

5y80™ Teams - The Strategic Prayer Initiative™ (SPI™)

*Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also, **you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done.** ¹If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Matt. 21:21-22*

Many of you would either like to improve your prayer lives, and/or you would like to help one or more others to grow in prayer. The 5y80™ Teams will give you one of your best chances of success, due to the SPI 5y80 Teams approach that puts the primary focus on: prayer for growth in prayer, goal setting, measurement and gentle accountability, versus meetings and materials. [Some might say the American church is long on information and short on execution. The 5y80 Teams are designed to drive success via measurement to prove execution.]

Real large scale prayer growth in the preponderance of our Scripture revering churches is possible; you will see this clearly spelled out in the survey responses you will get using the 14-question Short SPI Diagnostic Survey with your church, group, small group, friends, or acquaintances.

Here is how you can help this to begin happening:

1. You ask the leadership of your church if they would be willing to survey the congregation, one of the services, or a sub-group of the church, with the above mentioned survey [it takes eight (8) minutes for people to fill out the short survey]. Once the survey is done, you, with some others, will need to tabulate the results (this does take more time and effort the larger the church is). After the tabulations are done, you will create [don't worry we have tools that will help you] a Short Survey Results Report and get it into the hands of your leadership.

[Go to the Diagnostic Surveys button about halfway down on the Home Page of www.SPIprayer.org, and you will find a copy of the short SPI 14-Question Survey, and Instructions for how to implement it **with a group**. Using the 14-Question Survey **with individuals** is very simple, have them fill it out, look over the results yourself, then go over the results with the person and ask if they would be willing to improve?]

2. If the leaders find the results compelling and want to help the entire congregation, the people in a particular service, or one or more sub-groups of a church, to grow in prayer, we always recommend that they start out by going over the survey results with the people who took the survey. Furthermore, in tandem with making the results known, leadership should encourage those in the group to consider forming a 5y80 Team. The 5y80 methodologies can also be applied to already existing small groups. New 5y80 Teams can be as small as two (2) or as large as 12 and should typically be of the same gender. If the leaders decide not to go forward with 5y80 Teams, or one of the other SPI Launch options, the people who took the survey should still be copied in on their results. Additionally, we always suggest doing a grassroots launch, if your church's leadership, does not want to, or is not able to act.

[5y80™ stands for the God-sized goal of helping to empower 80% of the Christians in America to have, or develop, a "Good Prayer Life" and maintaining it for five years. This is not an unreasonable goal in light of the fact that research shows about 96% of Christians (surveyed Sunday morning) believe God wants them to have a "Good Prayer Life," as long as it is acknowledged that these "Good Prayer Lives" will look different for different individuals. Additionally, our Sunday morning research indicates that only about 28%, of **the multiple thousands** of people we have surveyed, currently have a good or a mature prayer life. The survey work also shows that the preponderance of those without a "Good Prayer Life" say they are not satisfied, and would like to improve, if it was not too difficult, or overly burdensome.]

3. Although the Strategic Prayer Initiative (SPI) has a number of other excellent tools, such as the PrayerCords System, it is the 5y80 Teams that will help you get started with the least amount of effort, and the least complexity.

[Do not forget, that the enemy does not want Christians to develop better prayer lives, and for sure not on a large scale. Therefore, **you must pray against, yet expect, spiritual opposition**. If certain individuals give you pushback that you didn't expect, ask the Lord to aid you and/or your leaders in resolving any *legitimate* concerns those pushing back might have. If the complaints do not appear to hold water, you might need to press ahead, despite some people stirring up unrest and discontent.]

The mission of helping to wake the sleeping giant i.e. the prayer lives of the preponderance of the Christian church, is so difficult, that starting with small beginnings is often imperative, especially when you are working for real long-term results, versus being just another flavor-of-the-month club. [*Being part of a process, not a program*, means consistently working towards meaningful long-term change, and resisting the temptation of just attempting the next trendy thing, for a while, and then eventually over time dropping it. However, 5y80 does have an ending point, and that is five years after you, your team, your group, or your church start the process. If 80% of all the sincere Christians in the country were to focus on and measure their GPL™ Levels ("Good Prayer Life" Levels) for five years, we might be attempting one of the greatest prayer experiments of all time. Wouldn't you like to see what God might do, if His people took up this basic, and Biblical, challenge?]

This actual progress toward transformation of peoples' lives is certainly part of what Jesus charged us with when ¹He said to go and "make" disciples, and to teach them to obey what He has commanded. In addition, ²this ongoing process of transformation is what is meant by Holy Scripture when it instructs us to not walk in the flesh, but to walk in the Spirit, ³to not be conformed into the ways of the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, ⁴taking every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ, and ⁵to submit ourselves to God, resisting the enemy so he will flee . . . (¹Matthew 28:18-20, ²Galatians 5:16-25, ³Romans 12:1-2, ⁴2 Corinthians 10:4-7, and ⁵James 4:6-10 respectively).

The following quote from religious polling expert George Barna, seems pretty harsh, but there is also some undeniable truth in it. The quote is from quite a few years ago, however it seems just as appropriate today, if not more so, then at the time it was written. In the years since the Barna quote was written, we do not currently know of any approach that has been able to drive significant prayer growth, relationship-with-the-Lord growth, and sanctification growth in large percentages of individuals, in multiple churches, using the same set of tools and methodologies (let alone in hundreds, or thousands, or tens-of-thousands of churches). Likewise, neither has it been done, at least so far, on a grassroots level.

SPI has been working for many years to be able to develop a set of tools, approaches, and methodologies that can effectively address some of the concerns raised in the following quote. We have been able to prove multiple successes. Now the operative questions are: can we keep doing it, and what might the Lord have instore? Whether it is with the churches or via the grassroots, it is *imperative* that the sleeper must awaken. [Did you know that the U.S. government, in the past, called for days of fasting and prayer for all able-bodied Christians in the country? If the government can't call the nation to serious, and ongoing prayer anymore (in the same way as in the past), shouldn't the pastors, and if not them, then you and me, as individuals? But if we are going to help large numbers to grow in prayer, it is futile to keep trying armed only with approaches that as of now, have not been able to move the majorities sitting in our churches (but have only affected the upper 5% to 15%, *at best*). We need new approaches to move the majority, and praying daily for each other's growth in prayer, while measuring our progress, are so fundamental, we are foolish to not attempt to use them, especially considering what is at stake, and the magnitude of the problem.]

"Related to this lack of laudable direction and courageous initiative is the failure of ministries to measure the outcomes that matter. Churches – and, by extension, the people associated with them – continue to evaluate the success or failure of a congregation and of individual lives according to factors that do not do justice to the life, death, resurrection and teachings of Jesus Christ. Churches measure attendance, donations, numbers of staff, numbers of programs and square footage as their primary indicators of spiritual health and growth. Jesus did not die on the cross for such incidental outcomes. Individual believers, taking their cues from their church, measure their spiritual vitality on the basis of the frequency of their church attendance, whether they donate money to the ministry, and their general sense of personal "goodness" on a day-to-day basis. Again, such measures insult Christ. The axiom "you get what you measure" is certainly true for the Christian body in the U.S. Until we start to think about, pursue, and measure genuine spiritual transformation in individual lives, we will continue to get what we've been getting, as unsatisfying as that is, for years to come." [The State of the Church Report 2005 by George Barna]

4. Following are the central components of being part of a 5y80 Team:

- a. Prospective 5y80 Team Members ask themselves if they believe that millions more American Christians obtaining and maintaining “Good Prayer Lives” would be something that could help our country, please our Heavenly Father, and assist more of our family, friends, and loved ones to actually make it to heaven?
- b. If they answered yes to the above questions, then they need to ask themselves (if they do not currently have a “Good Prayer Life”), would they be willing to work towards having one? If they already have a GPL™ (“Good Prayer Life”), would they be willing to help at least one or two others who don’t have a “Good Prayer Life” to work towards achieving one? [Yes, we do make materials available that help answer the question what makes up a “Good Prayer Life.”]
- c. The structure of a 5y80 Team (below) is how we utilize powerful practices to attain growth:
 - i. Daily prayer for the whole team (by name), asking the Holy Spirit to help everyone on the team to grow more effective in fervent, righteous, and strategic prayer.
 - ii. You or one member on your 5y80 Team needs to become the Team Administrator. The administrator checks in with each member regularly and asks them two basic accountability questions:
 - 1) How would you self-rate your prayer life since the last time I checked in with you?
Poor, Fair, Good, or Mature
 - 2) How would you self-rate your personal relationship with the Lord since the last time I checked in with you? (This second question is optional but is very helpful.)
Poor, Fair, Pretty Deep, Deep, or Extremely Deep
 - 3) The Team Administrator should be asking themselves and the other team member(s) these two questions either: weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. The Team Administrator can get these questions answered using whatever medium they find the most helpful (social media, text, email, phone, or face-to-face, etc.). However, bear in mind that starting with a weekly check-in is by far the best place to start, for driving positive results. [In certain situations, you will not be able to get serious progress if you don’t measure weekly, or at least start out measuring weekly.]

Additionally, the Team Administrator and the team should actually try to get together personally at least once a month, and if that is not possible on a specific month, they can check-in on the phone (either on a group call, or individually), or by social media, etc. However, interpersonal interaction does tend to facilitate more empathy for each other, allows updating each other on some personal prayer needs, and is very important to the development of new relationships (Proverbs 27:17). Face-to-face times can also aid a team in developing greater trust bonds with each other, and hopefully, over time, greater relational transparency.

Finally, the Team Administrator keeps track of the team’s responses to the questions, each time the 5y80 Team meets, as well as whenever they have their progress tracked via the two questions (I. Prayer Life and II. Relationship with the Lord) by social media, text, email, or phone, etc. Eventually the answers can become part of GPL™ Level tracking in churches, as well as on a grassroots level, and may eventually be folded into GPL on-going tracking in the nation overall. Team Administrators can log the responses of the team’s prayer life and depth of relationship levels in whatever fashion works well for them. However, there is a **Long-Yellow Card** that helps tracking of SPI Small Groups, and part of this card was also designed to be adaptable for 5y80 Teams. The Team Administrators will find it very helpful to use this document for tracking the 5y80 Team questions. This document can be downloaded under The PrayerCords System button at www.SPIprayer.org [for your purposes feel free to print this out on plain paper]. The part of the card you will use says:

5Y80™ Participants Tracking (If 80% of all the true Christians in the U.S. had a good prayer life for five years, the nation would change.)

4. (I.) How would you self-rate Your Prayer Life? 5. (II.) How would you self-rate Your Relationship with the Lord?

[for 5y80 Teams, only the two questions listed above will be used]

A weekly conference call is available on Thursday nights to get questions answered. Information can be found under the “Contact” menu at SPIprayer.org

****5y80 Teams - The Strategic Prayer Initiative™ (SPI)**

PrayerCords™ and SPI™ Small Groups are excellent tools; nevertheless, if you want to help others, (and yourself if needed) in a simpler, easier, and more streamlined fashion, we highly recommend you form your own 5y80 Team or get on someone else's 5y80 Team.

Here's how:

- 1) Make a commitment to yourself, that if you already have a "Good Prayer Life" that you will maintain it. However, if you don't currently have a "Good Prayer Life," you will start to work on developing one, and not stop working on it until you are able to actually reach it, and then to maintain it.
- 2) Help at least one or two others, who do not have a "Good Prayer Life," to develop one. The way we recommend you do this is as follows:
 - a. Prayerfully give one friend or acquaintance, **of your gender**, the 14-Question SPI Survey and see how they feel about their prayer life and whether or not they want to improve. If they want to get better, ask them if they would like to be part of your 5y80 Team (These teams can be as small as just two (2) individuals, or as large as 12 individuals, or anything in between. However, a total of three (3), in many circumstances, is an ideal size – See Ecclesiastes 4:12). [New 5y80 Teams should always be of the same gender.]
 - b. If they don't want to be on a team, or if you want more than just a total of two on your team, repeat the survey process with additional potential team members. Once you have picked the second member of your team, you and the second member should discuss and agree on a possible third member, before that third member is approached. People feeling compatible together is especially important!

[To obtain a copy of the short 14-Question Survey, go to the Diagnostic Surveys button about halfway down on the Home Page of www.SPIprayer.org. This can also be found under the Tools dropdown menu.]
 - c. Explain to them that you will take on the personal commitment of praying for them each and every day for the Holy Spirit to help them to grow in fervent, righteous, and strategic prayer (and if willing, they should also pray this daily prayer for you, and any other members of the team).
 - d. Their responsibility will be:
 - i. to consciously try to move towards a "Good Prayer Life," each day, and
 - ii. to let you know how they are doing, on a regular basis (this should be done weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly, but checking in more frequently leads to more rapid advancement).
 - e. Additionally, you (or whoever is the Team Administrator), will be responsible to make the regular contact with them, and ask them, "since that last time I checked in with you, how would you self-rate your prayer life? Would you say it has been: **Poor, Fair, Good, or Mature?**" (The answer you are working towards is Good, or Mature, either is fine.)
 - f. As an option (but a strongly recommended one) we encourage the Team Administrator to also ask the team members, "since that last time I checked in with you, how would you self-rate their personal relationship with the Lord? **Poor, Fair, Pretty Deep, Deep, or Extremely Deep?**"
 - g. We do make available copies of what we call the **Long-Yellow Card**. This card is designed for use with SPI Small Groups, and PrayerCords, but can also be helpful in tracking/documenting the Prayer Life Question, and the Personal Relationship with the Lord Question. However, using it is not necessary as long as you document the responses in some way, but it is important that you document, and save, the teams' progress over time.

- h. If you think it would be helpful, you should feel free to make your team aware of various SPI prayer guides, and prayer tools, such as Love to Pray - A 40-Day Devotional for Deepening Your Prayer Life by Dr. Alvin VanderGriend. You should also feel free to recommend other helpful Christian prayer materials you personally are already aware of or might find out about in the future. **Although, you should tell them they are not obligated to more than telling you how they are doing,** each time you check in with them. [However, the one page (2-sided) document entitled “What Does It Take to Have a Good Prayer Life” found at the bottom of the list of Downloads under The PrayerCords System tabs at www.SPIprayer.org can be helpful, and is not overly complicated. The Long-Yellow Card can also be downloaded from here.]

We do, however, strongly encourage you to offer them a monthly copy of the **Strategic Prayer Data Sheet** (a.k.a. **the Pink Sheet** monthly prayer guide). These Pink Sheet guides have 75% new content each month, and only take one minute a day to pray (with 2 or 3 exceptions, that may take two minutes). These guides are often called Pink Sheets due the fact that when using this guide in a paper version, we try to print them on pink paper, since it is one of the two easiest colors to recognize and locate. These monthly Pink Sheets are a very powerful tool to help your team move forward in their prayer lives, with an extremely small time commitment. Pink Sheets give the user a new, and very strategic, addition to their daily prayer lives, but they do not add a heavy load to their already very busy lives. Nevertheless, they are completely optional.

- i. Lastly, the SPI Development Team is working on a helpful way that you can use to track how well you and your 5y80 Team is doing in developing and maintaining “Good Prayer Lives” (GPLs), and also possibly allow us to one day be able to track GPL Level progress on a national basis.

****5y80™ stands for the God-sized goal of helping to empower 80% of the Christians in America to have, or develop, a “Good Prayer Life” and maintaining it for five years.** This is not an unreasonable goal in light of the fact that research shows about 96% of the multiple thousands of professing Christians, we have surveyed Sunday mornings, believe God wants them to have a “Good Prayer Life,” as long as it is acknowledged that these “Good Prayer Lives” will look different for different individuals. Our Sunday morning research indicates that only about 28% of people we have surveyed currently have a good or a mature prayer life. The survey work also shows that the preponderance of those without a “Good Prayer Life” say they are not satisfied, and would like to improve, if it was not too difficult, or overly burdensome.

Following are some Scriptures and thoughts concerning various truths about prayer and Christian discipleship:

Acts 11:26c --“The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch” (Christians and disciples are synonymous). [In the New Testament the words Christian or Christians are used three (3) times, while the words disciple or disciples are used 266 times. So, it stands to reason, that Christians are meant to be disciples, and if we call ourselves actual Christians, we should also call ourselves actual disciples.]

Luke 11:1a --“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of His disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray” (Growing more effective in prayer is something that is normal for a disciple/Christian.) Ephesians 6:18 --“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all of the Lord’s people.” Colossians 4:2-3 --“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, that we proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.” 1 Timothy 2:1-3 --“I urge...that petitions, prayers, intercessions...be made for...those in authority” i.e. the Supreme Court Justices, the leaders of nations, etc.

*Mathew 28:18-20 --“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” In the Greek, the word “make” is the imperative verb i.e. an order or command. As we make disciples and teach them to do what Jesus Christ asks of them, one of those things is to **teach them to pray**. Furthermore, and concerning prayer, we must also teach them the Word of God, because His will is in His Word, and if we pray in His will, He promises to answer. (See Appendix F of Love to Pray.)*

*1 John 5:14-1 --“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that **if we ask anything ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, He hears us.** And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask—**we know that we have what we asked of Him.**”*

*James. 5:16-18 --“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. **The effective prayer of a righteous [person]...can accomplish much.** Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit.”*