maintain my passion. The last time we had a building project, I became very emotionally unhealthy and burnt out. - explain

- Will you make a commitment to pray for me this year?

II. Will You Commit To Pray For Your Leaders?

- The other paid staff / volunteer Ministry Leaders

A. Pray for their walk

Col. 1:10 "And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God." (NIV)

1. Leaders of any organization set the tone for the entire atmosphere and environment of that organization. Our leaders do the same here at Foothills. Their walk with the Lord sets the tone and example for everyone else serving in their ministry.
2. If they are uncommitted, so will their volunteers / If they are undisciplined, so will their helpers. / If they are inconsistent, so will be the people around them. It's just a truth about leadership: People do not rise above the commitment level of their leaders. Their walk will dictate the walk of others!
3. Our leaders lives need to inspire others to walk with Christ and serve Him. Their walk with the Lord is the example many people will follow. We don't need perfect leaders...but we need consistent ones...ones that live a life worthy.

B. Pray for their wisdom

Col. 1:9 "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding." (NIV)

1. Just as you are praying that I have wisdom as the Pastor, we need to be praying for our leaders as well to have God's wisdom to operate their ministries and fulfill their responsibilities.
2. In a growing church, we have to constantly problem solve. We problem solve space issues / financial issues / personnel issues / misunderstandings / communication /
3. I don't make decisions for other ministry leaders. I expect them to make godly, wise decisions in their areas. Therefore, we need to pray that they are filled with the knowledge of His will.

C. Pray for their work (bless the work of their hands)

Ps. 90:17 "And may the Lord our God show us his approval and make our efforts successful. Yes, make our efforts successful!" (NLT)

1. There's nothing wrong with praying for success. It's not unspiritual! We're not

going through all this effort so we fail! We are working hard at making a difference in our generation for the Kingdom of God. “God...Please bless what we do and cause it to be Kingdom successful!

2. Don't you want to see the Student Ministry successful? / Kids Church / Preschool / Celebrate Recovery / Financial Peace / Nursery / “Lord, please make their efforts successful!” (These people are knocking themselves out every week!)
3. It's when we see God blessing our ministry we are excited and motivated to continue serving. Everyone wants to serve in an area that's being blessed!

D. Pray for their words

Col. 4:6 “Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.” (NLT)

1. It's not just the leaders walk that needs to be in a manner worthy of the Lord, but also their words. Our words have tremendous power, and as leaders, they carry even more influence.
2. We have the power as leaders to build people up; inspire them to follow Christ; motivate them to live by faith, or devastate and destroy them. How many people have walked away from church because of what someone said to them?
3. We need to pray that the leadership at Foothills have words that are gracious and attractive. Words that are the right response in every situation.

E. Pray for their weariness

Heb. 10:36 “Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised.” (NLT)

1. It takes a tremendous amount of endurance to accomplish God's will. The journey is not easy and weariness is something every leader will struggle with at some time.
 2. Sometimes as a ministry leader, everything inside of you is telling you to quit / throw in the towel / walk away / it's not worth the effort. Weariness begins to take over your mind and heart.
 3. The only way you're going to make it is through the prayers of others. It's the principal of Aaron and Hur lifting up the arms of Moses. (explain)
- Will you make a commitment this year to pray for your leaders?

III. Will You Commit To Pray For Your Church?

A. Pray for our harmony (unity)

John 17:23 “I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.” (NLT)

1. Jesus prayed for the unity of the church and so should we. Our unity is a testimony to the reality of Christ in our lives. If our unity breaks down, we cannot reach the unchurched! Losing unity will destroy our witness.
2. Satan fights at nothing harder than trying to destroy unity. He knows how

- significant it is. He knows that church's that grow in unity are unstoppable.
3. Any time there is a major transition in a church (like a building project) there is great opportunity for division. Change creates opportunities for misunderstandings / disagreements / confusion – It's coming (work projects are coming – we're moving the offices off / not everything is going to be smooth and predictable.
 4. We need to be diligent to pray against anything divisive and plead for God to grow our harmony here at Foothills. Ask Him to protect our hearts and minds from divisive thoughts, divisive attitudes, and divisive words.
 5. Pray that God would use this time to multiply and grow our unity. That we would get to the end of this project even more unified / more sweeter / even more harmony.

B. Pray for our hearts

Mark 12:30-31 "And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength." The second is equally important: "Love your neighbor as yourself." No other commandment is greater than these." (NLT)

1. We must pray that our hearts stay committed to God's priorities...Loving Him and loving others. Let's not fall in love with the wrong things...success / growth / a building /
2. We must be people who have a great commitment to God's great commandments; loving Him and others. Our greatest commitments should not be to a building / program / or to a particular ministry, but to LOVE.
3. Let's pray that this project causes our hearts to grow in our love for God and each other.

C. Pray for our holiness

II Cor. 7:1 "Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God." (NLT)

1. Many people have the wrong image of holiness. They think in terms monks – nuns / robes / religion / rules and regulations / When the word simply means: set apart. God has set us apart from the rest of the world for something amazing. We are set apart for His glory!
2. We must remember that we are holy people set apart for His purposes in this area. We must embrace this "setting apart" mentality as a church. We are not to act like, think like, speak like, have values like, or have relationships like this world.
3. We are not here to blend in. This has been the problem with the church! We are here to stand out! (salt and light) We stand out not because of religious rules, we stand out because our lives have been transformed!

D. Pray for our hope

Eph. 1:18 "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you

may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,...” (NIV)

1. As a church, we must continue to cling to the hope we are called to. Yes, this refers to our future hope in heaven and our future inheritance, but we also have a calling from God in this life and glorious things to inherit as we embrace our destiny.
2. God has called us to reach 1000’s of unchurched people / He has called us to be instruments of His transformation of a community. Where Molalla will not be a by-word, but will be synonymous with blessing! That’s hope we cling to!

E. Pray we would hold fast

Heb. 10:23 “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” (NASB)

1. This journey God has us on is not an easy one. The only way we will live to see the fulfillment of our hope is if we refuse to quit. God is faithful. He will fulfill what He’s promised. Our responsibility, is to simply stay on the mission He has called us to.
 2. We need to remember the imagery of the church. We are Pioneers NOT Settlers. We are on a Battleship NOT a Cruise ship. There will be times when we need to just hold fast and keep pressing on. This is how we need to pray.
- Will you commit to pray for the church like this?

We are ready to embark on yet another adventure for the Kingdom of God Foothills! Are you ready? Are you ready to pray our way forward? If so, I am asking you to make these three prayer commitments today.

- Will you commit to pray for me
- Will you commit to pray for the leadership
- Will you commit to pray for the church body

If you are willing, would you write the word PRAY on your blue card as we close today?

I also want to remind you about this Tuesday night worship and prayer event. Let’s show our commitment to prayer by filling this auditorium to pray!