



Culture of Prayer Conference

Session 1: Telling TPR's Story

I. **My Part in this Story:**

God has done many things in order to speak to, address and call this group to His purposes with promises to enable us. Now that it's clear that everything that has happened has been all about us as a corporate people I can now tell my part as the vessel that He chose to use in casting vision for this calling.

A. My Salvation:

At 18 years old I was an atheist and because of a recent high school break up I was depressed. My best friend had just started walking with the Lord and he told me I was too arrogant to ask God for help but that if I would pray God would respond. Not because I wanted God but because he told me I wouldn't do it I went home that night and prayed for the first time. I felt the Holy Spirit descend into the room and felt instant peace, and began to seek God. I heard the gospel a few weeks later and gave my life to Jesus and that night I told Him that I would serve Him with all the energy that I used to serve myself.

B. Going to Africa:

One more important thing the Lord was doing during that time was teaching me to pray into far off purposes. I really felt like the Lord was saying that I would be going to Africa to minister there in a radical way. I prayed about it daily for three years before the release. When I went, I went with pretty much nothing and I saw God move in the wildest ways and throughout this whole process I was learning a lot about how the Lord leads me and I grew in hearing His voice and following Him.

C. Coming Back from Africa:

My time in Africa will forever be precious to me, it was a marking season, it was a powerful and faith growing experience. After only three months however I felt like the Lord might be speaking to me about coming back to America, I was determined to obey God no matter what He wanted but I really didn't like this idea. I wanted to make sure this was really Him so I prayed and asked Him to give someone in America a dream about me coming home early and that if I was right about the timing of coming home being now for Him to make everything in the dream the color red. Within a week I heard from an old friend back home that she had had a dream of me coming home early and that everything in the dream was red.

D. Season of Waiting:

When I got back from Africa I was surprised by how quiet the Lord was, I went from front line missions to being bored and a season of waiting very much unsure of what God had for me next. I had hoped it was back to the mission field

but I was without direction. So I did what I knew to do, I loved Jesus and disciplined some people as best as I could.

E. Buying a House in Arlington:

The last thing that I wanted to do was to set down roots in America, so when the Lord gave me clear prophetic leading to buy a house I was pretty uncomfortable with that. But He made it clear and then provided in so many ways to make happen. Not knowing what else to do I decided to dedicate that house to be a place of ministry and moved into it in February of 2005.

F. Things Began to Transition Quickly:

The first week that I moved into the house I started a weekly Bible that really had some life on it. It was only a few months later the Lord spoke about me helping start a church plant and then just a few months after that the Lord gave me the most formative word of my life related to The Prayer Room and to what I would effectively pour the rest of my life into.

II. The Formative Word:

While we have been given a great many prophetic words over the years the ones I'm sharing in this section have really formed who we are. These words have continually been a source of encouragement for us and have served to prescribe our overall direction. Before we received these confirming words I had already begun casting vision about what I felt like the Lord's purposes were for us as a ministry long term.

A. The Call to Daily Prayer Meetings:

It all began on a Monday afternoon in September in 2005 when I was sitting at home on my couch reading a book with no sense that the Lord was up to anything. I got the shock of my life that afternoon when the Lord spoke to me out of nowhere and gave me the most life-altering directive. As soon as I heard it I was confident that my life was forever shifting and that I had just received my mandate while I had no idea what any of this really meant.

"Start a daily prayer meeting tomorrow morning at 5am and don't stop until I come back (September 12th, 2005)."

B. My Response:

I had never thought of such a thing, because I was trying to get back into the mission field. I knew nothing about corporate prayer, 5am sounded like a real burden, and I couldn't imagine what this would look like when we tried to do it daily. I wasn't connecting this call to the idea of a house of prayer at all at this point. I just knew that I was on the ground under the power of God finding myself saying, "Yes, yes, yes, Lord, I will do it."

C. We Started the Next Day:

After I was able to get up off of the floor I spent the evening sending out emails and making phone calls. I went to bed that night unsure exactly what would happen in the morning. So, I was shocked the next morning when I heard 11 rowdy 20 year olds knocking at my door at 4:45am saying "let us in." And so began daily prayer meetings in my living room.

D. Daily Since September 2005:

The Lord was setting me up for a lifetime of early morning interactions with Him, something I have grown to love, need and be ever so grateful to have in my life. Since that morning in September 2005 I've been in 5am prayer meetings seven days a week if I'm in town and healthy.

E. Our Wild Ride:

Since the Lord first called us to start daily prayer meetings, we have been on a wild ride of a journey with the Lord. He has led us each step of the way and we have seen many miracles, as well as our fair share of letdowns and difficulties. We are grateful, however, for our past and the way that He has led us through.

III. A Walk Through TPR's History:

These last however many years have been full of learning, hard lessons, fun moments, leadership blunders and victories and ups and downs of every sort. I want to share with you our story to encourage you and show you how doable it is to build and keep building the house of prayer as long as there is a core group of people that won't quit. That's probably the best way to describe our journey, a full-on refusal to quit, I think as long as you have that you'll be fine.

A. The Living Room Days:

It is important to understand that at this stage everything related to TPR was happening in my living room. It was real, but without the lens of faith it looked so weak that it was easy to dismiss. We had no money and no credibility; it was very difficult for people to take it seriously because of how small it was. We began daily prayer meetings at 5am seven days a week and soon started a second daily prayer meeting at night. Perhaps a year or so later we began our weekly Encounter service right there in the living room. It was during this season that I appointed TPR's first leadership team, began raising support, and went full time as director.

B. The Give Campaign:

Our little community was made up of less than 20 people, most of whom were poor college students and young twenty-somethings trying to get out of debt. We proposed a give campaign that would require us to engage our faith to get the Lord involved. We asked everyone if they would be willing to make a commitment with the Lord about their finances for the next several months. We all agreed to ask the Lord to multiply that offering in our personal lives and to give us great amounts of increase and then any unexpected money we received we would give toward the new facility. We asked for the home owners in our midst to get mineral rights checks and for the government to give us money, people to get raises and for the Lord to give me a \$10k check. The Lord responded powerfully and in many cases people permanently increased their monthly income in significant ways. We began asking the Lord for crazy specific things and we saw Him do every last one of them.

C. The Livermore Days:

We moved into a house in a residential neighborhood on Livermore Drive. We began implementing the harp and bowl model and we started having actual worship teams. This is also when we transitioned into two-hour prayer meetings and we added a third prayer set each day. We really began to get

organized; we started internships, held our first 24 hour prayer rally, and began holding other events. Things were fun, small but sweet, and the Lord was really with us in that season; there was a real sense of the Lord's presence in our meetings. During our time at Livermore, we grew our community from about 20 people total involved to about 35 committed to weekly prayer meetings with perhaps twice that number coming around to some degree. It was also during this season that we began to grow; we started getting visitors pretty regularly and people started joining prayer meetings and as a result quickly became family. We held our first citywide conference and soon after hosted our first Onething regional conference with IHOPKC.

D. The Pioneer Days:

When we moved into the 939 W. Pioneer Parkway facility our cost increased to over \$10k per month and with only about \$3500 in monthly pledges. The Lord somehow miraculously sustained us for three years. We continued to grow our conferences as well as we launched our Forerunner Equipping Center and took our internships to the next level. During this season we saw people saved, healed, and many lives transformed and we grew to have a real citywide feel, with people committed to be in prayer meetings from all over the region. It was here where we saw a significant increase in the prophetic in our community, expanded the concept of staff, and developed a real sense of family. In the first two years that we were at Pioneer Parkway, we grew to nearly 100 on the Sacred Trust.

E. Prince of Peace:

The Lord made it clear to our whole leadership team that He wanted us to move out of Pioneer because He was planning to take us through a season of pruning. We decided not to sign the lease renewal and immediately the door opened for us to move into a local church that we had relationship with, Prince of Peace Church in Arlington. As promised, this was a very difficult season for us and the week that we moved we lost half of the community and two thirds of the finances that were sustaining us. While our hosts were very kind to us and gave us an incredible deal on rent, the Lord used this season to bring TPR through incredible disappointments, difficulty, and pruning. We were sustained by the fact that our missionary staff doubled at about the same time and we gained the strength of having externs begin to come during this season. Most of us remember this time as a very low point for us as a ministry, but it was also during this season that we somehow miraculously increased to 18 hours a day of live worship. We had to shut down virtually everything that we did except for our prayer meetings and our weekly Encounter Services.

F. Moving to Nora:

The Lord began to speak about another move, this time into our own space. We saw the Lord do so many miracles to pull off the move and over a year after He spoke that, we finally settled into our new place. In our new home we began to see new life again, visitors coming in daily, programs back up and running, people being touched, and lives transformed. We're getting back to a place where our events are fruitful and well-attended and where things have really started clicking. While we didn't see much numeric growth after moving into the Nora facility, ministry started to be fun again and we saw the favor of the Lord resting on us in clear ways.

G. Life on Base Now:

Now that we've been settled into our own building for a good number of years and we have really been able to plant and root, but it's really important to me that you understand that for the first 10 years of our story we were able to have a vibrant house of prayer reality long before we owned our own space. So while it's true that we have 20 hours of live worship each day now and a staff of around 40 we got to 18 hours a day and almost 30 staff with no building. The same can be said about our schools, services and local church participation, while I'm very grateful for all of those we had significant participation before this current season because we were committed to a cause not to needing things in our circumstances to look a certain way.

IV. The Prayer Room's Core Messages:

We believe the whole Bible; we believe in its inerrancy and its practical nature for the daily life of the believer. Beyond that, there are a few messages from the Bible that we as a ministry are called to herald and embrace in a focused way. These three core messages are then reflected in what we teach on, how we prioritize our time and what direction we go as a ministry. These messages define what we stand for and what we call people to with great intentionality.

A. Intimacy:

The intimacy message discusses the depths of relationship that has been made available to us with God. Many people have a wrong perspective based on negative thoughts about how God sees them. This keeps people from approaching God in prayer because of how they think He feels about them. Our message is that God loves us, He likes us, and He enjoys us. He wants friendship with us and He desires to draw near to us in intimate fellowship. The Song of Solomon gives us a perfect word picture of how the Lord in His forgiveness permits us to draw near to Him even though we are flawed and sinful.

"I am dark, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem (SS. 1:5 NKJV)."

B. Urgency:

When we use the term "urgency" we are really talking about the subjects that urge people to pray because of imminent threat. Mostly we are talking about the end times and the difficulties that will accompany that time frame. Having understanding of the end times has a powerful effect on the human heart to draw us into the place of prayer at a deeper level and make sense of the hour we are living in. We believe that God is raising up forerunner messengers now who will have living understanding later. If the Church is not prepared for what is coming, then there are real consequences to face. For this reason we pray and we study so that we will be ready.

"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap (Lk. 21:34)."

"The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray (1Pe. 4:7)."

C. The Worth of Christ:

Jesus is worthy of all our adoration, love, hearts, souls, and devotion. We believe according to the scriptures that He is worthy of literal night and day prayer. When we feel and understand this glorious reality, we are far more likely to stay the course in the place of prayer because we are able to recognize that nothing in our lives can change the reality of Christ's worth. He is worthy of praise and intercession no matter what may be going on in our personal lives. We are laboring towards building Jesus a night and day worship sanctuary in our city because in heaven they never stop saying "Holy, holy, holy." This is a constant declaration of His immutable value in Heaven and we want to see that same expression on the earth as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10).

"Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come (Re. 4:8)."