



Elders and Leaders FIELD GUIDE: An In-depth Participant Commentary

[The following is a letter sent to CCBT describing one church's experience with using the *Elders and Leaders FIELD GUIDE*.]

Our group of Elders wanted to better understand prayer...how, when, where, and who. We used the *Elders and Leaders FIELD GUIDE* Issue 7 as a study guide. We wanted a way to "benchmark" our prayer lives against what could and should be done as Elders.

I remember working through the guide and having one of the men ask: "Why don't people ask us to pray for them when they are sick?" We had done this in the past, but it was years ago. The article on "How Then Should We Pray for Healing?" provided us encouragement and guidance for moving ahead to play the critically important role that shepherds of a flock need to provide. We then offered to pray for those we knew to be mortally ill.

Clearly, one of the most humbling experiences of my life, and yet one that is a tremendous blessing to me, was having the opportunity, as Elders, to pray with those in our church family who have been desperately ill. What a sweet time of worship, praise, and intervention these have been. Again, to God be the glory for what He has done.

As the *FIELD GUIDE* says, I think we are now seeing prayer as the *reason* for our meetings vs. something we do at the beginning of a meeting.

To provide additional perspective, here are the notes I took during the first evening that we studied the *FIELD GUIDE*. I thought you might find this informative.

First Reactions to the Study?

1. We don't fast and pray as a group. We should "beg" more in our tone and desire.
2. Don't know how to pray, specifically for the other elders.
3. We don't pray over sick people (anointing with oil).
4. #1 priority of elders: devote themselves to prayer.
5. We don't communicate with our flock as to how we're praying for them.
6. Don't see us praying with people when we're with them. We say, "I'll pray about it."
7. Easiest prayer is the "I want/they need" vs. praise and knowing God.
8. The thought on praying for healing....
9. In James, a focus on spiritual needs.
10. Praying ...ministering the Word...is teaching/showing/applying the Word to their lives.

If there was one thing we could change about how we pray, what would it be?

(Ideas generated at an Elder meeting.)

1. Pray in front of the church (We'll teach on prayer, and several elders then pray).
2. Praying the Psalms as a body.
3. Allow people to share their personal testimony, and elders pray with them.
4. Learn specifics as to how to pray for other elders.
5. Elders stand in front of the church and people come to elders for prayer (Sunday evening service?).
6. Decide if weekly prayer meetings are important, and if so, attend them.
7. Set aside a day of prayer and pray via Psalms, Corporate prayer, and personal confession, names of God, etc.
8. 24 hour prayer period (pray for marriages in the church, elders, etc.).
9. Cards...that people can submit to request prayer.
10. On James 5:14 Sick? Call the elders...why doesn't this happen now? Ignorance? Lack of confidence?
11. Break up prayer needs list; assign section of the congregation to pray for section of the prayer needs list. Tell individuals after the service that you prayed for them.
12. In a normal service, do a 5-minute (mini-class) teaching on an aspect of prayer, then do it.
13. James 5...a chapter of hard teachings on prayer...May need to examine as a group.

Thanks for making the *Elders and Leaders FIELD GUIDE* available for our use.

To God be the Glory!

Dan Price, Chairman of the Elders
Faith Bible Church
Cincinnati, Ohio