

We want to invite you into a new season of 24-7 Prayer called *Jubilee*. This season will focus on the mission statement of Jesus found in Isaiah 61. *Jubilee* will consist of 40 days of 24-7 Prayer beginning on Sunday June 12 at 6p and ending with a celebration on Thursday July 21 at 6p. This 40 day season will take place at the Upper Room in the Riverview Building, 678 Front St NW.

Crossroads Bible Church, the Stockbridge Boiler Room and the Bridge Street House of Prayer are inviting brothers and sisters from all over West Michigan to join us. **We need you** and we're asking you to prayerfully consider if you could join us on this crazy adventure of prayer. We are looking for 168 one hour slots to be covered each week for 6 weeks. **We want you to commit to the same slot each week.** We need people who are willing to come to the Bridge Street House of Prayer and pray for faithfully. Your time slot could be in the middle of the night, on the weekend, at the beginning of the day or even during the 11a Sunday service.

Corporate Worship and Prayer (each night from 7-9p) will be a great place for everyone to come, whether or not you can commit to one slot for 6 weeks. This looks like a two hour worship set with intercessory prayer and scripture reading woven in. These nightly gatherings are going to be a time of open, community prayer. we will see intercessors and worshipers join together to keep the mantle lit during this season of 24/7.

With so many people at Crossroads and only 168 hour slots during the week, we want to encourage you to sign up with someone you are discipling, as house churches, as families, as youth groups, as elder boards, as LTGs, as accountability groups and as individuals desperate to know and love our Father more deeply. Online signup is open beginning Saturday May 21. Signup at <http://www.24-7prayer.com/signup/433596>. You'll need to sign yourself up for each of the six weeks as the calendar does not automatically sign you up.

We have seen what God has done when His people humble themselves and pray. We are eager to see what He will do in this time of Jubilee.

The Core Leadership Team for Jubilee

Nitty Gritty Questions and Answers about Jubilee

How do I get my brain around committing to 6 weeks of prayer?

Consider yourself a season ticket holder to the symphony or to your favorite sporting team, only better. You commit for the season, but occasionally something comes up and you cannot attend, so you find a friend to go in your stead. That's also how it will work for this season of prayer.

PLEASE NOTE: Participants noted from our last season of 24-7 Prayer that it was extremely discouraging to not have people arrive for the passing of the prayer baton. We are engaging in this unbroken prayer to encourage each other in our desire for prayer. We are not preoccupied with merely avoiding breaking "the chain letter of prayer." Grace abounds. However, as a people called to spur one another on toward love and good deeds, we need to be aware of the effect our absence can have on brothers and sisters in Kingdom work.

Why come to the same room, why can't I just pray at home?

A Prayer Room helps build a sense of community and ownership throughout the season of prayer. We aren't all in the room at the same time, but our prayer footprints are left in our writing on the walls, in our pictures and other imprints we leave behind. It also provides a built-in accountability as people need to turn up on time to 'pick up the baton' from the person praying before them. Having a specific room with arts materials and suggestions for prayer creates a very conducive and creative environment. As the

room begins to fill with people's prayers and heart cries, it can reveal what God is doing in the lives of our prayer community.

Who's going to sign up for 3a prayer?

Jesus often took the last watch of the night for prayer. Those of us who pray in the middle of the night can testify that this can be a powerful time of meeting with Father. **Truly, we do NEED people to sign up for middle of the night slots.** Already some small groups have talked about signing up for three different slots during the week (one of them being the middle of the night) the others during morning and afternoon hours. The members will then rotate their times weekly. People often say they feel energized after praying in the middle of the night. Consider challenging yourself to give God the very first, precious fruits of the day.

What about safety at night?

We will have folks accessible by cell phone day and night. We have parking right next to the prayer room. We have security procedures and cameras in place.

How will we keep up with others who are praying?

We find that each time you return to the prayer room you can read the new prayers that have been posted and written on the walls. We will also have a community journal where participants will record Holy Spirit impressions and prophetic words. It is our hope that our teaching times and corporate worship will keep people in contact with the larger community. Finally, we will have a prayer coordinator for each day of the week and this coordinator will be in regular contact with the 23 people who are praying on that day.

A Theological Understanding of 24-7 Prayer

To understand the importance of 24-7 prayer we must begin with the creation mandate. Adam and Eve understood that they had been created to enjoy an uninhibited relationship with God. They may not have counted 24 hours in a day and seven days in a week, but from the rising of the sun to the setting of the moon they were intimately conscious of God. The whole earth was, in effect, a prayer room – a place of continual wonder and interaction between creature and Creator. However, it was at dusk that this continual intimacy of unbroken fellowship invariably crystallized into an intentional time of conversation (perhaps not unlike an hour of prayer); as they walked and talked with God through the glades of Eden. It was a time, even in paradise, of deliberate and delightful prayer. The story of Adam and Eve reminds us that we were created to work, rest and play in a state of unadulterated relationship with the One who gives us life. It also reminds us of the importance of deliberate, daily fellowship with God as the focal point of a prayerful lifestyle. Our primal call is, as the apostle Paul would put it thousands of years later, simply to 'pray continually...for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus' (1 Thes. 17-18)

Abraham

Abraham understood the significance of establishing 'holy space'. In fact he often marked and even renamed the places in which he encountered God in recognition of their lasting significance.

The Patriarchs Moses & the tabernacle

In the lives of the Patriarchs we observe that God's desire for continual communion with his creation lived on, in spite of The Fall. He called Abraham 'my friend' (Isaiah 41:8) and conversed with Moses 'face to face, as a man speaks with his friend' (Exodus 33:11). These intimate conversations would take place

in 'the tent of meeting' or tabernacle – a mobile prayer room, hosting God's presence at the very heart of the Hebrew community.

The Tabernacle

The tabernacle was so important to the Israelites that nearly one-third of the book of Exodus is devoted to it. As they camped at Sinai they spent many months and vast amounts of their treasure and endeavors constructing this symbolic prayer room which was to travel with them wherever they went. It was a defining moment. The tabernacle marked the fact that, through revelation and rescue, Yahweh had become the very essence of their national identity and hope. His presence belonged at the very heart of their community night and day. The Hebrew sense of history, destiny and community all now centered on the presence of God in their midst, 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

The tabernacle was an astounding symbol of the presence of God, but its importance to the Israelites was not just far more than symbolic this. The tabernacle was also a place alive with relationship, interaction, guidance and prayer. For instance, it was above the tabernacle that the pillars of cloud and fire appeared, leading the people forward and telling them when to rest. The tabernacle really was the place of prayer as well as presence.

Jack Hayford puts it like this: 'The tabernacle is not a great hall for the assembling of multitudes, but a place of personal encounter where worshippers may bring their covenant offerings.'

The temple

As the people of Israel settled in the Promised Land, that tabernacle tent evolved into a great temple building, described by the prophet Isaiah as 'a house of prayer for all nations' (Isaiah 56:7; Matthew 21:13). The prayer room had become a prayer house, in which the priests worshipped continually in disciplined shifts for a thousand years, apart from the exile in Babylon. The priests kept watch throughout the night in the Temple, and slept on site.

This priestly service of 24-7 praise and prayer was known as the Tamid, and particularly referred to three symbolic aspects of temple life:

- The morning and evening sacrifice
- The burning of incense (a symbol in both Testaments of prayer)
- The burning of the menorah candles and the fire on the golden altar

An exceptionally rare word is used to describe the candles and the fire on the altar: anaposbestos, which refers to inextinguishable, eternal, perpetual lights. Some 2,000 years later, this concept became an important one for our friends the Moravians as they sought to maintain the flame of intercession continually on the altar of their lives, according to Leviticus 6:13. The temple, and particularly the Tamid, spoke eloquently of the inextinguishable, eternal, perpetual flame of God's presence in Israel and of the prayers of the saints rising without ceasing to heaven.

That glorious temple became spiritually redundant forty years before its physical destruction in AD70. Centuries of perpetual prayer within its courts came to their bloody fulfillment as Jesus cried, 'It is finished!' and gave up his spirit. Matthew records how 'at that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life' (27:51-52). This was the ultimate, spine-tingling 'amen' to the ceaseless prayers of the tabernacle and temple. In that moment the gates of Eden were flung open for anyone to come in without shame or fear, and to walk and talk once again with God in the cool of the evening.

And at that moment 24–7 prayer changed for ever. It was never again to be locked away in leather tents and temples of stone for an exclusive, representative few. Instead, each one of us could now become a walking talking prayer room, a tabernacle of skin for the presence of God, a holy of holies, a flame burning perpetually on the altar, an ark of the covenant for the presence of God. “Do you not know,” writes Paul, “that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?” (1 Cor.6:19). From the moment of Christ’s death and resurrection, the only true 24–7 prayer room has been that of the human heart in which God is being worshipped and welcomed continually.

We are not called to rebuild the temple and we are not required to replicate the tabernacle. After all it is us that, in Christ, has become the temple of God’s presence and the place of prayer for the community. “Wait a minute” I hear you say. “Isn’t 24-7 prayer advocating the importance of holy space in the real world?”

Yes! But it’s vital to place prayer rooms in their appropriate biblical context so that we don’t end up making the physical place of prayer more important than the pilgrims who use it. Whenever the place becomes such a focus that the people who come to pray become peripheral to its identity, we have mistakenly created a shrine.

When we set aside particular places – physical space - for 24–7 prayer (which remains a great thing to do as long as we remember who the temples are!), these places are physical expressions of a much deeper reality which is the perpetual inner prayerfulness of individuals and churches who host God’s presence. This may sound like semantics but the distinction is an important one.

Sometimes this prayerful inward hosting of God’s presence will be subconscious; for instance as we sleep or use our brains to think about lesser things. But to maintain this prayerful state of heart and mind, we must regularly move prayer from the subconscious to the conscious realm, deliberately inviting Christ out of the twilight and into the limelight of our lives. There are many ways of doing this: taking a regular walk outside, maintaining a daily ‘quiet time’, saying grace before each meal, wearing a ‘What Would Jesus Do?’ bracelet, keeping a journal, attending a weekly church meeting or maintaining a bedtime ritual. Every person is different, but we all need to find those people and places that enable us to re-center on Christ regularly, so that the reflex reaction of our lives remains prayerful, all the time.

A season of 24–7 prayer provides a place, a time, a context and a catalyst for this conscious and persistent prayer to continue, both individually and in our as communities. The prayer room is a picture of something going on all the time in the heart of every believer. It helps us maintain the flame of worship upon the altar of our lives. We leave the prayer room encouraged and enabled to keep on praying consciously and subconsciously through the trials of the day ahead.

Adam and Eve experienced the presence of God continually, but it was once a day that they consciously conversed with him. Benedictine monks pray seven times a day, but they do not reduce their understanding of prayer to these seven daily services. Instead they seek to practice the presence of God all the time regarding the seven prayer times as a public expression of their private prayerfulness rather than the sum total of it.

A regular hour in a 24-7 prayer room is both an expression of and an inspiration for a lifestyle of continual prayer. The temple in Jerusalem that prayed the Talmid perpetually also hosted three fixed prayer times a day and we know that the early disciples attended these prayer meetings. Of course, when they did so, the temples were going to the Temple to pray!

(Theological Understanding from 24-7prayer.com)