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Barb Boyt is a former human resources director with InterVarsity Fellowship of Canada. Beginning in 1993, she took part on intercessory prayer teams that prayed throughout the triennial Urbana Student Missions Conferences. She also co-led three of those teams.

live magazine sat down with Barb to talk about how prayer teams work. Whether you're a seasoned prayer team member or someone who's considering whether to be part of Baptist Women's Prayer Network, we hope Barb's insights will encourage you.

PRAYER TEAMS | INTERCEDING FOR AN EVENT

Insights from an intercessory prayer team member and leader

live: What do you want women starting or taking part on intercessory prayer teams to know?

Barb Boyt:

Entrust the time to the Spirit . . . to lead you, teach you, develop the intercessory gift within each person.

Silence is a beautiful thing as you wait on the Spirit. I am a list person and a prayer list was important to me. I wanted to know what to pray for. For me, one of the biggest things was to just be silent and to pray, not out of a list that I had written out, but as I was led

to pray.

I learned to pray out of visions. I had never done this before and usually when this happened, other team members would confirm those promptings. So I learned to pray, not out of what I knew, but as I was prompted.

Be interactive and creative (e.g. posture, worship, artistic expression).

For example, some people may prefer to lie prostrate on the floor; others may prefer to walk around as they pray; others may kneel; still others may stand or sit. Give the team members permission to allow any of those things to happen. A caution: If something is

very distracting you may need to address that.

Some people may be more able to clearly express what they are hearing, feeling, sensing by drawing. Some may be able to paraphrase Scripture. Others may have a song. Some people may weep; others may be super silent. Don't be afraid of the charismatic expressions of what people are hearing.

My experience is multidenominational, working alongside intercessors from different cultural and church backgrounds. I've learned that anything can happen when you're on a prayer team!

CONNECT TO MISSION

Respect the diversity of gifts and experience represented among the intercessors. Learn from and encourage each other as you grow in prayer.

If someone comes to the room asking for prayer, see this as a divine appointment and focus on their needs at that moment.

Keep a journal of what you hear and experience together.

Report to church leaders key things/themes that would be important for them to know.

Remember that *where you meet to pray is sacred space* set apart for a specific purpose at a specific time. As you end the intercessory time, *celebrate* what has taken place as you prayed.

What are some pitfalls women should know upfront? And how do they avoid them?

One of the pitfalls is *fear*. People can say: *What can I offer to this? Others can pray up a storm but I can't*. What we forget is that we have been invited to be part of a team. Someone has seen something in us.

Pride. It's important to remember that the whole team is on the same holy ground and the Spirit is going to speak to each member of the team. I have been on teams where the leader has been all about, *"It's my way or the highway."* Don't become too proud of the fact that you're the leader or you've been asked to take on a specific role, e.g., praying for event speakers or worship leaders.

Being critical of others and what they're doing.

The biggest one is *not being silent; not intentionally listening* to what the Spirit is saying but talking the whole time. ■

HOW TO SET UP AN INTERCESSORY PRAYER TEAM FOR A LARGE EVENT

Before the event

- Identify who is going to be the leader of that prayer team. This is a decision that the event's leaders will probably make themselves.
- Set out expectations. What does the event leadership expect of the prayer team leader and of the prayer team as a whole?
- Discern who needs to be part of the prayer team.
- Write up a job description before inviting people to be part of the team.
- If possible, give prayer requests to the prayer team leader before the event happens. This gives the team ideas about what is going on; what the leaders hope to happen, and is an opportunity to pray ahead of time.
- If possible, meet ahead of time to discuss broad strokes. Assign team

members to pray for specific aspects of the event. Figure out how you will meet if team members are in different locations, i.e., Zoom, Skype.

- At the event, have a dedicated space set up for the prayer team that's out of traffic.

The day of and during the event

- Walk and pray through the venue before people arrive, specifically the rooms where plenary sessions, worship and breakout sessions will happen.
- Logistics: Decide how often this team will pray, i.e., when they will pray and for how long. This helps first-time team members know they'd only be praying for an hour, or two, or three, etc. Where will the team pray? Is the team expected to stay in one room the whole time or

are members expected to be out in sessions as well?

- Pray! For the first meeting, the leader comes with scripture, or the theme of the event, or something worship-related to begin the team's time of prayer. After a certain point in the session, it's important that the leader doesn't look like the leader.
- Give people the freedom to be themselves and to use the gifts they've been given in prayer. For example, some people may be silent the whole time—but they're great listeners. Others will find Scripture immediately. Don't be afraid of silence during this time.
- An important question: What are you/we hearing?
- Record that . . . so that those insights can be given to the leaders of the event either during or after.