

24-7 PRAYER COMMUNITY NETWORKS



Community Networks In-Depth Overview

What is the 24-7 Community Networks?

Introduction and background:

24-7 Prayer exists to revive the Church and rewire the culture through an international movement and communities of non-stop prayer, mission and justice.

24-7 communities are a mixture of churches, missional communities and houses of prayer who find their primary place of belonging, support, accountability and shared missional purpose within the family of 24-7. This family of communities who align themselves with the vision, values and practices of 24-7 prayer is known as 24-7 Community Networks.

The Vision:

The vision of the 24-7 Community Networks is to build an *apostolic ecosystem* of churches, missional communities and houses of prayer across the nations aligned to 24-7 Prayer's core practices (prayer, mission and justice) and dedicated to the fulfilment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20).

An Apostolic Ecosystem:

The 24-7 Community Networks is built primarily on friendship and formed around mutually committed relationships. In the same way an ecosystem is made up of different parts yet existing together and relating to one another in a living system, we understand the 24-7 Community Networks as a web of relationships joining individual 24-7 communities together under the Lordship of Jesus and the movement of the Holy Spirit. These communities are held together by a mutual desire to see God's eternal purposes in Christ fulfilled through the local church. Through the 24-7 Community Networks they find support, belonging, accountability and shared missional purpose. Our desire is that 24-7 Communities learn how to mutually submit to one another and resource one another in a living system that can move with fluency, grace and beauty.

Communities within our Networks:

We rejoice in the diversity of communities which exist within the 24-7 Community Networks and celebrate the unique contribution each community makes to the whole. As we look at the existing Communities within our Networks, we've noticed that the Holy Spirit seems to be drawing out three main types of community expressions:

- **Churches**

Churches are made up of a self-sustaining group of believers who relate to this community as their primary place of belonging and spiritual family. Churches can be large resource centres, local congregational expressions or "house-churches." In all these expressions, there will be practices of prayer, the sacraments, a shared missional vision to reach their local community and a leadership team providing pastoral care and discipleship for its members.

- **Houses of Prayer (HOP)**

Houses of prayer take on a variety of shapes, but there are two main forms:

Third Spaces: Third spaces are communities made up of individuals who represent the local church in a city or region who have come together with a vision to resource the local church in prayer - helping individuals pray, inspiring churches to pray more and encouraging churches to pray together. As their members are often part of other churches, HOPs are supported by local church leaders and are generally non-sacramental in practice.

New Monastic Communities: These communities consist of a group of individuals or households who are building common life around regular rhythms of prayer and a shared rule of life (most commonly but not exclusively the Order of the Mustard Seed). Their members will often see this as their primary place of belonging, discipleship, community and the place where the sacraments are practiced.

- **Missional Communities**

Missional communities are formed around a small group of committed believers who have clearly identified a people-group or geographical area as their shared mission and have intentionally orientated their lives around reaching this identified group or place. Missional communities are usually positioned in the most broken parts of cities and nations and are therefore primarily focused on establishing an incarnational presence and prayerful witness in an “unreached” area.

- **Summary**

It's necessary to recognise that each of these expressions has different developmental needs, different economies, and a different criterion of success. Different requirements are therefore needed in terms of support and oversight for each of these different types of community. Equally it is important to recognise that

some communities may reflect a blend of the different expressions as they have developed.

The CN International Leaders Team:

The 24-7 Community Networks International leadership team is made up of Alain Emerson, Pete Ward, Roger Ellis and Lou Moore. This team gets up each morning ready to serve the 24-7 Community Networks!



They are joined by a band of co-workers called the CN International Coaches Team.

What is our Strategy?

Becoming a Networks of Networks:

In practice, the Global 24-7 Community Networks outworks itself more accurately as **a network of networks**. Because of 24-7 Prayer's long-held value of indigenous leadership and its commitment to honour local context, we recognise that the Global 24-7 Community Networks will in reality become the sum total of several different *networks*. Strategically, we sense this is the route to both sustainability and scalability. Each network operates uniquely, as a collective community on equal footing, sharing resources, supporting and serving one another. An individual network operates like a nuclear family within a broader extended family. We have identified two main types of networks which exist amongst the 24-7 Community Networks:

- **Regional**

Networks formed around *regional or national resource churches* or around a *cluster of churches who have partnered together to function as a resourcing centre*. These “resource hubs” aim to serve the communities connecting around them by building a sense of belonging, support and shared missional purposes in their region or nation.

- **Ecclesial**

Networks formed around *a shared ecclesial shape or community expression*. Given the diversity of ecclesial expressions which exist within the 24-7 Community Networks, we recognise the need for those who are leading similar expressions of community to connect for more specific shared learning and support.

The matrix below helps show how these two forms of networks complement one another and ensures all our communities are held in a place of belonging and support. In some cases, a community may connect with a national or regional network as well as a network based on their ecclesial shape.

		National /Regional Networks		
		Tobar	Tribe	Other Nations
Ecclesial Shape	Churches (Gathered churches)			
	Houses of Prayer			
	Missional Communities + House Churches			

Current Networks:

We currently have the following networks:

Regional

- **Tobar (Communities)** facilitated by a team led by Alain Emerson
- **Tribe (England Churches)** – facilitated by a team led by Sim Dendy and Simon Benham
- **Netherlands Communities** – facilitated by Esther and Jonathan Westerkamp

Ecclesial

- **Houses of Prayer** – facilitated by a team led by Pete Ward
- **House Churches and Missional Communities** – facilitated by a team led by Adam and Juli Cox

Some of these networks have their own names and carry unique attributes drawn from their context, but all of them are grafted into the Global 24-7 Communities Network, finding belonging in the broader movement and receiving apostolic input from the Global 24-7 Prayer Community Networks Leadership Team. In line with this, it is our holy ambition to see numerous other indigenous networks established in the coming years.

Unity and Diversity

To hold space for the different networks and the range of distinct ecclesial expressions which exist within the 24-7 Community Networks, the biblical principle of **unity in diversity** is a crucial value which sits at the heart of all we are building together. We celebrate the diversity of contexts and cultures which exist within the 24-7 Community Networks and the breadth of ecclesial shapes and structures which therefore arise from this. We believe this is consistent with New Testament ecclesial patterns. Yet we want to be clear on what unites us: what holds us together?

1. Shared Vision: As part of the overall worldwide 24-7 Prayer movement, all our communities exist to play their part in reviving the church and rewiring the culture.

2. Shared Values: Our values define out we will act and behave to achieve our vision.

- We pursue the presence of Jesus through prayer.
- We are Spirit-led.
- We are creative and innovative.
- We are missional.
- We are relational.
- We are generous.
- We are passionate about fighting injustice.
- We celebrate diversity.
- We empower one another.

3. Shared Practices: All our communities share the six “practices” of 24-7 Prayer and especially the core three: prayer, mission and justice. Our six practices are not just aspirations – they are our family DNA – who we are.

Please see Appendix 1 for more information on 24-7 Prayers values and practices.

4. Shared Paradigm: All our communities see scripture and life through the lens of the presence paradigm. This is the hermeneutical and theological framework which makes sense of our mission and our model. It explains our understanding of prayer and how these fits with mission and justice and why we combine monasteries and churches.

5. Shared Leadership: All our communities unite around an understanding of local empowered leadership mutually submitted to our Global 24-7 Community Networks Leadership Team from where apostolic support and input flows.

*** Please see appendix 2 for information on our shared theological distinctives.***

6. Shared Models: All our communities are committed to establishing a culture of prayer at the heart of their churches, through the hosting of prayer spaces and the promotion of 24-7 Prayer resources and initiatives. In short, our 24-7 Communities should be the primary users of the movement's resources and best examples of prayer rooms.

Celebrate and Customise:

To ensure all the communities which exist within the Global 24-7 Community Networks are served effectively, given the breadth of community expressions and cultures, we want to both **celebrate** our unity in diversity and **customise** our input:

- **Celebrate** - we want to ensure there are regular times built into our annual calendar that allow us to celebrate the special unity in diversity of the Global 24-7 Community Network so that all our communities can feel the joy and privilege of being part of something bigger and truly multicultural. This will include environments like online Global Collectives, intentional touchpoints at our national conferences and festivals, and the International 24-7 Prayer Gathering.
- **Customise** – we want to ensure the input we provide our communities is the most effective use of time and resource, so we aim to curate content and connection for them that is most relevant to their context and ecclesial expression. This will take the form of smaller online network collectives and learning labs.

How do I join the 24-7 Community Networks?

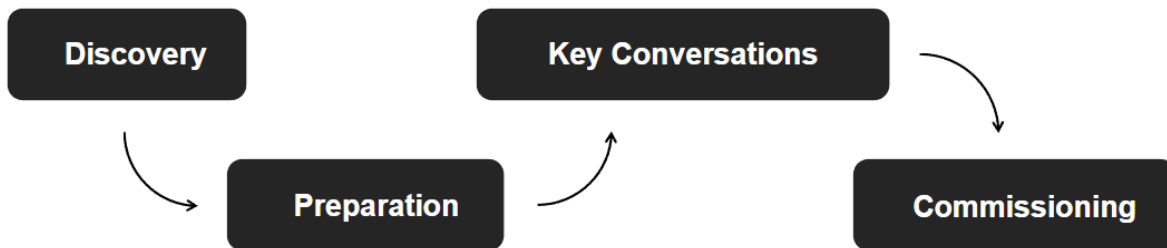
Get to know us:

Joining the 24-7 Community Networks is less about becoming a member of an organisation and more like joining a family with a set of shared values. Every community seeks to be blessed by and be a blessing to every other community in the larger ecosystem of the 24-7 Community Networks. The focus is on building relationships across communities, not only amongst senior leaders but as much as possible across leadership teams. Through these relationships we then seek to bless and build up one another for the advancement of God's Kingdom.

As Communities explore the possibility of joining the 24-7 Community Networks, the best place to begin is to start getting familiar with the 24-7 Prayer movement's vision, values and practices and to begin building relationships with others who are already a part of the 24-7 Community Networks. Practical ways to do this are to consider coming along to our annual events, visiting a 24-7 Community and spend time visiting www.24-7prayer.com to familiarise yourself with the breadth of 24-7 Prayer and the 24-7 Community Networks.

Welcome Process:

The next step is the *24-7 Community Networks Welcome Process – a journey of mutual discernment towards one-minded partnership*. This one-to-two-year exploration process helps potential new communities understand the heart and values of 24-7 Prayer and the Community Networks. Once this is completed, you would be welcomed and commissioned formally at the next appropriate 24-7 Regional Gathering.



The Welcome Process has 4 distinct steps:

1. **Discovery** – When a community expresses an initial interest in exploring connection with 24-7 Community Networks they are invited to attend events such as regional or international gatherings and our Global Collectives to learn more about us. At this point communities will start to receive our Quarterly Updates helping them gain an understanding of what is going on in 24-7 Community Networks and the wider 24-7 Prayer movement.
2. **Preparation** – As we grow in relationship with one another, one of the Community Networks Leadership Team will visit the respective community, meeting with the wider leadership team and if possible, the wider church body. At this point a mutually discerned decision can take place as to whether the respective community would like to enter more formally into the Welcome Process. If the answer is ‘yes,’ one of the 24-7 Community Networks Leadership Team will be assigned to shepherd a community through next stage of the process. From this point communities will start to receive our monthly newsletter and, where appropriate, be invited to join our Network Collectives.
3. **Key Conversations** – This stage involves three separate conversations with the community’s leadership team. Each of these conversations is introduced by way of a short video which will outline important elements of 24-7 Community Networks and allow space for reflection and discussion.
 - a. Conversation 1: An overview of the history, vision and strategy of 24-7 Community Networks
 - b. Conversation 2: Unity and Diversity Framework - exploring what holds us together in one-minded mission?

- c. Conversation 3: Outlining our structures, expectations and ongoing partnership looks like.
4. **Commissioning** – If, at the end of the ‘Key Conversation’ stage, we have mutually discerned that we would like to enter into a more recognised and public form of partnership together, we will officially commission and pray for this community at the next appropriate regional Gathering.

What are the benefits of being part of the 24-7 Community Networks?

Below is a list of ways we believe being part of the 24-7 Community Networks can be a blessing to your community:

- Being part of a global prayer movement of 25 years of non-stop prayer.
- Belonging to an international family of 24-7 communities across the world.
- The opportunity for ongoing input and encouragement from seasoned apostolic leaders and teams
- A level of accountability outside of local elders in exceptional circumstances, therefore granting local church members access to a place of appeal.
- A safety net to help resolve conflict.
- Support in times of crisis, individually or corporately.
- Advice and insight - a “fresh pair of eyes” on areas of growth, development and the evolving architecture of the community.
- Access to leadership development and wider forms of training for your community.
- An opportunity for local churches to make a unique contribution to the wider movement and be released in their spiritual gifts.

What are the expectations?

Healthy relationships require a level of commitment from all, and some of these would include:

- Committing to embody and grow in the 24-7 values of prayer, mission, and justice in your community
- Our hope is 24-7 communities would endeavour to enthusiastically engage with the wider 24-7 Prayer movement's core products and initiatives. This could involve:
 - o Hosting 24-7 Prayer rooms and establishing appropriate rhythms of prayer at the heart of your community.
 - o Promoting 24-7 Prayer resources including Lectio 365, Prayer Spaces in Schools, The Prayer Course, Leadership Pathway etc.
- Intentionally building relationships with the leadership teams of other 24-7 communities by visiting them and inviting them to visit you.
- Attending key touchpoints for the movement e.g. the International Gathering and other regional gatherings.
- Encouraging your community to connect with the National Hub Community rhythms in your area, with a focus on making it possible for children, youth, young adults, and those in poverty to attend.
- Helping to grow other communities in the 24-7 Community Networks by making your leaders, ministries, and resources available to help in any way they can.
- Inviting input from other 24-7 Communities to help you hear from God, receive wisdom and input, identify blind spots and bring in gifts you lack.
- Seeking help from others in the 24-7 Community Networks if you are struggling or dealing with an issue which requires external input to resolve.
- Helping 'new' communities to integrate into the family.
- Financially contributing to the work of 24-7 Prayer

If you have any further questions, please email lou.moore@24-7prayer.com

Appendix 1: 24-7 Values and practices

24-7 Values

Our values define how we will act and behave to achieve our vision.

We pursue the presence of Jesus through prayer, seeking to encounter Christ's power and transformation for ourselves and others.

We are spirit led, obeying the disruptive guidance of the Holy Spirit and trusting in God's provision.

We are creative and innovative, responsive to the world around us and the Spirit in us.

We are missional, 'breathing in' Christ as we pray and 'breathing out' Christ as we engage with the world around us.

We are relational, growing and sustaining the movement through the building of authentic and loving relationships.

We are generous, giving our time and resources freely.

We are passionate about fighting injustice, taking action to bring transformation and reconciliation to our hurting and broken world.

We celebrate diversity whilst committing to equality and prioritising unity across the nations and cultures we serve in.

We empower one another, by making space for honest conversations and praying attention to different views, voices and perspectives.

24-7 Practices

The six practices of 24-7 Prayer are key practical areas of activity that enable us to achieve our vision. They are made up of core practices that are essential for achieving our vision, and three additional complementary practices that enhance and shape the way we outwork our vision.

- **Core practices:** Prayer, Mission, Justice

- **Additional practices:** Creativity, Hospitality, Learning

Appendix 2: Key theological distinctives of the 24-7 Community Network:

There are several theological distinctives we share which we believe describe the flavour of Christianity we carry.

The 24-7 Prayer Community Networks is only one part of the wider 24-7 Prayer movement. As an international, ecumenical prayer movement, 24-7 Prayer works with all streams of the global Church. Church denominations have different theological views on this topic, and we are respectful of that. We are committed to supporting non-stop prayer, mission and justice all over the world, and anyone, regardless of their theological belief or faith background, is welcome to engage with and use our resources.

Within the apostolic ecosystem of the 24-7 Community Networks however we recognise it is important to be clear on the theological foundations we are building upon and to outline the distinctives and preferences which characterise the culture of our network. These are:

Family: First and foremost, we are a family. We believe ‘family’ is the Bible’s primary motif for the church – a community of people from different religious backgrounds, ethnicities, colours, ages, those married and those who are single. We love one another deeply and share together in life-giving, authentic and accountable relationships. We are one in Jesus.

Unity in Diversity – we celebrate the diversity of cultures, colour, contexts and ecclesial expressions within the global body of Christ. We pursue the unity of the church and champion reconciliation, seeking to embody a spirit of charity, humility and openness towards those from different traditions. We base our unity with others around the core creeds (Nicene Creed and Apostles Creed) as defined by the Early Church and which have been embraced as orthodoxy for almost two thousand years of church history. Where we share a common experience of salvation in Christ and a common encounter with the Holy Spirit, we will discern ways in which the Lord may be calling us to enter into gospel-partnership and one-minded mission together.

New Testament patterns for apostolic mission – We are committed to the patterns and authority of the New Testament as our guide towards true apostolic ministry. We believe in the healthy synthesis of prayerful, prophetic kingdom advancement which results in the transformation of society and the planting of organic expressions of church which are shaped by apostolic Christlike leaders and teams. We respect context. Rather than imposing one ecclesial model, we simply carry our values as we listen to the Spirit, trusting him to lead us to outwork the Great Commission.

Kingdom Orientation - We teach and embody a Kingdom theology where the Lordship of Christ is proclaimed in every sphere of society, calling believers to a radical discipleship in Jesus. We believe as followers of Jesus our primary citizenship is in heaven and therefore do not promote allegiances to political parties, or other societies. We hold to an understanding of the kingdom that is both 'now and not-yet' encouraging our church family to develop a healthy theology of both the supernatural and of suffering.

Charismatic – we love and value the gifts of the Holy Spirit and are prayerfully committed to a fresh move of the Holy Spirit across the globe.

Household codes Given we are united around a shared kergma and didache we believe this allows for the local pastoral sensitivity required for the myriad of discipleship issues each will face.