

# Building a Sustainable Leadership Life

## Lesson 6: Prayer support

Welcome to Lesson 6 of Building a Sustainable Leadership Life. This roadmap will help you last the long haul in ministry.

I want to talk to you about prayer support.

One of the questions I love asking pastors and Christian leaders is who prays specifically and intentionally for you and your family. Those two words are specific and intentional. Who's praying specifically down to the very core of your needs? Who's praying intentionally, in other words they're doing it in a proactive manner for you and for your family.

Paul asks for prayer many times throughout the New Testament and I think leaders should also ask for specific prayer to be done intentionally by people. So I encourage leaders to set up a prayer team. A group of people who will pray for you. Let me outline for you how I think that works.

### Who should be on your prayer team?

We'll choose at least 1 or 2 people, up to maybe half a dozen to 8 and here's some qualifications to be on our prayer team. We've had one of these for around 15 years or more.

- 1. They have to love you.**
- 2. They need to be people who pray**
- 3. They need to have displayed proven loyalty and integrity**

They don't necessarily need to be key leaders or on your board or on your team as such, but the key aspect is they love you, they support you, they pray (that's the point of a prayer team) and they've got proven integrity because they'll keep things confidential and that's vital.

### What do personal prayer partners do?

Well we ask them to individually, in their own time of prayer, pray for our specific needs 3-4 times a week and to work through those regularly, lifting us up before the Lord.

When we were pastoring we would meet with this team every couple of months. Now we do it via email because of our travel and different schedule. But we would meet with our team and this is what would happen we would meet with them.

## Meeting with your team

I'd sit with them, I'd have one of the team as a scribe for the group and they would take notes from the meeting and then circulate them around to the team so that everyone would have a copy that they could use, in a digital or printed manner, so they could pray through the needs.

When we met with them they would bring the previous notes that people had been praying through. I would step through them one by one giving them feedback and this is essential.

The feedback loop with intentional and specific prayer and I'd give them feedback on each of those matters, what to keep praying for, answers to prayer, celebrations etc through that.

I always thanked them for their prayers and I think the feedback loop was fuel for them to keep praying because they could see answers to prayer.

And I'd share new prayer points around our family, our church, our personal needs, our travel itineraries, any concerns or opportunities that we had.

## How much should I tell them?

You might want to ask this question, how much should I tell them? Every time I talk to a pastor or a leader about setting up a prayer team they say well what about confidentiality? Should I tell them all the stuff that's going on in my world?

Well I think choose your own comfort level. Find what you're comfortable with and then tell the team what you want to tell them. In other words, I'd probably dip your toes in the water to start with, tell them a few generic things about ministry or leadership or something that you just want to see the Lord move on and then as you grow in confidence with the group, knowing that they're going to keep confidentiality, you can begin to lower the curtain a bit, get a bit more vulnerable, get them into your world a bit more.

I think also during the couple of months when you don't meet with them, something like a What's App group or some sort of digital group that you can set up, where you can send them a message and give them updates on the go.

You might want to send them pictures if you're travelling somewhere for ministry. Send them a picture of what you're doing and say hey thanks so much for your prayer support while I'm out here ministering in this church or in this country - really appreciate you, just to

keep the feedback loop going. I think that's generally the missing element in personal prayer support.

## What do they not do?

There's a few things that I tell our team that they're not going to do.

### **1. We're not going to have prayer meetings together with them as a group.**

We want them to pray individually, intentionally and specifically for the needs we've outlined. We're not going to have prayer meetings together.

### **2. We don't want them praying together as a group.**

Now you may have someone who could lead a group and keep the boundaries strong, but sometimes prayer group's end up going a little bit strange and I just would prefer people just praying at home so it's not another meeting for them to go to.

### **3. We don't want them to give me direction or prophetic words.**

If the Lord shows them something or puts a burden on their heart about us and our ministry I just want them to pray it through. I have Godly, brilliant leaders who speak into my life and the Lord is able to use those leaders to speak into my life. I don't need my personal prayer team doing that. I want them to pray what the Lord gives them. I don't want them to kind of operate like some sort of directive or prophetic group into my world. That's not the purpose of this group.

## Next steps

### Invite people to join your prayer team

You may start with 1 or 2. That's ok. Don't despise the small starts. Small starts are good. Invite people to join the prayer team.

Outline your expectations as I've outlined them here. You can use the notes that you can download and tell them your expectations. Write them out for them and make sure that you establish the feedback loop. Don't launch the group and then 6 months later meet with them. Meet with them fairly regularly to get the feedback loop going because I think that's the key to establishing a brilliant prayer support team for yourself.

Well there you go. Building a sustainable leadership life is definitely going to happen when you get a team praying for you regularly. God bless you.