

- DON'T preach. Pray! Again, remember that you are talking to God on our behalf not talking to us on God's behalf.
- DO practice the prayer aloud. This allows you to edit what you're saying.

### ***on the night***

- DO arrive early for church to let the meeting leader know you are there.
- DO make sure that the microphone is well positioned for your prayer posture so that we can hear you loudly and clearly.
- DON'T mumble.
- DON'T just read. While it's important to write out what you are going to pray, make sure you pray with meaning and not simply with 'reading'.
- DON'T pray in a funny prayer voice. Pray as yourself, with your own voice, not someone else's. Don't try and sound 'spiritual', impressive or profound: we want you to pray in your normal voice. Don't say 'holy' as a very spiritual 'hoe-ly'.
- DON'T use filler words like 'just'. Praying "um, we just, like, wanna thank you because we just..." is tiresome, annoying and shows a lack of preparation. Again, writing out the prayer will help with expression.

### **an exercise**

*Take a short portion of Scripture and turn it into a prayer that you might pray on behalf of & for nightchurch.*

eg. Ephesians 4.1-6; 4.20-24; 4.25-32; 5.1-7; 5.15-21; 5.22-33; 6.1-4



## **leading public prayer**

### **an important ministry**

***“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 the saints.”*** (Ephesians 6:18 NIV)

Leading your church family in prayer is a very important ministry.

Leading in prayer has a primary “vertical component”. You are praying to the Lord God our heavenly Father on our behalf. However, it also a secondary “horizontal component”. You are encouraging us with what you are praying and how you are praying it.

It should be a ministry that we take seriously out of love for the Lord and love for his people.

## a general model

One helpful way of structuring public prayers is to think of the acronym 'ACTS'.

### **Adoration (or Praise):**

We are addressing the sovereign ruler of the universe (not just our mate) who has become our heavenly Father through the saving work of the Lord Jesus, his Son and is present with us by his Spirit. Adoration is being caught up in the greatness of God and his deeds (Psalm 150).

### **Confession:**

Once we recognise that God is perfect and holy, we must acknowledge what we are like and 'come clean'. Remember: don't be shallow about sin. It is real, it is destructive, and offensive. It is good to be specific about sin. (1 John 1:9).

### **Thanksgiving:**

The heart of a prayer of thanksgiving goes beyond understanding God's gracious movement to us in creation and redemption. It is moving back to God with gratitude and a desire to give Him delight. In Christ we always have every reason for profound & deep thanksgiving. (Ephesians 5.20)

### **Supplication (or Requests):**

This is where we ask the Lord to supply our needs and the needs of others. Here we express our dependence on God and so glorify him. We pray for God working in people's lives and in the events of the world, for our lives to grow in Christ-likeness, for the problems and challenges to Christ-likeness in our daily living. Our requests should reflect the sovereign care of our Lord God. Our heavenly Father is big so we can pray big! (Ephesians 3.20-21)

## do's & don'ts

### **in preparation**

- DO prepare. The importance of this ministry requires you to take it seriously and to prepare properly for it.
- DO be clear what part your prayer is playing in the overall meeting of God's people (eg. is it preparing us to hear God's Word, responding to God's Word, relating God's Word to issues in the church family/world?).
- DO think through a clear structure for your prayer. It's best to write out the prayer in full so that you start well, finish well, and are clear in between! The ACTS model (or part of it) may be helpful in this.
- Do think about using a part of scripture to help you in praying. Taking God's word to us and turning it back to him in prayer is very helpful and adds a depth to our prayers.

### **in writing**

- DO consider writing down your prayer either in full or in part. This is not less spiritual than praying on the spot. Taking the ministry of leading prayer seriously & wanting to serve God & his people well is very pleasing to the Holy Spirit.
- DON'T prepare a prayer that's too long. Writing out your prayer will enable you to be clear and concise and enable us to say a hearty "Amen".
- DO pray in the plural. Say "we" rather than "I". You're leading our prayer. Saying "our" rather than "my", "us" rather than "me" helps us pray with you. And DO say a clear "Amen" at the end so that we can add ours.
- DO remember to address God as "you" rather than in the 3rd person. e.g. a written prayer point asking "God to humble us" should be prayed as "we ask YOU to humble us". Remember you're talking to God, not to the congregation!