

ON BECOMING A HOUSE OF PRAYER

It's a Process, Not an Event



THE HANSON PLACE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH EXPERIENCE

Hanson Place SDA Church
88 Hanson Place
Brooklyn, NY 11217

"I was passing through some difficulties in my life. I felt upset with God and was questioning Him, but my mighty Savior in His kindness answered me through your book and I feel blessed."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Most experts will tell you that it takes 21 to 30 days to form any new habit. The relevant question for the spiritual leader of any church is: How long does it take a church to begin the process of transitioning from simply being a church to becoming a house of prayer? From the experience of the Hanson Place Seventh-day Adventist Church in New York, it took as little as 40 days. Overall, prayer related activities increased at the church.

- Attendance and participation at weekly prayer meeting and other prayer events increased.
- Attendance and participation on the prayer-line increased.

GOING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

The Hanson Place Seventh-day Adventist Church (HPC) is part of a worldwide denomination that numbers some 19 million-plus members. HPC is located in Brooklyn, New York and is in the process of planning its 60th Anniversary in October 2018.

Weekly worship activities for the church include Sabbath School at 10:00am, Sabbath worship at 11:30am, and youth worship at 5:30pm—all held on Saturdays. The prayer meeting worship service is held on Wednesdays at 7:15pm and an additional prayer session is held each Monday morning, via conference call, at 5:30am.

For several years, the first Sabbath of the new year has been set aside as Prayer and Fasting Sabbath. Recognizing the need to help members develop a closer relationship with Christ, through prayer, two prayer-focused initiatives were introduced a few years ago—Monday Morning Glory (the Monday morning prayer sessions) and 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting (a six-week emphasis on prayer at the weekly Wednesday night prayer meetings).

The book, *Inevitable and Imminent: On Becoming a House of Prayer - The Process*, was introduced to HPC in December 2015 and a one-year anniversary celebration was held in December 2016. New departmental leadership was in place, and it was suggested and accepted to use *Inevitable and Imminent* for the 2017 Prayer and Fasting Sabbath and to kick off the 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting.

A 40 day reading, fasting, and prayer guide was developed by the author and the six-week initiative was launched on January 14, 2017. Over that period, members read, fasted, prayed, and met three times during the week (Monday mornings, Wednesday nights, and Saturday afternoons) for discussions led by the author. What happened next was a demonstration of the power of prayer.



THE POWER OF PRAYER

Here is what a few members had to say about their experience during the six weeks:

"The 40 Days of Prayer really helped revitalize my prayer life. I realized in order for Hanson Place Church to become a House of Prayer, I must first become a House of Prayer as my body is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Now, when facing an issue, my first or second thought is to pray." Only when those levels are reached, Dr. Carrington heightens it with, "we could be more effective co-laborers with Christ in finishing up the work."

"God is truly working on me. Thanks for your prayers and please continue to pray me up. It's high time in Zion; prophecy is on us—signs foretelling. If ever a time we need God, it's now. Continue to lift up the Lord and to sow the seed—the harvest is near. I'm being blessed myself from these 40 days. I admire the way you admonish and exhort—the Holy Spirit is working, didn't know you had this powerful plan."

"Thank you for giving your time and ministry to us for this 40 days of spiritual food & prayer. I am truly revived and strengthened and ready to help create this change in my church as well. Serving in this capacity is not easy, and you made it seem that way. Stay grounded and let nothing separate you from the love of God! May He continue to keep, guide, and direct your path as you work for Him!"

"Oh, how the Lord blessed us during our 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting. I believe that we were all made better as a result of what God accomplished during that wonderful time. We especially thank Elder Carrington for leading us on this spiritual journey. We thank God for inspiring him with such a powerful teaching from His Word. We are looking forward to how God is going to use him as we move forward over the next few weeks."

MAKING PRAYER A HABIT

As a result of the 40 days of reading *Inevitable and Imminent*, fasting, and praying, the following happened and is happening at HPC:

- Attendance at Wednesday night prayer meeting increased from approximately 40 to 100 individuals.
- Attendance on the Monday morning prayer-line increased from approximately 30 lines to 60 lines.
- The pastor noted that HPC becoming a house of prayer will continue to be the theme for the rest of 2017.
- Sermon series that flowed from the theme, *Becoming a House of Prayer*, followed as outlined below:

March - Becoming a House of Prayer with our Stewardship

April and May - Becoming a House of Prayer through Jesus Christ

Summer Series - Becoming a House of Prayer through the Fruits of the Spirit

Fall Series - Becoming a House of Prayer through the Word

Thanksgiving Season - Becoming a House of Prayer through Service

- To encourage the ongoing presence of prayer within the church, the pastor introduced the concept of having a dedicated prayer room at the church.
- The pastors and elders now meet every Sabbath after worship to pray with members and visitors.
- Members requested that the Sabbath afternoon prayer sessions continue and they will continue once per month under the theme—Power Hour of Prayer.
- Wednesday night prayer meeting worship is now designed around a book on prayer. Members and visitors are building and/or refreshing their libraries with books on prayer as they grow spiritually.
- A prayer box and prayer request cards were instituted to document members' prayer requests.

- Permanent announcements were added to the weekly bulletin to highlight and focus members' attention on Monday Morning Glory and Prayer Meeting as regular and important worship activities of the church.
- HPC mission and vision statements were revised to include the words pray, prayer, or praying.
- The church's bulletin cover was rebranded to include the phrase "A House of Prayer."



HPC is just now scratching the surface of what it means to be a house of prayer. So much more is capable of happening and will continue to occur as it relates to prayer. Most of all, HPC will experience membership, financial, spiritual, and ultimately kingdom growth as they co-labor with Christ in finishing the work. The deep dive is coming and this church is suited-up and ready to go. Will your church be next?

"Last night's prayer meeting was a blessing; the presentation presented by Dr. Carrington provided deeper insight on making God's house a house of prayer—your heart, my heart, a heart of prayer."

For information regarding the booking of
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