

Suggestions for Your Church's Participation

Familiarize yourself with the resources provided

The materials in this packet may be copied as needed for distribution to your members.

- The FAQ sheet gives background information provided by our missionaries to help you and your church understand the significance of *Carnaval* and how it impacts their ministries.
- “Praying Against Spiritual Strongholds in Latin America” explains underlying issues of spiritual opposition to the gospel and church planting identified by our missionaries. These are the focal points of the global prayer initiative. Use copies of this material to equip your members to pray strategically. Praying through this list could be an appropriate guide for an hour of prayer with your congregation or in small groups.
- The missionary prayer request list is provided direct from missionaries. You may choose to use it for your people to pray personally.

Choose a format suited to your church

Consider your church's unique characteristics, experience, and schedule to determine a format which will involve the greatest number of your members. Some possibilities include:

- Designate one of the days as a prayer emphasis day for your people to pray personally using the material you provide. Ask them to sign up to participate, rather than just announce it and hope they do.
- Dedicate your Sunday evening service on February 3 as an hour of prayer for this initiative. Note: this is Super Bowl Sunday, which affects many church's evening services.
- Move your Wednesday evening prayer service from February 6 to Tuesday, February 5. This is Mardi Gras day, the culmination of the *Carnaval* celebrations in Latin America.
- Organize a prayer vigil calendar, for whatever time frame you choose during the days of *Carnaval*. It can be spread out over the four days, or focused on a particular day. It isn't necessary to cover an entire 24-hour day. Adjust your plan to suit your church.
- Host a special prayer event (early morning, noon, or evening) in which your members use the prayer guide for an hour of prayer.
- Use another option you know will work to involve as many members as possible.

Promote participation among your members

- Start with the church leadership. Recruit commitments from the pastor and other staff members, church officers, deacons and other lay leaders, and Sunday school, youth, and children's workers. Talk to them privately or meet with them as a group.
- Use the pulpit, Sunday bulletin, weekly newsletter or e-mail, and bulletin boards to announce the prayer initiative and urge members to participate. Engaging your members in strategic intercession for missions will raise the level of their awareness and involvement in praying for your local ministry needs as well.
- Communicate the priority and urgency of pleading the throne of grace for the cause of evangelism and church planting. Prayer is the most important work the church can do when it gathers. The pastor's conviction and passion for strategic intercession will transfer to church members. God's work requires God's power. God's power flows in the direction of the church's prayers.

Communicate with your Latin America missionaries

Use the occasion of the prayer initiative to send encouragement to missionaries in Latin America. E-mails, cards, letters, even packages from your church, can lift the hearts of our missionary families facing the issues about which we are praying.

Celebrate and evaluate participation

- If appropriate, give an opportunity following the prayer initiative for your members to share what their participation meant to them.
- Ask someone to write a summary of your church's participation—what was done, how people participated, response(s), and suggestions for improvement—for your reference for future prayer initiatives.
- Send a copy of that summary to the International Missions office. This will help us improve the services provided for FWB churches. We will pass along appropriate information to inform and encourage our missionaries in the region.

Contact us if we can help you prepare your church to participate:

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