

Praying the compass

On your marks:

It is important in all-age worship that every part of what is done together be accessible and meaningful to everyone there. However too often the prayers are left out of this and they revert to the usual adult format of someone speaking up front while everyone else just listens and adds the occasional Amen. Why not make your prayers more interactive?

Get set:

This does not need any particular preparation other than knowing which direction is north, south, east and west for your church!

Go!

Explain that for the prayers today everyone is going to stand and turn to face different directions to help us in our praying.

Each bidding and suggestion for prayer for the four directions could be led by a different person. It may also help to have a visual focus for each direction, in which case you will need someone to hold an appropriate item up when the congregation turns in that direction. For example: a local newspaper; a missionary prayer letter; a national newspaper and a picture of a current international situation. These will fit with the different prayer focuses described below.

1. The congregation is asked to turn and face *north*. Depending on where your church is, this may be a direction of most of the rest of the country and so the focus of the prayers would be for prayer for the United Kingdom - its leaders and institutions; the work of the church and the challenges of a particular situation that is in the news at the time.

2. The congregation is asked to turn and face *west*. Depending on where your church is, this may perhaps face the majority of your town or city and so the focus of the prayers becomes the local streets, the local councils and events as well as partner churches that are working to bring the good news to your locality. Include of course any local issues that are in the news at that time.

3. The congregation is asked to turn and face *south*. For most churches this will mean facing towards the developing world, particularly Africa and there shall be an opportunity to focus your prayers on the work of particular mission agency or mission partners with which your Church has links. Bring into these prayers specific prayer requests that have

come from these people.

4. The congregation is asked to turn and face *east*. Again for most churches this is facing towards Europe, the Middle-East and the Far East. Sadly this area has never been short of prayer needs in recent years and so focus on praying into the situations that have hit the headlines from these areas. Remember to pray specifically for the local churches in all these countries that they will know how to show and share God's love, often under pressure.

By now you have turned to face every direction and so bring all your prayers to a conclusion using a gathering prayer such as:

Lord of the world, we bring all our prayers to you.

Lord of north, south, east and west, we pray that your love will continue to inspire, challenge and strengthen all the good that is done in your name.

Lord, all the corners of the world are in your hands, so show us what we should be doing here in our corner to be part of your local work of mission.

We ask these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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