

# DOES GOD EXIST?

- YES
- NO
- PROBABLY

Everything You Need to Know To Run a Successful  
**Prayer & Worship Event**  
for the **Alpha Invitation 2009**

*“Take this most seriously...  
When two of you get together  
on anything at all on earth  
and make a prayer of it,  
my Father in heaven goes into action.  
And when two or three of you  
are together because of me,  
you can be sure that...*

*...I'll be there.”*

*(Jesus)*

*Matt 18: 18-20*

## INTRODUCTION

Every year a thrilling invitation goes out to the nation to come and explore the Really Big Issues of Life on an Alpha Course. Underpinning the national advertising campaign, is an army of ordinary people organising thousands of local Alpha Courses, booking venues, cooking meals, preparing to lead discussion groups, and inviting their friends.

But the story of the Alpha Invitation doesn't end there. Just as the real power behind the bus campaigns is the army of volunteers, so the real power behind the success of the Alpha Course is an army of prayer warriors who understand that this is not just an annual recruiting drive by the church, and it is not just a well-run course. Behind the humorous talks, the pasta suppers and the cartoon illustrations is a real spiritual battle for hearts and minds.

The Apostle Paul reminds us not to rely on advertising and planning alone, since "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world" (Ephesians 6:12)

In 2009 the Alpha Invitation rings out with special urgency to a nation gripped by recession and rising unemployment. Nicky Gumbel has called this 'a hinge moment'. At such a time it's vital that we call our churches to pray for the advancement of the gospel of Jesus Christ where we live.

***The Alpha Invitation is really two invitations, not one!***

The scriptures depict a surprising scene in heaven. Forget those cliché images of angels strumming harps serenely on cotton-wool clouds. Instead we see the Trinity actively engaged in a passionate prayer meeting. Jesus, we are told, 'lives to intercede' for us (Heb 7:25), the Father longs for every single person you know to hear the gospel (2 Peter 3:9) and 'the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express' (Rom. 8:26). That's why the Alpha

Invitation is really two invitations, not one. As well as the church's annual invitation to the nation to join us on an Alpha Course, there is also God's continual invitation to the church to join Him in heaven's 24-7 prayer meeting for the world.

This resource has been designed to help you respond to that heavenly invitation, by running a really great prayer and worship event. The aim is to make prayer interesting, enjoyable, and worthwhile for groups large and small, combining worship and thanksgiving with targeted petition.

Have fun!

Pete Greig

Director of Prayer, *Alpha International* and *24-7 Prayer*

## Suggested Plan (Overview):

<b>Opening Worship</b>
<b>Welcome and Introduction</b>
<b>Testimony or Interview Slot</b> <i>(Ideally someone who has come to know Christ through Alpha, or experienced a remarkable answer to prayer.)</i>
<b>Prayer for this Year's Alpha Invitation and autumn Alpha courses</b> <i>Including thanks for previous courses, prayer for the upcoming national invitation and courses</i>
<b>More Worship</b>
<b>Prayer for the Nation</b> <i>Covering prayer for our government, the youth of our nation and the impact of the church nationwide</i>
<b>Prayer for the Church</b> <i>Including prayer for your local Church, other churches that run Alpha and the Persecuted Church worldwide</i>
<b>Closing Worship and Prayer</b>

***Prayer does not equip us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work'***

***Oswald Chambers***

Mins approx	Screen / OHP (optional)	Style	
10	Words		<b>OPENING WORSHIP</b>
2	"Welcome!"		<b>WELCOME:</b> Welcome to everyone including any senior leaders and guests
5			<b>INTRODUCTION:</b> We're here to pray for the "re-evangelisation of the nation and the transformation of society" beginning here in [add the name of your community or parish] and for the Alpha Invitation 2009 ( <i>Please see Pete Greig's Introduction for possible basis of intro, page 2</i> )
5			<b>TESTIMONY</b> ( <i>please see 'Notes' section, page 5</i> ) Possibilities: •A recent Alpha experience • Answered prayer • Other relevant interview
15			<b>PRAYER FOR ALPHA</b>
(5)	Bullet Points	Small Groups of 3/ 4 people	<b>Thank God for</b> 1. His presence on previous Alpha courses and the lives He has changed 2. The 1.5 Million people who attended the Alpha course worldwide and the 186,000 people in the UK in 2008 3. God's ever growing church worldwide
(5)	Bullet Points	Small Groups of 3/ 4 people	<b>This Autumn's Events</b> 1. For impact of this year's publicity and Invitation for the month of September and beyond 2. For opportunities to invite and tell others 3. For local Alpha Launch Events happening in your area; for increased participation, fun and for God to be present
(5)		Split the group in half 50/50	<b>This Autumn's courses</b> Right Hand Side: Many people to come to know Jesus Left Hand Side: Outpouring of the Holy Spirit Flow into..
5	Words		<b>WORSHIP</b>
5			<b>PRAYER FOR THE NATION</b>
	Bullet Points	Small Groups of 3/ 4 people	1. For our national leaders and those in government 2. For a specific issue/ need in your area 3. That God would use His church to impact and build communities in our nation 4. For the young people and youth of our nation
10			<b>PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH</b>
(2)	Bullet points	100%	<b>Encourage people to raise their voices as one to pray for your own &amp; local churches</b> • Unity • More power & love • Growth & Life
(3)	Bullet points	Small Groups of 3/ 4 people	1. Pray for Group leaders: <i>wisdom, strength, courage, boldness.</i> 2. That we would see the needs of our community and serve those around us 3. That we would spend time and build relationships with those in our communities
(5)		100% or Silent Prayer  100%	<b>Church around the world</b> Pray for Alpha in other countries ( <i>202 countries</i> ) and The Persecuted Church (see <a href="http://opendoorsuk.org.uk">opendoorsuk.org.uk</a> ) Courage and Boldness (Acts 4:29-30)
3			<b>Closing Worship followed by closing prayer</b>
60			
Following the official close of the meeting - A chance to sign up for further intercession/ prayer-emails/ prayer-chain / 24-7 prayer room throughout the coming Alpha course			

# Notes

## Visuals

A powerpoint presentation to accompany this prayer meeting is available from: [www.alphafriends.org/prayer](http://www.alphafriends.org/prayer) or from Alpha UK on 020 7052 0495.

## Flexibility

This is a very detailed agenda as a number of people have requested that we give them as much detail as possible so as to get them started. Please feel free to tailor it to suit your local situation.

The songs and styles of prayer given are only suggestions but we do encourage you to include participatory worship and variety at your meeting.

Please change the agenda as you see fit especially taking into consideration any local issues or recent items in the news.

## 'Style' Key

- 50/50 – half the people worshipping whilst the other half pray aloud together then the sides are swapped around
- RHS – right hand side
- LHS – left hand side
- 100% – everyone praying aloud together
- Small Groups – a group of 3 or 4 people, praying one at a time

## Testimony Slot

If you are not able to have a live testimony (which is always best!), please feel free to use the testimonies on this year's Invitation DVD. There are 18 testimonies to choose from.

Should you be conducting a live interview, it's important to meet with the interviewee(s) beforehand. Some of the most reluctant candidates give the most wonderful testimonies and, for this reason, always be encouraging and reassuring. You might like to brief them as follows:

- Everyone will be 'on your side' and will love to hear your story – however simple.
- Imagine one of your non-Christian friends is in the audience, and they're sitting at the back, so as to avoid religious jargon.
- If you've had a bad experience in another denomination, please don't name the church as that can appear very negative and offend people. We suggest that you simply say, 'I had a religious upbringing.'
- When describing the difference Jesus has made, try and give concrete examples (eg "when a driver cut me off yesterday, I didn't lose my temper!") and avoid sweeping generalisations.
- Please don't worry about having nothing to say – I can easily prompt you with another question if you need it. I'm responsible for the interview – you simply need to answer the questions.

## During the Meeting:

### **Testimony interviews**

- "I would like to introduce you to one or two people who have done Alpha before... Firstly, I would like to introduce you to [name]" .... Launch into the testimonies.

Suggested questions for someone converted through Alpha:

- Xxx time ago, would you have described yourself as a Christian or a churchgoer?
- How did you come to be on Alpha?
- What happened?
- What difference has Jesus made to your life?

## 24-7 Prayer

If you would like to create a prayer room for continual prayer over a weekend or even a week, you can find out how from *The 24-7Prayer Manual* (Kingsway).

# Possible Songs

Song	Author	Publisher
Amazing Grace	John Newton	
Blessed Be Your Name	Matt Redman	2002 Thankyou Music
Can a Nation Be Changed	Matt Redman	1996 Kingsway's Thankyou Music
Consuming Fire (There Must Be More Than This)	Tim Hughes	2002 Thankyou Music
Even Though I Walk Through the Valley (You Never Let Go)	Matt Redman & Beth Redman	2005 Thankyou Music
Everlasting God	Chris Tomlin	
God of Justice	Tim Hughes	2005 Thankyou Music
Great is your faithfulness	Chris Tomlin	2002 worshiptogether.com songs
God of this City	Bluetree	
History Maker	Martin Smith	
Everlasting God (Strength will rise)	Brenton Brown	2005 Thankyou Music
I See the King of Glory (Hosanna)	Brooke Fraser	2006 Brooke Fraser/Hillsong Publishing/kingswaysongs.com
In my life	Hillsong United	
Lead Me Lord	SS Wesley	
Light Of The World	Tim Hughes	2000 Kingsway's Thankyou Music
O Lord my God	Stuart Hine	1941, 1953, 1955 Stuart K. Hine, Renewed 1981 Manna Music, Inc
Open The Eyes Of My Heart (V*2 + Ch*1 for each side then all together for 2*Bridge and 2*Chorus) 50/50	Paul Baloche	Integrity's Hosanna! Music
Our God reigns	Delirious?	2005 Curious? Music UK
Prayers of the Saints	Matt Redman	
Show your power	Kevin Prosch	
Teach Us How To Pray	Tim Hughes	
The Splendour Of A King (How Great Is Our God)	Chris Tomlin	2004 Worship Together EMI
The stand	Hillsong United	
We exalt thee	Pete Sanchez	
We stand and lift up our hands	Chris Tomlin	2003 EMI
We won't stay silent		2008 GloWorks Limited for CompassionArt (Registered with the UK Charity Commission number 1124708)
What a Friend We Have Jesus	Joseph Scriven	

***Revivals, as far as man's agency is concerned, always come in one way – by prayer.***

***R.A. Torrey***

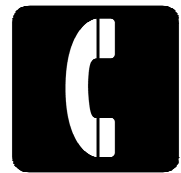
# Ideas for praying during your Alpha course

Here are just a few ideas that you could use to encourage people to commit to pray throughout the course:

- Create an email-list of those committing to pray for Alpha and provide regular updates. You can also connect this group with a phone-chain, or with special prayer alerts by text message.
- Organise/ Become part of a prayer intercession group that prays on the same evening as the course.
- Make sure that Alpha is profiled in existing church services and prayer meetings.
- Allocate house groups to cover particular weeks of the course in prayer.
- Encourage the youth group to pray creatively for the course.
- Consider starting a 24-7 prayer room/ week. Please see [www.24-7prayer.com](http://www.24-7prayer.com) or *The 24-7 Prayer Manual* (Kingsway)
- Make sure that all Alpha Group Leaders are encouraged to pray for the members of their groups by name each day. Some churches create personalised prayer bookmarks for group leaders to use in this way.
- The Leaders and Helpers Meetings: of course this is a key time of collective prayer for the leaders and helpers.
- If you are web savvy, why not set up a Facebook Group or even Twitter?

*NB: When sharing prayer requests always ensure that guest confidentiality is maintained.*

If you have any prayer ideas that you have used on an Alpha course, we would love to hear about it and share it with others. Please feel free to post these ideas on the prayer page on [www.alphafriends.org](http://www.alphafriends.org)



**“Prayer is simply a two way conversation between you and God”**  
(Billy Graham)

## Alpha Prayer Advisers

If you have any questions about prayer and Alpha, please feel free to contact one of our Alpha Prayer Advisers:

Liccolnshire Team - Sophie Chapman	<a href="mailto:chapmansophie@aol.com">chapmansophie@aol.com</a>
London Team - Kerry Taylor	<a href="mailto:gary.kerrytaylor@o2.co.uk">gary.kerrytaylor@o2.co.uk</a>
Monmouthshire Team - Isobel Mead	<a href="mailto:i.mead@yahoo.co.uk">i.mead@yahoo.co.uk</a>
Norfolk Team - Jill Gower	<a href="mailto:jill@jill495.orangehome.co.uk">jill@jill495.orangehome.co.uk</a>
Norfolk Team - Robert Taylor	<a href="mailto:robert_taylor1@btconnect.com">robert_taylor1@btconnect.com</a>
Norfolk Team - Rebecca Taylor	<a href="mailto:rebecca_taylor1@btconnect.com">rebecca_taylor1@btconnect.com</a>

We are always on the lookout for more Prayer Advisers, so if there isn't one in your area yet and you have a heart for prayer, do consider dropping us a line to find out more about this vital ministry: [prayer@htb.org.uk](mailto:prayer@htb.org.uk)

"One in three UK adults agree with the statement '*There is a God who watches over me and answers my prayer*'" (Tearfund Prayer Survey – 2007)

## Countries around the world where Alpha is currently running

Afghanistan	Djibouti	Lesotho	Serbia
Albania	Dominica	Liberia	Seychelles
Algeria	Dominican Rep.	Libya	Sierra Leone
Andorra	East Timor	Liechtenstein	Singapore
Angola	Ecuador	Lithuania	Slovakia
Anguilla	Egypt	Luxembourg	Slovenia
Antigua & Barbuda	El Salvador	Macao	Solomon Islands
Argentina	Equatorial Guinea	Macedonia	Somalia
Armenia	Eritrea	Madagascar	South Africa
Aruba	Estonia	Malawi	South Korea
Australia	Ethiopia	Malaysia	Spain
Austria	Falkland Islands	Maldives	Sri Lanka
Azerbaijan	Faroe Islands	Mali	St Kitts & Nevis
Bahamas	Fiji	Malta	St Martin
Bahrain	Finland	Marshall Islands	St Vincent & The Grenadines
Bangladesh	France	Mauritania	Sudan
Barbados	Gabon	Mauritius	Suriname
Belarus	Gambia	Mexico	Swaziland
Belgium	Georgia	Micronesia	Sweden
Belize	Germany	Moldova	Switzerland
Benin	Ghana	Morocco	Syria
Bermuda	Gibraltar	Mozambique	Taiwan
Bhutan	Greece	Myanmar	Tajikistan
Bolivia	Greenland	Namibia	Tanzania
Bosnia	Grenada	Nauru	Thailand
Botswana	Guinea Bissau	Nepal	Togo
Brazil	Guinea	Netherland Antilles	Tonga
British Virgin Islands	Guyana	Netherlands	Trinidad & Tobago
Brunei Darusalam	Haiti	New Zealand	Tunisia
Bulgaria	Honduras	Nicaragua	Turkey
Burkina Faso	Hong Kong	Niger	Turkmenistan
Burundi	Hungary	Nigeria	Tuvalu
Cambodia	Iceland	Norway	Uganda
Cameroon	India	Oman	UK
Canada	Indonesia	Pakistan	Ukraine
Cape Verde	Iran	Palestine	United Arab Emirates
Cayman Islands	Iraq	Panama	Uruguay
Central African Rep.	Ireland	Papua New Guinea	USA
Chad	Israel	Paraguay	Uzbekistan
Chile	Italy	Peru	Vanuatu
China	Jamaica	Philippines	Vatican City State
Colombia	Japan	Poland	Venezuela
Comoros	Jordan	Portugal	Vietnam
Congo	Kazakhstan	Puerto Rico	Yemen
Costa Rica	Kenya	Qatar	Yugoslavia
Cote d Ivoire	Kiribati	Romania	Zambia
Croatia	Kosovo	Russia	Zimbabwe
Cuba	Kuwait	Rwanda	
Cyprus	Kyrgyzstan	Samoa	
Czech Republic	Laos	San Marino	
Dem Rep Congo	Latvia	Saudi Arabia	
Denmark	Lebanon	Senegal	

***“The evangelisation of the world depends first upon a revival of prayer”***

***Robert Speers***

# The Persecuted Church

The following is a list of 50 countries compiled by Open Doors. For more information on countries in the World Watch List please visit

[www.opendoorsuk.org/profiles](http://www.opendoorsuk.org/profiles)

Afghanistan	Laos
Algeria	Libya
Azerbaijan	Maldives
Bahrain	Mauritania
Bangladesh	Morocco
Belarus	Myanmar (Burma)
Bhutan	Nigeria (North)
Brunei	Oman
Chechnya	Pakistan
China	Palestinian Territories
Colombia (Conflict Areas)	Qatar
Comoros	Saudi Arabia
Cuba	Somalia
Djibouti	Sri Lanka
Egypt	Sudan (North)
Eritrea	Syria
Ethiopia	Tajikistan
India	Tunisia
Indonesia	Turkey
Iran	Turkmenistan
Iraq	United Arab Emirates
Jordan	Uzbekistan
Kenya (North East)	Vietnam
Korea, North	Yemen
Kuwait	Zanzibar Islands

“God does not act the same way whether we pray or not. Prayer exerts an influence upon God’s action, even upon His existence.”

(Karl Barth – theologian)

# 24-7 Prayer & Alpha

24-7 Prayer Rooms are an effective and exciting way of engaging the whole church, including the young people, in prayer for Alpha. These 'houses of prayer' can foster creative, persevering intercession and worship in all sorts of church contexts, or regionally, as a prayer hub shared between different churches. What's more, there are many useful resources to help you.

## **Background**

The 24-7 Prayer movement began with a single, night-and-day prayer vigil in a dedicated room, on an industrial estate in Chichester, West Sussex during the *Alpha Invitation* in September 1999. That one prayer room unexpectedly went on to inspire thousands of other groups to pray 24 hours a day and seven days a week, and the movement has now spread into more than a third of the nations on earth, with a steady stream of thrilling testimonies of answered prayer (see [www.24-7prayer.com](http://www.24-7prayer.com)).

24-7 Prayer may sound ambitious, or even extreme, but that first 24-7 prayer room began simply enough, with a bunch of ordinary students at Revelation church admitting that they were 'rubbish at prayer' and determining to do something about it. They decided to borrow a model of continual prayer from a Moravian community in Herrnhut, Saxony who prayed continually through most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, sending out missionaries all over the world and even converting John Wesley along the way. People signed up to spend an hour in the prayer room in a non-stop chain, and found that it was easier to talk to God in an atmosphere of continual prayer. Many inexperienced intercessors began to pray non-verbally, with art, music, drums, dance, silence, and even graffiti. Many heart-rending prayers were answered, non-Christian visitors said they could feel God's presence and new-Christian visitors assumed it was natural to pray for an hour each day. Before long the idea of 24-7 prayer had caught on and began spreading all over the world.

## **Recommended Prayer Resources**

### Motivation to Pray:

City Changing Prayer by Debra and Frank Green (Survivor)

God on Mute: Engaging the Silence of Unanswered Prayer by Pete Greig

Prayer: Does it Make Any Difference by Philip Yancey (Hodder)

Red Moon Rising: The Adventure of Faith and the Power of Prayer by Pete Greig & Dave Roberts (Survivor)

Rees Howells Intercessor by Norman Grubb (Lutterworth Press)

### Practical Advice:

The 24-7 Prayer Manual: Creating & Sustaining Sacred Space in the Real World (Survivor)

The Church On Its Knees: Dynamic Prayer in the Local Church by Jeremy Jennings (Alpha)

### Prayer Resources:

Writing on the Wall: Prayers Psalms and Laments from Prayer Rooms Around the World Ed. Brian Heasley (Survivor)

Operation World: The Ultimate Prayer Guide to Every Nation on Earth by Patrick Johnstone Jason Mandryk

### Websites

[www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)

[www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org)

[www.worshipcentral.com](http://www.worshipcentral.com)

[www.24-7prayer.com](http://www.24-7prayer.com)

## **Alpha ministries and related ministries to pray for:**

### **Alpha Ministries**

**Alpha for Forces  
Alpha for Prisons  
Alpha in a Roman Catholic context  
Senior Alpha  
Student Alpha  
Alpha in the Workplace  
Youth Alpha**

For more information on the above ministries, please visit [www.alphafriends.org](http://www.alphafriends.org)

### **Related Ministries**

**Social Transformation including Caring for Ex-Offenders & Besom  
Dynamic Prayer in the Local Church  
The Marriage Course & The Marriage Preparation Course  
St. Paul's Theological Centre  
Worship Central  
God at Work**

For more information on the above ministries, please visit [www.htb.org.uk](http://www.htb.org.uk)