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Tips on hosting a drum circle prayer meeting – Teri Bryant

Suitable for people wanting to explore prayer and worship using drums.

Here is a basic outline for hosting a 'prayer-drum circle'. These 10 points are only a very rough guide, but do form the basic model for the way I have led 'prayer and worship' gatherings using percussion and hand drums. This is suitable for people wanting to explore prayer and worship using drums and can be a great tool for introducing the non-churched into an environment of worship with the body of Christ. If you are planning to host a meeting always pray in preparation and seek your pastor's blessing along with the support of your church community. Remain accountable and take advice from people you trust within the church body. Please read through - I hope it helps. If you have questions or there are things that are not clear, please feel free to get back in touch - and also do let us (PDs core team) know how it develops.

1. Get the room/space ready first. If you are able to provide extra percussion instruments, unpack them and have them ready at hand. Create a circle of chairs (where possible), making sure they are not tightly packed to give room for people to move around, or to join the circle.
2. Once everyone has arrived briefly introduce yourself - and give people a few 'ground rules' i.e; clarify your intention for meeting with God through prayer and worship. Let people know how long the session will be and explain about sharing instruments, and any other practical stuff too.
3. Ask for a show of hands for those who might not have played a drum before - encourage them to join in at their own pace. Explain (briefly) how drumming is stirring, encouraging, useful for prayer and worship, but also lots of fun! You may want to draw on one or two biblical 'tof' (tambourine) references. *"Praise Him with the timbrel and dance.. " Psalm 150:3-6. "Begin the music, strike the tambourine... " Psalm 81:2."Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp." Psalm 149:3.*
4. It can be helpful to mention God's creative nature etc., as this might be very new for some. Encourage freedom, moving around, sitting or standing etc. Also encourage singing and speaking out prayers (this very important). You may need to lead by example with this - if you stay too serious/sitting/static so will everyone else.

5. You may have a scripture verse (ask God what He would like you to say) and/or a theme to touch upon? If not, don't worry many times the Lord delights in revealing His presence in the moment. I consider Ephesians 3:16-19 as a helpful Psalm Drumming prayer.

6. Make your session 'Prayer, Praise and Worship' (in character and content). Avoid aggressive spiritual warfare (shouting at Satan etc.) unless the Lord specifically leads and you feel confident in this area. Although not very common, if you experience distracting or unhelpful manifestations don't be afraid - sometimes this sort of praise can bring release. Talk to the Lord, and either hold the level of praise until it subsides, or be unafraid to shut it down. If you are inexperienced in this area, take advice from your pastor or elders in the church fellowship. Do some study and ask for His wisdom - the Lord wants to teach you how to move in His authority in all these situations. *Luke 10:19 'Look, I have given you the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; nothing will ever harm you'.*

7. Get the group drumming - perhaps say a short prayer, and start a beat inviting others to follow in as they feel comfortable. Lead and stay in charge, but NOT aggressively, or by interrupting the flow all the time. Be unafraid to let the drumming go on for a good while. Twenty minutes to an hour is quite normal and allows things to develop.

8. Watch what's going on keeping your eyes open, acknowledge with a smile different things going on. Try following or picking-up on the beat or pattern someone else is playing. Don't be afraid to gently lead into a louder or quieter phase. When you are ready stop playing, stand and wait for others to stop too. The silence after a time of drumming can be very powerful too.

9. Invite feedback and then pray into the comments and observations. Perhaps (if there is time) pick-up a new beat.

10. End by affirming all present. Encourage them to pray through and or write down things they may have sensed the Lord speaking. It's always good to end with a prayer of thanksgiving.

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