

New Participant's **Startup Guide - PrayerCords or SPI Small Groups (2 page version)**

Starter Packet

Strategic Prayer Initiative

(Shorter Version)

Support in the battle, because we were never meant to go it alone.

Welcome to the Strategic Prayer Initiative (SPI). This guide will help you get started with your PrayerCord (or the following information can be adapted to be used with a new or already existing small group). Whether you are in a Cord or a SPI Small Group, there are two major components of SPI that you will need to become familiar with: 1) the Strategic Prayer Data Sheet known as **The "Pink Sheet"** due to the color of paper it is printed on, and 2) **The "Blue Card"** which contains a brief summary of the structure and the accountability features for the PrayerCords and SPI Small Groups. [Please note that the Yellow Cards and small green Promise of Confidentiality Cards (discussed later in this guide) differ depending on if you will be in a Cord or a SPI Small Group. Their color and functions remain the same, but the cards for Cords are designed to be used only with three people, while the Long-Yellow Cards and Promise of Confidentiality Cards for Small Groups are designed for use with more than three. It is also important to point out that for the purpose of accountability, small groups must either be all of the same gender, or if the small group has both males and females, for the purpose of monthly accountability, the men and women must temporarily separate during the accountability discussions.]

Once you have formed a Cord with two other individuals, you will need to meet with your Cord at least once a month. Some Cords like to keep this meeting very brief while others prefer to spend a little more time together, such as over a shared meal. This meeting is for the purpose of keeping each other accountable in five vitally important areas concerning your spiritual growth and success in strategic prayer. Reasonable accountability is a proven way to improve the average Christian's effectiveness in the spiritual battle, an ongoing battle that affects you, your family, your country and the world! These monthly meetings are also for the purpose of mutual encouragement and Christian fellowship. They give very real support in the battle, because we are not meant to go it alone. If your Cord or SPI Small Group meets more than once a month, the SPI accountability questions can be asked as often as you would like to use them, however they must be formally asked at least once a month. Filling out the Yellow Card at least monthly is also necessary.

At the start of your first meeting, each of you should fill in your name on the top line of your "Green Card" (which you will keep), and then have the bottom of the card signed by each of the members of your Cord, or the same gender members of your SPI Small Group. This Green Card is a promise on behalf of your partners to treat these monthly meetings with confidentiality (James 5:16-20).

During your regular meeting (at least once a month) you and your partners will typically be asked the following five key questions:

Question 1. Have you achieved your two minutes a day of Strategic Prayer?

One of three answers may be given to Question #1: Yes, No, or Almost

(Almost means not missing more than three days in a given month. Almost is still considered a very successful month.)

Following are the easily achieved requirements for your two minutes a day of strategic prayer:

- **Each day's strategic prayer listed on your monthly Strategic Prayer Data Sheet a.k.a. the "Pink Sheet"**
- **The three daily bullet point prayers for your partners which are listed on the "Blue Card." These are as follows:**
 - Pray that the Holy Spirit would help them to grow in fervent and righteous prayer (see James 5:16b)
 - Pray for their moral, sexual, physical, spiritual and emotional protection (see 1 Peter 5:8)
 - Pray that they would interact with the Word on a daily basis, and be taught by the Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 2:14)
- **Radical Growth Prayer found on your Blue Card (prayed at least weekly, if not daily, for your PrayerCord members)**

Question 2. Have you been in the Word daily?

Many of you are reading the Bible regularly, but for those who are not, we ask that you read at least two verses per day. This exceedingly simple practice can build a powerful habit into your life if you are not currently looking to the Scriptures each day. By placing a Bible next to your bed you can be encouraged and blessed by reading this small amount before you rest. On Sundays we encourage you to take a pass on the two verses since God's Word is being taught to you in church.

One of three answers may be given to Question #2: Yes, No, or Almost

(Almost means not missing more than three days in a given month. Almost is still considered a very successful month.)

You are free to use any reading plan or system that you prefer. However, if you are not sure where to read, we suggest using the Strategic Prayer Initiative's Chapter-A-Day Reading Chart. This chart specifies one chapter per day, except Sunday (please read the first two verses). By using the chart, if you choose to read the whole chapter, you can read the entire New Testament and a few Old Testament selections each year. (Each day's full chapter is typically less than two pages in length.)

Please remember, the Strategic Prayer Initiative's process is not meant to be burdensome. The brief but strategic prayers and the two verses per day of Scripture are intended to be doable, in literally three (3) minutes per day. We would love to see you read more than two verses per day, but all you are signing on for is two, and that is all that you will be asked about.

Question 3. Have you given in to significant sin during the past month?

Only one of two answers can be given to Question #3 Yes or No [See the do not worry "Note:" on the backside of this page]

The reason this question is asked is because it is extremely relevant for your greater effectiveness in prayer (both personal prayers as well as strategic prayers), and for your relationship with God.

“Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.” (Isaiah 59:1-2 NIV)

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23-24 RSV) “...for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” (1 Peter 1:16 NIV)

“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” (James 4:7-8 NASB) [Also see, 1 Peter 3:12, and Psalms 66:18 concerning sin weakening prayer]

Note: Please don't let Question #3 worry you. Although it is extremely important for all true Christians to get the resisting sin discussion on the table, we have done so in a way that allows the one answering the question *very* little risk. We have done this by getting you a signed confidentiality agreement in hand and on top of that, you only have to answer this question with a simple yes or no answer – nothing more needs to be said, and your Cord members are not to ask you for additional details. This approach allows little vulnerability or risk, while still alerting your Cord members of a need to pray more fervently on your behalf, in this *essential* aspect of being a Christian (2 Tim.2:19, Jam. 5:16).

For those of you **wondering if a sin is significant** or not, we encourage you to assume it is if you are in doubt. Furthermore, you may want to bring up any possible moral struggles with your PrayerCord. The members of your Cord can often shed some important light on whether or not a particular struggle should be considered sinful. Additionally, the list in **Galatians 5:16-26** can be helpful in discerning sin in one's life. Some other Scriptures to consider are: 1 Thessalonians 5:18-**not giving thanks**, Romans 12:3-**pride**, Ephesians 4:31-**anger**, Ephesians 4:29-**language**, 1 Corinthians 8:9-**stumbling blocks**, Hebrews 10:25-**forsaking assembling**, Colossians 3:9-**lying**, 1 Peter 2:11-**fleshly lusts**, John 13:35-**not loving others**, Colossians 3:13-**forgiving**, Ephesians 4:28-**stealing**, Ephesians 5:16-**redeeming the time**, Matthew 6:24-**money**, Matthew 23:28-**outward righteousness**, Philippians 4:8-**think on these things**, Jude 1:7 and 10-**perversion**, Hebrews 13:4-**adultery** and **premarital sex**, 1 John 4:20-21-**prejudice**. Most of the previous scriptural references come from What Happens When Women Pray, by Evelyn Christenson pp.147-151.

(The above Scriptures are given in their entirety in the Longer Explanation of SPI PrayerCords document.)

At the bottom of the standard Yellow Card used to track PrayerCords is a dotted line. Beneath the dotted line are three more questions listed in an abbreviated form. When a church or group is also using another SPI Tool known as The QuickCheck™ Card for Group Assessment, the questions below the dotted line are ignored. However, when no QuickCheck Card is being used Questions #4 and #5 do need to be answered. Question #3.1 on the other hand, is a replacement question for Question #3. Question #3.1 is intended to never be used unless the individuals in the PrayerCord or SPI Small Group feel they are ready for this higher level of transparency.

Question 4. How would you self-rate your prayer life during the past month? (or week if measuring weekly?)

One of four answers can be given to Question #4 **P=Poor, F=Fair, G=Good, or M=Mature**

Question 5. How would you self-rate your personal relationship with the Lord in the past month? (or week if...)

One of five answers can be given to Question #5 **P=Poor, F=Fair, PD=Pretty Deep, D=Deep, and ED=Extremely Deep**

[We would like to point out that with Questions #4 and #5 the possible answers that are available can appear to be too general or imprecise. On the contrary, we have found that these possible options are typically easy for a SPI participant to place themselves into. Additionally, Questions #4 and #5 and #3.1 are also self-correcting. For example, if the person thought they had a “Good” or a “Mature” prayer life at the beginning of their involvement in SPI, but after they go further up the learning curve (regarding the subject and practice of prayer) come to realize their prayer life had been just “Fair” at best, they will change their answers accordingly. However, with their deeper understanding, they choose their future answers from their new more informed base, which means going forward if they say their prayer life is “Good” or “Mature,” it is said with a much fuller understanding than before.]

A Cord or SPI Small Group can voluntarily replace Question 3. With Question 3.1 if they want to advance from the very basics.

Question 3.1 How much in the past month (or week if measuring weekly) were your prayers weakened by any known, unconfessed, and un-repented-of sin in your life? a=A Huge Amount, b=A Lot, c=Pretty Much, d=A Little, e=I am aware, but...

Regarding Question 3.1, the way the question has been developed, it functions well whether the individual is a new believer or a mature believer. Keep in mind that this question doesn't ask to identify the sin, just the level it has weakened or harmed the effectiveness of the individual's prayers. Remember, we Christians can be fully clean at any given time, by asking the Holy Spirit to show us the sins in our lives (Psalm 139:23-24) and then, with confession of “known” sin (1st John. 1:9), and true repentance (John 8:10-11, Mark 1:14-15, Matthew 3:5-8 and 11-12, Matthew 4:17, Matthew 11:20. and Matthew 12:41) our prayers will not be hindered or weakened.

Cord Helper/Administrator – Finally, one member of your Cord will need to serve as the Cord's Helper/Administrator. This member has the additional responsibility of making sure: 1) the monthly meeting gets scheduled, 2) each Cord member (including themselves) is asked the five questions on the Yellow Card, and 3) and keeping a simple record of the Cord's or SPI Small Group's progress. These Cord Administrator duties are not difficult, but they are essential *if we are going to help awaken the sleeping giant i.e. the prayers of the many*.