

Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church (Building Healthy Churches)

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What is the role of corporate prayer in the church?

Prayer is as necessary to the Christian as breathing is to the human body-but it often doesn't come quite as naturally. In fact, prayer in the church often gets subtly pushed to the side in favor of pragmatic practices that promise tangible results.

This book focuses on the necessity of regular prayer as a central practice in the local church-awakening us to the need and blessing of corporate prayer by examining what Jesus taught about prayer, how the first Christians approached prayer, and how to prioritize prayer in our congregations.

John Onwuchekwa

(MA, Dallas Theological Seminary) serves as pastor of Cornerstone Church in Atlanta, Georgia.

Pastor, Cornerstone Church, Atlanta, Georgia; author, *Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church*

"I don't know if I've ever read a book on prayer that left me feeling the entire range of human emotion-until reading John Onwuchekwa's *Prayer*. Here is a human book-beautiful, poignant, funny, gritty, and pastoral. This book is better than a correction to our often languid prayer lives. There's no guilt-based manipulation. Onwuchekwa writes like a fellow traveler, and as a fellow traveler knows what travelers need most: refreshment. Here's a thirst-quenching encouragement to join together in seeking our great God. I pray every church reads *Prayer* together; it will change our congregations. Here's a warm invitation to the entire church, beckoning the people of God to the wonders of prayer."

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Thabiti Anyabwile,

Pastor, Anacostia River Church, Washington, DC; author, *What Is a Healthy Church Member?*

"*Prayer* is an excellent book by my dear friend John Onwuchekwa. It is biblically and theologically rich. It is also real and honest. Want to get a corporate prayer meeting started in your church? This book is a very good start."

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Daniel L. Akin,

President, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

"Everyone remembers that auntie or uncle who hushed our fears with the words, 'Baby, we just gon' pray on that.' John Onwuchekwa is that voice for today, calling the church back to one of the simplest and most powerful tools in her arsenal-the habit of communal prayer. He doesn't merely want to reawaken our atrophied prayer muscles; he invites us into

the much harder work of reorienting our priorities so that they're more in line with God's. Onwuchekwa's call to return to such "first things" is an excellent start to seeing Christian communities moving in the same kingdom direction."

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K. A. Ellis,

Cannada Fellow for World Christianity, Reformed Theological Seminary

"There's likely something missing in your church, something you haven't thought much of and likely haven't even noticed. It's prayer. Onwuchekwa shares compelling, insightful, and biblical reasons why corporate prayer should be a priority for the church. What a privilege it is to pray together as a family—this is the vision Onwuchekwa casts for us. This book has the potential to transform not only individuals, but also relationships and the culture in our churches. I highly recommend it."

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Trillia Newbell,

author, *Sacred Endurance: If God Is for Us; and God's Very Good Idea*

"The early church moved forward in power because they were a praying church (Acts 4:31). If we today are so proficient at ministry mechanics that we can succeed without power from on high, we have failed. But if our churches today will heed this compelling call to prayer by John Onwuchekwa, we too will prevail against all earthly powers, for God's glory!"

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Ray Ortlund,

Pastor to Pastors, Immanuel Church, Nashville, Tennessee

"This is a thought-provoking book about the life of prayer in the local church. Onwuchekwa builds a theological framework and then gives tangible and practical solutions for fleshing it out. I've had the privilege of working with John over the last decade, and I've seen no one better able to take lofty concepts and present them in a way that is palatable for the body of Christ. This book is an outworking of his gift. He takes biblical principles and communicates them in an effective way. His work on this subject is a gift to the church."

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Dhati Lewis,

Lead Pastor, Blueprint Church, Atlanta, Georgia; Executive Director of Community Restoration, North American Mission Board; author, *Among Wolves: Disciple-Making in the City*

"What more could be needed by our churches than a revival of gospel-centered spirituality? And what more could we do to experience this revival than to recommit to nourishing communion with our Father through prayer? This is why I'm thankful for this exceptional book by John Onwuchekwa. It is an accessible, practical, and relatable guide to the depths of the enormous, glorious privilege of speaking to the God of the universe."

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Jared C. Wilson,

Director of Content Strategy, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; Director, Pastoral Training Center, Liberty Baptist Church, Kansas City, Missouri; author, Supernatural Power for Everyday People

"I have a lot to say about this little book, because it's so good. In fact, I think this is one of the best books in this series. Brief and well written, this book by pastor John Onwuchekwa looks especially at two sections of the Gospels—the Lord's Prayer, and Jesus's prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. Onwuchekwa shares significant observations that seem intuitive, but are also surprising. It is well illustrated, biblically faithful, and theologically accurate. This book is useful to think not only about when we should pray, but also about how we should pray, and even what we should pray about. It reintroduces us to the ignored topic of praying together at church. Hope-giving and inspiring, specific and practical, the whole book is sweetened by touches of humor. You and others could benefit from investing your time in reading this small book on such a grand topic."

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Mark Dever,

Senior Pastor, Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, DC; President, 9Marks

Other Books

Colossians, The New Testament Library offers authoritative commentary of every book and major aspect of the New Testament, providing fresh translations based on the best available ancient manuscripts, critical portrayals of the historical world in which the books were created, careful attention to their literary design, and a theologically perceptive exposition of the biblical text. C. Clifton Black, M. Eugene Boring, and John T. Carroll are series editors. The letter to the Colossians offers great insight into the faith, life, and problems of an early Christian church. Understanding this letter to be one of Paul's prison epistles but aware of the differences between this and his other writings, Jerry Sumney shows how the church struggled with expressing its new faith in the diverse settings of the Greco-Roman world. Paying special attention to the ways of forgiveness and salvation through the power of Christ, this fine commentary offers compelling new insights into Colossians expansive Christology and expectant eschatology.

Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ . A Commentary Jerry L . Sumney . The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and The Epistle to Titus, The Epistle to the Hebrews. Vol. 11 of The Interpreter's Bible ."