

# Prayer spurs smaller church to revival\_111003

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**By John Hall**

*Texas Baptist Communications*

DALLAS—Church members across Texas often greet each other with a smile and handshake on Sunday mornings. Crestview Baptist Church gets on its knees to welcome God.

As many as 30 people, but usually about 10, gather every Sunday morning to usher in the Lord's day and pray for God to move through the upcoming services, according to Pastor Mark Dunn.

The prayer time is purposely steered away from immediate personal needs and toward the church, Dunn continued. It sets the tone for everyone involved and prepares their hearts for worship. The prayers also let God know the congregation wants to make a difference in lives, he said.

Once a month, the group meets in the sanctuary. Members travel around the sanctuary touching the pulpit and pews, praying for the specific person who will be there during the service.

"It doesn't look very exciting, but it's very deep," Dunn said. "It's compelling to the people. They want to see God's work today. It's not 'bless me.' We're praying for the church."

Prayer has helped the 40-member church adapt to a transitioning neighborhood, the Dallas Baptist University professor reported. An attitude of expecting God to work has helped create a welcoming community of believers that is open to newcomers.

“The love among the people has just been outstanding,” Dunn said. “That’s hard to communicate to the world. They receive people and love them. It’s like family ought to be.”

The morning meditations also serve as the source of the church’s recent spiritual revival, according to Dunn, who is in his seventh year at the church. The pastor recently helped network five small churches to put on a series of revivals.

“None of us could afford evangelists. Even if a love offering could be taken, it wouldn’t be very much,” he explained.

Together, the churches held five revivals in five weeks. Congregation members combined to form a 30-person choir that performed each Monday evening. Each pastor spoke during a service at another church. Several of the pastors were present at each service, lending support and encouragement.

Crestview Baptist Church surrounded each service with prayer, asking God to move. Although the churches did not pass out decision cards, leaders witnessed decisions in four of the five services, and at least one person made a profession of faith in Christ.

But revival truly occurred during the prayer times, Dunn said. Church members became focused on reaching people with the gospel and moving their faith to the center of their lives.

“Those prayer times are where the revival happened,” he said. “The service was really a celebration.”

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