

[MJTM 23 (2021–2022)]

#### BOOK REVIEW

Lawless, Chuck. *Lord, Teach Us Pastors to Pray: Creating a Culture of Prayer in Yourself and Your Church*. Franklin, TN: Church Answers, 2021. Kindle edition.

In his book *Lord, Teach Us Pastors to Pray*, Chuck Lawless attempts to convey a convincing message on the necessity and urgency of prayer for all of God's children, but even more specifically, he is speaking to those called to serve in the ministry as pastors. Lawless embeds Scripture references throughout the text to authenticate his position. The primary premise and purpose for writing this book is to encourage pastors, who may feel that they are lacking in their prayer life due to busyness or pressure to get the job done, and realize that, without praying first, their endeavors are highly unlikely to be fruitful and sustainable. He reminds his readers that God has called his followers to have a relationship with him and to be good stewards of the time in which he has given to them.

The author shares some of his personal story as a pastor and confesses that he misunderstood and undervalued his own prayer life. He shares that his prayers were mostly reactive instead of proactive. Lawless goes on to explain the difference between the two and is convinced that when God's people truly experience the power of prayer, they will learn to be proactive in their prayers. He goes on to give biblical examples to demonstrate how God hears and answers the prayers of his saints. Using his personal testimony, the life of Jesus, and other Scripture references, Lawless presents an inarguable case for pastors and church leaders to seek first the Lord in prayer before setting out to accomplish any personal or ministerial endeavor.

Lawless provides, in detail, intentional and strategic plans that should be used to develop and maintain a fruitful and God

honoring prayer life. He suggests using various triggers or tools to remind and spur pastors to pray specific prayers throughout each day. Lawless claims that without intentionality and without tools in place, pastors may never develop a prayer life that is essential for the Christian leader. He provides some very specific prayer tools such as ACTS which stands for adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. Lawless also gives examples of how to dedicate each day of every week to praying for different groups such as personal family, extended family, missionaries, non-believers, etc. Once a consistent prayer life is established, according to Lawless, one of the greatest responsibilities that a pastor has is to teach his family and his church how to be effective prayer warriors.

The author has written a solid and encouraging book on prayer. He focuses on pastors, but the content of the text certainly can and should be applied to all followers of Jesus. At first glance, it may appear to be just another book on how to pray with a ton of obvious and repetitive thoughts. However, after carefully reading through it and taking the time to ponder what is being taught, there is a lot more to this book than one may think.

From the very beginning of the text, Lawless highlights the prayer life of Jesus to show the importance of prayer for his followers. By doing so, Lawless effectively debunks any excuse that pastors may have that prevent them from having an intimate and consistent prayer life. No pastor can honestly say that they are busier doing ministry than Jesus was when he walked the earth.

Lawless transparently shares how he is still learning how to pray after more than forty years of being a Christian. This catches the attention of his readers for at least two reasons. First, anyone reading this book desires to begin or enhance their prayer life. Second, it is unfortunate but encouraging to readers to see how even such a well-known pastor, theological guru, Bible teacher and professor, can struggle with his prayer life. His honesty and vulnerability provide an element of hope for readers who have yet to develop a meaningful prayer life.

I would recommend this book for any pastor or church leader with no discrimination between denominations or years serving

in the ministry. Reflecting on the Scriptures when the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray speaks volumes to all who desire to faithfully live out the life of a Christian. Anyone desiring to start a church, lead an existing church, or begin a new ministry within an existing church, would profit greatly from reading this book from Chuck Lawless.

I would recommend using the text from this book to use within a small group as well. There are many options of small groups that could make good use of this book. A church staff could use it during weekly meetings, a prayer team could use it as they gather for a season of specific prayer for a new ministry, it could be used for a Sunday school or weekly discipleship group, and the list could continue. Ultimately, God has called all his children to prayer and all Christians have room to improve in this area.

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