

# Prayer Vigils

A “How To” Booklet



Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (Canada)

*[www.anglicanprayer.org](http://www.anglicanprayer.org)*

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# **PRAYER VIGILS**

## For Planners

**WHAT** Vigils focus prayer on a special event, an urgent need, or a particular individual or issue. For a set period of time, usually in a designated place, people concentrate on expectant listening and communicating with God.

**WHY** Jesus said, “Watch and Pray”. Those who love Him long to please Him. The dictionary describes vigil as “watchfulness” and Scripture confirms that power is released through concerted prayer: Matt. 17:21; Matt. 18:20; Acts 1:14, Eph. 6:18-19.

**WHERE** Before the cross in the church is one of the easiest places to keep focussed in prayer, but any quiet place is a potential chapel “where prayer is wont to be made”. With a cross, an open Bible, and perhaps a candle on a small covered table, a focal point is achieved.

**WHEN** Usually vigils cover 12-24 hours continuously. Segments of 15, 30, or 60 minutes are pledged. Longer vigils for synods or conventions may cover up to two weeks during meeting hours.

**WHO** Participants may be anyone who believes in God and appreciates that God answers prayers with “Yes”, “No” and “Wait”. Often existing prayer groups will be a good source of people to keep vigil. Members of conventions or synods should be invited to join in the vigil at their convenience.

## **IMPLEMENTING A VIGIL**

A vigil is most likely best organized by 2-3 people who gather to pray and plan together. Here are some things to consider.

1. **Advertising.** Prepare a weekly bulletin insert item or notice for the parish newsletter. Also make up a flyer that contains an explanation of the vigil purpose, encouragement to participate and perhaps a prayer. The flyer will be important for larger, longer events.
2. **Charts** with space for times, names and phone numbers would be posted or given to phoners.
3. **Phoners** would see that all slots are filled. Consider inviting men to participate during dark hours to enable pray-ers to feel safe. The obtaining of phone numbers from participants facilitates reminders if needed.
4. **Suggestion Sheets** can be provided of “What to do in a Vigil”, such as using appropriate Scriptures, encouraging listening, and how to use a prayer request basket (if used).

5. **Furnishings.** Provide Bibles, Prayer Books, a basket or two for prayer requests, along with paper and pencils/pens. If an ordinary room is used, it will need a focal point: a small covered table with a Bible, cross, candle, and flowers. Also provide glasses of water, suggestion sheets and tissues.
6. **Signs.** Provide arrows and signs to indicate where the vigil is being held. Signs and arrows can be used and re-used if inside out tape loops are used on their backs. If signs are made with 8 1/2 x 11 sized paper, or multiples of same, they file well for future use.
7. **An Orientation Day** is a good idea when participants are participating in large events (e.g. Synod) and/or where people are interested in training for such an opportunity. In the case of synods or conventions, pray-ers can alternate an hour in the chapel and an hour in the visitor's gallery for a day or half day. For vigils that involve contentious or difficult issues, pray-ers find themselves most sympathetic when they've heard informed discussion or arguments on both sides of an issue. "Now we can really pray!" they say.

**RESULTS:** The results of Vigils are often a resolution of a crisis, a course of action revealed, or special grace given to see a situation through with strength and hope.

### **Resources Enclosed in a Prayer Vigil Kit**

1. Questions and Answers regarding a vigil.
2. AFP's "How to Spend a Hour in Prayer" pamphlet.
3. A Sample Sign-Up Chart.
4. An Anglican Fellowship of Prayer Logo – Sign.

Note: Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (Canada) has a pamphlet, "Prayer in the Calling Process", that is appropriate for vigils involving the Election of a Bishop or Calling of a Priest as it contains prayer resources that would be useful in a prayer vigil.

*or further information or pamphlets please contact your AFP  
Diocesan Representative or AFP Canada:  
[www.anglicanprayer.org](http://www.anglicanprayer.org)*

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