

“ A prayer room is a **physical space** set aside for people to spend time **with God** in worship, **intercession** and contemplation. ”

Attending to God

The birth of a 24/7 prayer room

Ben staffed a prayer room in the basement of Skinner Chapel.



The summer after I graduated in 2005 I wanted to stay in Northfield to cultivate a 24/7 prayer room. God gave me deep confidence that this was a worthwhile pursuit. What I didn't know at the time was that there were Christians in Northfield who had been waiting and praying for this for more than a decade.

Ben Faroe '05

Early on, God encouraged me with some startling gifts. My roommate situation fell through before it started, leaving me committed to paying twice the rent I'd expected. One day as I was out fretting and praying about it, I ran into a former classmate who needed an apartment. Within thirty seconds we eagerly decided to room together. We were roommates for two years.

I began that fall, wanting to try a one-week test of the prayer room

concept at Carleton. (A prayer room is a physical space set aside for people to spend time with God in worship, intercession and contemplation. A 24/7 prayer room has as its goal to schedule people to pray in a continuous chain, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.) Optimist that I am, I hoped somehow to reserve a chapel room for the same three-hour block every day for a whole week. Imagine my delight when the chaplain's administrative assistant

found me a perfect mid-afternoon slot, three hours a day, seven days in a row. As I did my best to hold back my explosion of joy until I was outside, she calmly asked if I wanted the room for the whole term. I did.

One term stretched into two and I extended the schedule to four hours a day. I'd go into my classroom in the chapel basement, set up an art station and a CD player, write a welcoming message on the blackboard, and then sit and pray and read my Bible and pace and mutter and doze off and start over. Sometimes people joined me, sometimes they didn't. I rarely knew what to do with myself—and some days I even abandoned the room out of boredom or dullness—but God slowly taught me what it means to enjoy Him as an end in Himself. His mark is still on me today, and I can't be truly content unless He is at the root of my desires and decisions.

By the summer of 2006, several other students caught the vision and we met some of the Christians in Northfield who actually had had the same dream long before I'd even heard of Carleton.

I partnered with several of them, including a fiery intercessor who knows everybody in Northfield, to form a vision team for what would become a prayer room for the city. She called me up one day to say she'd found an apartment for the prayer room. It was perfect, matching several specific characteristics I'd been asking God for during the previous year, including a downtown location within two blocks of Carleton.



From above clockwise: Entrance to the Northfield Prayer Room, located in downtown Northfield next to Goodbye Blue Monday coffeehouse; Northfield Prayer Room logo; meeting room at Northfield Prayer Room.



We established the Northfield Prayer Room (NPR) that summer. Several local pastors and intercessors worked together as the leadership team, and we continued to see God provide consistently. As of spring 2011, the NPR is approaching five years old, runs entirely on donations and is filled with prayer for hours every day. There is so much more to the story but what shines through in retrospect is that time with God is always worthwhile. It is impossible to pay too much attention to Him. ♦



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