



August 2023

Cultivating a Heart for Prayer: A Testimony

*Come near to God and he will come near to you.
- James 4:8a*

Scripture testifies that Christ spoke and acted according to the Father's will, emphasizing the need for any follower of Christ to engage in a meaningful relationship with God through prayer.

Since Evana Network's establishment, we have embraced prayerful relationship with God as a foundational piece of our life together and have sought to make it priority within our congregations.

Through various events like Pastor Spouse retreats and the recent ReGen gathering, a common theme has continued to emerge among leaders and members - the widespread desire to connect with the Father's heart. Here's a testimony that showcases how God has been responding to the heartfelt cries of His people.

A decade ago, Evana Board member and Pastor Marketo Michel felt a strong call to be part of a house of prayer while serving with Voice Ministries, a Michiana regional plant of the Kansas City House of Prayer. Immersed in the dedicated atmosphere of prayer at Voice Ministries, where she served as a worship leader for two years, Marketo developed a hunger for prayer and spending time in God's presence. During this time, she even received a prophecy about potentially starting a house of prayer.

Taking the first step towards this vision, Marketo initiated Tuesday night prayer meetings at That Church Downtown (South Bend, IN), where she and husband Gil Michel serve as pastors. These gatherings provided space for worshippers to connect with God, gain confidence in leading worship, and exercise spiritual gifts. Additionally, Marketo's practice of listening to International House of Prayer (IHOP) recordings became a vital morning devotional routine.



Marketo with ceiling mural artist Mackenzie O'Neil

Around the same time, the COVID pandemic necessitated church meetings over Zoom, prompting Marketo to reach out to her online community. She started a Facebook post on prayer, leading to conversations with people about the possibility of a physical space for prayer. While this online engagement was taking place, Olive Mennonite Church (Elkhart, IN) approached Gil and Marketo with an opportunity. A former church plant of Olive was closing, and they wondered if any nearby churches in the network could utilize the space for ministry.

Responding to this potential opportunity, Marketo, Gil, and their Regional Pastor, John Troyer, met with the leadership of the closing church. When Marketo stepped inside the old church building, she heard God's clear voice of affirmation say "This is my house of prayer." This resulting journey of launching a space dedicated to prayer has proved to be profoundly transformative in Marketo's relationship with God.

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Flourish 2024: Lead with Purpose



Mark February 15-19, 2024 on your calendars for Evana's Pastor/ Spouse Retreat. Pastors and lay leaders alike will join us in sunny Bradenton, FL for a time of rest and renewal.

"Lead with Purpose" will focus on helping pastors and lay leaders identify processes and postures that further our mission of outreach and discipleship. The wider church in the past few years has had to pivot and adapt rapidly, and many now find ourselves in circumstances that require the long view. With input that will challenge and equip leaders and spouses, this is a Flourish you will not want to miss!

Tickets will be available shortly, so be sure to mark the dates.

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As the prayer space began to take shape within the community, Marketo learned to lean on the Lord's voice and move with confidence into unfamiliar territories. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's "Life Together" speaks of how the first thing to die when you are in Christian community or ministry is your personal vision as to what it should be like. In her case, she's not sure it looks any different than what she had hoped, because God revealed each step as it was needed. Marketo's overriding desire was to provide a safe and encouraging environment for people to encounter the Lord.

By embracing prayer as a core practice and relying on God's guidance, this testimony illustrates how God can lead us into transformative experiences and



unexpected ministry opportunities. In the process of launching this ministry, Marketo experienced unexpected personal growth and participation from people she hadn't anticipated. Such encounters have reaffirmed God's surprising and generous nature, reminding her that He often exceeds human expectations and reorients plans to align with His will. It is our hope that all our churches and members can share in similar experiences.

We invite others to share their own stories of growing awareness of prayer ministry opportunities or other forms of ministry God may be calling out among individuals and churches. Feel free to contact Tyler Hartford, Director of Church Leadership at tyler@evananetwork.org, to share any testimony you might have.

glorify. a night of worship & prayer

saturday, sept. 23 · 7-9 pm · free admission
malone university x evana network

Come together as a unified community with one goal - to glorify Jesus Christ. All Evana churches and members are invited to join the Malone University community for a night of lifting our voices in praise, worship, and prayer.

johnson center, 2600 cleveland ave nw
canton, oh 44709
GlorifyGodTogether@gmail.com

A Radiant Birth: Advent Readings for a Bright Season

With just three months between now and the start of Advent, I thought I'd join the retail stores and pop a holiday book on our radar. Releasing September 5, *A Radiant Birth: Advent Readings for a Bright Season* is a compilation of writings from a broad swath of Christian authors. Featuring work from members of the Chrysostom Society, dedicated to the preservation and promotion of quality Christian literature, this book presents a poetic and narrative range of creative reflections on Jesus' arrival.

The advance copy I've read and handled has a quality feel to the build and is laid out in an easy to read, clear format. The various essays have a pervasive joy and anticipation to them, and invite you to explore the authors' other works. Whether you decide to use it for personal or family devotions or for assistance in planning Advent services and readings, I promise it will be an encouragement to your faith.

If you desire something unique to encourage you in the coming Advent season, be sure to preorder!
-Tyler Hartford

Visit Israel/Jordan with Evana Network in 2024!

Desire a Holy Land experience that will transform your reading of Scripture, understanding of faith history, and relationship with Jesus and his church? Join others from Evana Network on a 10 day tour from July 16- 26, 2024.

Experienced tour leader Pastor Tyler Hartford, Evana's Director of Church Leadership, will introduce you to all the classic pilgrim stops with unique experiences and add-ons. This particular trip has an optional Jordan add-on. Be aware that this date range will require individuals to be able to walk several miles a day in the summer heat. This trip will have departures from Chicago, Cleveland and New York.

If interested, email tyler@evananetwork.org. Visit link for more info, and if placing a deposit, use codes for identifying group.

<https://bit.ly/israelpastortyler>
TOUR:HL24
CODE: B
ID:61610

