

Virtual Prayer for The Technologically Challenged

“[C]hurchgoers, even those who have stopped regularly attending worship services during the pandemic, want support from a church community. Practicing Christians across the U.S. are seeking “prayer and emotional support”... – [Barna, July 2020](#)

Face-to-face prayer, phone call prayer, and virtual prayer share the same ingredients—consistency, compassion, and patience. The difference between them are the tools we use to convey the “prayer and emotional support” that practicing Christians are seeking today. In fact, on a spectrum of interaction where face-to-face prayer is most personal, virtual prayer is a step above a phone call because we can see each other on video in ways that we cannot over the phone.

Using technology to compliment your prayer ministry can be intimidating at first. But one way to break through that challenge is to organize your prayer ministry to focus on missions.

Some years ago, I did this myself as a church secretary and experienced very positive results. This is what I did:

Get Started!

First, I gathered all the names of the missionaries a church supported and contacted each missionary to:

1. Ask for their correct mailing address and email.
2. Clarify any security concerns they had in writing.
3. Ask to receive their newsletters to stay up-to-date on their prayer needs.

Second, I created a Microsoft Word document on my computer listing the following information for each missionary:

1. Their names
2. Areas of ministry
3. Email address(es)
4. Mailing address
5. Security concerns
6. How to communicate with them.

Third, this was given to the missions team (and also kept in my files).

Next, I planned how to use the digital tools to supplement our current prayer ministry.

Get Online!

What makes technology a great ministry tool is how it can work independently or in conjunction with face-to-face prayer ministry.

Use Video Conferencing

Video conferencing has come a long way, in both security and practicality. I recommend “Zoom” (zoom.us). It is a great “face-to-face” way to see people and multiple people can participate. Plan video

conference prayer times the same way you plan face-to-face prayer gatherings. While the technology is different, the principles of leading a prayer group in a church space or home are much the same.

Take It To The Next Level: If you'd like to separate individuals or groups of people into smaller groups, you can do that with Zoom Breakout Rooms! You can even use Zoom Breakout Rooms to serve those who watched a sermon online and would like some prayer with someone, much like a time of response after a sermon in person. If you'd like more information about how to do this, please see my contact information below.

Watch Out For This: While this is uncommon, it's possible to experience a "Zoom Bomber." These are computer users who accidentally or purposefully enter your Zoom prayer group. You can simply dismiss them if they show up, or you can adjust your Zoom settings so that you must approve entry to the Zoom room (like a doorbell that you answer) or to require use of a password (like giving out a door key).

Other video conferencing options include Google Meet, Facebook Rooms, and Skype.

Watch The Chat Box on Your Church's Livestream (and be ready to "chat!")

Many churches now stream their services on different social media apps and online services. Whatever app or service your church uses to live stream the service, watch the chat box to seek out prayer opportunities from viewers. You can even ask people online if they have any prayer requests. That can start a good online conversation ("chat") to learn more about the person, how to pray, and how best to follow up.

Consider Prayer Apps and Chat-Based Digital Prayer Groups for Smartphones and Computers

Many prayer apps exist that can help you connect with people digitally throughout the week. One app I like is called [Echo](#). You can set up a prayer group and invite people to share prayer requests and write prayers for each other. It is a lot like having a bulletin board that individuals can visit any time, any day and be reminded to pray. You can do the same

You can create chat groups on Whatsapp, Facebook, Messenger, Signal, or MeWe to get updates and send prayer requests. You can even use email to send out prayer requests. There are many ways to build connections and help people know how to pray.

Important To Remember:

When using technology for virtual prayer, follow the same principles that you would follow for a face-to-face prayer ministry:

Try to craft a digital prayer space that is easy to access and easy to use, for both those seeking prayer and those leading prayer.

Separate your prayer requests and updates into three categories:

- Public Prayer Requests with publicly shared details.
- Unspoken Prayer Requests that are acknowledged but details not shared.
- Leader/Pastor Only Prayer Requests that are kept private and only shared with leadership.

You may wish to keep a private journal that tracks prayers, particularly those that need to be shared with a pastor, and helps you follow up with individuals on answers to public prayer requests. It is always inspiring to hear how God has answered prayers and it builds the faith and enthusiasm for more prayer among those involved. A prayer journal will also help you show other leaders the ministry God is doing through these digital efforts.

Remember, give bigger responsibilities to those who are more technologically astute and smaller tasks to those who are still learning technology, giving them room to learn. Give each other a lot of grace and keep your sense of humor when things do not go quite as planned.

Like writing with a pen, riding a bike, or learning to read, making the most of technology requires commitment and practice. And like those things, the benefits of learning to use digital tools for prayer ministry will reap considerable rewards, for today and for eternity.

Thank you for reviewing this material! Together, we are engaging the world for gospel impact.

-Nikki Hahn
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WorldVenture

WorldVenture exists to help local churches fulfill their purpose in the Great Commission of making disciples of all nations. Though our primary work is helping churches prepare, equip, and send missionaries all over the globe to take the Gospel to the unreached, digital disciple-making is an exciting new field of ministry that most anyone can get involved in that can have a global AND local impact. WorldVenture would like to help you and your church fulfill your calling.

To learn more about how WorldVenture helps churches send missionaries all over the world, please visit www.worldventure.com.

To get more assistance with developing a digital team to reach lost peoples locally and globally, please contact Nikole “Nikki” Hahn, WorldVenture’s Digital Disciple-Making Coordinator.

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