

New Ways to Pray

Congregations are often told that they are the senders, the ones to give and to pray. Yet frequently, apart from passing the offering plate and poorly attended Wed PM prayer meetings, Joe Pew-Sitter has no clue how to be involved praying for missions.

Every other year, Calvary Church holds an all-church concert of prayer during Global Missions Week. All other ministries Wednesday night family ministries become part of this all-church event in the sanctuary. Below are two different concerts of prayer.

Praying for least reached peoples.

The theme for the evening was "A Light Shining in the Darkness." Everyone received a miniature two inch flashlights as they entered. A printed prayer guide introduced four groups and listed some things to pray about. A separate booklet was designed for children that required listening to the video for the answers to puzzles. Families sat together so the family prayed together. Others came with their small group. And of course, there were those who just came and took their seat. They prayed with others sitting near them.

A video clip introduced each of four segments -- **Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu, peoples.** After the video about Islam, a missionary who worked with Muslims identified the people group with whom they were working and some specific prayer requests. We then prayed for those requests in groups all over the sanctuary. When the music played, it was time for the next prayer focus.

At the end of the four prayer times, the congregation was asked to circle the auditorium. As the lights were turned low and off, everyone lit their flashlight. A leader prayed asking God to use the light of His Word to penetrate the darkness in the places where He is not known.

The evening closed with everyone holding their flashlight high and singing *This Little Light of Mine*. We grew in our understanding of how to pray and what is needed for reaching into the lives of the least reached people of the world. We saw the difference that even one small light can make.

Prayer for the Persecuted Church.

Again, this was a family night experience. Three areas of the world exposing different aspects of persecution were presented with a video clip. The program listed prayer requests related to each area.

The first video segment introduced the situation in North Korea and what it takes for believers to meet. The families saw what it took for a Christian to even get to church . . . hiding, avoiding watchers and government authorities . . . all to worship with a very small group of other believers. Then they prayed. The prayer time was so much more passionate because they felt their struggle.

The second video segment was about Christians imprisoned for their faith in Orissa. An adequate number of prison images communicated the situation. The interview with a pastor filled in some of the details. One leader said she felt embarrassed by the ease of my life in America. Again, they prayed.

The third video segment addressed the abuse of women. It was not graphic or inappropriate for children to see, yet it explained in a sensitive manner how young girls were taken from their rural homes into the city to work as entertainers. They could grasp the loss of their innocence and their childhood being robbed. Deeply moved, their prayers again moved deeper into the issue rather than the superficial prayer of God bless the children in Cambodia.

Music and congregational singing signaled each transition providing a bridge between the videos. The evening made the participants feel grateful for their church and their life in a new way. The whole emphasis was very sobering. The concert of prayer introduced them to a very different prayer need and way to pray.

The program from that night is attached.

See program for: Concert of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.

Outstanding resources are also available from Voice of the Martyrs at <http://www.persecution.com/> and International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted church. <http://www.persecutedchurch.org/>

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