

one thing

for the
Church

Growing prayer
together

Study Guide

This workbook contains information and activities to help you make the most of the course.

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Introduction

Welcome to the 'One Thing' Prayer School series. We're delighted that you've decided to join us on this journey of learning more about prayer. We'll be reflecting together on how prayer shapes our own lives, and how it impacts our churches and communities. As you use this material, our prayer is that you will be encouraged and informed, challenged and inspired.

Why 'One Thing'? There are certain things we know we need to prioritise in life, but all too often busyness takes over, unexpected things happen, and before we know it, we've run out of time to do that 'one thing' we always meant to do. The writer of Psalm 27 probably knew what it was like to be busy and distracted, but he also knew what mattered most of all to him. He wasn't going to let anything else get in the way of the one thing he was pursuing: to dwell in God's temple all the days of his life.

In our first series, 'One Thing for Us', we explored how we can put prayer at the centre of everything: how we can hear God's voice, build prayer rhythms and navigate the obstacles that get in the way of prayer in our everyday lives. In this series, 'One Thing for the Church', we consider how we can grow in prayer together as communities of faith, putting that ultimate conversation with God himself right at the heart of our church life together.

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Getting the most out of 'One Thing for Us'

The course consists of seven recorded sessions, each lasting between 45 and 60 minutes. Each session consists of a 30- to 40-minute teaching seminar, interspersed with interviews with people whose stories illustrate the theme of the teaching. Each session also includes 'Pause Points' – moments when you are invited to pause the recording and spend time in discussion or reflection.

To get the best out of 'One Thing for the Church', we recommend that you use the recorded sessions in conjunction with this Study Guide. It contains all the discussion questions for each session, as well as suggestions for other exercises you might like to do, to help you explore the themes more fully.

Group Settings/Leader

If you intend to use 'One Thing for the Church' in a group setting, we would strongly recommend that the group leader watch the recorded sessions first, and read the relevant section of this Guide before running each of the sessions, so as to choose suitable activities and discussion questions in advance.



Leader-guided activities are indicated by the symbol above.

Recorded Sessions

This Guide contains an outline for each recorded session, giving you a running order, along with timings for each item. Each outline also gives a suggested structure for using the material with a group: recommended timings for opening worship, Pause Point discussions and closing prayer. Items which form part of the recording are shown in normal font, whereas items which are suggested as *group activities* are shown in *italicised font*.

Questions

The Guide includes the discussion questions suggested in the recorded sessions, but it also includes some extra questions which you may find it useful to use in addition to, or instead of, the ones suggested in the teaching. It also gives suggestions of activities you could use with the group for each session. These are of course only



Discussion questions are indicated by the symbol above.

recommendations, and we hope you will feel free to adapt them as you need to, or make up your own. You will be unlikely to have time to do all the suggested activities, so choose the ones which you feel best suit the group.

Timing

Though it takes less than an hour to watch each of the recorded sessions straight through, we strongly recommend that you set aside a minimum of two hours for each one. This gives time for discussion, reflection and prayer, and makes the learning experience richer.

You may even find that you want to split each session into two parts, so as to give more time for conversation on each topic. A line part-way down the session outline for each session gives an indication as to where you should split each one.

Though it is not necessary for everyone in your group to have a copy of this Study Guide whilst following the course, it is possible to download a pdf version from our website, should you wish to make it available to them. You can find a link to download the Study Guide, along with more 'one thing' resources by visiting The Salvation Army's 'One Thing' page at:

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/one-thing

Finally, a word of encouragement: We have visited 6 different churches in the making of this series. They are all different, and they all approach prayer in different ways. These churches aren't meant to be models which your church should imitate, or shining examples to make you feel inadequate. They are communities of people who are on a journey of learning how to put prayer at the centre of their church life. Each one of them would want us to tell you that they're growing prayer together, but they're still very much a work in progress. Our hope is simply that their stories will encourage you, and that, as you discuss the topics raised in this series, you will be inspired with ideas for growing prayer in your own church, in whichever ways best suit you.

You can find a list of the churches we visited in the back of this booklet.



Session 1

The Ultimate Conversation

God is community; he is one God, but he is three persons. God loves community; he formed Adam, but he knew his creation wasn't complete until Adam was part of a community with Eve. Throughout History, God has gathered scattered, disparate individuals into families, tribes, peoples and nations. Yet we humans so often insist on celebrating individualism. We applaud the lone hero who overcomes unimaginable odds with no help at all from anyone else, and we tend to feel guilty or inadequate when we can't achieve similar levels of independent heroism, even in the everyday hassles of life. Yet it's worth remembering that the lone hero wasn't God's idea. God has always liked his heroes to be dependent on him and interdependent with each other.

When Jesus taught on prayer, he was the first to introduce the idea that each of us could have a personal relationship with God the Father. Up to that point, talking to God was something that was done in community. Prayer wasn't a lone exercise for ordinary people; it was a community conversation. Jesus' instruction, therefore, that his followers should each go into a private place to pray, would have been radical and controversial (Matthew 6:5-6).

Yet he never meant them to dispense with corporate prayer once and for all. He fully intended them to continue communicating with God as a family together. Perhaps that's why the Apostle Peter picked up the theme in his first epistle, reminding the new-born church that they were a collection of stones, built together into a house for God's presence (1 Peter 2:1-10).

In our rather individualistic western culture, we delight in the idea of prayer being something we can do on our own, and rightly so, but does that same culture leave us baffled when it comes to praying together as a church family? For many of us, finding time to spend with our own families can be a struggle, let alone making time to pray with our church family. And when we do make time for praying together, it can be hard to grasp why it's so important and powerful, especially when it can feel like just a religious routine.

So, what is this 'ultimate conversation' of corporate prayer, and how do we get started?

Session 1

Outline

<i>Welcome and Worship</i>	20 mins
Presenter's introduction	3 mins
Gordon Cotterill, Hazel Jessop and Sarah Costerton	7.5 mins
<i>Talk Part 1: God is community ... (Lyndall Bywater)</i>	10 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 1: Discussion question 1</i>	1.5 mins
Talk Part 2: Jesus made it personal	7 mins
<i>Pause Point 2: Discussion question 2</i>	10 mins
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Story: Sarah Costerton	2.5 mins
Talk Part 3: You are a chosen people	5.5 mins
Story: Gordon Cotterill and Hazel Jessop	1.5 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 3: Discussion question 3</i>	10 mins
Talk Part 4: You are a royal priesthood	2 mins
Story: Gordon Cotterill and Hazel Jessop	1.5 mins
Talk Part 5: You are a holy nation	5 mins
Story: Sarah Costerton	3 mins
Presenter's Conclusion	1 min
Closing Thoughts: Gordon Cotterill	1 min
<i>Discussion and Prayer</i>	20 mins

Session 1

The Ultimate Conversation

Scriptures in the Teaching

1 Peter 2:1-10; Genesis 1:26, 2:18, 14:14; Exodus 4:13-17; Leviticus 23:3; Matthew 6:6; Acts 2:1-3.



Discussion Questions

1. What are the pressures that cause you to lose perspective on life and lose touch with your church family?
2. Talk about a time in your life when it's been better to be together with others than on your own.
3. In your church, what opportunities are there for different personalities to express themselves in prayer?
4. What do you love most about 'corporate worship' – those times when your church gets together to celebrate God, hear from his Word and encourage one another?
5. What do you find most difficult about corporate worship?
6. Living stones have to trust God the builder to place them in exactly the right position. Have you ever had an experience where you've known for sure that you were in the right place at the right time? What happened to make you so certain of that?
7. Have you known a time when love has stirred a community to pray?



Getting Ready

1. Spend some time talking about people's hopes and expectations for the 'One Thing for the Church' course.
2. Play some music and invite each person to think for a few minutes about prayer in the church they belong to. Invite them to reflect on the good things and the frustrations, and then to bring all of those thoughts silently to God in prayer, asking him to do something new in the church, in the weeks to come.
3. Spend a few minutes praying together for your study of this course over the next few weeks. Pray out loud (either simultaneously or one at a time), each

starting your prayer with those words which Jesus' disciples said to him, two thousand years ago: "Lord, teach us to pray ..."

Better Together

For the next few weeks, as you study this course together, you will become a 'praying community' (even if you weren't one already). Why not set some prayer goals together, and see what God does when you seek him as a community, rather than just on your own.

- *Invite each person to share one situation which they are praying about regularly at the moment. It may be something in their own life, or something in the life of a friend or family member. Then provide them with a small card, and ask them to write a sentence on it, summing up the prayer request they've just outlined.*

Each week, place all the cards in a bowl and invite each group member to pick one at random, which he/she will then take home, as a reminder to pray for that situation. When you gather again, collect the cards in again, and repeat the process.

Part of a People

As you study this course, why not make a commitment to pray daily for the church you belong to. God does powerful things in answer to prayer, so amazing things might happen over the coming weeks.

A word of caution though: churches are full of people, and as such, they can bring both blessing and pain, joy and frustration into our lives. If you are feeling pain or anger because of something to do with your church, it's important to say that this exercise isn't meant to diminish that, or to ask you to pretend it never happened. Wounds take time to heal, and conflicts take time to resolve. This exercise does not require you to have everything sorted, or to feel at peace with every aspect of your church; it is simply about using the words of Scripture to pray a blessing over the congregation you're a part of. Here are some words you could use each day:

Father God, I pray for my church today, that you will fill each of us with your joy and peace, and that, in our worship, our fellowship and our mission, we will overflow with hope, by the power of your Holy Spirit, in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen. (Based on Romans 15:13)



Session 2

A Culture of Prayer

Armin Jesswein was a preacher, a writer and a passionate champion of prayer. In his book 'Plead the Promises of God,' he wrote this:

'When Christ ascended into heaven, all He left behind was a prayer meeting. The early Church didn't have a prayer meeting; the early Church was the prayer meeting. In fact, in the early Church, every Christian was a prayer-meeting Christian.'

Our last session took us on a whistle-stop tour through the Bible, to catch some glimpses of that 'ultimate conversation', the dialogue which has been going on between God and his people for centuries. In this episode, we're looking at the Book of Acts, where we'll be spending some time in the company of the first-century church. Two thousand years on, it can be hard to relate to what life was like for those first Christians, those men and women who had followed Jesus as their Rabbi, had seen him die on a cross and rise from the dead, and who now had the responsibility of living out those lessons he had taught them. Yet, each time we gather as church today, what we are and what we do has its roots in who they were and what they did.

Those first Jesus-followers knew that prayer was one of the most important things they could ever do.

'They devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.' (Acts 2:42, NIV)

So they didn't just pray, they were devoted to prayer. What does that mean? How did that work? In this session, we'll be discovering how they developed a culture of prayer in the life of that new-born church, and we'll be thinking about how we might develop that same kind of prayer culture in our churches today.

Session 2

Outline

Welcome and Worship	20 mins
Presenter's Introduction	2 mins
Robb Harman and Jon Biddle	5.5 mins
Talk Part 1: Making space for God (Lyndall Bywater)	11 mins
<i>Pause Point 1: Question 1 (personal reflection)</i>	5 mins
Story: Charle Harman	3 mins
Talk Part 2: Prayer getting everywhere	8.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 2: Discussion question 2</i>	10 mins
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Story: Robb and Charle Harman	2.5 mins
Talk Part 3: Problems ignite vision	8.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 3: Discussion question 3</i>	10 mins
Story: Jon Biddle	2 mins
Talk Part 4: Prayer unlocks doors	7.5 mins
Story: Charle Harman	1.5 mins
Presenter's Link	1 min
<i>Pause Point 4: Discussion question 4</i>	5 mins
Presenter's Conclusion	1.5 mins
Closing Thoughts: Charle Harman	1.5 mins
<i>Discussion and Prayer</i>	15 mins

Session 2

A Culture of Prayer

Scriptures in the Teaching

Acts 1:12-14, 2:1-3, 2:42-47, 4:23-31, 12:6-16.



Discussion Questions

1. Personal reflection: How could you make more space for God in your life and your church?
2. What do you need to do to let prayer get everywhere?
3. Can you think of any creative ways to get your whole church praying together? Are there ways you could connect in prayer, even if you can't always be in the same place at the same time?
4. What is your biggest prayer for your church?
5. Have you ever known God to interrupt your church – to stop or block something which you were about to start doing? If so, why do you think he stopped you, what was it like, and how did you move forward?
6. When your church gets together, How good are you at chatting 'God stuff'? Does God get a mention over coffee, or is he just for the service? Do you find it easy to talk to people about your relationship with God and his work in your life? Do you find it easy to ask others if there's anything they'd like you to pray for? Or does it feel awkward and over-spiritual to talk about God?
7. Has your church ever encountered a crisis which has led you to pray together more than usual? What was it about that season that made people want to pray more? Did prayer feel different to how it usually feels? If so, in what way?

NB. To find out more about 24-7 Prayer 'boiler rooms', visit: www.24-7prayer.com/boilerrooms



Prayer Inventory

- Set out a large piece of paper, or hand out small piles of post-it notes, and invite the group to list every single bit of prayer that happens in the life of

your church. Remember, it's not just the Sunday service and the prayer meetings where people pray. What about team meetings, pastoral visits etc? When you've got them all written out and laid out where everyone can see them, invite people to take a moment to look over the list, and thank God for all the prayer that is already happening in your church.



Growing our Dreams

One of the most famous verses about prayer in the Bible is found in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, where he tells his readers that God can do 'immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine' (Ephesians 3:20, NIV). In simple terms, if you can think of something to ask God for, then you can be sure that he is able to do even more than that. Have your prayers become too small? God's work here on earth is a Kingdom partnership with us, his Church. He acts in answer to our prayers. If our prayers remain small, then he is indeed limited. When our prayers grow bigger, he meets us more than half-way.

Get into pairs, and ask your partner to tell you what they'd most love to see God do in their church. Having heard their longing, your job is to grow their prayer one size bigger. For example

Person A: The thing I'd most love God to do in my church is to bring more children into the Sunday school.

Person B: That would be wonderful, but what if God not only brought children to the Sunday school, he also brought their parents to join the church. God can bring children, but he can also bring whole families!

Once you've grown their prayer, then take a moment to pray together for that bigger dream, before swapping over and letting your partner do the same for you.

Praying the Ancient Prayers

There are many occasions in the New Testament when Paul prays for the churches he's supporting. Those prayers are some of the most beautiful ever written. Why not close your time together by taking it in turns to read some of them out, making them your own prayers for your own church community.

Romans 15:5-6; 1 Corinthians 1:4-9; Ephesians 1:15-23, 3:14-21; Philippians 1:3-6, 9-11; Colossians 1:3-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, 2:16-17, 3:16.



Session 3

Praying as a Family

Throughout human history, people have lived in small groups, caring for each other and conquering the challenges of every-day life together. The earliest stories in the Bible are stories of family: Adam and Eve walking the paths of Eden; Noah, his wife, his sons and his in-laws all pitching in to manage a zoo on a boat; Abram and his whole household putting their home on the road, to go and find a promised land. As we discovered in Session 1, God isn't into lone heroes. He seems to think that 'together' is by far the best way to live life.

When the God of the universe decided to tell his love-story through the lives of human beings, he chose a cast of characters with distinctly unconventional family situations: he chose widows and orphans, infertile couples and siblings who hated each other, people who'd been rejected by their families and people who forged family in the strangest of places. His message was never that all families had to be a certain shape or size or flavour; his message was just that we should do life together.

When the Apostles started teaching about the church, one of the first words they used to describe it was 'family'. In fact, Paul used words connected with the idea of family over 170 times in his New Testament letters, reminding their readers that they were brothers and sisters, adopted into the care of a loving heavenly father. So, a church is many different things, but first and foremost it is a family.



Session 3

Outline

<i>Welcome and Worship</i>	15 mins
Presenter's Introduction	2 Mins
Story: Michael West, Jo Seddon and Ros Pye	5 mins
Talk Part 1: Being family (Verity West)	3 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 1: Question 1 (personal reflection)</i>	5 mins
Story: Owen and Ros Pye, Michael West and Jo Seddon	4.5 mins
Presenter's Link	1 min
<i>Pause Point 2: Discussion question 2</i>	10 mins
Talk Part 2: Learning to pray together	4 mins
Story: Pye family, Anastasia Janskowski and Michael West	4.5 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 3: Discussion question 3</i>	5 mins
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Talk Part 3: Being creative	2 mins
Story: Ros Pye and Jo Seddon	2 mins
Prayer Walk: Michael West	4 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 4: Discussion question 4</i>	10 mins
Talk Part 4: Including everyone	4.5 mins
Story: Michael West and Jo Seddon	3.5 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 5: Discussion question 5</i>	10 mins
Talk Part 5: From generation to generation	2 mins
Story: Ros and Owen Pye	2 mins
Presenter's Link	1.5 mins
Closing Thoughts: Michael, Jo and Anastasia	4 mins
<i>Discussion and Prayer</i>	15 mins

Session 3

Praying as a Family

Scriptures in the Teaching

Ephesians 3:14-21



Discussion Questions

1. Personal reflection: Who feels like family to you? Take a moment to thank God for them.
2. What are the things which most help to make church feel like family?
3. What do you remember about praying as a child? Did you pray? Did you have favourite prayers, or did you enjoy making them up as you went along? Did anyone pray with you?
4. What kinds of creative prayer and worship have you tried, and what have you found most helpful/least helpful?
5. Are there things which stop people feeling included when your church worships and prays together? What could you do to change those things, or to help people feel included in spite of those things?
6. Have you ever felt excluded from prayer or worship for any reason? What was it like? Did anything happen to change the situation?
7. How often do the different generations worship and pray together in your church? What is it like when you do? Are there things which you could do/change to make it even more meaningful for everyone taking part?
8. One of the reasons prayer can be less inclusive in our churches is that we make it rather 'wordy'. Is prayer in your church usually wordy, or are there non-verbal, multi-sensory ways people can express themselves in prayer? If not, what could you do to include more of those things?

NB. Any activities involving children or vulnerable adults must always be carried out in full compliance with your church's safeguarding policy. If you are unsure what this policy requires, please consult your church leader or designated safeguarding officer.



Sensory Prayer

If you are hosting the group for this session, why not do some sensory prayer for the first few minutes. Do any or all of the following, and invite the group to enjoy using their senses as they relax in the presence of God.

- *Bake/warm some bread, brew real coffee or light a scented candle just before everyone arrives. As you open the meeting, invite them to sit in silence for a while, enjoying the fragrance and relaxing in God's presence.*
- *Play some music at the start of the meeting – not a song with words, but a piece of instrumental music, preferably with a variety of instruments, sounds and textures within it.*
- *Show a video clip which features the wonders of nature – landscapes, seascapes, starscapes or animals.*
- *Invite everyone to close their eyes, and then to use one hand to touch their other hand. Encourage them to explore it, noticing the shape of the bones, the textures of the skin ... and the miraculous engineering that makes our hands so remarkable and so useful.*
- *Give everyone a boiled sweet to suck, encouraging them to notice its flavours.*

Prayer Board games

When it comes to breaking out of the old, familiar routines, board games can be a great way to pray. For instance, why not find a Monopoly board, and stick temporary stickers over the property squares, each with the name of a particular group or activity in your church. Then play the game as normal, but each time someone lands on a square, instead of buying the property or paying rent, they have to say a one-sentence prayer for that group/activity. When someone lands on Chance or Community Chest, they have to read out one of their favourite Bible verses. And when someone lands in jail, they have to say a prayer for the persecuted church.

With a little creativity, there are lots of board games which can be re-purposed for prayer. Why not give it a try?



Session 4

The Power of Agreement

As we discovered in Season 1 of this Prayer School, God longs to commune and communicate with every single one of us. That one-to-one relationship of personal prayer is at the heart of the Christian faith. In the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew chapter 6, Jesus introduced his followers to the idea that they could go into a private room to talk to their Father in Heaven. Jesus himself broke the beautiful news that God the Father welcomes each of us to talk with him, without the need for protocols or go-betweens.

But the Bible is very clear that we can't have the benefits of personal relationship with God without also signing up to be part of a community – part of the family that is his church. A choice to follow Jesus is a choice to be inter-connected, to be a living stone, built together with all his other living stones, as we learnt in Session 1. That interconnectedness is as much about prayer as anything else. It's sometimes easier to want to keep prayer as our own private business, as something we do when we're alone, but something we prefer not to do with other people. Yet Jesus never intended us to get into the habit of 'privatised prayer'; he never intended us to use prayer as something to bless our own lives, whilst avoiding praying with others. Praying for ourselves is a good thing, but wanting to keep prayer to ourselves is not.

In Session 3, we learnt a bit about what it means for the whole church family to be together in prayer. In this session, we move from the topic of 'togetherness' to the topic of 'agreement'. If togetherness in prayer is about everyone being included, then agreement in prayer goes one step further. It's about a group of praying people tuning themselves in to one another, so that in the end they're all praying the same prayer. And the Bible teaches that the prayer they pray – the prayer of agreement – has a power and authority unlike any other kind of prayer.

Agreement starts with relationship. To pray in agreement, we need to be in relationship with people and we need to be praying with them. When we make space in our lives to do that – when we step out of our own preoccupations and get together with others to see a bigger picture – then we are experiencing prayer the way Jesus meant us to.

Session 4

Outline

<i>Welcome and Worship</i>	20 mins
Presenter's Introduction	2 mins
Story: Alain and Gerry Emerson and Dave Wylie	12 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 1 Discussion question 1</i>	10 mins
Talk Part 1 (Alain Emerson)	5 mins
Presenter's Link	1.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 2: Discussion question 2</i>	10 mins
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Talk Part 2	8.5 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 3: Discussion question 3</i>	10 mins
Story: Laura Brown	12 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 4: Discussion question 4</i>	10 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
Closing Prayer: Laura Brown	1 min
<i>Discussion and Prayer</i>	15 mins

Session 4

The Power of Agreement

Scriptures in the Teaching

1 John 5:14; Matthew 18:18-19; John 3:16, 6:38, 14:8-10, 17:21-23; Acts 2:1, 13:1-3;
2 Corinthians 3:18; Isaiah 58:12.



Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever seen a situation change as a result of people praying together in agreement?
2. Personal reflection: How can you open your prayer life up more to include others?
3. Think of a situation that needs prayer, and talk about how God might want you to pray. What sort of things would he want for the people involved?
4. What are the walls of division you want God to tear down in your community?
5. Many people find praying with others difficult or even frightening. What can we do in our churches to make praying together feel safer and less daunting?
6. God created us with free will to form our own opinions, and that means we don't all agree about everything. What does it mean to be 'in agreement' in prayer, even when we disagree with each other?
7. How do we work out what God's heart is for a particular situation?
8. How does your church listen to God's voice? Can you think of times when God has clearly spoken to you as a community? What did he say and how did he communicate it? What could we do as churches to make sure we hear God speaking to us by his Spirit?

NB. Laura mentions 'treasure hunting'. This is an activity where a group of people pray together, asking God to give them specific words about who they are going to meet when they go out into the streets. These words may include visual 'clues' such as 'woman wearing a green coat'. They also ask God to give them particular messages of love/encouragement for those people. Then they go out, look for the people God has told them about, and give them the message he has for them. You can find out more from Kevin Dedman's book, 'The Ultimate Treasure Hunt: a Guide to



One Faith

Millions of Christian believers down the centuries have united around a set of core truths about God and his Church. Those truths, known as 'creeds' are an excellent place to start, when we turn our minds towards the subject of agreement in prayer.

Print out copies of one of the creeds used in liturgical worship (the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed or the Apostles Creed), and invite the group to read it aloud together at the beginning or the end of your time together.

You'll find the three creeds, along with some background information on how they came into existence, here:

www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/creeds

Praying Aloud

Praying in agreement becomes easier when everyone present feels comfortable about speaking their prayers out loud. When we can hear someone's words, we can respond with encouragement, verbalise our agreement with a fervent 'amen', and then amplify their prayer by praying along a similar line ourselves. The only problem is, many people feel too scared or embarrassed to pray aloud. If that's true of your group, why not try one of these exercises, as a way of helping people get used to the sound of their own voices in prayer.

- 1. Choose a situation you want to pray about together (someone in need, an upcoming event in your church or a problem in the local community for instance). After a minute or so of silent prayer, invite people to take it in turns to speak out one word or phrase which sums up what they most want God to do. Remind them not to worry about having to make sentences, or having to start with 'Dear God' and end with 'amen'. The aim is just to speak out some one- or two-word prayers.*
- 2. Choose a situation (as above) and invite each member of the group to write a one-sentence prayer about it on a piece of paper. Then put the papers in a bowl and invite each person to draw one out at random, making sure it's not their own. Then take it in turns to read one another's prayers out loud to the group.*



Session 5

Prayer Warfare

Writer and theologian Andrew Murray once said:

'In the conflict between Satan and the Believer, God's child can conquer EVERYTHING by prayer. Is it any wonder that Satan does his utmost to snatch that weapon from the Christian, or to hinder him in the use of it?'

In Season 1 of the 'One Thing' Prayer School, we opened up the subject of warfare in prayer, when we looked at some of the obstacles which the enemy puts in the way of our own personal prayer lives. So how does it work with churches? Does the enemy put obstacles in the way of corporate prayer too? Given what we learnt in our last session about the power of agreement in prayer, we can safely assume that praying together is perhaps even more contested by the enemy than praying by ourselves.

Mary Warburton-Booth put it like this:

'Depend upon it, if you are bent on prayer, the devil will not leave you alone. He will molest you, tantalize you, block you, and will surely find some hindrances, big or little or both. And we sometimes fail because we are ignorant of his devices. I do not think he minds our praying about things if we leave it at that. What he minds, and opposes steadily, is the prayer that prays on until it is prayed through, assured of the answer.'

Session 5

Outline

<i>Welcome and Worship</i>	15 mins
Presenter's Introduction	1.5 mins
Story: Pauline Milner	1 min
Talk Part 1: Introduction (Pauline Milner)	3 mins
Story: Pauline Milner	2 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 1: Discussion question 1</i>	5 mins
Talk Part 2: Opposing the gospel	6.5 mins
Story: Tom Haylock	3.5 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 2: Discussion question 2</i>	10 mins
Talk Part 3: Disunity and division (1)	5 mins
Story: Tom Haylock	2 mins
Talk Part 4: Disunity and division (2)	3 mins
Story: Duncan Clampton	1.5 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 3: Discussion question 3</i>	10 mins
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Talk Part 5: Imitation and religion	10.5 mins
Presenters' Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 4: Discussion question 4</i>	5 mins
Story: Tom Haylock	1.5 mins
Talk Part 6: Openness to the Spirit	3 mins
<i>Pause Point 5: Discussion question 5</i>	10 mins
Story: Omana Kalayil	4 mins
Presenter's Conclusion	1.5 mins
Closing Thoughts: Pauline Milner	1 min
Prayer	10 mins

Session 5

Prayer Warfare

Scriptures in the Teaching

Intro: 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18; Luke 10:19;

Opposing the Gospel: Matthew 13:19; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 Timothy 3:6-7; Ephesians 6:10-18; Luke 22:31-32;

Division and Disunity: John 13:34-35; 2 Corinthians 2:10-11; Acts 6:1-4; John 17:20-23; Deuteronomy 32:30; 2 Chronicles 20:21-22; Acts 16:25-26;

Imitation and Religion: Exodus 7:8-12; 2 Corinthians 11:14-15; Galatians 1:6; Luke 4:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11; Psalm 6:9; Lamentations 3:22-23; Psalm 55:22; Philippians 4:13;

Openness to the Spirit: 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:1;

Closing Encouragements: James 4:7; Romans 8:38-39.



Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever known the enemy to oppose the work of a church you've belonged to?
2. When have you known the enemy to block the gospel?
3. What are the things which most help and most hinder unity in a church?
4. Is there a particular lie which you tend to get tangled up in? Think of a Bible truth to counteract it.
5. What are the 'religious' things which keep your church from being open to the Holy Spirit?
6. Are there particular enemy strategies which you think your church is especially susceptible to? What are they, and how could you better counteract them?
7. How often would you say the subject of spiritual warfare is taught or talked about in your church? When and how is it addressed? If you've ever talked about it with others in your congregation, what different perspectives have you come across?
8. It is generally acknowledged that we can veer to one of two extremes, where the enemy is concerned: either giving Satan too much attention on the one hand, or denying his power, and even his existence, on the

other. How do we find balance, when thinking about the enemy, and how can we ensure that our perspective is biblically and theologically sound? NB. Pauline refers to the 'Freedom in Christ' course during her teaching. If you'd like to know more, please visit: www.ficm.org.uk



Battle Songs

Whether your church is one where prayer warfare is taught regularly or not, the chances are you sing hymns or songs which draw on the battle metaphor. Throughout the centuries, writers have used the image of a warfaring church as the basis for many a stirring hymn. Why not dig out a few of these songs – anything from 19th century hymns to modern-day worship songs – and look at them or listen to them together as a group. What is their message about Christian warfare. What effect do you think each writer meant his/her song to have?

Once you've done that, you might even want to sing one of them together.

Finding Unity

Strong opinions and wounded feelings can make it difficult to pray together in unity for the churches we belong to. We can even tend to avoid praying together for certain things, for fear it will stir up our differences again. It can be hard to discern God's heart for a particular situation, when conflicting opinions clamour loudly in our heads.

The writer to the Hebrews described Jesus as the exact representation of God's being (Hebrews 1:3, NIV). If we want to know what God's heart is like – what he loves and what he longs to see – then Jesus is a good place to start looking.

Is there a 'thorny' issue which tends to divide opinion across your church? Ask the group to spend some time in stillness, thinking about Jesus and his character, and imagining what he might want to bring into that situation, if he walked into your church today.

Then invite people to pray simple prayers, using the phrase:

'Jesus, please bring ... into our church'.

Holy Spirit Freedom

Why not get this group to do a prayer-walk around the church, before your next Sunday service, praying that God's Spirit will be free to work in power.

'Jesus, please bring ... into our church'.



Session 6

Battle Stations (1)

In our modern reference-book culture, we tend to take Bible stories at face-value. We read them as interesting little glimpses into the life of an ancient people. But knowing the story-telling culture in which those Scriptures were born, it's safe to assume they were always meant to be more than just factual accounts. They were also parables – teaching tools to help people understand the important things in life. So, when the Apostles started teaching about prayer as a battle, it's likely that they meant their hearers to call to mind those ancient Hebrew stories of sword-wielding warriors and victorious encounters with enemy forces, because those stories had something to say about prayer.

Of course, the parallels are never perfect. The prayer battle in the heavenly realms isn't some spiritual role-play game, with characters, scores and a handy set of rules. It is a Holy-Spirit-led mystery which we will never fully understand until we reach Heaven itself. But we can safely assume that there are some truths in those ancient battle stories which will help us as we learn how to engage in prayer warfare, and it is those truths which we will be digging for in the final two sessions of this series.

The most obvious truth those ancient battle stories teach is that prayer can be a gruelling combat. Thankfully it's not always like that – prayer is often a peaceful, gentle, joyful business. But some prayer feels like a real fight, and that's the prayer we call 'intercession.'

'There is no power like that of prevailing prayer, of Abraham pleading for Sodom, Jacob wrestling in the stillness of the night, Moses standing in the breach, Hannah intoxicated with sorrow, David heartbroken with remorse and grief, Jesus in sweat of blood. Add to this list, from the records of the church, your personal observation and experience, and always there is the cost of passion unto blood. Such prayer prevails. It turns ordinary mortals into men of power. It brings power. It brings fire. It brings rain. It brings life. It brings God.' (Samuel Chadwick)

That's the kind of prayer we're talking about in this session.

Session 6

Outline

<i>Welcome and Worship</i>	15 mins
Presenter's Introduction	4 mins
Story: David Betteridge	2.5 mins
Talk Part 1: Introduction (Lyndall Bywater)	8 mins
Story: David Betteridge	2 mins
Presenter's Link	1 min
Pause Point 1: Discussion question 1	10 mins
Story: David Betteridge and Janette Howard	5 mins
Presenter's Link	1.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 2: Discussion question 2</i>	15 mins
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Talk Part 2: The Intercessor (1)	7 mins
<i>Pause Point 3: Discussion question 3</i>	10 mins
Story: Kathy Betteridge	2.5 mins
Talk Part 3: The Intercessor (2)	4.5 mins
Story: David Betteridge and Bill Wilson	4.5 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 4: Discussion question 4</i>	10 mins
Presenter's Conclusion	0.5 mins
Closing Thoughts: Janette Howard	1 min
<i>Discussion and Prayer</i>	15 mins

Session 6

Battle Stations (1)

Scriptures in the Teaching

2 Chronicles 7:14; Ephesians 6:12, 6:18; 2 Samuel 23:11-12; Luke 18:1-8; Colossians 4:12.



Discussion Questions

1. Has your church ever had a season of prayer? What was it for – was it a ‘sabbath’ or more of a ‘battle push’? What effect would you say it had on the church? Did anything new happen, or did anything change as a result of it?
2. Have you ever ‘wrestled’ in prayer, either alone or with others? What did you learn about yourself, and what did you learn about God?
3. Have you ever done any ‘wrestling’ in prayer, either alone or with others? What did you learn about yourself, and what did you learn about God?
4. What could you do to grow more intercession in your church?
5. Our churches are shaped by all sorts of practical things: the architecture and layout of our buildings, the structure of our services and the way they are led. Do you think the way your church prays is also shaped by these things? Does the layout of your building tend to mean one particular type of prayer is easier/more favoured than another? Do the services tend to prefer one kind of prayer over another? What ‘shape’ of prayer has your church adopted? What is good about it and what would you like to see change?
6. Who are the ‘prayer warriors’ in your church: those who are known for their faithfulness and diligence in intercessory prayer? Do you know of situations in the life of the church where their prayers have made a difference?
7. How are prayer requests shared in your church? Do you have a way to mobilise urgent prayer when it’s needed? What systems could you introduce to mobilise more intercession throughout the congregation?
8. Intercession is always easier and more motivated when we know that our prayers are being answered. Are there ways for people to share answers to prayer in your church: testimony times, or a ‘Thank you

God' prayer board, perhaps? What could you do to circulate more stories of answered prayer?



Wisdom in Word-pictures

The Bible is full of stories because God knows that we learn best through stories. Spend some time talking about the stories you have most loved and remembered throughout your lives (be they Bible stories or otherwise). What are the life-lessons which you learned from them?

Lentil Fields

In 2 Samuel 23:11-12, we read about Shammah, one of David's Mighty Men, who defended a lentil field against an onslaught of Philistines. There is no indication in the story as to why the field mattered so much to him, but he was utterly committed to wrestling for it.

Give your group some time for reflection (either in silence or with gentle music playing) and invite them to think about what their 'lentil field' might be: what is it that they find themselves wrestling in prayer for at the moment? What is it that they just can't stop crying out to God for?

Then, after a few minutes, invite each person to pray silently for the person on their left, that God will give them strength to persevere, and courage to keep going when they feel weary or discouraged. There is no need to share what your lentil fields are, unless anyone particularly wants to.

Warrior's Reward

Discuss together in your group who the intercessors are in your church – those who take the ministry of intercession particularly seriously, and who do it most faithfully. Then take some time to write a card to each of them, signed by everyone in the group, to thank them for their faithfulness in prayer. You might like to do a collection for a small gift for each of them too. Then invite the members of the group to take a card and hand-deliver it to the recipient. (Note to Leaders: It is highly likely that the intercessors in your church are the people doing this course. Therefore, instead of the above activity, you might like to consider writing a card for each member of the group, on behalf of the leadership

Session 6

Battle Stations (1)

Continued

of the church, to thank them for their work in prayer and intercession.)

Hearing the Answers

If you would normally set aside time for intercessory prayer, as part of your session together, why not exchange it this week for time spent sharing answers to prayer and thanking God for his goodness.



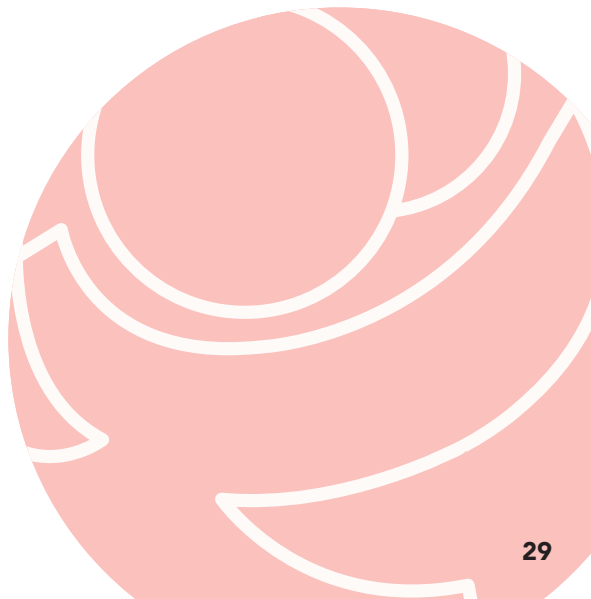
Session 7

Battle Stations (1)

In our last session, we explored the subject of intercession and the role of the intercessor. Many churches stop at this point; after all, to identify your intercessors and to develop spaces for passionate, effective intercessory prayer in your church are two excellent ways of growing prayer together. Yet, battle stories in the Bible were always about more than just the foot soldiers. In fact, had everything been left to the foot soldiers alone, many key battles would have been lost. It is simple, well-known warfare strategy that fighting armies are made up of soldiers competent in a whole range of different skills.

‘The prayer meeting is the place to meet with the Holy Ghost, and this is the way to get His mighty power. If we would have Him, we must meet in greater numbers; we must pray with greater fervency, we must watch with greater earnestness, and believe with firmer steadfastness. The prayer meeting... is the appointed place for the reception of power.’ (C. H. Spurgeon)

If praying with fervency is important, then watching with earnestness is equally important. In this session, we meet the soldiers who watch, steer and guard.



Session 7

Outline

<i>Welcome and Worship</i>	15 mins
Story: Janette Howard	1 min
Presenter's Introduction	1 min
Story: Keith Johnston	4 mins
Presenter's Link	1.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 1: Discussion question 1</i>	15 mins
Talk Part 1: Trouble-shooting Watchman (Lyndall Bywater)	7 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
Story: Keith Johnston	2.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 2: Discussion question 2</i>	10 mins

Talk Part 2: Prophetic Watchman	3.5 mins
Story: Kathy Betteridge	2 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 3: Discussion question 3</i>	5 mins
Talk Part 3: Spy Watchman	3 mins
Story: Janette Howard	1 min
Presenter's Link	1 min
<i>Pause Point 4: Discussion question 4</i>	5 mins
Story: Janette Howard	1.5 mins
Talk Part 4: The Overseer	3 mins
Story: David Betteridge	1 min
Talk Part 5: The Armour-bearer	4 mins
Story: Kathy Betteridge	3 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
<i>Pause Point 5: Discussion question 5</i>	10 mins
Presenter's Link	0.5 mins
Story: Keith Johnston	1.5 mins
Closing Prayer: Lyndall Bywater	1 min
Prayer	15 mins

Session 7

Battle Stations (2)

Scriptures in the Teaching

2 Samuel 18:24-27; 1 Samuel 14:6-7.



Discussion Questions

1. Battles need watchmen as well as wrestlers. As we begin thinking about the role the watchman plays, read these stories and word-pictures and discuss together what they tell you about the vital task of watching: Nehemiah 4:7-21; Isaiah 62:6-7; Jeremiah 31:3-6; Ezekiel 33:1-9; Matthew 26:36-46; 1 Peter 5:1-11.
2. What are the characteristics of a good watchman, and how should a watchman deliver his/her warning? Are there ways of delivering warnings which might make them harder for others to hear, and if so, what are they?
3. Has anything new ever started in your church as the result of a word of prophecy? Has someone ever spoken out in such a compelling way that a new initiative started, or a significant change took place? What was the word of prophecy and what happened as a result?
4. Who are the spy watchmen in your church: the people who are most well-connected in the local community, who are best at doing research or who seem to have their finger on the pulse of what matters in the area where you live?
5. Who are the overseers in your church? Who has a talent for connecting the watchmen and the intercessors, for making sure things get prayed for, and for leading prayer meetings? Who keeps an eye on your church prayer strategy?
6. Who are the armour-bearers in your church? Do you know of people who have a calling to pray for particular leaders, groups or ministries?
7. Perhaps you've never thought about there being watchmen in your church, but can you think of a time when somebody's vigilance was crucial in averting a problem? Has anyone ever called your church to urgent prayer ... prayer which, in the end, changed the outcome of a situation?

Session 7 Battle Stations (2) continued on page 32

8. How 'connected up' is the prayer battle in your church? What could be put in place to make it even more effective? How can the intercessors better hear the watchmen, and how can the watchmen be encouraged to say what they're seeing? How can the overseers and the armour-bearers be released and encouraged in their roles too?



Watchman Walk

One of the best ways to learn about being a watchman is to go and do some watching. Why not invite your group to spend the first 10 minutes of the session going for a short walk around the local neighbourhood. Give each of them a pen and paper, and invite them to note down anything which particularly catches their attention. Remind them that this isn't a prayer-walk, so they don't need to pray for anything in particular; they just need to keep their eyes and ears open, and see what happens.

When everyone is back, ask each person to share briefly what they noticed. If you have time, you may want to extend the exercise by praying for the neighbourhood you've just walked around, but the object of the exercise is simply to practise watching.

Who's who?

Having heard all about intercessors, watchmen, overseers and armour-bearers, spend some time talking together about where each person in the group feels they fit best, when it comes to the prayer battle stations. Remember, very few people fulfil just one role in prayer, and most of us will change roles from time to time, depending on the church we're in or the circumstances of our lives. It's often easier to see things in others than in ourselves, so don't forget to tell each other what gifts and talents you've seen in each other throughout this course.

Prophetic Prayer

At the end of the session, spend some time praying together for the church or churches you are part of. Instead of simply listing needs and problems, take a more prophetic approach: invite each member of the group to allow the Holy Spirit to steer them to a Bible verse; then ask each person to form a prayer for the church, based on the verse they've been given. (If your group aren't used to extemporary prayer, give them some time to write their prayers down, so that they can read them out, instead of having to form them spontaneously.)

To close, pray the prayer from Romans 15:13 together (found on page 7 of this booklet).

Credits and Acknowledgements

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 - o Emmanuel Church, 23a Castle Lane, Lurgan, BT67 9BD; www.emmanuel-church.co.uk
 - o Harrow Salvation Army, 15-16 Roxeth Hill, London, HA2 0JY; www.salvationarmy.org.uk/harrow
 - o Edinburgh Gorgy Salvation Army, 429-431 Gorgy Road, Edinburgh EH11 2RT; www.salvationarmy.org.uk/edinburgh-gorgy

If you've enjoyed 'One Thing for the Church', why not work through Season 1 of the One Thing Prayer School. 'One Thing for Us - Bringing personal prayer to life' is now available for streaming or download. Please visit www.salvationarmy.org.uk/one-thing to find links to the six sessions and the Study Guide.

Coming soon ...

one thing
for the
World
Moving out
in prayer

Look out for the third part of the 'one thing' series, due for release in autumn 2017, featuring six sessions on how to weave together prayer and mission.

