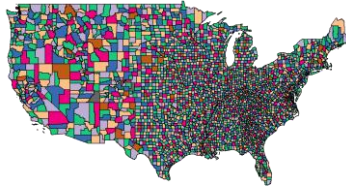


Reaching America Ministries



**The “Why Pray?”
Church Prayer-Emphasis**

Leader’s Implementation Guide

Table of Contents

Introduction to “Why Pray?” Pg. 3

Objectives of the “Why Pray?”
Church Prayer Emphasis Pg. 6

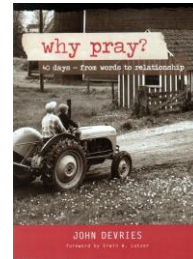
Implementation of the “Why Pray?”
Church Prayer Emphasis Pg. 8

Materials for the “Why Pray?”
Church Prayer Emphasis Pg.11

What is Reaching America Ministries? Pg.13

What is “Why Pray?”

This little book was first published in 2005. Since then, over 60,000 copies have been distributed, mostly by word of mouth. The goal of this book, as stated in the preface, is to remind us that prayer is, “something far more profound than merely a tool to get something from God. Prayer is a relationship.”



Like the little boy sitting on his grandfather’s lap (Day 2) prayer is a dependent relationship in which we sit on the lap of the heavenly Father and place our little hands on top of His saying, “Father, could we drive the tractor over here?”

The author of this book has seen that kind of child-like trust exhibited in the lives of thousands of former Hindus in India. They have learned how to hold onto the Father’s hands through prayer, and have seen God work in powerful ways in their land. Some of these mighty acts of God are documented in this little book.

But is that kind of life-transforming and culture-renewing power possible here in the West? Should Christians in North America even attempt to pray with audacity for God to move powerfully in our churches and even restore our cities, neighborhoods and homes? Why Pray?

The answer to these questions is **YES** because **“Prayer is a love relationship with God in which we present our needs and then live in exciting, trust-filled wonder and anticipation of the unexpected ways that God will work. We are certain only of the fact that He will work in wondrous ways. What He does is always beyond anything we can ask or imagine (See Eph. 3:20).**

Book Overview

This book is a 40 day primer on prayer. It is hoped that within five weeks new prayer habits will be formed and new and exciting perspectives of prayer will be discovered. Prayer will no longer be a spiritual discipline but a spiritual delight! And our homes, not just places to raise families, but will become places to raise the needs of our cities and neighborhoods before the God of all hope.

The book is divided into five weeks and concludes with a 5 day epilogue. The five weeks cover the following areas:

Week 1- The importance of prayer is developed. Why does God call us and teach us to pray? The reasons our author gives may surprise some readers.

Week 2- The priorities of prayer are developed. *When should we pray?*

Week 3- The focus of our prayers is examined as we ask the question, “*Who should we pray for?*”

Week 4- The manner of our praying is explored using the Lord’s Prayer as an outline. “*How should we pray?*”

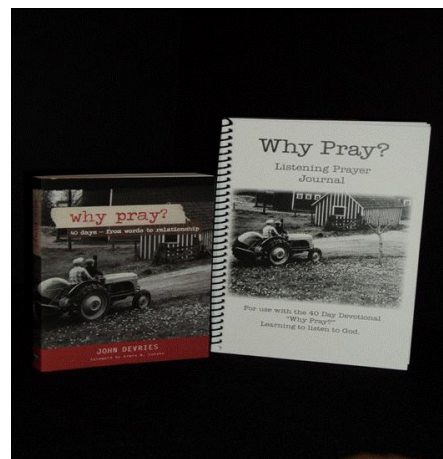
Week 5- Finally, the wonderful privileges and results of praying as God’s children are presented to encourage us to keep praying.
“*What happens when we pray?*”

Epilogue- The final five days introduces the reader in how to make our homes a **Home Of Prayer Everyday.**

The Why Pray? Journal

In 2011, a downloadable journal was produced to supplement the Why Pray? book. The best way to learn how to do something is by doing it! The Journal encourages active participation in prayer applying each lesson in practical ways. Participants are encouraged to use the Journal for their daily personal or family devotional time. The theme for each of the 40 days is given along with scripture reading, a key verse for the day, and one or two reflective questions that both apply each lesson and prepare the participant to listen to God.

The Journal introduces a key element of prayer-listening to God. One of the goals of the Journal is to help Christians learn how to talk with God not just to God in a one-sided conversation. Four different listening-prayer exercises are developed for individuals, families and/or small groups within the 40 day Journal.



Exercise 1 (**Dare**) In the first 10 days, participants are challenged to ask God to lead them to the families, neighbors, co-workers, or even neighborhoods the Lord wants them to intercede on their behalf with the B.L.E.S.S. prayer.

Exercise 2 (**Prepare**) In the next 10 days, participants are asked to watch where God is preparing the seed of the Gospel to be planted in the lives of

the people they are praying for. We are also asking the Lord to prepare our hearts so we will be able to plant the seed.

Exercise 3 (**Care**) In the third exercise, participants are encouraged to ask God to show them how to connect with and care for one person (or more) for whom they are praying.

Exercise 4 (**Share**) In the final 10 days, participants ask the Lord how and to whom they should share the three greatest gifts anyone can receive.

There are also six sets of discussion questions for small groups or Sunday school classes in the Journal. The discussion questions center around the previous week's meditations and the four listening-prayer exercises. It is important to learn how to pray with others enjoying the mutual encouragement others provide as groups share answers to prayer, and even pray for one another.

Sample Week One Small Group Questions

1. Do you tend to look at prayer as a one-way conversation or as a dialogue with God? What changed your view of prayer?
2. In Day 2 Andrew, the little grandson, thought that his grandparents couldn't get along on the farm without him. In what ways are you like Andrew when it comes to your feelings about God the Father?
3. Share a time when you were overwhelmed by or especially aware of the presence of God.

Four Major Objectives of the “Why Pray?” Church Prayer Emphasis

It is the heart-felt passion and prayer of Reaching America Ministries that God would fulfill the following objectives in the life of congregations and individuals using these materials:

Objective #1

Individual Christians will develop a loving, maturing and intimate relationship with Christ their Lord and Savior enjoying his presence through prayer and expressing their joy as a powerful witness to the world.

***The Why Pray? book, along with a five-week sermon series on prayer will help motivate congregations to take action.**

***The Why Pray? Journal will help Christians to establish a personal daily devotional time with the Lord through scripture reading, self-reflection, and listening prayer.**

***The small group component in the Journal will help Christians to encourage one another in their faith and prayer life as they share their own experiences in a group setting.**



Objective #2

The church will “re-awaken” to the awesome privilege and power of prayer as the royal priesthood of believers. As the church calls out to the Lord in dependency, listens for his voice of direction, and follows his assignments for ministry (no matter how humanly unrealistic they may be), the church will rediscover with joy what the Lord can do.

***The Why Pray? book will encourage the church to look beyond its own resources and the great challenges Christians face today to the One who has all the resources needed to meet these challenges. The Biblical examples, as well as, the current examples of what God is doing in India, will be a source of encouragement to spur the church on in prayer.**

***The Why Pray? Journal will introduce church members, and especially the leadership, to the lost spiritual discipline of listening for the Lord's still small voice of direction and spiritual renewal.**

***Sunday services and sermons can address specific needs in a local congregation with a call for concerted prayer. Current and local examples of answers to prayer can be shared either through sermons, or even in times of personal testimony, as another way to motivate the church to pray during the prayer emphasis and beyond.**

Objective #3

Christian families will be encouraged and equipped to develop their homes into Homes of Prayer Everyday in their communities.

***The Why Pray? book is designed to be read by families at home, promoting an occasion to restart family devotions. The questions after each day's reading will create lively discussions around a dinner table even for children and teens.**

***Families and individual Christians, will be encouraged to "spiritually tear down" their back-yard privacy fences and get acquainted with their neighbors. This even applies to the large fences we often construct around our cubicles at work.**



***The Why Pray? Journal equips families and individual Christians on how to effectively be an H.O.P.E in our communities by:**

Daring to set impossible goals

Preparing homes, our places of work, and communities through praying the B.L.E.S.S. prayer

Caring and establishing friendships

Sharing the seed of eternal life, God's Word, in contextual ways.

Objective #4

Christians will unite in prayer within their homes, churches and small groups in order to B.L.E.S.S. entire neighborhoods and cities through concentrated prayer movements asking the Lord to transform and reproduce new Homes Of Prayer Everyday as the "Gospel Seed" is planted in hearts.

***The local church will reestablish its Biblical vision and call to make disciples, taking the seeds out of the barn and planting it in the fields. Small groups may form and continue meeting as answers to prayer are shared and mutual encouragement given while the Gospel seed is being sown.**

***Other local churches will also mobilize and unite to B.L.E.S.S. entire communities and cities.**

How to implement the “Why Pray?” Prayer Emphasis in your Church

Step 1:

As a church leadership staff or; with a special planning committee involving the pastor, worship and outreach leaders, determine a date in the church calendar year when to start this emphasis. Here are some suggestions:

- a. Kick off the fall season using the “Why Pray?” materials. Many churches with small group ministries need new materials for the fall season. Some churches form new small groups or even new Sunday school classes in this part of the church calendar year. The Why Pray? Journal comes with six different small group sessions that can even be used for teen/adult education classes.
- b. Use this Church Prayer Emphasis during the Lenten season. We have included sample sermons and services in the Service Folder which were used by a church during the Lenten season.
- c. Start the campaign on Resurrection Sunday and end it on the Sunday following Christ’s Ascension (a 40 day period). Or, introduce the materials the week following Resurrection Sunday and conclude it on Pentecost Sunday.

We urge the planning staff or committee preparing this prayer emphasis to bathe both the planning and implementation with fervent prayer! All hell shutters with fear and contempt when God’s people pray. You will face opposition as Satan tries to discourage and cause divisions even among your planning team. Ask the members of your church to keep you in daily prayer before, during and well after this church renewal experience.

Step 2:

After you have decided when to start the Why Pray? Emphasis, you need to make decisions about what materials you are going to use and how you are going to use them. The following are examples from two different churches:

Trinity Church- (fall season)

Dates: Oct. 6- Nov. 17

- a. Sign-up for new small groups took place (September 8-29th)
- b. Bulletin announcements and the church web page highlight the upcoming “Why Pray? Prayer Emphasis during the month of September and throughout the 40 days.
- c. Sunday October 6, the Why Pray? Prayer Emphasis began with an introductory sermon on prayer. Church members were invited to pick-up a copy of the Why Pray? book and were asked to read Day 1.

***This church provided one free copy of the Why Pray? book to every household, but asked members (who were able) to purchase a downloadable version of the Journal from the Reaching America web site.**

- d. Small groups in this congregation meet weekly, many on Sunday nights. On this first Sunday night or weekly meeting, the small groups met and considered the theme of Day 1 by asking the questions found in the Why Pray? Journal. On the following Sundays of the Why Pray? Prayer Emphasis, the small groups used the questions provided on pages 16-17, 27-28, 39-40, 48-49, 59-60, 66-67 of the Why Pray? Journal.

(The same concept could be adapted for Sunday school classes)

- e. On the last Sunday of the emphasis, the worship service included two powerful testimonies from members of the congregation of how God answered their prayers in the past 40 days. Since it was near Thanksgiving Day, the congregation met for a meal that Sunday evening, and as part of the program for that evening meal, a representative of each small group was given an opportunity to share additional prayer answers with the congregation.

First Church-(Lenten season)

Dates: March 3-April 14

- a. Bulletin announcements and the church's web site highlighted the upcoming Why Pray? Prayer Emphasis and there was a huge display in the lobby of the church with samples of the Why Pray? Book and Journal (printed form from web site download).
- b. Sunday March 3, the Why Pray? Prayer Emphasis began with the morning message introducing the theme of prayer. Church members were invited to pick-up their copies of the Why Pray? book from the church lobby. Thirty copies of the Why Pray? Book and printed copies of the Journal were kept out for the church's Youth Group. The Youth Pastor wanted to teach the kids about prayer and how to have a personal devotional time with the Lord. He also used the small group discussion questions for their weekly small group gatherings.

***This congregation purchased enough Why Pray? books so that every household could have at least two copies. Members were asked to sign-up for any additional copies.**

- c. Small groups in this congregation meet once a month. They used the six sets of discussion questions for their monthly meetings which gave them materials to use through August. Even though members of the small groups had completed the 40 days along with the other members of the congregation, their small group times extended the emphasis of prayer past the 40 days.
- d. On Sunday April 14 (Resurrection Sunday) the pastor asked a member to share her experience with the congregation of what it was like to share the Resurrection message with a neighbor for whom she had been praying in the past 40 days.

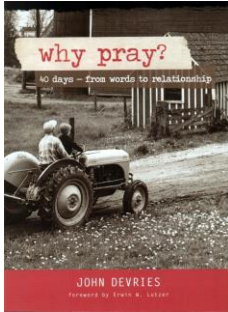
Step 3:

An important part of the “Why Pray?” Church Prayer Emphasis is follow-up and celebration. When members begin to experience opportunities to care for their neighbors and even share the gospel with them, they may need additional resources. It will also be important to celebrate what God is doing as a result of this special time of prayer during the 40 days, and well after, this church-wide experience.

Here are some helpful suggestions as you prepare:

- a. Make available to your congregation introductory Bible studies to give out to neighbors and co-workers so that the seed of the Gospel can be planted. Reaching America offers a number of different studies (see Materials for the Why Pray? Church Prayer Emphasis listed below) or you may choose to use some other discipleship courses for inquirers.
- b. Some churches have blogs on their web site or on their church Face Book pages. This blog could be used to both share what God is doing in the lives of participants as well as answers to prayer may be posted to celebrate and encourage the congregation during the 40 day emphasis.
- c. Place a huge map of the church’s parish or geographical boundaries in a key location. With markers or pins, mark the locations of the various H.O.P.E. on the map. This will encourage the church to B.L.E.S.S. every street or community in their geographical area.
- d. Pray that neighboring churches will also join in and cover specific geographical areas in the community with prayer. For example, in one sizable city in California, the ministerial association of that city was introduced to the “Why Pray?” Book and Journal and many used it in their congregations to encourage concerted prayer efforts around the city. Some churches even encouraged their members to place yard-signs in their front lawns highlighting their prayer emphasis for the city.
- e. As a congregation, begin planting the seed of the Gospel in a systematic and measurable way through Reaching America’s County by County initiative. See the Reaching America web site for more details.

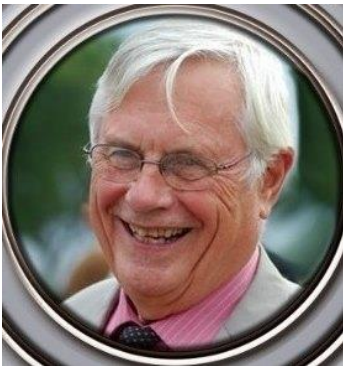
Materials for the “Why Pray?” Prayer Emphasis



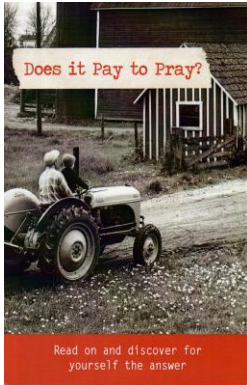
Why Pray? books. For orders of 10 or more books (\$5.00) plus shipping and handling. Orders may be placed by phone at (616) 554-7997 or online at www.reachingamerica.net



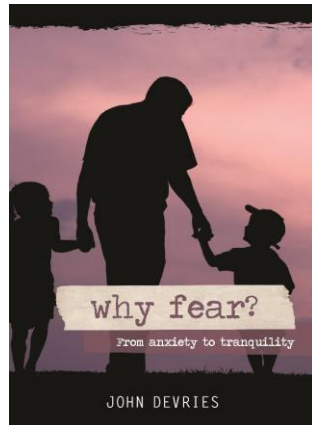
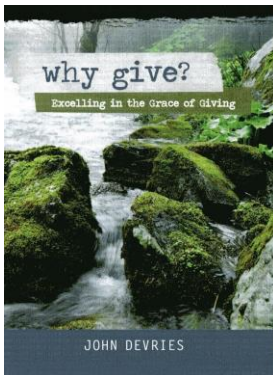
Why Pray? downloadable journal. See the resource page on the Reaching America.net web site. Churches and groups are permitted to photo-copy up to 10 copies per download.



Video segments. Author John DeVries gives 5-five minute video introductions for each week. These brief clips can be used during a worship service or in a small group setting to introduce the theme for each week. The DVD is \$5.00 and can be purchased from the Reaching America.net web site.



Introductory Bible Study. This glossy 23-page booklet contains the first four days of the Why Pray? book, as well as, additional Bible passages after each of the four days. The Bible passages introduce the four major themes of the Gospel message with a brief explanation. H.O.P.E can use this tool to share the gospel with their neighbors and co-workers. Get your neighbors thinking about prayer! A case of 100 booklets (\$50.00) can be ordered by phone or online.



Why Give? and Why Fear? Lead your congregation in experiencing the joy of giving and the peace of trusting the Lord as Shepherd with these additional 40-day devotionals by author John DeVries.

What is Reaching America Ministries?

Reaching America Ministries, formerly known as Project Philip Ministries, and our publishing division, **Ephesians 3:20 Publishing**, were founded by Dr. John DeVries, and, exemplify his missional principles based upon Acts 8.

1. Spiritual Experience- We believe that a growing relationship with the Lord Jesus, creates joy, peace, and provides a life purpose of longing to share this experience with others, and to explain the message of God's Word in clear and appropriate ways. (Acts 8:8,31)
2. Saturation Evangelism-We believe the Great Commission calls every Christian and every Church to blanket their neighborhoods and cities with the Gospel message until all hear the good news. (Acts 8:4; 19:10)
3. Spontaneous Expansion-We believe true discipleship creates new communities of believers in relationships that foster spiritual growth, selfless love, and exuberant joy shared with family, friends, and neighbors (Acts 8:39)

Who are we?

1. A non-denominational ministry working with a variety of evangelical churches, denominations, and city-wide groups to equip them to saturate their ministry area with prayer and God's Word.
2. A ministry with a vision to see every home in the USA prayed for and reached with the seed of the Gospel message.
3. A ministry providing proven material and methods used around the world for over 40 years.
4. A ministry that supports the vision by publishing inexpensive books, Bible studies, and outreach materials through its publishing division, Ephesians 3:20 Publishing.
5. A 501 c (3) non-profit ministry