

“If only I would have had a prayer team.”

By Chris Johnson

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“We need to do a lot more than pray!” With intensity of tone an elder fired those words at me as I began explaining that I wanted to form a prayer team. Our church had been struggling in its ministry. Although we had made some strides, we also had experienced some daunting setbacks. I was fed up, beaten down, and worn out. I needed God to breathe fresh air into me if I were to continue. I needed wisdom, direction, and encouragement from the Lord. So, I desperately needed a prayer team to lift me up to God’s throne and to call down his Spirit of endurance upon me. Yet at an elder board meeting, before I could finish my first sentence explaining my need for a prayer team, I was interrupted by that remonstrance, “We need to do a lot more than pray!”

With deflated spirit, I explained that we needed God to pour out his presence and power, that we would receive this divine outpouring in answer to prayer, and that we had not really begun to pray. Yes, we needed to do ministry with people, but prayer fuels ministry, and we needed to fuel up. My explanation was met with blank stares and bronze ears.

I already had considered resigning from my ministry as the church’s senior pastor. At that elder board meeting, the ears of my spirit heard the bugler sound taps. How could I charge ahead if the elders would not encourage prayer support for me? I resigned shortly thereafter.

If only I would have had a prayer team. . . .

I rejoice that today I pastor a church whose mission statement cites prayer as our foremost task. We already have a team of 41 prayer warriors praying for 538 people in our church family at least once each week. One of these prayer warriors prays for me and my family. I am confident that I will be able to form a prayer team around her. I am just as confident that our church will form prayer teams for our two staff pastors. My wife, my children, and I look forward to spiritual growth spurts in Christ as God answers the prayers of our soon-to-form prayer team.

In Christ,
Chris