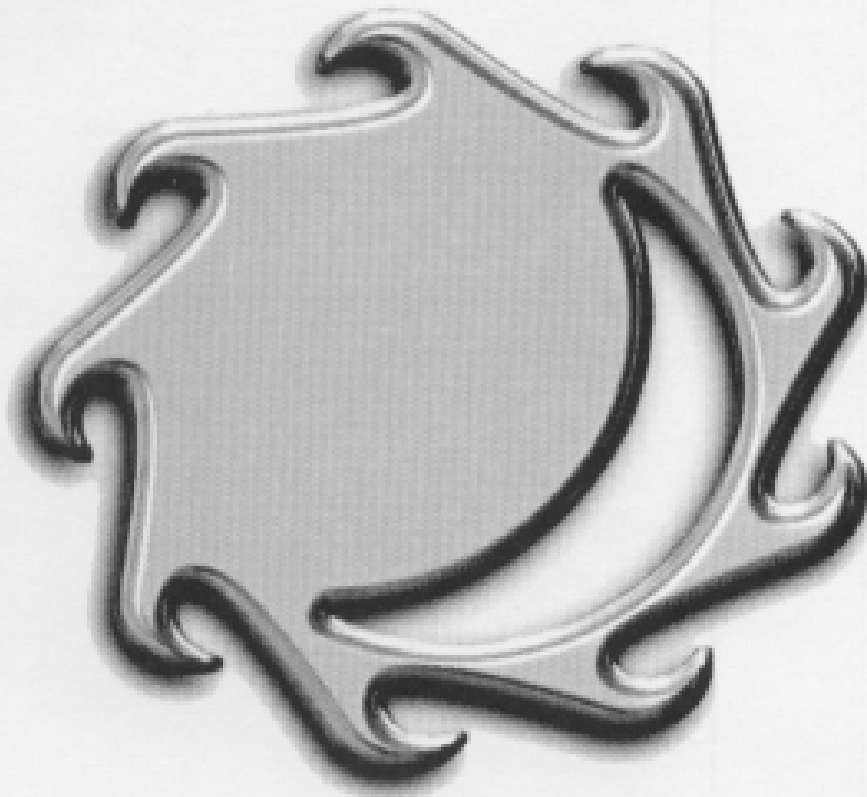
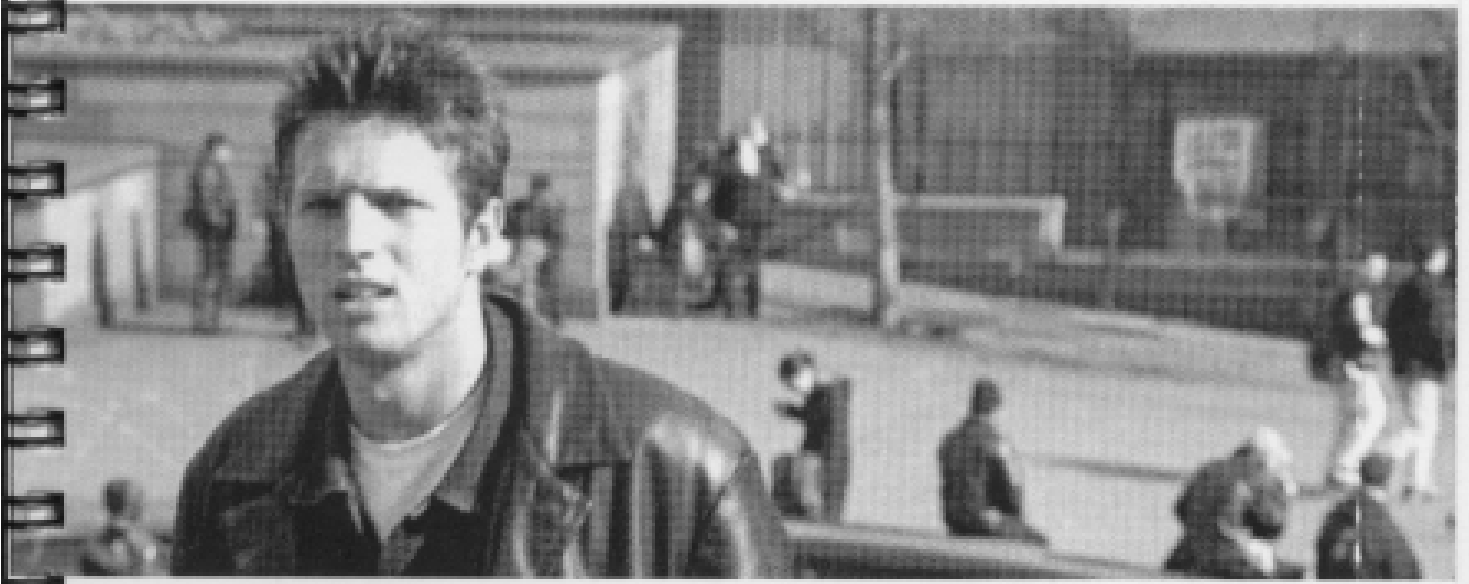


HOW TO DO 24-7



WWW.24-7PRAYER.COM

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Written by Pete Greig

DEAR LEADER

**“We left the prayer room at 4.35am, madly and passionately in love with Jesus”
[Sarah – UK]**

Hi,

Thanks for registering to do 24-7. We're here to support you through the planning stages, into the Prayer Room and out the other side! This booklet will answer your questions and help you run the wildest prayer meeting ever!

So how are you feeling about it?

Are You Excited?

It's great that you're planning to do 24-7. As such, you are part of a growing movement of people determined to 'pray like it all depends on God and live like it all depends on us'. 24-7 is working in churches, universities, festivals, bible-colleges and youth groups; from the most traditional denominations to the most experimental streams!

Maybe You're Confused?

24-7 is a non-stop world-wide prayer meeting. We can guarantee that right now, someone, somewhere is praying 24-7. Your group can be a vital link in the international 24-7 chain for anything between a week and a month.

24-7 is for groups who know that God is calling them to pray... but are bad at it! It takes normal, disorganised people and teaches them to pray – by praying.

24-7 is for all ages, but is particularly focussed on young people; the church family's missing generation. There's an awesome sense of being caught up in something God is doing in our time...

He has started it.

He will make it happen.

**Perhaps You're Scared?
Not Sure?**

Whatever you do, don't get too complex (or 'sensible') about it. Star Trek's Captain Spock would never approve of 24-7 – it is entirely ridiculous at every level!

All you need to do is find a room with a kettle; mobilise the troops and start to pray. Hopefully this booklet will make undertaking 24-7 a little easier; it's really practical, informative and addresses many of the more detailed issues we have encountered in praying 24-7, here at Revelation Church, UK. And the thing about us is that we are bad at praying! If we can do it, anyone can!

**“The Vision behind 24-7 is directly from Heaven. It just works!”
[Ocke Kruger – Germany]**

When we first started praying in this way, we had little idea of what we were doing, except that God was calling us to pray in a new way. The first 24 hour period alone seemed like a crazy idea.

Would anyone really do it?

But as people met with God in that room, the momentum grew. Prayers were answered dramatically, some saw angels, non-Christians visitors sat in wonder, unsigned graffiti crept across the walls glorifying Jesus, married couples slipped out in the night to pray together and even new Christians assumed it normal to pray for an hour. We were discovering that prayer really does work!

That first season continued for three months and spread to other places too. We just couldn't stop! And now, like many other groups, we have built seasons of 24-7 Prayer into our church calendar.

If you have any further questions, no matter how detailed, please don't hesitate to get in touch with a member of the team at your nearest 24-7 Base (contact details are at the back of this booklet).

We're with you all the way,

Carla Trundle
24-7 International Base

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

"The dream behind 24-7 Prayer is to turn the tide of youth culture back to Jesus – It's a big dream – maybe an impossible dream..."

1. Turning the Tide

According to legend the ancient (Danish) King Canute tried to turn back the tide. He positioned his throne on the seashore one day, shouting at the waves as the tide swept in towards him. It didn't work and soon he was very wet. God: 1, Canute: 0.

Right now the tide of western culture is surely approaching its lowest ebb. Suicide rates are rocketing amongst young men. Eating disorders and other self-image problems affect women everywhere. Materialism and greed seem to determine everything. And the Body of Christ is bleeding young people.

But, of course, at the moment of lowest ebb, the tide turns with greatest force.

The tides and seasons of our lives are not determined by powerful people like Canute or by media icons worshipped by millions. Human destiny ultimately rests in the heart of God and the hands of His people. That is why we must pray.

The 24-7 prayer idea is growing and multiplying fast, alongside many other wonderful prayer initiatives. Again and again we have declared our intention to 'be history makers in this land'. Perhaps it is in response to this prayer that God is gathering an army of young, reckless intercessors for whom God is an addiction and prayer a way of life.

History shows that this is an amazing time to be alive:

- The early church spread from a prayer room in Jerusalem to the ends of the earth thanks to the Roman Empire's network of nations, roads and ideas.
- The printing press did the same for Martin Luther's Reformation.
- In the same way, today's internet/MTV generation represents a new empire of trade-routes by which the gospel of Jesus could spread easily around the world. Right now it's an empty vacuum just filled with junk like Coke and McDonalds. People are hungry for something more...

But strategy alone will not achieve this. The great need of this hour is for Christianity to become contagious again. And this Jesus epidemic begins in His presence, in the blood and not the head. It's time for us to lay down our differences, join hands around the world and pray as He taught us.

"Anything not born in prayer is born in pride"
[Joy Dawson - author]

The idea of praying 24 hours a day, 7 days a week is nothing new.

- Isaiah describes watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem who 'will never be silent day or night.' (**Isaiah 62v6**). We like to think that we're part of the fulfilment of that prophecy.

- Pentecost came to a prayer room.
- Members of the early church 'all joined constantly together in prayer.' **(Acts 1v14)**
- The Celtic Monks at Bangor Abbey in Ireland prayed continually for 200 years, in the 6th, 7th and 8th centuries.
- Today we know of prayer-centres in South Korea, Kansas USA, all over South America, Kenya, and other nations too.

One of the most stunning examples of 24-7 Prayer comes from the Moravian community of Herrnhutt, Germany. On 13th August 1727 the Spirit of God fell upon them with such power as they confessed sin and shared bread and wine, that a prayer meeting began that was to continue without a break for more than a century. This praying community, tucked away in a remote German village went on to rewrite the history books as they took the gospel to the ends of the earth and introduced people like John Wesley to Jesus.

A small prayer meeting in an obscure village sent out 3,000 missionaries in the 200 years after their 24-7 began. That could happen where you live too! The Moravians prove to us that the tide really can turn across nations and generations. The sea of popular opinion does not listen to kings on their thrones who shout at the waves. The tide turns when nobodies like us unlock the power of persistent, faithful and focussed prayer.

PLANNING YOUR SEASON OF PRAYER: The Practical Bit

**"Is it true today
that when people pray
clouded skies will break
Kings and queens will shake?"
[Delirious? - History Maker]**

**"We need to find God and He cannot be found in noise and restlessness.
God is the God of silence.
The more we receive in silent prayer the more we can give in our active life"
[Mother Teresa]**

1. How Long Should We Go For?

How long do you plan to run your Prayer Room for? We ask that you make a commitment of at least a week, but some of you will want to go for longer. Some groups start with a 24 hour vigil or a weekend, but most groups manage a week quite easily.

Take the following considerations into account:

The size of the group – As a rough guideline, if 30 people commit to an hour a day, you will easily fill a week with non-stop prayer. Some will prefer to pray in pairs while many like to have the room to themselves.

The strength of the community – In our experience the biggest factor in making 24-7 work for a sustained period is NOT the size of the group but the sense of community. Some big churches have struggled to do just seven days because their people aren't used to attending anything other than Sunday services. But just 20 students in Belfast found they couldn't stop at the end of their week! A church of 100 in London prayed for an amazing 15 weeks.

The rhythm of prayer – A week of 24-7 Prayer may not be enough. One pastor, planning a week of prayer cleared much of his diary, expecting to have to cover much of the slots, and never managed to get one at all – such was the demand! If you are too cautious in you planning there will always be several people in the room. This isn't ideal because most people prefer to have the room to themselves. However, if in doubt, it is best to be cautious with planning the length of your first prayer season. It's better to go for a week and end up doing two than to announce plans that you are going to pray for a month and quit after a fortnight.

- If your week doesn't work out – don't panic! Contact us for help or just stop (and let us know). You've still prayed more than ever before and we're not trying to break any records!
- Believe it or not, some groups can't stop at the end of their week! We suggest that no-on plans to do more than a month at this stage, although if you do go over the month marker, naturally, we will be delighted.
- If you reregister for a second season of 24-7, *Fast Forward* is a comprehensive booklet designed to maximise your prayer.

2. When Shall We Do 24-7?

Choose the week carefully. Consider the following:

Local commitments – Are your key people going to be around? Does it clash with other church commitments? Does it clash with exams or other school/college events? Could it build up to an evangelistic focus or form part of a missions push?

Think ahead – Plan the year, not just a few months. For example, you might want to pray for one week in April and then try two weeks in November. Many churches are building regular seasons of 24-7 into their ongoing community life. At Revelation Church in the UK we're trying to model a regular cycle that passes from a season of 24-7 Prayer into a season of mission and then a season of relaxation where meetings are kept to a minimum. (See appendix 6)

3. Where Should We Do 24-7?

We think it is really important to locate your prayer in a fixed location.

Prayer Rooms have opened in all kinds of places: in a disused radio station in Sweden, a hospital, a barn on a farm and a tepee at a New Age Festival; in a Swiss skate park, an American office, and on an English double decker bus; in marquees at big festivals, in student basements and campus chaplaincies. Oh yes – and also in church buildings!

"I told a non-Christian friend about our Prayer Room. She said, 'My head's messed up right now, and I think I need to do some praying.' I didn't realise she meant 'right now' literally until she left the club, went to the Prayer Room and spent 2.5 hours alone with God!"
[Claire]

4. Why Do We Need A Prayer Room?

- The Holy Spirit can fill a place as well as a person (**Acts 2v2**).
- There's often a strong sense of God's presence in such a place of prayer, even experienced by non-Christians.
- Time often goes quicker! Many have reported that "in the Prayer Room one hour feels like 10 minutes".

"Wow! I didn't believe all that stuff about one hour being like 10 minutes, but it's true... People don't want to leave!"
[Dave – UK]

Evangelistically the Prayer Room is excellent. Non-Christians have often sat in such places to pray, some have said that they can feel God's presence. People who don't want to be preached at still like to be prayed for. (See Appendix 4)

"A Prayer Room helps a church look beyond itself, motivating it to unleash prayer power for the unsaved, the community, the nation, the church's missionaries, and the world"
[Vander Griend – *Praying Church Source Book*]

The Prayer Room enables people to pray non-verbally, by posting artwork, poetry and graffiti on the wall. The environment can be artistically designed to stimulate and direct prayer. (See Appendix 5)

- The Room provides accountability – a place where people have to turn up, and this ensures a constant flow as one prayer-shift hand the baton on to the next. Visiting the room is like a mini pilgrimage.
- A shared location provides a strong sense of being part of a community carrying each others' burdens, as well as celebrating the breakthroughs together. You are more than an invisible link in a prayer chain.

You need to think through various issues when selecting your Prayer Room;

Accessibility – Choose somewhere central for those travelling in at night.

Size – Ideally the room should be big enough to move around in (there's a lot of prayer 'pacers' out there!!) and big enough to take groups without being too big for atmosphere and intimacy. A medium sized room divided into themed areas work well.

Security – How safe is the building? Think especially about late at night. Try to have a phone available (switch the ringer off!!)

Facilities – Obviously you need toilets. Tea/coffee and cookies are a step in the right direction.

Stuff You Need in the Prayer Room:

- CD player and music including a 24-7 Prayer CD and a kid's praise tape.
- Lots of paper (large) and pens, paints, brushes etc.
- A bible.
- A book of prayers.
- A world map.
- A 'share' book where people can put their thoughts, answered prayers, and stories (put this somewhere very obvious).
- 24-7 postcards and Supporter's leaflets.
- A candle (check fire-alarms).
- The 'Sign-Up' Sheet.
- A board saying the name and number of a person 'on-call' in an emergency (see page 14).
- Make lots of copies of the latest newsletter (you can download these from the web or get full colour copies free – just pay postage).
- Other things to consider include blu-tak, dust sheets, 'Operation World', by Patrick Johnstone.
- It's great if you can have a computer on-line in the room, so that people can use the 24-7 website live.
- Video player with helpful tapes.
- 60 Minute Prayer Guides (available with the 24-7 Start-up Pack or make your own).
- Lava lamps and atmospheric lighting.
- Bean bags and comfy chairs.

Noise/Disturbance – With people coming and going all the time and music being played at all hours, try to find a venue that is 'neighbour friendly'. If it has to be in a private house, can you use a detached one or a basement?

Décor – Create a good environment that will encourage prayer (don't make it too respectable!) As well as a globe/world map, think about prophetic symbols as well as any significant prophetic words your church may have received. Make the lighting warm and subdued. Videos and projections are great. It's worth printing out some relevant parts of the website. One group even installed a goldfish in their Prayer Room.

It might be a good idea to commission some arty types to design the room, so that it has real impact when people step inside. (For more on art see Appendix 5). You will need a small budget for art materials, drinks etc.

You could divide the room into sections. Using four walls, you could have one for personal prayer requests, as well as a wall designated for practical stuff like the Sign Up sheet and a sign to say who is 'on call' (See page 15).

Other Ideas...

Prayer Slugs – We once built a massive 'Prayer Slug' from sheets of plastic and hoops. In the 'Slug' people put their prayers they had prayed/names of people they were praying for to show they were given to God.

Intimacy Tent – You could build an 'intimacy tent' within the room, inside it place beanbags and devotional material to give people some privacy in more popular and busy time periods.

Labyrinth – Available from the shop any day now.

Video – You could make some videos that lead people through an hour of prayer focusing on local issues and world news items.

“Our 24-7 week exceeded all expectations. Over 200 people used the prayer room, and more than 20 churches got involved. 24-7 has been one of the most productive (yes, prayer is productive!) weeks I have ever known, people were saved. The lukewarm were ignited. Unity made huge steps forward. Through 24-7, a radical vision was imparted way beyond anything our puny little talks could have accomplished. The week has also multiplied itself into three other locations”
[Ian – UK]

PREPARING A GROUP FOR A SEASON OF PRAYER

“People are being disciplined by the Holy Spirit. One girl who is a very new Christian visits the Prayer Room everyday”
[Belfast, N. Ireland]

Preparation is Vital!

OK, you’re a leader so maybe you caught this vision really quick. But it takes weeks of careful communication to really inspire and mobilise most groups to get involved. “Drip-feed” the vision of 24-7 over a period of time. Circulate 24-7 postcards and the ‘What is it?’ leaflets. (You can make copies from the ‘Master’ included with your registration pack or order copies online.)

In many ways, preparing people to pray is the most important job of all. God is not a massive slot machine, into which we can feed our prayers. There will be answers to prayer, but there will also be passionate prayers that seem to go unanswered. The point is that this is a space for people to hang out with their Heavenly Father, a place of intimacy and transformation. In His presence we are changed – we *become* answered prayer.

1. Teaching On Prayer

In the weeks leading up to 24-7 you will want to teach about prayer and get everyone excited about what God can do. Teach very practically. You could use the Lord’s Prayer as a model, and recommend books. On the website there are some recommended books and free materials you can download.

If you have cell groups, focus them on prayer. Encourage people to share stories of answered prayer to build faith. Our ‘Start-Up’ packs are specifically designed to inspire and ignite small groups for 24-7 and can be ordered from the website.

Many people don’t think they’ll be able to pray for a whole hour. Encourage them in the use of art materials and Prayer Pointer sheets. Explain that time will probably go quicker in that room. It is really important to excite the whole church and to get everyone involved; but in all of this, make sure that you have particularly captured the hearts of your young people as they are at the heart of 24-7.

2. Prayer Pledges

It is a good idea, two weeks before the launch, to invite people to pledge a certain number of hours per week. You could do this in response to a talk on prayer. Make sure that the pledges are realistic. You could also give people a symbol to remind them of their pledge, a bracelet or a small sticker for their watches for example.

3. Fasting

It’s good to encourage a season of corporate fasting throughout the prayer time. It could be fasting from chocolate, alcohol, sex, TV or food (watch those with eating disorders). It’s good to explain the power of fasting (check out the article on the website).

4. Focus

Be clear about the objectives of the prayer week. You need to focus on local and personal needs, but beyond this focus is ‘turning the tide in youth culture’. The website provides all sorts of prayer resources you can print out around this theme.

5. Website

Wherever possible get members of the church to check out the 24-7 website and add it to their 'favourites' before the week starts. This often does more than anything else to excite and motivate them. If you have the technology, project the website on the wall of your Sunday meeting when you share the vision.

'Thanks to the 24-7 website I can now say that I am a Christian'
[Claire]

6. Principles

Keep rules to absolute minimum. However one or two principles are important:

Variety – Let people pray how they want to. One night we had a guy praying silently to Celtic music, followed by a group dancing their prayers to disco tunes! Some like to shout and yell, pacing up and down. Some kneel quietly. Some paint. Some sing out scripture or write their prayers down. Hour by hour the prayer-style is as different as the people who are praying. It's all good stuff, and stops things getting boring for God!

Teenagers – What is your plan in terms of teenagers coming out at night? You could either put an age restriction on this or get older ones to come out with them. You might need to organise parental consent forms and strict guidelines. A good model is to get a whole cell group of teenagers to do a sleep-over in a room adjoining the Prayer Room with a responsible adult where they can wake each other for 'prayer watches' throughout the night.

Children – By providing art materials and kids' praise tapes, all children can enjoy using the Prayer Room with a parent or guardian during the day.

Pairs – We recommend that at night/after dark, people pray in pairs unless they specifically want the room to themselves. In this case, they should indicate this clearly on the signing up chart. (We get people to draw a red box around their name if they would like private use of the Prayer Room). Make sure that any regular church prayer-meeting is also conducted in the Prayer Room.

7. 'On Call' Team

This is one of the absolute top keys to a successful prayer season. You will need to recruit a few reliable people to be your 'On Call' team. These people will each then be responsible for a 24 hour period of the week. Their job is as follows.

Fill up slots – The day before their duty they should check the signing up sheet to see if there are any blank slots where no-one has signed up to pray. They should then phone around people in order to fill up these slots. (N.B. they need to be gentle in this. We do not want people to feel pressured into praying!) It is useful to build up a bank of people who do not mind being called out to pray in an emergency.

Be on-call – On their allocated day, the person is on call for 24 hours. They must be contactable throughout that period. (Ideally they need to have mobile phones or pagers). Their contact number should be posted clearly in the Prayer Room for that day.

We have found that it works better to start the period at 9am rather than midnight, as this saves people having to turn on phones in the middle of the night. The 'duty' person visits the Prayer Room at 9am to write their name & number on an 'On call' board and check that everything's o.k.

If someone does not turn up for a prayer slot (yes, it does happen!), then the person who is on call is phoned, and they either fill the slot themselves or get someone else to relieve the previous person. This stops people feeling 'trapped' in the Prayer Room if the next person doesn't show.

Tidy – It is also the On-Caller's job to ensure on their day the room is kept stocked (tea/coffee/paint etc) and tidy. This is a daily task.

"His whisper is much louder in here"
[Jenni, 16]
LAUNCHING YOUR SEASON OF
24-7 PRAYER

We started off our week with our agendas then slowly God led us to the cross and then to the lost; to His agenda. We've been working for years here (without much success) to engender a real concern for the lost amongst our churches and young people.

Suddenly there's tears, prayer and compassion and it's being lived out when we get home. Yes God!"

[Andy Freeman – Reading, UK]

Sign Up Sheet

You need a large chart dividing each day into one hour slots, where people can sign up to use the room (a template is included in our 'Start-Up' pack available from the website). Locate this at the back of every public meeting with a persuasive person 'recruiting' (don't expect this to just fill up itself)! At all other times the chart should be in the Prayer Room so people know who is coming to relieve them and so others can come and sign up for slots during the week. Some groups have developed an on-line sign up rota. Check out www.readingprayer.com

Prayer Pointers

Post a selection of 60 minute prayer guides in the room. These should be focussed around certain issues and take people on a spiritual journey, broken down into five minute chunks (samples are available in the 'Start-Up' pack). Newspaper headlines and articles from our website will also be helpful.

Network Maps

You could encourage everyone to write a network map (spider graph) of all their non-Christian friends, family and work/school/college colleagues. Put these up around the room so that people can pray into each others' maps.

Grand Kick Off

Put some thought into the actual launch meeting. Start with a bang! You could ceremoniously light a candle that will burn throughout the time. Show the website and let people know where else in the world prayer is happening and who's passing the baton on to you. Perhaps you could establish a link with a group praying before you by phone or in person.

"Jesus is so near in the Prayer Room. Sometimes all of us weep for the lost. People just want to pray – we don't have to urge them. We haven't seen loads of answered prayers yet, but we have received vision, passion and a love for our nation and for this generation"

[Ocke – Germany]

MAINTAINING YOUR SEASON OF PRAYER

"Prayer itself is an art which only the Holy Spirit can teach us. Pray for prayer. Pray until you can really pray"

[C.H. Spurgeon]

What if we Can't Stop?

Good problem! Keep going as long as there is life in it.

If you end up going for more than a week (it does happen!) consider a news sheet to circulate stories, words and updates. Work at keeping the momentum, through motivational and effective communication and an ongoing public profile. Some people will not get involved until the very last minute and will then be sad when it stops. After three months, we still had church members visiting the Prayer Room for the first time!

"They all joined together constantly in prayer"

[Acts 1.14]

Encourage people to visit the website regularly as it will help build faith and enable people to feel part of something that God is doing around the world.

If things go crazy and you just can't stop, organise a regular review meeting with the 'On Call' team to take the pulse and decide whether to extend for another block of time. If it's getting hard to fill slots... Stop!

Please **NEVER** announce that you are going to keep going indefinitely unless you have been building up to this for a long time. Otherwise this is a recipe for definite discouragement no matter how much excitement it releases when you first make the announcement. If things are going well, extend a week or

a month at a time. Remember: it's best to quit while you're ahead, leaving people hungry for more and excited about the next time than to exhaust and cajole people.

What if Some People are Praying too Much?

You can laugh but it does happen! There is an addictive quality to the presence of God (check out Obededom in the Old Testament) and some people have to be told to go home! We would suggest that no one ever does more than a three hour stint unless they particularly want to do a night vigil. Clearly God doesn't want anyone's home-life or work to suffer.

Feed Back

We will open a section for you in 'Talkback' on the website, under 'Now Praying'. Please do take the time to post your reports and stories there throughout the week. Anything that gets written in your 'Share' book in the room is worth uploading onto the website along with poems and stuff. This encourages people all around the world who are standing with you as you pray. If you email us updates, we can also post them on the site's 'news' section, and don't forget to update church members at your Sunday meetings!

"Be joyful always, pray continually"

[1 Thess 5.17]

ENDING YOUR SEASON OF PRAYER

"Our Church has been changed forever... Dozens are coming back to Jesus, or are being saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. We are believing for an awakening that will usher in the greatest harvest the world has ever seen. 24-7 Prayer has enabled us to be a part of it"
[Ann Burns – Tennessee, USA]

Finish with a Bang!

It is really important to end your season of prayer well. We suggest you do it with a celebration. You could take all the art and have a prayer bonfire! We suggest you resist the temptation to keep the Prayer Room 'open indefinitely' in between seasons of prayer. We don't want to create 'shrines'!

Money

24-7 is not an organization – just a network of people with a call to prayer. But we aint got no sugar daddies! We ask each participating group to take up an offering for 24-7 in a congregational (or similar) context, ideally at the end of their week(s).* We desperately need this and rely on the whole 24-7 community sharing the costs together in this way. Sadly, many well meaning groups forget to contribute, meaning that it has cost us money to help them pray which puts a lot of pressure on the 24-7 Bases. We hate having to 'chase-up' these contributions, so please don't forget your offering. It's an important principle and we depend on it in practise.

A few groups are unable to give anything at all, in which case they should just let us know in writing. No problem. Larger churches and city-wide situations who can give more therefore subsidize Prayer Rooms in much poorer situations.

Debrief

It is also important, we've discovered, to gather people for a simple de-brief when you end your Prayer Room. In this can get feedback, deal with any disappointments, share the exciting stories and sound them out about doing it again. We would ask you to hand out leaflets about becoming regular 24-7 supporters, helping your people to stay actively connected with the movement through a monthly personal donation.

After the week, please let us have:

- **Encouraging Stories** – Send in all clear answers to prayer and if they relate to miraculous healing please ensure that these stories are thoroughly checked out.

- **The money from Your Offering**
- **Creativity** – Each location should contribute a couple of poems and pictures for the 24-7 gallery. Sadly we cannot return artwork, but you can send photos or email images directly to us (JPEG/GIF).

Become a 24-7 Supporter...

Please consider becoming a regular 24-7 Supporter. By making a regular monthly donation, however small, you get password access to a Dedicated Area of the web, keeping you right at the heart of 24-7 365 days a year!! (See website for more details). You won't notice it go out of your account, but we will definitely notice it coming in!

*There should be an invoice form enclosed in your registration pack explaining the practicalities of taking your offering. Please complete it and return to the 24-7 office or you can donate it by credit card on-line. If paying by credit card please indicate the name of your group and the name on the credit card in a separate e-mail.

APPENDICES

"I believe as a 59 year old woman, sitting in this Prayer Room, that if these young people are the next generation, our land and our world is in safe hands"
[Liz]

1. Learning To Pray

"Lord teach us to pray!"
[Luke 11.1]

It's not easy is it? Jesus' first disciples needed help with their prayer lives and so do we. Some people would rather climb Everest than pray for an hour. For others the issue is just to pray out loud.

Don't just assume that all your people will step in the Prayer Room and know what to do. The Room makes prayer easier but not automatic! So don't be afraid to teach people how to pray and what to say. You could offer a prayer workshop in the Room for people who want some tips on chatting to God. Our 'Start-Up-Pack' has excellent cell materials designed to equip beginners in prayer.

"I feel inadequate to be here I'm a pathetic pray-er but you're pleased that I am here. If you're pleased then that's great, coz that's all that matters right now to a guy who longs to be doin' your will..."
[Letter 2 God found in a Prayer Room]

How do I Pray?**Accountability**

An international survey discovered the top three barriers to prayer to be:

- Wandering thoughts (80%)
 - Noise & distraction (66%)
 - Finding the time (54%)
-
- Well, don't panic! 24-7 can help with all three! When you sign up for an hour's prayer slot, you know you're gonna have to turn up coz someone will be waiting in the Prayer Room unable to go home until you arrive! Being accountable for our private prayer lives in this way is good.
 - Many people also find it helpful to form a prayer partnership with one or two others. Grab a Christian friend – or even your boy/girlfriend (no kissing!) for an hour with God.
 - Leaders should make space for people to talk honestly about what they find difficult about prayer.

Boldness

- Dare to be yourself in prayer! Nothing's more scary than the idea of sitting in a circle for an hour in the 'shampoo position' (elbows on knees and hands in hair) while others pray long prayers leaving even longer embarrassing silences in between.
- You can help people gain confidence in praying out loud by giving everyone time to think up a prayer in advance (possibly write it down). Gently make it clear that everyone will be expected to pray a short three sentence prayer out loud – unless they opt out of the exercise before it starts.
- Encourage people to be real with God in prayer – he can take it! Be honest. Talk about the things on your heart, not the religious things you think you ought to say, but the things you're really feeling.
- Dare to be alone with God for an hour – it's actually much easier to concentrate and relax when no-one else is listening.

Creativity

A man stepped into a 24-7 Prayer Room with a big black bible under his arm. As usual artwork littered the walls, cds and coffee cups were scattered on the floor and music was blaring from the stereo. "This atmosphere is NOT conducive to prayer," he growled and stormed out. We think he was wrong. We think prayer is about all 5 senses.

Encourage people to try lots of ways of praying. Try writing a song or a letter, painting a picture or reading a Psalm. Experiment with different positions (standing, lying down, kneeling), different music (it doesn't have to be Christian as long as it inspires you to pray), different books like the Bible or Celtic prayers, and different ways of speaking: through noise, artwork, poetry.

What do I say?

When I was about seven someone taught me the 'Teaspoon' prayer and it worked for me ever since! In English cookery books the old abbreviation was tsp.

Thank You – start by giving thanks. **Philippians 4v6** "...but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God..."

Sorry – Ask God to reveal to you specific sin in your life and then ask him to forgive you. This can open up the communication lines between you and God. It clears away the junk.

Please – ASK! Trust that he WILL hear you and answer. Be specific in your prayers.

2. Kevin's Slot Machine

OK here's the scene...

Kevin Keen (age 16) has decided to get stuck in with this 24-7 Prayer thing. He's nervous because he has never prayed for an entire hour in all his life (except, maybe, one time outside the Head Teacher's office). But he has been persuaded by his cell group leader that time goes quicker in a Prayer Room, that there will be music and art stuff and that chatting to God is generally rather a funky thing to do.

Miracle 1 – Major achievement. It's Saturday and Kevin manages to drag himself out of bed at the crack of noon and down to the Prayer Room before lunch.

Miracle 2 – Kevin actually enjoys himself as he graffiti's the phrase 'Satan Sux' in one metre letters across the wall. He also designs a 'network chart' of all his non-Christian friends and relatives. Wanting his list to be the longest, he adds the names of his sister's pets and the members of Linkin Park.

Miracle 3 – Kevin actually felt quite emotional when he wrote up the name of his best mate Gavin. He would love it if Gav became a Christian. Hard to imagine though.

Miracle 4 – On his way out of the room Kevin is surprised to find himself signing up for a slot praying at 3.00 Sunday morning. Later that day, the 'on-call' person notices Kevin's commitment and wonders whether his mum will be OK with him coming out in the middle of the night. A quick call later, Kevin's mum is delighted with her son's surprising commitment, provided he puts lights on his bike. Encouraged by Kevin's new-found devotion she then offers to lend him her Keith Green LP's. Kevin looks confused and declines. Having phoned Kevin's mum, the diligent 'on-call' lady also notices that someone has written 'Stan Sux' on a five meter length of paper. Stan being her husband's name, she pulls it down, wondering who would be so unkind and what Stanley could possibly have done to offend anyone so much.

"If we can't recognise the value of simply being alone with God, as the beloved, without doing anything, we gouge out the heart of Christianity"
[Brennan Manning – Author]

Miracle 5 – Kevin turns up at 2.59 a.m. (with bike lights).

Miracle 6 – He loves it. He really, honestly, genuinely has a blast. He reads a bit of the bible, writes a poem and sticks it on the wall. He jumps around to the Delirious track 'Did You Feel the Mezzanine Floor Wobble?' and prays some more for Gavin. At 3.37 he gets a surge of faith and thanks God that "Gavin is just like really going to get totally saved by Wednesday lunch-time Lord". The name of 'Gavin' resounds round that room again and again. He can't find his graffiti anywhere.

Monday at School – Kevin tells Gavin all about the Prayer Room. Gavin actually seems quite interested and asks some questions.

Tuesday – Kevin informs Gavin that he has been actually, like – err – praying for him. Gavin goes quiet and looks at his shoes. Seems like a good sign. Kevin can hardly wait for Wednesday lunch-time when Gav is due to get saved. He spends most of the evening in the Prayer Room looking forward to Gavin's immanent conversion. Just before going home Kevin gets a picture in his head of a giant tuna fish, singing a Matt Redman worship song.

Wednesday Lunch Time – Gavin is eating...tuna sandwiches. Excitedly Kevin points out to his friend that tuna is a fish and that fish is the symbol of Christianity. He goes on to explain all about God and church and especially the amazing vision of the giant singing tuna. Discovering that he is expected to become a Christian before the end of his packed lunch, Gavin chucks his sandwiches on the floor, shouts something very rude at Kevin and storms off.

Wednesday Afternoon – Kevin is gutted. He is angry at God. He has never prayed so hard about anything, ever. And he has never spoken up for God like this before. He decides to miss his cell group meeting that night. Then he remembers that last week a total babe turned up for the first time and he changes his mind. He decides he will go but will do so with attitude (in a cool, rock star sort of way).

"I cancelled work and even slept in the Prayer Room... It was just too wonderful to leave. This week has ended but our Prayer Room has just begun"
[Andy – Canada]

Wednesday Evening – Tracey (his cell leader) is one of those super-discerning types who know exactly what you're feeling even when you don't. As a result she misses the rock star thing completely and asks Kevin what's up. The whole sad, angry story comes out. Tracy listens, nodding her head sympathetically and saying 'mmm' a lot... When Kevin finishes spilling his guts she tells him that prayer doesn't work like a coin in the drinks machine.

'Gavin's a free agent' she points out, 'and it's up to him if he wants to be a Christian or not. Prayer helps change things but it doesn't always make everything easy and automatic'.

Miracle 7 – That night Kevin writes something unusually profound in his Bible. It says 'Prayer is about talking to your Dad, not calling your dog'. He decides to share this at cell next week. But only if that new girl is there.

4.30p.m Thursday – On his way home from school Kevin reluctantly goes to the Prayer Room. Gavin hasn't spoken to him all day. Disguising his handwriting, he scribbles the most honest, angry prayer he has ever dared to write and sticks it up on the wall. Feeling better he prays once again for Gavin. "Please, God, just get him to like me again".

And then Kevin Keen, aged 16, whispers something to God so quietly that no-one anywhere in the world could possibly hear; "OK, God. I want to be your friend even if Gavin doesn't and if he never, ever becomes a Christian, I guess I'll still follow you".

Instantly, Kevin's tiny, whispered prayer echoes round the vast courts of heaven. His heavenly Father smiles, and whispers, "Thank you, Kevin. And by the way, you're absolutely right about one thing; Satan does indeed suck".

3. Ghostbusters

There are all sorts of different types of prayer, ranging from quiet thanksgiving to noisy intercession. In 24-7 Prayer you are taking a mixed group of people onto the front-line of spiritual warfare. It is important, therefore, that leaders take a careful, pastoral and balanced lead in all of this. On one hand we must recognise that this really is a battle against 'principalities and powers' (**Eph 6v12**). On the other hand we should create an atmosphere of safety and confidence in a Prayer Room, since we are 'more than conquerors through him who loved us' (**Rom 8v37**).

In case you are nervous about handling this side of things, here are a few do's and don'ts:

DO

- Encourage people to pray in pairs, unless they specifically want privacy, especially at night.
- Give some basic teaching about our authority in Christ.
- Provide simple prayer guidelines to help people through the hour in a constructive way.
- Trust God to protect and cover those who are immature and vulnerable.

DON'T

- Allow sensational/spooky stories to circulate generating fear (this does happen sometimes).
- Allow the focus to become Satan – an atmosphere of worship will keep things on track.
- Take on major spiritual powers over the nation/area/generation unless it is in a mature context.
- Allow weirdo's to take over the room or create a spooky atmosphere!

"Prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open"
[Ephesians 5.16 – The Message]

"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves"
[Matt 10.16]

4. On a Mission from God

"For years I've been trying to get my young people to have a heart for the lost and a desire to pray. Lat night I found eight of them on their faces in Prayer Room at 2.00 weeping for their non-Christian friends. What's happening?"
[Youth Pastor – Spain]

Prayer and Outreach are Inseparable

- When the Holy Spirit fell at Pentecost, it was upon a prayer meeting and 3,000 got saved.
- The Moravian 100 year prayer meeting, tucked away in a remote village in Germany, sent out 3,000 missionaries to the ends of the earth!
- Writing about the Hebridean (Scottish) Awakening of 1949-53 where entire communities came to Christ, Arthur Wallis observed:

"Let it be burned upon our hearts by the Spirit of God, that this mighty movement was not only born out of prayer, but that it brought forth prayer and was maintained by prayer."

"The evangelization of the world depends first upon a revival of prayer"
[Robert Speers]

For this Reason, it is a Good Idea:

- To focus your season of prayer on outreach such as a forthcoming Alpha course or a university mission.
- To make sure that the room's design is outward looking with maps, photographs of missionaries, local schools and colleges, newspaper clippings, friendship networks etc.
- To encourage people to ask their non-Christian friends for prayer requests. Many of those who are closed to the Gospel are open toward and appreciative of the offer of prayer. It only takes one miracle...! Some people have knocked on neighbours' doors to gather prayer requests or arranged an anonymous 'prayer box' at school.
- You could think about bringing a group to join a 24-7 Prayer Mission Team visiting High Places in youth culture to pray non-stop, living and loving like Jesus in some of the toughest spiritual environments on earth. Check out www.24-7mission.com for details.
- Consider practical expressions of God's love and justice like feeding the hungry or campaigning for debt-relief.

"Lots of non-Christians have been visiting our Prayer Room. The first time they turned up they were a bit surprised to see their names on the wall where we were already praying for them! But instead of being freaked out, they decided to join in and have been back a few times to pray for themselves"

[Roger Bretherton – Lincoln, UK]

5. Art and Soul

One of the things that often take people by surprise when they start 24-7 can be an explosion of creativity. Many people choose to paint, draw, dance and even sculpt their prayers. When one church launched their week, someone brought in a pile of rocks (can't remember why!). A sign that said 'danger' appeared on morning. Prophetic symbols abounded.

We feel such creativity is really important to encourage. A circle of plastic chairs is not conducive to prayer so provide materials and plenty of wall space. Practically you may need to protect the floor! It's well worth buying a big roll of lining paper and a bulk load of sticky tack.

You may become concerned that the art stuff is becoming a distraction from prayer for some people rather than an expression of it. However, it is important not to be judgemental. If this happens you could put a gentle notice up to encourage people to engage with God through words as well as art and problem normally sorts itself out.

In his letter to the Corinthians Paul describes a similar tension between praying with the mind/with words/with rational thought on one hand and on the other hand praying non-verbally through the spirit:

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. What shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind"
[1 Cor 14.15]

Occasionally inappropriate things may appear on the wall. If this happens just quietly remove these! However wherever possible leave artwork up – not wanting to censor people's prayers.

Please send artwork into info@24-7prayer.com (JPEG or GIF).

"In this room, I have had the freedom to express my love to God through art. Paint is magic – so is God"
[Abi – UK]

6. Seasons of Prayer

Of course, prayer should undergird everything we do, but life is crowded with so many legitimate demands upon our time. If 24-7 works for you, we would suggest that you build it into your ongoing church life in limited seasons to make space for other stuff. There's a time to pray, but also a time to act

out those prayers. In nature, in Scripture, in the example of our forefathers, there is a seasonal rhythm to life. You might consider building your calendar around the following cycle:

A Season of Prayer (intimacy, intercession, reflection, worship, creative expression, self discipline, fasting etc).

A Season of Mission (this gives a focus to the time of and a fruitful outworking of it evangelistically).

A Season of Fun (a time with fewer meetings, where we have the time to enjoy being alive, to model the 'Kingdom of Heaven', to be with friends and family and renew our strength).

"Jesus spent the night Praying to God"
[Luke 6.12]

7. Wanna Cuddle? (by Pete Greig)

I got a phone call from my 2 year old son a few days ago. I was miles from home preparing to speak at a meeting. It was raining. I was tired. But when I heard that little voice on the line things seemed better. After chatting as usual about animal noises, 'wee-wees' in the potty and the Telly Tubbies, Hudson suddenly said something totally unexpected. He'd been feeling ill all day, but nothing could prepare me for the impact of his next sentence. He paused then simply said, 'Daddy, I want a cuddle'.

Those childish words knocked the breath out of me. My eyes suddenly stung with tears. I would have done anything right then just to reach down that telephone line and gather that little boy in my arms. After all, he couldn't understand how far away I was – how impossible his request. For the first time in his life his Daddy couldn't show him love when he needed it.

As I joined the crowd at worship that night my heart was far away with a 2-year-old boy. I watched people stretch out their arms to a heavenly Father as they sang and remembered Hudson's request for a cuddle from his Daddy. How God must long just to reach down and gather us into his arms when we worship. And how I long for the day when I'll see my Father face to face.

It's an incredible buzz surfing this 24-7 wave. Again and again God has done 'immeasurably more' than all we could ask or imagine. Tens of thousands of young people are praying like never before. And it all started by accident. But the most amazing thing of all is not the many nations, the many miracles, the CD, the TV programmes or even the Mission Teams. The most amazing thing about 24-7 is that God wants to spend time with us so much, that when we rise in the night, or lift our hands in the day, our Father in heaven responds again and again with such love and gathers us in his arms. All the prayers come back to one simple longing: a kid asking his dad for a cuddle. Night and day, in Prayer Rooms in many nations, the deepest heart cry of the generation is the same: 'Abba, Father'.

When we started praying non-stop in Chichester, UK, on September 5th 1999 God showed up. By the time we prayed for six weeks we felt sure that revival must be right around the corner. After all, we had never prayed so hard in our lives. And then God brought us a man called John Dawson who laid an important foundation stone into the prayer movement that was being born. He simply pointed out that everyone prays. Even non-Christians pray. The difference when Christians pray, however, is that they are climbing into the arms of their heavenly Father. That's why Jesus told us to begin our conversations with God, 'Our Father...'

It's true that we've seen incredible answers to prayer since all this began. In some places they are even experiencing genuine breakthrough as a result of 24-7. But the most important thing about every single Prayer Room, from Alaska to Australia is that it is a place where people can be alone with their Dad. A place where you and I can study his features, find comfort in his love, learn to recognise his quiet voice, seek his advice and pour out our childish hearts to him. In the Prayer Room we pick up God's mannerisms, we grow in his likeness. We become the answer to our own prayers. And of course that's the greatest miracle of all.
'Daddy, I want a cuddle!'

"In the Prayer Room God showed me the reality of his love. He showed me that He's my Daddy, which is an area that has been a struggle for me"
[Bryan, 16 – California, USA]

8. Local Organiser's Checklist

Don't panic! This list will help you run a successful 24-7 Prayer Room

Now

- Locate a suitable Prayer Room.
- Start to publicise 24-7 to your people and profile it at meetings.
- Distribute postcards and 'What Is It?' pamphlets.
- Get as many people as possible logging onto www.24-7prayer.com.
- Plan your launch meeting (the Sunday you start).
- Recruit your 'On-Call' team.

Next

- Mobilise: brief cell group leaders, teach on prayer, get people excited! Consider using the small group resource on prayer from the 24-7 Start Up Pack.
- Consider allocating 'sleep-over' nights to cell groups.
- Make sure that any regular church prayer meetings are booked into the room.
- Recruit your 'On-Call' team.
- Get people signing up for hour slots at meetings. Consider 'prayer-pledging'.
- Order any extra supplies.
- Decorate and stock room creatively.

Available Resources

- Extra 24-7 postcards/'What is it?' leaflets. (cost price)
- 24-7 T-shirts.
- Latest newsletter (free – just pay postage).
- 24-7 TVisionMix video or CDs.

Launch Meeting

- Get as many prayer slots as possible filled (certainly the first 36 hours).
- Explain how the week will work and any rules, etc.
- If possible project www.24-7prayer.com onto a large screen. Encourage EVERYONE to use the site and update it during the week (show them where 'Wailing Wall' and 'Now Praying' are).
- You could play one of the songs from a 24-7 CD.
- Countdown and launch with a bang. Light a 'never-ending' candle.

During

- Lead by example!
- Daily contact with on-callers.
- Email reports to 24-7 on how it's going.
- Post prayers on 'Wailing Wall' and stories/poetry/prophecy etc on 'Talkback'.
- Pastorally oversee. Deal with issues that arise.
- Take photos, especially of art work.

After

- Take up an Offering for 24-7 and send it in with your invoice.
- Gather participants for a debrief... What's been good, what's been hard, should we do this again?
- Distribute 'Surf the Wave' leaflets for those waiting to become regular supporters.
- Feedback to 24-7.
- Send in artwork, photos, etc.
- Plan your next 24-7 season!

Any problems, we're always at the end of a phone.

"72% of all Christians seldom attend prayer meetings. 75% of Christian couples rarely pray together"
[Teal Trust Survey – 1998]

9. Qualities of an Effective Leader

24-7 works brilliantly when it has anointed leadership leading by example. It generally struggles when it doesn't have that.

The ideal 24-7 organizer is good at mobilising and motivating people – especially young people – to do irrational things! Jesus could say 'Come follow me' in such a way that people actually wanted to do it!! If you know that you're not gifted in this way, we suggest that you team up with someone who is. They can do a lot of the public communication while you build 24-7 on the ground. Secondly (and less importantly) a 24-7 leader needs to be able to organize the practical aspects of the room.

Your role is to lead by example! People will look on the 'Sign Up' chart to see if you've been doing your time! I sometimes book out a night just to 'keep watch' alone with God and these are always amazing times to pray, read, meditate and reflect. Sometimes I grab someone I'm mentoring or even my wife (!) and use the room o pray together at a new level.

"Jesus considered prayer more important than food"

[Billy Graham]

[Mark 1.35]

10. Vision and Values

Our Vision

"24-7 Prayer exists to transform the world through a movement of Christ-centred and mission-minded prayer."

Our Values

Obedient to the Holy Spirit – Like Jesus we only seek to do what we see the Father doing. We acknowledge his right to break our rules and offend our sensibilities. (John 5:19, Psalm 127:1, John 3:8)

Relational – We are a community of friends with shared vision and values, driven by friendship rather than function. (John 15:14-15, Luke 10:1-22, 1 Peter 4:7-11, 1 John 4:7-12)

Indigenous – We respect, value and honour cultural diversity. (Rev. 7:9-10, Daniel 1, 1 Corinthians 9:20-21)

Inclusive – We work with anyone sharing our vision and values regardless of race, age, gender or Church background. We build unity and enjoy diversity. (Colossians 3:11, Ephesians 4:3-6)

Like Jesus – We seek to be like Jesus in the way we do what we do. For us the means do not necessarily justify the ends.

Deeply Rooted – We are committed to growth in maturity rather than size. (Psalm 1:1-3)

Creative and Innovative – We embrace God inspired creativity as integral to authentic expressions of prayer. (Exodus 35:30-35, Genesis 1:1-2, Psalm 45:1, Proverbs 8:22-31)

Just – We will pursue justice and freedom from oppression for humanity and the created world. (Isaiah 61, Luke 4:18-19, Romans 8:19-21, Isaiah 58)

Good Stewards – We take responsibility for ourselves, those around us and the things that God has entrusted to us. (Matthew 25:14-30, 2 Corinthians 8:6-15)

Sacrificial – We believe that a lifestyle of prayer is costly at every level. (2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 1 John 3:16-18, Romans 12:1-2)

Celebratory – We believe that Jesus came to bring life to the full and that we have a Christian duty to celebrate all that is good. Fun and laughter are central to 24-7 and we do not need to justify these. (Genesis 1:31, Psalm 24:1, Matthew 11:19, John 10:10)

Raw/Simple – We are a network of likeminded people, not a slick new organisation. In character we are wild and unpolished, passionate about developing people rather than our own profile. (Psalm 116:6, Luke 10:3-5, John 3:8)

We are not, and will never become an organisation. 24-7 is a movement of God and a network of his people.

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