

Prayer Vigils

A “How To” Booklet



Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (Canada)

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*

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