



# Prayer & Fasting

## Making Room for God's Presence

by Westly Yoder, Senior Pastor, Maysville Baptist Church

**W**e would all say that prayer is powerful and, hopefully, we all want it to be a main focus in our churches, but I don't think I really understood the power of prayer until I went to the mission field. During my 10 years of service in South Asia, I learned a lot about the power of prayer. Surrounded by masses of lost people and seeing the zeal of other believers, the Lord helped me learn more about the power of prayer. I saw a greater desire to pray and greater devotion to prayer and fasting, and the many answered prayers that came from it. It totally changed my heart and devotion to pray.

The Lord called our family from the South Asian mission field in 2016 to serve as the senior pastor of our home church, **Maysville Baptist Church** in Buckingham County. I wanted to apply what I'd

learned about prayer on the mission field to pastoring my home church.

### **7 Days of Prayer and Fasting**

In January of 2019, we felt the Lord leading Maysville Baptist Church to pray and fast for seven days. This was not something we had done before, and why it was for seven days, I can't tell you. In the first 24 hours of this focused prayer time, members of the body signed up for a specific hour so that we prayed together for 24 hours continuously.

Our focus last year was very broad. We set up seven prayer stations, starting with a focus on our personal walk with the Lord, then our work with the Lord, the church body at Maysville, our community, our state, our nation, and the world. Each station was filled with specific facts and statistics and prayer requests for how to pray accordingly. We then committed to pray together for

a week using a prayer guide. To break the fast, we joined together in a meal of celebration and excited expectation of joining God in what He was doing.

### **Answered Prayers**

As we prepared to have another time of prayer and fasting in January 2020, we looked back and realized that God had answered many of our prayers. God allowed us to see spiritual growth in our lives, more love for each other, and greater unity in the body.

The Lord opened a door for us to minister in our community through the Good News Club at our local elementary school. He also gave us many other new opportunities to share the Gospel with people in our community. We were able to partner with other SBCV churches and lead out in reaching UUPGs (unreached, unengaged people groups) in South Asia.



***We had no way of knowing a pandemic was coming, but the Lord knew, and He was helping us prepare for it.***

**A More Narrow Focus**

As we prepared for 2020, it was with great excitement and expectation for how the Lord might lead us. But this year, God led us to narrow our focus to our community. We only had four prayer stations this time that focused on our walk, our work, the church body, and the county of Buckingham. We either met personally with or talked directly to our local sheriff's office, county administration, health department, social services, school superintendent, and the principal of each school. This gave us the opportunity to get real-

time prayer requests from those in our community who face hard issues daily.

The statistics we acquired helped us to really see the issues that our community deals with and gave us a greater heart of love and compassion for them. We learned that our county has the highest rate of reported child abuse among the surrounding counties. This gave us great insight into how to pray.

We had no way of knowing a pandemic was coming, but the Lord knew, and He was helping us prepare for it. The time of prayer and fasting made us aware of

the issues that might be heightened during this time of crisis. It gave us better awareness of how we can pray and serve our community.

The time of prayer was also a time of renewal of the mind and revival of the heart. This helped Maysville Baptist stay strong during this time of not having a life-on-life community with the body. It has helped us to be flexible as we look for other ways to grow strong in the Word and reach the lost in our community. ■

**95%**  
of all Christians have never helped lead someone to Christ.

***"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..."***  
Matthew 28:19a

**17%**  
of all Christians know the meaning of the Great Commission.

**Maysville's Vision...**  
to see a multitude of all peoples from Buckingham and beyond come to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ for the glory of God.

**Effective Prayer**

***"Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises."***  
James 5:13

**Maysville's Mission...**  
to be used of God to raise up and deploy equipped, mature, and fully devoted followers of Christ for the sake of family, community, and global transformation.