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Idea of the Month

The ABF Prayer Ministry - January – 07



There are three ways that I have seen ABF's address prayer during the fellowship time. 1.) Open and Close with a prayer for God to bless every life, need, and action along with the lesson. 2.) Take verbal requests from the group and hope other people write them down and pray for them. The leader may pray for all of them or ask other people to intercede. 3.) Have people write their own prayer needs down and copy/distribute them for the fellowship to reference, pray for, and follow-up.

What you expect your ABF to accomplish determines the role of its prayer ministry. We have a 60 minute (9:30-10:30) ABF meeting time sandwiched between our two Celebration/Worship Services (8:15 & 10:45). Our ABF's aim to meet the church's fellowship and connection needs so they have age/season of life parameters to create an affinity-based group. The ABF's also have an open-group/open chair philosophy. It is structured to expect people who come as a guest, or come when they can, or come every week. Everyone can experience meaningful adult, Bible centered interaction each week without expectation of completed homework or divulging personal information.

For our situation, time is crucial. We know prayer is A ministry and not THE ministry of the ABF. We have discovered THE BENEFITS of having people write their own prayer needs down and then copy and distribute them to the fellowship works well for the following reasons:

- A person may write something that they would not say aloud in a group.
- A person is more concise when writing – won't be thinking out loud or stumbling for words.
- A person is more exact with names, dates, times, and other details when writing – less misunderstanding from the others in the fellowship.
- A person has time to write in ABF as the sheet passes them during the lesson. They may not have time or even forget during the Celebration/Worship Service.
- The group is more informed to pray for the situation and the individuals.
- The group has the hard copy list for regular reference and follow-up conversation starters.
- The ABF Prayer ministry has time to develop a way to focus on a special need toward the end of ABF time rather than be stunned by the information and responding irrationally or inactively.
- The ABF Care ministry has opportunities for service in writing.
- The ABF Assimilation ministry can keep absentees updated by mailing it each week.
- The ABF Outreach ministry can offer church attendees who are not yet part of an ABF the opportunity of their needs being remembered in prayer.
- The ABF Teaching ministry has more time for the lesson, discussion, and application.
- The ABF Leader has more time for announcements along with other group information.
- The pastors can easily be given a copy of each ABF's prayer sheet.
- The pastors are aware of new requests and updated of former requests and can pray for them.
- The pastors can network with other church ministries to assist with the need.
- The pastors can follow-up with the individual and with the ABF for continued care.

This is what we have discovered to be effective in the ABF gathering for generating intercession, connections, and fellowship. ABF prayer sheets are modified regularly to meet communication

needs and also to include guest information, absentees, upcoming activities, treats for the next week, and the various ABF ministries with their coordinators. This is HOW IT WORKS:

1. Create a form that is easily usable. Making it specific to the ABF is helpful. See our [demonstration copy](#).
2. Make several copies.
3. Put the copies in the ABF attendance/supply folder that is distributed weekly or in the ABF storage cabinet.
4. Pass one sheet around the fellowship as everyone is settled in for the lesson.
5. After it is filled out have one person go to the church office to make enough copies for attendees, absentees, and pastoral staff.
6. Return to the ABF and distribute to attendees.
7. Take time to pray in class, note special needs, ask for more information if needed.
8. Address envelopes for absentees. Write a little "missing you" note if desired and mail.

Note: Prayer requests given in ABF are not published as a church prayer request unless permission is given to do so.

Note also: Until we are a completely paperless society, this is just one more communication tool. Also use phone trees, prayer chains, mass emails, text messaging, internet, and any other form possible to get people connected in Christ.

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