

## 1. The Objective:

To help pastors realize that a vital spiritual life is at the core of growing churches. Vital spirituality does not occur by accident.

**Growing churches are characterized by regular and spontaneous times of prayer, fasting, and genuine repentance - both corporately and individually - as a natural part of their culture.**

## 2. The Major Teaching Points:

*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.*

Mark 1:35 (NIV)

- a. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ dependency for us.
- b. Jesus had to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ His purpose.

*<sup>1</sup>One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." <sup>2</sup>He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come. <sup>3</sup>Give us each day our daily bread. <sup>4</sup>Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'"*

*<sup>5</sup>Then He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, <sup>6</sup>because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.'*

*<sup>7</sup>"Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.'<sup>8</sup> I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.*

(continued...)

Luke 11:1-13 (NIV)

(continued...)

<sup>9</sup> “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

<sup>11</sup> “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? <sup>12</sup> Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

Luke 11:1-13 (NIV)

- c. How do we connect with the Father, as Jesus did?
  - God is our “Abba” – a term of endearment and informality, literally translated “papa” or “daddy.”
  - Only someone who deeply esteems the relationship will feel unthreatened to call in the middle of the night.
  - Ask, He’ll answer.
  - Come to the HOW MUCH MORE God.
  - Accept we have nothing to bring to God.
- d. Vital spirituality must be modeled.
- e. Vital spirituality must be taught.
- f. Vital spirituality must be practiced throughout the life of the church.

Luke 6:40

### 3. The Research:

In churches where prayer is viewed as an inspiring experience rather than an obligation or duty, there is a very high correlation to the quality and quantity of the church's growth.

### 4. Practical Implementation:

- a. A pastor's personal devotional life, \_\_\_\_\_, and family must model for the congregation what you are asking your people to do.
- b. The leadership environment of prayer, \_\_\_\_\_, fasting, and repentance must be vibrant.
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ provides great opportunities to respond in prayer, fasting, and dependency before God.
- d. There must be built into the life and structure of the church a dependency upon God, with sensitivity to what the Spirit is doing.

Think through...

- How do we keep prayer and dependency fresh in the service?
  - How do we keep helping people to see that we desperately need God?
  - When do we teach on prayer?
  - When do we block off time to pray?
  - How do we build prayer into the structures of the church?
- e. Pray in response to \_\_\_\_\_ in interpersonal relationships, finances, or lack of fruit.

**Key Questions:**

1. How will you keep prayer and dependency fresh in the service?
2. How will you keep helping people to see that we desperately need God?
3. When will you teach on prayer?
4. When will you block off time to pray?
5. How will you build prayer into the structures of the church?
6. How will you demonstrate prayer in response to stresses in interpersonal relationships, finances, or lack of fruit?

**Resources at our website: [LivingontheEdge.org](http://LivingontheEdge.org)**

*The High Impact Church*, chapter 4

*Ancient Paths to Intimacy with God* by Chip Ingram, Audio series, [LivingontheEdge.org](http://LivingontheEdge.org)

