

GRAND MARAIS PRAYER INITIATIVE

March 2022 Newsletter / Issue 10

MISSION

Cultivate an urgency for unified prayer through its committed/disciplined practice.

VISION

Holy Spirit-led prayer movement makes disciples & transforms the community by radiating Christ-like character.

PRAYER MAP FOR MARCH 2022

The central topic for this month's prayer map (attached at the end of this newsletter) is "Building Up the Church". The basis for examining this concept from a prayerful standpoint stems from the importance the Apostle Paul gives it in his letters to the Corinthians and Ephesians:

"The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up." 1 Corinthians 14:4-5 (ESV)

"So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church." 1 Corinthians 14:12 (ESV)

"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for

building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." Ephesians 4:11-16 (ESV)

Notably, Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 come after his inspired words concerning spiritual gifts and his metaphorical use of the human body to describe those who are in Jesus Christ (chapter 12), and his emphasis on the relative importance of love in the Christian equation (chapter 13). This sequence suggests the importance the Apostle gave to the humbling task of serving the needs of others growth before one's self-centered need to justifying themselves. For, it is apparent that there was some 'who-is-the-greatest' bickering going on amongst the Christians in the Corinthian church since Paul states the following at the beginning of his letter:

"So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building." 1 Corinthians 3:7-9 (ESV)

Paul goes to extraordinary lengths to reduce his message in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 to simple terms, i.e., your Christian efforts are misguided if you are not promoting growth in Christian wisdom, affection, grace, virtue, holiness, and blessedness (the list of nouns used here to describe how growth is promoted is

taken from the *Blue Letter Bible* website's analysis of the Greek word "edify" which is used in the context of verses 4 and 12)¹.

A slight variation of the same Greek word used for "building up" in 1 Corinthians 14: 4 and 12 is used in chapter 4 of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Here, Paul reminds the Ephesian church that its maturity will be demonstrated by growth that cannot be explained by means other than "it builds itself up in love." This statement implies there is something mysterious going on; something beyond human effort; something critically important. I think we will have grasped the essence of maturity when we keep our focus on "building up" the members of the local Christian fellowship into which God has placed us and let God do the miraculous work of expanding His gospel to points beyond. I believe we see in our midst such evidence of God's grace. Praise be to Him.

I want to leave this discussion of March's prayer map with a prayer the Apostle Paul gives for the church of Thessalonica:

"...that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (ESV)

Amen!

MARCH'S PRAYER MAP: HOW TO USE IT

This month's prayer map seeks to serve as a daily reminder of 1) the pitfalls the Church faces in its struggle to build itself up in love and 2) the irreducible core² of the Christian faith: loving God, loving others, and making disciples. Use the map as part of your daily prayers to praise God for the wisdom He imparts through His precious Word; simple to comprehend, easy to apply in local settings, experientially upheld, and, perhaps most importantly, confirming we need to leave the big stuff up to Him.

To make the most sense of March's prayer map, the first offshoots from the central concept should be read in a clockwise manner starting with the offshoot in the map's upper right quadrant and ending with the offshoot in the map's upper left quadrant. Further, the arms extending from each offshoot of the central concept should be read from bottom to top.

WANT TO KNOW MORE? WANT TO ADD SOMETHING TO THIS NEWSLETTER? HAVE OTHER SUGGESTIONS?

Prayer-ers are encouraged to contribute input that would provide for the outgrowth of Spirit-led prayer in the community. Email the editor a note at online@grandmaraisfree.church if you have something that should be shared to encourage others' growth in prayer!

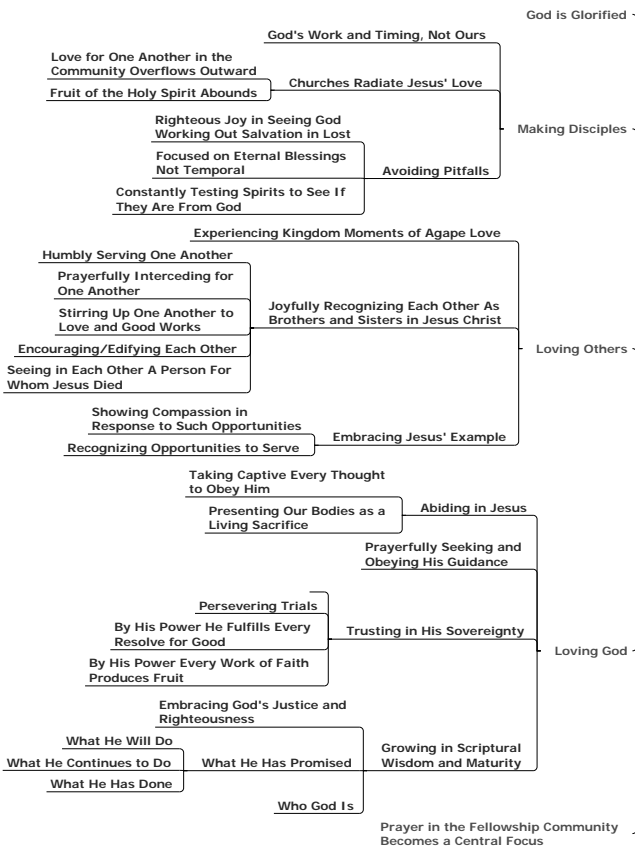
¹ G3618 - oikodomeō - Strong's Greek Lexicon (esv) (blueletterbible.org)

² *Journey, The Descent to Servant-Leadership, Facilitator's Guide*, Johnston, T and Perkinson, M.C., The Praxis Center for Church Development, Manchester, NH, page 5.

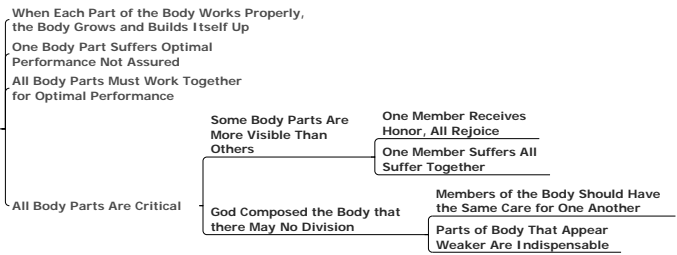
**Grand Marais Prayer Initiative
Building Up The Church
March 2022 Prayer Map**

Building Up the Church

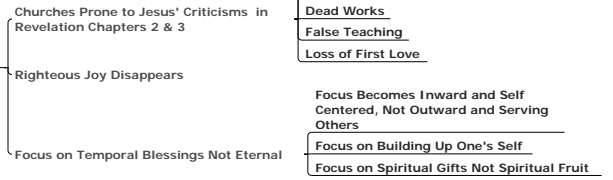
Evidence Within the Worship Community



Akin to Strengthening the Human Body



Pitfalls



Akin to Strengthening a Family

- Comforting One Another
- Serving One Another
- Encouraging One Another
- Honoring One Another
- Rejoicing In One Another