

PRAYER MINISTRY AS AN EFFECTIVE MEANS FOR CHURCH GROWTH IN  
ILORIN EAST AND WEST BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS  
OF KWARA BAPTIST CONFERENCE

A PROJECT

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BY

GBENJO, SOLOMON ADEMOLA  
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## ABSTRACT

This project, titled Prayer Ministry as an Effective Means for Church Growth in Ilorin East and West Baptist Associations of Kwara Baptist Conference, was embarked upon due to lack of effective prayer ministry that can aid healthy and dynamic growth of Local Baptist Churches. The researcher set out to look into how the prayer programmes of Baptist Churches could be made effective so as to prevent or reduce the exodus of Baptist members to a bearable minimum.

The researcher employed historical and descriptive methods of research. Questionnaire and oral interview were used as instruments for data collection from the field. The outcome of the findings revealed that (1) weak leadership, and member lack of commitment to prayer have adverse effect on the Baptist prayer programmes; (2) one of the major diseases affecting the growth of many Baptist Churches is the prayer life of the Church; (3) many Baptist members are migrating to other denominations because Baptist prayer programmes are considered being casual and traditional; (4) some Baptist members retain their membership but hunt for effective prayer programmes elsewhere so as to have their problems solved and needs met; to mention but few.

In the light of the above findings, the researcher recommended that Baptist Pastors should maintain sense of discipline and commitment to effective prayer and lead their churches to do the same. Prayer retreats, seminars, conferences and workshops should be organized frequently for pastors and members at the Associational, Conference and Convention levels. Prayer materials could be developed in form of discipleship programme for new believers, growing members, and even for pastors to be used in their periodic fellowship. Baptist Theological Institutions should design contextualized curriculum in relation to effective prayer in pastoral duty. The implementation of these recommendations would not be beneficiary to Ilorin East and West Baptist Associations alone, but to the whole of the Nigerian Baptist Convention Churches.

## Conclusion

It is obvious that prayer is like a pillar for the Church and the Church needs to place high value on effective prayer. The researcher, however, discovered that the lack of healthy growth of many Baptist churches is not as a result of not having prayer programmes, but it is due to the ineffectiveness of those prayer programmes, which through the result of the findings, is majorly traceable to weak leadership and membership lack of commitment. The researcher thus submits that Baptist Pastors need to lead their churches both to organize prayer programmes with focus and practically involve in active and effective prayer so as to cause the Church to experience healthy growth.

## Recommendations

1. Baptist Pastors should lead their respective churches to break forth from the cord of the usual traditional and casual prayer programmes. They should look into having some specially designed prayer programmes that can meet the needs of the members.
2. While the researcher does not in any way oppose the idea of Pastors delegating prayer programmes to some individual members to lead, the researcher recommends that Pastors should avoid delegating Church prayer programmes to

members who are not disciplined or well versed in the knowledge of the word of God.

3. Baptist churches need to lay serious emphasis on biblically based prayer. There should be effective teaching and preaching of the word on the issue of prayer, and which the members are allowed to practically respond appropriately at the end of each teaching or preaching.
4. Since prayer has been discovered to be an integral part of Christian life, efforts should, therefore, be intensified to produce quality prayer guides for various age groups.
5. Prayer retreats, seminars, conferences and workshops should be organized differently for pastors and members where the nitty-gritty of prayer will be discussed. These could be planned at every level by the association, churches, Departments and organizations as the case may be.
6. Theological institutions should include a systematic and contextualized course on prayer in their curriculum which can help the minister to meet the inevitable ministerial challenges. This would definitely enhance their effectiveness in the ministry and aid the growth of the church.
7. Even though there are many books, teachers, preachers, theologians, analysts, critics and others sympathizers for prayer, yet both the Pastors and members should make intensified efforts to actually do the act of praying.