

A WORD AND SPIRIT  
MAINSTREAM  
NETWORK

**Magazine Issue 67. May 2000**

*Issue Theme: PRAYER*

# PRAYER

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Magazine issue 67

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# INTRODUCTION

I wonder what was your reaction when you saw the theme?

There is such a plethora of material on the subject of prayer, and yet it still demands our highest priority. I am hoping that you will find a mixture of both the familiar and the fresh in these pages.

I often say, “**If we get our prayer right, we get most things right.**” Prayer is perhaps the most fundamental way that we *work-out* our relationship with God. It is not principally about the words that we use or the techniques we employ, but pouring out our hearts to a Father that we are getting to know better.

**Prayer is always on God’s agenda.** My sense is that He has led the church over the past decade to give it an even greater priority, however with some new directions. We have been led to move outside the prayer needs of our individual churches (important as they are) and create frameworks where we can intercede for the needs of the community.

- Leaders praying together in villages, towns and cities.
- Movements raised up to concentrate on particular age groups or territories.
- Targeting secular powers and authorities like commerce, education and the media.
- Taking to the streets to pray and to listen to God’s heart and word for the community.

I trust that these articles will challenge, inspire and inform and that Mainstream, as well as all God’s people in this nation, will take hold of the weapon of prayer to bring in the harvest.

I am particularly grateful to Kingsway Publications for giving permission to reproduce a chapter from *50 Ways to Help Your Church Grow* by David Beer.

# ANSWERS PLEASE!



Have you ever felt like this—that many of your prayers don't get answered, but then God does something amazing that you haven't prayed about or, maybe, even thought about? Well, I have! The way I see it is that we sort of pay into a bank of prayer and God pays out, at His time, in His way, with larger or smaller amounts.

God has done some remarkable things in my life and in the life of Poynton Baptist Church and I want to pick on a few which are distinct answers to prayer. Hopefully you, the reader, will find some encouragement here for your own prayer life.

The year was 1966, the numbers attending Sunday services were around twelve or thirteen, enquiries were under way as to the possibility of selling the site to a contractor for development. The church? Poynton Baptist. The few members kept praying, however, especially a small group of ladies who met weekly to pray for two seemingly impossible things—a pastor and a pianist. The leader of this small group had actually put her prayer requests on a small piece of paper and pinned it to the vestry door. Faith or on a hiding to nothing?

A few miles away a college lecturer was walking home from work and sensed the Lord saying to him that he should go to Poynton. Sounded like God speaking, but then we've all had those experiences and decided it was our imagination. But it happened again and, being a man who didn't hang around, he went there and then to the one place in Poynton he knew a little—Poynton Baptist Church—and introduced himself to the group of praying ladies, "Hello, do you want a Pastor? I believe God is calling me to be the Pastor here and, by the way, I don't need to be paid, I will go on as a College lecturer!"

What would you do? Get really excited, as I would? Funny how we get excited at answers to prayer—as if we weren't really expecting them! Well, (and I'm sure this could have suffered a little embroidery over the years!) the leader of the group took it

all in her stride, got up, went to her piece of paper saying, "God's answered one of the prayers, now we must believe for the other!" "Oh, by the way", said the visitor, David Pringle, "I can play the piano!" The leader of the group tore up the piece of paper, amongst much thanksgiving!

Poynton Baptist Church doubled in size each year for many years after that. Talk about an answer to prayer! That constantly encourages me as I minister here, although I would still love to see the church doubling in size annually!

One other real answer to prayer (and fulfilment of a personal prophecy) has been the unity amongst the churches in Poynton. There was a workable togetherness when I arrived seven years ago but, as we have prayed and worked, the leaders of all six churches in Poynton have joined together to see the walls between the churches demolished and a strong emphasis on reaching the community together developed. One or two of the local leaders have admitted that, during this period, they have shifted their spiritual position to one of a more intimate relationship with Jesus and more dependence on the Holy Spirit.

On a personal front, how do I choose which answers to prayer to mention? Not that I'm ready to write a book that has an answer to prayer on every page, mind you! But there are examples which may be of

encouragement or with which you may identify.

Firstly, when called by God back in 1974 to leave business and start a ministry which we called Open House, where we would take people with problems to live with us in our family, we decided to 'live by faith', not mentioning our needs to anyone except God. Never, in seven years, did we want for anything. Our spoken (and many unspoken) requests to God for necessary finance were answered time and time again.

The main thing that I want to share, though, is about the time when we needed a larger house to take more people. We looked around for about two years and, in that time, saw one particular house which would have been ideal, but it was far too expensive. Then we saw another, which was nearer to where we lived, and I believed with all my heart that God pointed me to a Scripture which confirmed it. It was one of those miraculous meetings with the word of God upon which you must act. However, it did not come to pass! I was convinced that, if it didn't work out, I would feel like jettisoning my faith, but we sensed that, however puzzling, we must hang on.

A few weeks later we were talking to an estate agent friend who asked us if we had seen a particular house. We thought he meant the ideal one we had seen earlier, because it was in that road. However, it turned out to be the house next-door to that and

it had been on the market for some time. Knowing that we could not afford it we went to see the vendor, who turned out to be a Christian! To cut a long story short, the house was even more ideal than the other one and the lady said she believed God wanted us to have it. She sold it to us for one third less than its value! We moved in and were able to take up to eight people at any one time, plus three helpers. Does God answer prayer? Yes, yes, yes!

Finally, God heard and answered our prayers as we knew the time had come to leave YFC where I had been National Director for ten years. We knew it was right to go, but had no idea where. My vision was strong for young people and we looked for opportunities that would involve that vision. We prayed earnestly that God would point us in the right direction, but there was nothing that seemed to grab. Then it seemed that some doors were opening and, as a result, we were making early plans to join a fast-growing, multi-congregation church on the South Coast. We would be a part of it and be released for many months in wider ministry.

Just one problem — I sensed no excitement in my spirit and I worried that that fire was not there. We kept praying and, in the absence of anything else, continued with our

South Coast plans. “Perhaps we will have to go by ‘open door’ guidance”, we thought. But I was not at peace.

One morning, as I woke (after folk had gathered around us and prayed for us at the church where we were members, but not often able to be there), I had the most remarkable hunger deep within me and I knew without a doubt that I had to take the leadership of a local church. Up to this point one of the things that I definitely was not going to do was lead a local church!

Marion tells me I came alive again that day and, to cut a long story short, although I hardly told anyone, was asked (within two months) to consider leadership by about twelve churches!

The first one that I responded to was Poynton Baptist. They took the risk of calling a fella from a par-local church organisation and that’s where I have been for the last seven years. Without any doubt, a marvellous answer to prayer!

There have been many other answers, but time and space do not permit. I long to see further answers as the ministry continues to unfold at Poynton. As to whether or not the people there think that their prayers have been answered, only they can tell you!

*Rob White*

# PRAYER MOVEMENTS



A fresh prayer movement by young people from England is spreading like wildfire all over the world.

The 24-7 movement is a non-stop chain of groups of mostly young people praying for their friends and heroes. Amazingly, less than two months after the kick-off, thousands of young people are on their knees with a new desire to pray. And some can't stop.

The prayer, which began last September amongst the young people of Revelation Church, Chichester, has spread right across the UK, in churches, universities, city-wide contexts, youth groups, Bible colleges, a school and even a skate park. To date, groups in USA, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, France, Canada, Spain and Ecuador have also signed up to pray.

## THE 100-YEAR PRAYER MEETING

It really all began when church leader Pete Greig visited the village of Herrnhutt in Germany last summer. This was the location of Zinzendorf's remarkable 100-year prayer meeting, that catapulted Moravian missionaries out all over the world and converted John Wesley.

"I thought that if the Moravians could pray for a century, non-stop, we could maybe attempt a month. It seemed like a great idea out in Germany, but when I got home and worked out how many hours there

actually are in a month it suddenly seemed like a recipe for disaster. However, we all knew that God was calling us to pray, and that the traditional combination of private Quiet-Time and public Prayer Meeting wasn't working for the young people. Maybe the idea of non-stop prayer would capture the imagination somehow."

## OUT OF CONTROL

"We set a room aside in our church building, drew up a chart for people to sign up for hour slots and made a lot of coffee. On Sunday, 5th September, we lit a candle and – somewhat nervously - began to pray.

"What happened next took us completely by surprise. The thing just exploded as people began to encounter Jesus. Incredibly moving prayers and poetry were posted on the walls. An answered prayer book began to fill up with wonderful stories. People were clamouring for prayer slots and the sense of God's presence was at times so strong that

non-Christians just came to sit in the room."

One wide-eyed student summed it up when he said, 'Cor, this prayer lark actually works!' At the end of their first month the young people found they couldn't stop, and after three months the thing had begun to spread to other groups and nations.

"It has all been such a surprise," says Pete. "I guess 24-7 is just a wonderful accident. We feel like God is zooming over the horizon at 300 mph, leaving us running to catch up! Certainly no one ever sat down and decided to start a new prayer organisation or anything like that. In fact we would be the last people on earth to do anything like that because we are so genuinely and spectacularly bad at prayer!"

## **HOW DOES IT WORK?**

*The idea is simple: participating groups pledge to pray 24 hours a day in a fixed location for anything between a week and a month. They then 'carry the baton of prayer' for that period. The prayer passes from location to location in a never-ending flow linked up by the World Wide Web. It's the MTV generation having a prayer meeting.*

*The big dream behind 24-7 is to turn the tide in youth culture and to encourage and equip normal people to pray, especially the young, who often find prayer difficult. "Two months ago our dream was to see thousands and thousands of young people mobilised in prayer. God has already fulfilled that dream."*

*Reactions on the 24-7 website show a growing hunger to pray. A girl with a Free Church background from Aberdeen felt compelled to tell people on the street about Jesus. "I was shaking, not with fear but with the living power of the true God. At home I spent all night praying and I just met with Jesus there in my room. Something was broken and the power of the Lord rained down on me."*



**The website offers a place of encouragement, with articles about prayer, tips to make prayer time**

**more effective, prayer requests and a growing number of testimonies about God's answering of prayers.** "We have had amazingly instant conversations with key people in a local school," says a participant from Hertford. "After praying, almost instantly God has brought us together again with people that we haven't seen for years and we see an amazing unity amongst ages, denominations and church backgrounds... people's faces were glowing after being in the prayer room."

Pete Greig concludes, "I guess we're realising that clever strategy and creative ideas won't get the job done. Young people are still leaving our churches and everyone's freaking out like Corporal Jones in Dad's Army. In contrast God wants to remind us that it's 'not by might, nor by power' but by his Spirit that the tide will turn. In the words of



Walter Wink, 'History belongs to the intercessors.'

Further information is available from the web site [www.24-7Prayer.com](http://www.24-7Prayer.com)



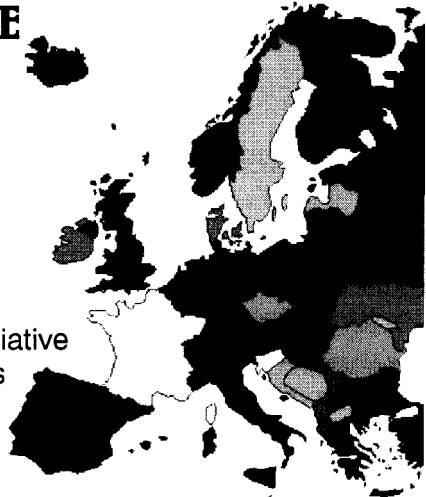
*Pete Greig, on the staff of the Revelation Christian Fellowship in Chichester*

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## DEBORAH ARISE EUROPE

*"Deborah arose - a mother in Israel"*      Judges 5:7

*Deborah*  
~ *Arise Europe!*



is a new inter-church prayer initiative that is currently exploding across Europe. There is a growing sense amongst many of God's people that God will pour out His Holy Spirit in unprecedented power on the current generation of young people, leading them into living radical lives of mission and discipleship that will spread revival in the earth.

The vision of Deborah Arise Europe is to link women together who have a heart to pray for young people across Europe and for them to invest time daily in prayer, and if possible to meet in couples or triplets to intercede for the current generation of young people. We also encourage our folk to fast, if possible, for the first three days of each month. As we move together we will be more effective in prayer

and able to seek God for His strategies for the battle. We can support and encourage one another as we pray together and hear about what God is doing in different countries.

The four main areas of our prayer are:

- salvation of the lost
- the restoration of backsliders
- for youth with a zeal and passion for Jesus

- for youth to have missionary hearts.

## HOW IT ALL BEGAN

In Brazil a project called "Wake up, Deborah" started in 1997. The goal of this project is to see 50,000 young Brazilians involved in mission and they now have 25,000 mums praying for their children to become missionaries.

A British pastor, June Richards, who has for many years been the pastor of an Independent Methodist Church, also has links with the Brazilian missionary organisation "Go to the Nations", which has its British base in her church. She had received a number of prophetic words that she was being given a Deborah calling.

She visited Brazil on a number of occasions and on one of these a sword was prophetically put in her hand and she was told that God would use her to raise up an army and that the work would be international. God confirmed this in 1998, as a call to raise up women in Europe to pray for young people. Since then others have been led to join her, who also have heard God telling them that they had a "Deborah" calling.

## SPREADING LIKE WILDFIRE

From its launch in the UK, this prayer initiative has grown at a phenomenal rate, both in our nation and in Europe. It appears to be something that the Holy Spirit is raising up at this time. Our first

opening into Germany was at a church in Bavaria, where 150 women committed themselves to prayer and one group developed into seven in three weeks.

We now have links into Spain, Holland, Poland and opportunities to go into the Czech Republic, the Faroes and France. Recently at an intercessors' conference in Africa with John Mulinde, June was told by God that this project was not just for Europe but for the whole world. Since then "Deborah Arise" has now been taken up in Africa and also Australia.



Links have often happened through the internet, where women have told us that God had given them a "Deborah" calling years before, but they did not know what it was about until they heard of this project. Links are also growing with many ministries working with young people, both in this nation and abroad. Deborah Arise Europe is a member

of the Evangelical Alliance and we have links with many other prayer ministries.

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

This initiative is God's vision and we in the leadership do not want to control what God is doing, and so each person called to leadership in their nation will listen to God for their particular national strategy.

If you have a heart to pray for young people, we would love you to get in touch and perhaps join us. Do not worry if you do not have a prayer partner or find fasting difficult for whatever reason. Our aim is to unite and encourage women in their

prayers for young people. If you have access to a computer you can look up our website on [www.deborahariseeurope.org](http://www.deborahariseeurope.org) or write with your details to DAE, 3 Bodmin Road, Sale, Cheshire, M33 5JH and we can send you some leaflets.

Come and join this international prayer army and see God move amongst the young people of Europe and the world.

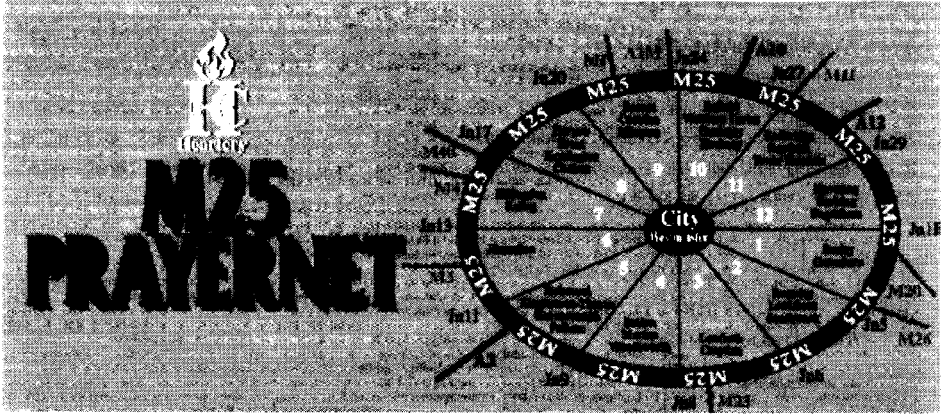
**Linda Holt, part of the leadership team of DAE**  
*and married to a Methodist Minister in Guildford*



"HMM, NO SCHOOLING, NO SKILLS, NO CONNECTIONS. I'D SAY YOUR CAREER OPTIONS ARE FISHING OR BECOMING AN APOSTLE." SEE ACTS 4:13.

# HEARTCRY - M25 PRAYERNET

*building a Millennium Prayer Dome over London!*



The vision of this M25 Prayernet is for a network of Christians - individuals, churches and prayer ministries - working alongside one another in a co-ordinated way to pray for breakthrough and protection for God's work in the city and an open heaven over London.

This vision was stirred by a dream which Rachel Hickson had:

"In this dream I saw respected men and women, who work in London, labouring to build God's vision in the city and reap a harvest from their work. But as they bent down to engage in the work they were called to do, they seemed to be ambushed and fire-bombed on their exposed backs. As soon as they stood to pray the fire was extinguished. As I watched this scene repeat itself again and again, I found myself asking, 'What can they do to break the deadlock?' After all, if they work, they are fire-bombed by the enemy but if they pray they cannot work.

"I then began to sense that I should pray for them to be covered from these fire-bomb attacks so that they could work. As this thought crossed my mind, it was as if the scene opened out in front of me and no longer was I just seeing familiar London scenes but a map of the M25 ring road. This map was then illuminated with lights that began to arc across London, forming a dome of protection and the glory of God over this city.

"At last the workers were working without interruption. As I have prayed about this dream, I felt God speak to me about the following:

“That the M25 ring road was to become an outer wall of London, and each section should become a prayer tower that would pray over the inner boroughs and the city of London.

“The prayer should be done in an organised, co-operative manner so that there was no breach in the defences. Too often the prayer has been like swatting flies, i.e. we drive the opposition from our immediate territory only to move it on elsewhere within the region.

“As the outer area committed itself to pray for inner London, a breakthrough would come for the greater London area.

“We want to see a Spiritual Dome of prayer being raised above London, stretching across the whole area enclosed by the M25.

“The effects will be to change the very soul of the city, in areas such as finance and commerce, music and drama, family life, law and order. Working together we can see London changed and an open heaven created over this vast area.”

## HOW IS IT ORGANISED?

As you can see from our illustration, we have divided up the whole area into segments. The outer areas around the M25 relate to specific London Boroughs and there is ongoing prayer and dialogue between them.

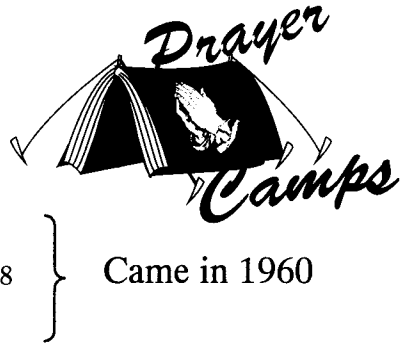
In addition we co-ordinate London-wide prayer on specific issues and weekly information on London prayer needs is sent direct to each intercessor via email (at home, work or church).

**We ask each person to pray regularly for their street, Borough and segment.** We then like to see them meeting once a month with two or more others to pray in agreement on the same issues. We also require that they pray for their own street and town.

**Gordon and Rachel Hickson,**  
*members of Watford  
Community Church*  
GordonandRachel@compuserve.com

**PRAYER**  
**PRAYER**

# NOTTINGHAMSHIRE PRAYER CAMPS NETWORK



Background:

Isaiah 55  
Deuteronomy 1:8  
Isaiah 49:8-9

Came in 1960

## PROPHETIC CALLING

The prophetic calling came in 1967 and from 1967 to 1978 it was preparation time - Ephesians 2.

In 1978 came the vision of the city covered in black clouds with a war taking place underneath and the Lord clearly said, "I am going to call an army of prayers and I will clear the way". These prayers came from different churches and denominations (all women at this time) - Jeremiah 33:9.

## THE SEVEN AREAS

The first time the prayers met together the Lord gave a strategy, which divided the land into seven areas (Joshua 18:5) and after much prayer these seven areas were established as Police, Education, Health & Social Security, Media, Politics, Trade & Commerce and Church, and there was a ribbon around these which was identified as freemasonry and had to be cut. At this time we did not know anything about freemasonry and so went to the library to research.

From that time on all these seven areas became more open to receive prayer and Task Forces were born. Today a Task Force is a group or groups of people who pray specifically for, work with, and are a voice into one of the particular areas of responsibility listed above, and represent the Church in that area. These are becoming particularly successful as relationships are made and formed, e.g. Police and Council.

The Lord showed that high praise was going to be the main weapon and we had to learn as we went along. As we began to sing and praise (2 Chronicles 20:20-24) the Lord broke the hold of freemasonry in Anglican circles, which began to accept that freemasonry was incompatible with Christianity.

God then revealed four gates of the city as specific strategic places where He wanted to be enthroned (Isaiah 60:18), and for a number of years we concentrated on establishing His rule on the four city gates, identifying the enemy and proclaiming the reign of Jesus over it.

## **PRAYER WATCHES, PRAYER BREAKFASTS & PRAYER CLOCKS**

It was from establishing the gates that the Lord gave us Ezekiel 4:1-3 and Nehemiah 4:16-20, that led to the start of the Neighbourhood Prayer Watches, having stickers on house windows that really led on to more people being involved and setting up prayer breakfasts in the neighbouring towns of Nottinghamshire. The prayer leaders of these prayer breakfasts meet together once a month and the telephone prayer chain has developed into a 24 hour prayer clock, involving numerous churches within the county.

The prayer clock involves prayer co-ordinators from each church to watch over their particular area and involvement. Administration is also being established to co-ordinate the 24-hour prayer clock and keep informed those involved.

Prayer co-ordinators meet together at regular intervals to pray and to share, continuing this theme of networking. Church leaders meet together regularly on a Thursday lunchtime, with a particular emphasis once a month to include those unable to attend on a weekly basis.

## **JESUS IS CROWNED LORD OF NOTTINGHAM**

Two years ago Nottinghamshire City Council approached us to do a prayer walk to celebrate New Year 2000. This developed into four prayer walks, North, South, East and West, culminating in a large celebration of Churches Together, along with the Council. We crowned Jesus Lord of Nottingham and County, and between 6,000 and 7,000 people gathered in the Market Square. This received good press coverage and Council support, to the extent that the City Council asked us to organise another event soon. As a result of this, permission was given to meet together in the Castle grounds on Easter Sunday for a celebration in honour of Jesus and to hoist His standard declaring "Jesus is King".

At Pentecost "On The Move" (an evangelistic organisation) visited Nottingham for four days, having

been given permission to use the surrounding areas of the Market Square and to be involved in the Lord Mayor's Parade. Alongside this, we were given the Sunday of Nottingham's Wollaton Park Festival to hold an Open Air Service with different church bands playing throughout the day.

The Lord Mayor considered that there was no clear Christian voice in Nottingham representing all Christian concerns and asked whether this could be rectified. A working party was formed that resulted in a representative group of people known as CTFN - Christians Together For Nottingham. An executive came into being to assist and co-ordinate the Christians in Nottingham and be involved, both as a voice and in action, in the areas of society, e.g. "Task Forces". Many, many years ago the Lord told us that

He would raise up a "City Eldership" and we feel that this is the embryo.

From the prayer for law and order a Christian police inspector has a vision to work more closely with the local churches. As a result of this the relationship between the

churches and the commitment of the people to pray and be involved has made such an impact in the drop in the crime rate that it has now become national news. This work is now moving into two other inner city areas.

## **PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION**

What is happening today is exciting and we realise that if we want this to continue we must train up our children (i.e. the next generation) to continue the work. Therefore the building up of a children's prayer network is being established (Psalm 8:2).

Training for Warfare courses are run regularly throughout the year to ensure that people are properly taught and prepared as they commit themselves to pray for the city.

**Ruth Bussell, a member of  
the Christian Centre in Nottingham**

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# **WHAT I DO IN MY QUIET-TIME**

I try to make some space during the day to have time talking and listening to God. Sometimes there are very specific issues that I want to talk to Him about, other times prayer is more general.

I usually start by acknowledging who God is and ask the Holy Spirit to help me keep focused on Jesus, then spend a few minutes in worship and praise. Then I come to Him in confession, saying sorry for things that I know have come between us and also asking God to let surface anything that needs dealing with - but I don't go digging for things! I ask Him to forgive me and wash me clean again and enable me to try again to be more like Jesus. I ask Him to refill me with His Spirit.

I then give thanks to Him for different things each day - sometimes for specific answers to prayer, sometimes much more generally. Next I pray for other people and situations - quite often for particular people, sometimes praying with more intensity than others; often for friends when I know that they have a special need - sometimes just asking for God's blessing on them and often that their relationship with Jesus would deepen and grow.



Now and then I ask God for a verse of scripture to pray over them and wait to hear what He says to me - the answer often comes later, perhaps days afterwards. Occasionally I feel a real need to pray for someone about a particular issue in their life and I almost feel compelled to bring them daily before God until I sense that the burden has been lifted. Often I ask God if there is anyone or anything He would want me to pray for and I wait and see what He brings to mind.

Many times I ask God to protect my family, myself and others and there are times when I "put on the armour of God" before I enter a situation or pray into it.

I have family and friends who do not yet know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour and I pray fairly regularly for them, asking Him for opportunities to share my faith with them and others.

I try to be quiet and sit with God's word open and read it, often with the help of Bible notes. I try to listen to what the Lord has to say to me, asking the Holy Spirit to help me to know the reality of His word to me and to let it go deep. I listen to Him and talk to Him about my relationship with Him - wanting and needing more of Jesus in my life. Often I use other Christian books.

Music is very helpful to me. I find worship songs extremely good in enabling me to express my love to Jesus. There are times when I'm completely lost for words, either in worship or when praying into a difficult situation. These are times when I use the gift of tongues,

although I probably don't use it as often as I could or should.

During the day I give little "arrow prayers" to God - thanks, praise and very often "help!" I need the communication with Him. I ask for a sense of His nearness before I sleep at night.

I try to get a short while alone with God before corporate worship to prepare myself before Him, but often I rush into His presence without doing this. I do find that when I take the time I can focus more easily on Jesus when we worship together.

I consider it important to pray regularly with other Christians - sometimes one or two, sometimes with the whole fellowship. I have a prayer partner, which is very helpful because there are many issues that I fail to bring before God on my own. Having someone else to pray with makes me "get on with it".

There have been times when I have had other people praying with me in situations in my own life. These have been very valuable - sometimes I have felt very close to God.

Having said all this, I know that all too often I fail and even though I so much want to be in the place of listening and talking to Jesus, there are many times when I don't quite get there! Also, there are times when I'm praying when my mind will insist on wandering off onto irrelevant topics - much to my annoyance! However, I often sense Him calling me back to Him and I am grateful for His patience with me.

If I go for any length of time without really communicating with Jesus, I know that I have “missed out” again. When I know that I have something wrong in my life I often find it difficult to approach God with other issues until I have put things right. I am thankful for His mercy and forgiveness, because I know that I am in great need of it.

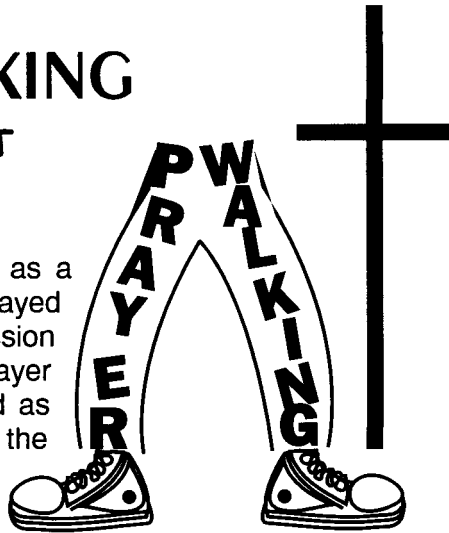
Sometimes I feel very close to Him; other times not so; but I do know that whether I feel His presence or whether I don't, He is always with me and that to

be in a prayerful place is a good place to be. I know that prayer is a discipline - sometimes it's easy, sometimes not, but I do believe that prayer makes a difference in this world for Him. There is so much more I need and want to learn from Him and I'm thankful that He is and always will be there for me.

*A church member from Counterslip  
Baptist Church*

## **PRAYER-WALKING WITH A NINE-FOOT WOODEN CROSS**

I began walking and praying as a way to stay awake when I prayed for the lost! My primary passion was to preach the gospel; prayer was definitely something I did as a discipline, rather than for the love of doing it and I found I got easily distracted.



As an area evangelist for a church plant in a village, it soon became apparent that no matter how effective the evangelism was, its effectiveness was definitely linked to the amount of prayer that I had put into whatever method I was using. As a result I began to walk the roads in this village once or twice a day, praying as I went, sometimes for individuals as I passed them by, sometimes praying for the blessing of homes, sometimes about issues that just popped into my head!

A strategy of prayer began forming and out of that I did experience some helpful breakthroughs in attitudes

and responses, both in and out of the church, towards the gospel being preached.

In 1997 I became involved in a prayer-walk which covered the UK. The focus was to pray for marriages and families, the unity of the body of Christ, and the lost. The prayer focused around calling on God to release the ministry of Christ (reconciliation) to these broken down areas of society. We wheeled a nine-foot cross with us for the following reasons:

1. It stands for reconciliation.
2. It cuts through all the dross and points straight to Jesus.
3. It enables the Body of Christ to gather together because we all understand its meaning.
4. It gives identification.
5. It is a powerful sign to rulers, powers, and authorities in the spirit realm as Colossians 2:14-15 tells us.

I can testify to the authority that prayer-walking with the cross releases, simply because when walking with it you become quite vulnerable and suddenly not ashamed of the gospel because it has the power to save! I am still continuing to do this as long as I sense God asking me to. I always focus on the family issue but God has opened up to pray for reconciliation issues relating to other nations where healing is needed.

In 1998 I walked the nation of Zimbabwe praying for reconciliation between the whites and blacks, repenting for unrighteous trade from

English pioneers which has left the country in devastation. I will be travelling to China with the cross to walk and pray the length of the Great Wall, which is also an issue relating to unrighteous trade. I am currently completing a series of routes which cover Surrey, focusing on marriage issues as Surrey has the highest divorce rate in Europe.

There are always strongholds in the mind that need renewing and I believe from scripture and experience that these strongholds are enforced by demonic authorities over areas. On numerous occasions when out with the cross I have had demonic forces grab the cross and pull it back from entering a town border. I'm not physically strong but I know that greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world!

My only reason for doing these cross-pulling prayer-walks is because I believe we are called to bring in the Kingdom of God. Christ won the victory on the cross, not so that we must win battles but so that we must enter, plunder and restore back to God His world.

God has encouraged me in many ways. I have seen denominations work together in areas where there had been no sign or hope of that happening. I have seen prayer meetings sparked off in the most dry areas spiritually, as a result of seeing the encouragement of the cross out on the streets. I have seen suicidal farmers being given hope.

We pray for the sick and see healings; we direct people always to

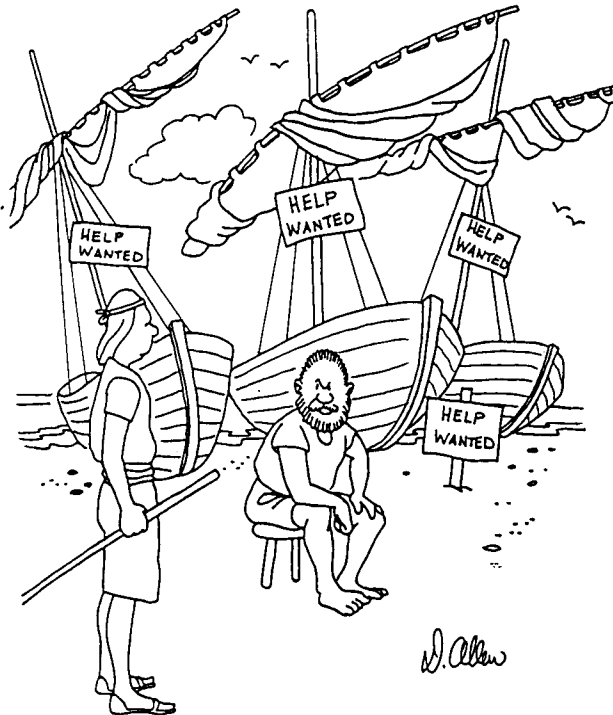
join a church, preferably one we know. We have seen marriages healed and spiritual climates changed for the better through immediate answers to prayer, with physical signs following.

We have had many opportunities to expose the work of the occult and I

am pleased to report that since praying this way around Surrey and removing cursed cassette tape laid along certain roads, the number of road accidents resulting in death has been the lowest ever since records began. This was reported by the Surrey Advertiser!

There are many ways to pray - I like this way!

**Angela Fairlamb, attends Guildford Community Church**  
*and is a fruitful evangelist*



"AS A MATTER OF FACT, THAT FELLOW JESUS DID  
COME BY HERE." SEE MARK 1:16-20.

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# PRAYER: THE POWER BEHIND THE PRINCIPLES



EXTRACT FROM “50 WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHURCH GROW”  
BY DAVID BEER *Kingsway Publications 2000 ISBN 0-85476-810-6*

A pilot must not only apply the power, but also understand something of its nature. The syllabus for learning to fly includes information about how the engine - the power supply - works, and how to maintain it. Prayer is the power source behind the growth of the church in the book of Acts.

We read that before Pentecost “they all joined together constantly in prayer”. After Pentecost they still continued to pray, with startling results. “With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33), and “more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number” (Acts 5:14). There is a strong relationship between prayer and church growth.

In Acts 12:5 we read: “So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him”. Commenting on that verse, John Stott says:

Here then were two communities, the world and the church, arrayed against one another, each wielding an appropriate weapon. On the one side was the authority of Herod, the power of the sword

and the security of the prison. On the other side, the church turned to prayer, which is the only power which the powerless possess. (John R. W. Stott, *The Spirit, the Church and the World*, IVP 1990)

Prayer was at the heart of church life in Acts. They prayed before they selected and appointed leaders. They prayed during times of persecution. They prayed for the progress of the gospel. They prayed for the ill. They prayed for church leaders and workers. They prayed for the church, and they prayed for the community and the world.

Prayer demonstrates our dependence on God. Even after Pentecost the church showed its dependence on God through prayer. We cannot build churches in our own strength. We might be able to build organisations and institutions, but

only God can build the church. If we neglect prayer, we neglect the power source behind all church health and growth.

When Peter Wagner began researching the spiritual dimensions of churches he was led to a much deeper understanding of the role of prayer in church growth. (C. Peter Wagner, *How to Have a Healing Ministry Without Making Your Church Sick*, Regal 1987) By 1992 he had published three books on the subject. George Barna, in his study of some rapidly growing churches in America, also found that prayer was the foundational ministry of these churches that emphasised prayer in at least four major areas.

First, church members were given consistent biblical teaching about the importance of prayer in the Christian life. Teaching in sermons and the various programmes and ministries of the church encouraged prayer. There was little doubt in the mind of the average church member that prayer was a priority.

Second, the church leaders, beginning with the pastor, modelled dynamic prayer lives. Large segments of time were devoted to prayer despite busy schedules. Some pastors spent more time praying about their sermons than preparing them.

Third, the rapidly growing churches learned that praise for answered prayer was an integral part of prayer itself. The people learned that prayer really is effective as they heard about the many answers.

Fourth, growing churches engendered accountability for prayer. The prayer life of members, the prayer ministries of the church, and the prayer life of church leaders were regularly held before the church. (George Barna, *User Friendly Churches*, Regal 1991)

Prayer is indispensable to understanding God's vision for churches. Not only must we look beyond the world's ideas for vision, we must look beyond the visions of other churches. Though we can certainly learn from other growing churches, the vision God gives to one church is not the same as He gives to another church. As we pray to God for a vision for our churches, He will miraculously open our eyes to possibilities. (Thom S. Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth*, Broadman 1993, p.178)

The prayers of the early church unleashed the power of God to add thousands to the church. It happened then. It is happening in churches today. And it can happen in your church. (Thom S. Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth*, Broadman 1993, p.184)

Pray for spiritual and numerical growth. It is God's will for his church to be healthy, and a healthy church will attract people.

### **LEADERS MUST SET THE PACE**

Put prayer at the heart of leaders' meetings at every level. Evaluate your own prayer life, and put prayer



at the centre of the leaders' own personal lives. Make time for larger prayer periods on the agenda of elders' and deacons' meetings, PCCs and pastoral leaders' meetings. Encourage significant periods of prayer at the meetings of children's workers and youth workers, at the various team conferences and committees of all groups in the life of the church. Prayer needs to characterise not only worship planning, but every aspect of the church's ministry. Make prayer in all small groups part of their corporate experience, inviting group members to participate. Handle it sensitively, showing care towards those who are not yet ready to pray openly. Allow people to stay silent until they feel comfortable about praying in front of others.

### **TEACH THE VALUE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PRAYER**

The pulpit is a powerful tool for demonstrating and teaching the effectiveness of prayer, to both believers and unbelievers, and small groups are even better for discovering the power of prayer. Encourage the church by telling the members how prayers have been answered for specific events in the life of the church. Help people to tell their own stories of answered prayer. Build confidence in prayer through teaching and testimony.

In larger congregations, use prayer carefully during worship. Charles Spurgeon counselled his students in his *Lectures on Preaching* not to pray for long periods of time in public worship

services. Most Christians admit that sustaining concentration during long prayers in worship is difficult, even more so for people not used to church. Seeker-sensitive worship needs to use prayer sparingly. Larger congregations of believers can break into small groups for periods of prayer. Smaller congregations can sometimes simply become a prayer meeting! People can be encouraged to pray silently as well as audibly. The size of the congregation often dictates the ways in which people's prayers are integrated into the life of the church. The value, practice and place of prayer needs to be taught at the earliest point of entry into the church. Members need to be taught how to pray, and about the many different forms that prayer can take. Encourage members to find spiritual models that inspire them to pray and prayer partners who help them to pray.

### **SET UP PRAYER TEAMS**

Rather than use the term "prayer meetings" for small prayer groups, it may be more helpful to use "prayer teams". Set up prayer teams for specific purposes such as special worship services or outreach events. The team idea can be used for all the ongoing ministries in the church. Have a prayer team praying in a small room throughout every worship service. Remember that prayer is engaging in spiritual warfare. Satan will oppose any spiritual or numerical growth that God wants to bless. Prayer is one of the principal weapons in the battle against those

powers that try to prevent or slow down the growth of the church. At some point in any plan of church growth, Satan will unleash his forces to frustrate the growth of God's church. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the battle may come from church members whose comfort zone or power niche has been threatened, or the battle may come from outside the church.

Prayer teams can be formed for short- or long-term purposes, for individuals passing through a difficult time or for ongoing needs in the community, nation or world. Use prayer teams as part of the support structures for church members involved in full-time mission in some other part of the world or in the local community.

### **MAKE USE OF PRAYER EMPHASES**

Give special emphasis at certain times of the year to prayer. Suggest a 24-hour period of prayer and fasting. We have used Good Friday as a day of prayer for the opportunity for spiritual and numerical growth on Easter Sunday. Start a new season's work with a prayer week, suggesting certain times of each day when as many people as possible can meet in groups to pray, or as an entire church. Those in the workplace or in residential homes can also mark those times in practical and appropriate ways.

Have a "prayer walk" either around the church premises, stopping to pray for the various activities that take place in each

room, or around the community, stopping to pray for the people and needs of the area. Be as creative as possible in prayer.

Larger churches often have difficulty in arranging church-wide prayer meetings. Such meetings are often used as a barometer of the church's health, and if poorly attended can be discouraging. However, there should be times when the whole church is called to corporate prayer. We have found one of the best times is at the beginning of the autumn, winter and spring terms. We take an evening and spend some of the time in corporate prayer and some in prayer groups.

Organise a prayer conference, either at a residential centre or in the church. Plan a longer period of prayer, fasting and giving before a major project such as a special building programme, a mission, or the calling of a leader. Above all, pray for the overall health and growth of the church.

Have a plan to increase the level of prayer in the life of the church. Plan a day of prayer. Then sometime later, arrange a week of prayer. In between, focus on teaching and encouraging prayer. Then have a longer sustained period of prayer. Build up the prayer life of the church. Lead the church to seek God and to depend on God for spiritual and numerical growth. It is God's church and He wants it to grow.

An idea has come from South Korea where thousands of people have come to Christ. It's called a "One, One, One Prayer Movement". Everyone identifies one non-believer and makes a commitment to pray for one person for one minute at 1 p.m. every day. Give everyone a card with "One, One, One" on it, to remind them to pray. It's a way of beginning to pray for lost people. One church did this for ten weeks leading up to Easter; or it can be done leading up to any significant outreach event. The value of this is that it gets people started and familiar with praying more frequently for the unchurched. It is something that is do-able!

### **MAKE MORE OF PRAYER MEETINGS**

Give thought to setting aside a room solely for prayer. Encourage church members to give time each week praying over requests listed in the room. The room can also be used during worship services where a prayer team meets.

Pray strategically for people. Pray for one another in the church family, or group. Pray for the leaders of the church. Pray for newcomers to be attracted to the church. Pray for relationships to grow. Pray specifically for people to come to faith in Christ. Even if no-one else is praying like this, you can. I remember a Baptist minister who had not seen a baptism in his church for several years. He felt his people were discouraged and unmotivated. They were suspicious of goals. So without saying anything to anyone, he set himself the goal of praying for

two people to be baptised within the next couple of months. To his own surprise he baptised four people within that period. He prayed specifically and strategically for the church to grow, and it did.

When a group meets for prayer, it will be more effective if it has some structure. Small groups can be totally spontaneous, but larger groups need a leader. To prevent the "prayer meeting" becoming aimless or dominated by strong individuals with their own agenda, plan beforehand what kind of "prayer meeting" it will be. You may want to begin with a time of worship with an emphasis on thanksgiving and praise. Use songs and prayers. Between the songs suggest that people might offer brief prayers of thanksgiving. If a group doesn't find spontaneous prayer easy, have two or three prepared prayers that can be read together displayed on a screen. Encourage the use of the Psalms. Have a period focusing on the need for prayers of confession. Let the group say a prayer together, read David's confession in Psalm 51, and sing a song that celebrates God's forgiveness. Even in a larger church it is encouraging for the whole church to spend some time praying in a group. The larger the group, the more it will need to be structured and led. For the prayers of intercession it is better to break into small groups of six or eight people. Sometimes even a group this size will need a leader if it is a group of people who do not find it easy to pray. You can give each group three or four items to pray

about, or provide all the groups with a paper highlighting subjects for prayer.

“Prayer meetings” also provide an opportunity for teaching. Have a 15-minute Bible study to motivate people for prayer. Help people to understand that prayer can involve discipline, effort and hard work. The devil will do everything he can to defeat us. John Earwicker, in his helpful and practical book *Prayer Pace-Setting*, says, “Prayer is work: working at understanding God’s plans; working on co-operating with God’s purposes.” (John Earwicker, *Prayer Pace-Setting*, Scripture Union 1987, p.91) John’s book is chiefly a resource manual for mobilising young people in prayer, but contains many helpful, practical ideas which can be used among all age groups.

There are many books written calling on Christians to pray for revival. Among them is *Rivers of Renewal* by Neil T. Anderson and Elmer L. Towns (Regal 1997). Ronald Dunn’s book *Don’t Just Stand There ... Pray Something* (Alpha 1991) concentrates on intercessory prayer. Most Christians agree on the priority of prayer for that and other purposes. Church leaders, hopefully, do not need convincing of its importance. So why isn’t it happening on a larger scale? Busy lives, many distractions, lack of focus, lack of discipline and lack of vision may all be contributing factors. All of this reveals the need to teach the principles of prayer early on in

the life of a new believer, and for leaders to set the pace in leading the whole church to become a praying church.

On the outside we may look like a non-praying church, but behind the crowds of seekers and all that is public and visible about a growing church there will be a committed core of praying believers: individuals, prayer partners, prayer teams, prayer support groups, in addition to those occasions when as many believers as possible come together to be the church at prayer. Prayer needs to be a highly visible part of a healthy church to believers, but it may be invisible in the main to unbelievers until they come to faith.

The theologian and teacher Dr Paul Tillich once said:

“The church is potentially a powerful body with a necessary arsenal at its disposal to change the moral character of this world. The fact that it is not doing so causes us to be painfully aware that its potential is not being realised. That which is possible is not being produced, for while possessing the dynamite of the Gospel, the church has lost its detonator (explosiveness). As a result of this inaction, the church that the world sees is weak, timid, divided, and crawling instead of flying. While it has material resources to convert the world, it is restricted by its stinginess and narrowness of vision.”

*David Beer, has led churches in four British towns and is presently Senior Pastor at Frinton Free Church and works with Anglia TV*

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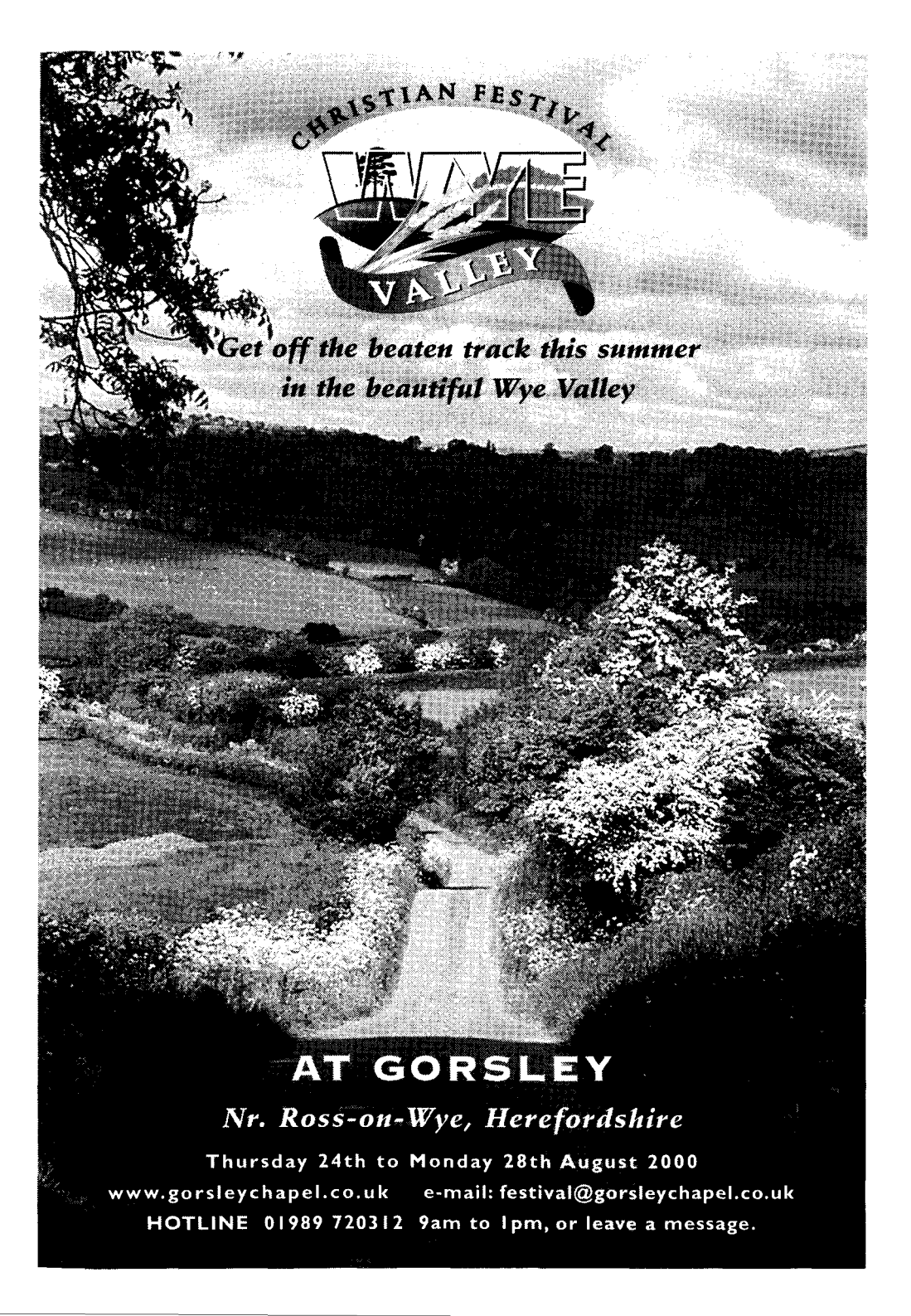
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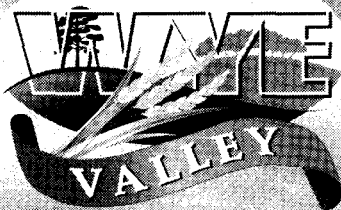
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