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Joel Smallbone Says Prayer and Stillness Anchor Him as Drummer Boy Earns $9.4 Million

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Just breathed and prayed and said the Lord's Prayer."

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Joel Smallbone says prayer and stillness are what keep him steady - and the numbers behind his new film suggest the audience is listening. In a Christianity Today Q&A published on 18 November 2026, the for KING + COUNTRY singer and co-director of Drummer Boy said he set a timer for 10 minutes the previous day and "just breathed and prayed and said the Lord's Prayer." The film, which opened on 6 November, earned $9,421,843 in its first three days - roughly double its projection - and finished No. 3 At the US box office.

Ten minutes. That is the whole of the habit Smallbone described, and it is not much by the standards of a man who has spent years on arena stages.

A timer, a chair, a breath, and the Lord's Prayer. In an interview full of talk about box office numbers and a growing Christian influence in film, the quietest line was the one that said the most about him.

Smallbone is one half of for KING + COUNTRY, the Christian pop duo that has won four Grammy Awards, and Drummer Boy is the duo's first feature musical. He co-directed the Revolutionary War film with his brother Ben Smallbone and stars in it as Jeremiah Clem, while his brother Luke Smallbone produced it. The film opened in 2,850 theatres across the United States on 6 November, and its first weekend took it past the $9.4 Million mark - about double the roughly $5 million it had been expected to earn.

The film itself follows Jeremiah Clem, a young drummer in the Revolutionary War, and it is built as a full musical - songs, spectacle, and a story about courage under fire. It is the kind of project that takes years to bring to the screen, and Smallbone has spoken about the long road it travelled before opening night. That history is part of why the interview kept returning to stillness, untill the prayer itself became the headline.

Joel Smallbone Prayer: 10 Minutes Of Stillness Before The Noise

"Faith is believing in things that are unseen, things that are yet to be," Smallbone told Christianity Today. He also said Jesus spoke "vehemently against worry and anxiety," a line that lands differently when it comes from a man standing at the centre of a film opening. The interview, published on 18 November, ranged across his career and the growing Christian influence in mainstream film, but he kept coming back to the same idea: pause first, then move.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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