

Problems with the Prayer Team?

I appreciate the faithful ministry of our prayer team very much. Unless the Lord breathes out the fire, all our efforts remain a wet pile of wood!

I do want to clarify my thoughts about prayer in relation to our services. I do not think that we need to 'synchronize our watches' with God's plan and our prayers. In other words, I do not think that prayers 'at that moment' we are having our service has any determining factor of His blessing on the service. My preference would be that our 'prayer team' meet before the service begins, and then be present in the service (prayerfully, as I hope we all are). I think the prayer team members should be in the service for several reasons;

1. God's primary calling for His children is to be worshippers not workers.
2. The preaching of the Word is one of the most important instruments the Holy Spirit uses in the salvation and sanctification of God's people.
3. The 'prayer team' of the church is key to its ministry and there are many things in the life of the church that are communicated in the worship service – both in announcements from the front, in the sermon, and in the chatting in the seats. It is unfortunate that prayer team members are often 'out of the loop' with what is going on in the life of the church.
4. Prayer team members are prayerful people and we need them most during the hour of worship in the seats with other people. You are the most natural people to reach out to those near them, believer and unbeliever, who have come to the 'house of the Lord' but have not yet 'met Him' or 'left their burdens' at His feet. Instead of ten fired up prayers praying with each other in the back, I am sad we don't have those ten people throughout Ginko hall ready to pray with all our people before and after the services. And that is going to happen much more naturally when you have met, and sat with, those people during the services.

5. Prayer team members praying by themselves during service sends a message to us 'average worshippers' that prayer is for special folks, almost like monks in the monastery.

Again, I am not against your team gathering for focused prayer for our church and its service – I crave it!! But I think it can be done at 9 am, or 8 am, or earlier!! Whenever!

But I do hope you as a prayer team consider my five concerns about being in the service of worship with your whole church family. There are lots of 'other meetings' for other vital aspects of our church life. But I think THE meeting of the church in worship at 10 and 6 should be more important than all those other meetings.

That said, and for the reason that I started this letter in response to having communion elements taken out of the worship hall to the place the prayer team is having their own meeting during the service, my answer is no. Communion means community with God and His people. The ZGC prayer team is a vital part of the ZGC family/community. If those who pray would like to be served communion, then please join us for the worship service.

In Him, Mark