Praying Your Friends To Christ

A Strategy for Individuals, Churches, and Associations

Acts 1:8

Georgia Baptist Challenge
The Vision

God has a plan to reach the world with the message of Jesus Christ and that plan is Acts 1:8.

If we follow God’s plan exactly as He gave it, the plan will be successful and we can dramatically impact the lostness of our world. This is the only plan God guarantees to be successful because it is His own plan.

It is important that God’s Acts 1:8 plan be recognized as an individual Christian responsibility. It has never been God’s plan to reach the world through missionaries and clergy alone. Jesus gave Acts 1:8 to the church. It is imperative that each Christian make a personal commitment to become an Acts 1:8 Christian and to take personal responsibility for their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the world. In addition, each Acts 1:8 Christian should develop a personal Acts 1:8 plan for his/her life. The plan should include:

1. Personal prayer
2. Personal education
3. Personal going
4. Personal giving in each of the four distinct geographical areas of God’s strategy. The geographical areas should be addressed simultaneously and consistently as God has directed.

This booklet is provided to assist Acts 1:8 Christians in developing their personal prayer plan as part of the Acts 1:8 strategy to impact lostness.

Contact Mike Gravette at the Georgia Baptist Convention for further assistance or to order additional materials. Email mgravette@gabaptist.org or call 1-800-RING-GBC. Check out the Acts 1:8 website at www.gabaptist.org.
developing a life of evangelistic prayer

Rewritten & Expanded by J. Chris Schofield

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Special Thanks & History

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Torrey, that great apologist-evangelist once asserted, “The most important human factor in effective evangelism is PRAYER.”¹ Torrey’s assessment of effective evangelism around the turn of the 20th century still rings true today.

George Barna, a cultural research analyst for the contemporary church says that, “A church that strives to evangelize its community without saturating its efforts in prayer is like a race car driver that jumps into a car at the starting line and discovers that the tank has not been filled with gas.”²

Drawing from 1 Timothy 2:1-8, Howard Tryon, pastor and prayer practitioner comments, “When we fervently intercede on behalf of unbelievers with respect and thankfulness, we are identifying with God’s very interests and involvement in the salvation process. We are aligning ourselves with God’s purpose.”²

The above comments all point to the fact that prayer’s influence on evangelism is great. If we are going to make an evangelistic impact
on our communities, we need to learn how to talk to God about people as we talk to people about God. When we do this, we depend on our sovereign Lord to work in, through, and with us as we obey the Great Commission.

Today, much attention has been given to the development of new methods for reaching the lost. This is important if churches are to effectively share Christ with the lost. However, unless believers and churches begin to pray effectively before, during, and after they evangelize, little fruit will be produced from their many labors.

Specific evangelistic prayer is therefore what this guide is all about. This *Praying Your Friends to Christ* booklet will assist you as you seek to equip believers to pray evangelistically and biblically toward the Great Commission.


2 Ibid., 51.
A missionary John Hyde bowed on his knees in prayer, tears streamed down his face and dry choking sobs could be heard from his chamber. Such was the routine of this man of prayer who was often called a “Christ intoxicated witness.” John Hyde was convinced that prayer was an “essential” if he was to win souls to Christ. So much so that he would often spend nights awake praying before he would move into the villages to evangelize. The results were staggering. In the last three years of missionary service to India, John Hyde was personally responsible for leading at least 2500 souls to Christ through personal soul winning efforts.

What John Hyde practiced while serving in India has its roots in the Bible. The Bible mandates that prayer is foundational to our lives as believers (see John 15:1-16). Therefore, it is essential in our witnessing life. There are four ways the Bible links prayer with evangelism:
Prayer for Personal Spiritual Needs

A passion to pray and evangelize begins with the individual witness. This happens as believers recognize their utter dependence on God through prayer. Jesus certainly models this dependence on the Father in John 17:1-8 and Luke 22:39-45. In essence, He prays to His Father asking Him to complete His redemptive work through Him. Truly apart from Christ a believer is not able to join God’s redemptive activity.

In Psalm 51:10-13 David recognizes the link between prayer, personal holiness and a fruitful ministry. After his request for cleansing and renewal in verses 10-12, David continues his prayer with the statement, “Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You” (vs. 13). This statement demonstrates the important role prayer for personal spiritual needs (in this case personal forgiveness) plays in effective evangelistic ministry. A forgiven heart produces an empowered and confident witness.

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4 The Holy Bible, New American Standard (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1985). All subsequent references are taken from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise stated.
Prayer for Unbelievers

Jesus prayed for the lost in John 17:20. Effective evangelism includes heartfelt prayer for the unsaved. “Through intercessory prayer for the lost, believers can become instruments of salvation to men and women all over the world, even to those they have never seen in this life.”

Prayer on behalf of the lost is clearly mandated by Christ in Matthew 6:9-10. In this text Jesus commands believers to pray for Christ’s rule and reign (i.e., Thy Kingdom Come) to come in people’s lives. The Apostle Paul models and exhorts believers concerning prayer for the lost (e.g., see Rom. 10:1-2; 1 Tim. 2:1-4).

Romans 10:1-2 shows Paul’s heartfelt passion to see his fellow Israelites come to Christ when he says, “My heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.” His passionate praying preceded his intentional witness (see verse 2).

In 1 Timothy 2:1-4 Paul exhorts believers to pray for all men to be saved. His words to young Timothy sound forth the priority of prayer on behalf of the lost when he says “First of all.” His words also demonstrate the importance of such prayer to the
fulfillment of the Great Commission in any nation (see verse 2-4).

Psalm 126:4-6 teaches passionate prayer for the lost. Charles Spurgeon correctly reminds us of the need for compassionate prayer and intentional witness: “Weep Believer. . . Go to your God and tell Him that if souls are not saved it is not because He has not power to save but because you have never travailed for perishing sinners. Wake up, wake up, and be astonished: you have neglected prayer. Wrestle and strive with your God, and the blessing shall come—the early and latter rain of His mercy, and the earth shall bring forth plenteously, and all the nations shall call Him blessed. Look up, then, and weep.” 6

When the altars of churches are wet with the tears of the saints, then and only then will the darkness throughout the land begin to be stamped out. “It is not enough to share the Good News: we must also pray that people might open their hearts to the gospel. It is not enough to preach to souls: we must win souls for the kingdom through intercessory prayer. St. Mary of Jesus, a Carmelite nun, has rightly said, ‘It is the prayer of agony which saves the world’.” 7

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Prayer for Evangelism Efforts

Acts 13:1-4 the early church prayed for and sent Barnabas and Paul on their mission to the Gentiles. The church recognized their dependence upon the power of God to fulfill their mission. In boldness and vigor Paul and Barnabas went forth. This was largely due to the churches desire to trust God in prayer.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:1 Paul requests prayer for his evangelistic team: “Finally brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified just as it did also with you” (NASB). One reason Paul’s ministry was so fruitful was because of the prayer support he often asked for and received from believers (see Eph. 6:18-20; 1 Thess. 5:25; Col.4:12-13). E. M. Bounds said it well, “The gospel moves with a slow and timid pace when the saints are not at their prayers early and late and long.”

Prayer for Believers

Much of the praying that was done in the New Testament was on behalf of believers. Jesus certainly modeled this pattern with His
“Mission-Centered” prayer in John 17. In this prayer Jesus prays specifically for his disciples to be: kept in his name and character (vs. 11); protected from the evil one (vs. 15); sanctified in the truth of God and His Word (vs. 17); one in mission and focus (vs. 21); joined with Christ in His work that they may behold His glory (vs. 24).

In Matthew 9:35-38 Jesus also taught believers how others are motivated to win the lost to Christ. In these verses Jesus shows that the problem is not with the lost multitudes who need Jesus, but the need is for more people to be actively involved in sharing their faith. Then He shares that the solution to the laborer problem is specific prayer—“beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest” (Matthew 9:38). More believers on their knees praying will result in more Christians on their feet evangelizing.

Paul likewise models and teaches prayer for believers throughout his Epistles. He prayed for them to have wisdom, to understand their calling to be witnesses, to be empowered and strengthened, and to grow in their love for one another and all people (see Eph. 1:15-19; 3:14-19; 1 Thess. 3:11-13). Thus, he knew that if new Christians

were going to grow and become fruitful witnesses for Jesus, they would need specific prayer.

Prayer for believers that focuses on the Great Commission was also central to the life and practice of the first century church (see Acts 1:14; 6; 4:29-31; 12:5ff). In Acts 4:23-31 the early church offers specific prayer for boldness to preach Christ even while being persecuted. Verse 31 records the answer to their heartfelt and unified prayers for boldness, “(They) began to speak the word of God with boldness,” (i.e., divinely empowered and inspired speech). They prayed, God answered, and the Gospel continued to spread through the bold proclamation of Christ.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What changes, if any, are needed in our lives that would cause others to describe us as “Christ intoxicated witnesses?”

2. The Bible points to four key components that make up evangelistic prayer. What are those components? Which components are most needed in your personal prayer life? Congregations?
3. What does Jesus mean when he teaches his followers to pray for the kingdom to come in Matthew 6:10?

4. In 1 Timothy 2:1-4 Paul exhorts Timothy to make evangelistic prayer the “first priority” in his ministry. Why is this so? Does your church make evangelistic prayer the number one priority?

5. What impact on Christian witnesses can be made through specific prayer?

**Prayer Prompts**

Distribute the bookmark “Praying Toward His Passion” (order at www.PrayNC.org). Instruct participants to list 5 lost people, three Christian witnesses and two evangelistic events on the prayer list on the back of the bookmark. Then ask them to combine their lists and pray together with the other team members.

- Begin praying for the salvation of the lost people listed.

- Pray for the Christian witnesses to have boldness in their witness.

- Pray for next Sunday’s services, that God would bear evangelistic fruit in lost people’s lives.
Why should Christians pray evangelistically? The first reason is most important—because of our relationship with our Heavenly Father. The purpose of prayer is for believers to relate to their heavenly Father not just to get things they want or need. Through prayer a believer communes, communicates and walks with God. The Christian walk is all about relationship. No relationship will ever be healthy without communication, intimacy and fellowship. Fulfilling God’s mission as believers is not just about the activities related to prayer and evangelism. It is all about a love relationship with the Father through Jesus. So, as Christians we pray evangelistically not because of what we want God to do in our churches or in the world. We pray because of Who God is and because of the relationship we have with Him through Christ. Our motivation to pray evangelistically thus begins with intimacy and our relationship with Christ.
Second, we pray evangelistically because it is a biblical mandate. When a Christian weds prayer with evangelism they are modeling the way Jesus, Paul, and the early church did evangelism. The above section clearly shows that the Bible teaches that prayer should precede, permeate and follow all our soul winning endeavors. Biblically speaking, the Bible mandates that believers are priests in His Kingdom. Thus believers are to fulfill the role of intercessors and mediators on behalf of others as they pray (1 Pet. 2:3-10; 1 Tim. 2:1-4). This mandate involves prayer for the lost, prayer for the Christian witnesses and evangelistic/mission endeavors. Thus, if we want to do biblical evangelism, we will pray evangelistically.

Third, believers pray evangelistically because it enhances the fruit of their labors (John 15:16). The Lord accomplishes at least six things when Christians pray evangelistically:

Motivates others to be involved in sharing Christ with the lost (Matt. 9:35-38).

Prepares the hearts of the lost to receive the truth of God’s Word (Psalm 126:4-6; Acts 10:1-11:5).

Empowers witnesses to boldly and effectively share Christ with the lost (Acts 4:29-31; Eph. 6:18-20).

Opens up opportunities for Christians to witness (Col. 4:2-6).
Prepares the heart of the witness through cleansing and forgiveness (Psalm 51:10-13).

Positions the Christian to be involved in divine encounters with the lost (Acts 8:26-40).

The fourth reason believers pray for the lost has to do with our utter dependence on Christ to fulfill His mission to reach the lost (Luke 19:10; John 15:5). This dependence is best understood as believers consider seriously what the Bible has to say about being lost. The Bible gives a vivid and heartbreaking picture of the condition of lost people. Listed below are six ways the Bibles describes the condition of the lost.

1. Blind

“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

“There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God.” (Romans 3:11)
“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.” (1 Corinthians 2:14)

The gospel is hidden from them; they are without understanding; they do not comprehend spiritual things.

2. Bound

“With gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.” (2 Timothy 2:25-26)

You formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.” (Ephesians 2:2)

Those that are lost are held in bondage by Satan. He seeks with all his might to keep them in his grasp, that they might live and die in disobedience to God. In essence, the lost are incarcerated by Satan in his “domain of darkness” (see Colossians 1:13).

3. Condemned

“He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not
believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18)

“Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.” (Ephesians 2:3)

4. Hell-Bound

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)

“But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.” (Matthew 5:22)

“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.” (Matthew 7:13).
“And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:15)

The Bible clearly teaches that the destiny of the lost will be eternal punishment in hell and damnation. This is a sobering thought considering the millions in North America without Christ.

5. Helpless

“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:44)

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.” (Ephesians 2:1)

The lost are helpless to change the course of their eternal destiny. Without the work of God’s Spirit and the witness of His Word, they will remain lost. Believers need to join God’s redemptive work through prayer and evangelistic witness for this to be different. As God’s people pray for the lost, His Spirit draws them to understand their need for repentance and faith.

6. Hopeless

“Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” (Ephesians 2:12)
Billions on our planet live in spiritual darkness apart from Christ. If the lost are going to be released from their terrible condition Christ must intervene. This happens as the power of the gospel is unleashed in their lives through heartfelt intercessory prayer on their behalf.

Dialogue Session

After covering the material, spend time in dialogue about the Biblical mandate to pray evangelistically. Ask participants to break up into groups and discuss the following quote: “The purpose of prayer is to get a hold of God not of the answer.” Discuss their responses as a large group.

Lead in a discussion about the process of evangelism (i.e., sowing, reaping, cultivating, sharing a verbal witness, see John 4:34-38; Mark 4:1-20) as it relates to prayer and bearing evangelistic fruit. Ask the group to break up into small groups and share how they felt before they met Christ. Encourage group discussion around the 6 biblical conditions of the
lost listed above. Ask participants to identify other biblical conditions or other observed conditions they have noticed of lost persons.

**Prayer Prompts**

Lead in a group prayer time that focuses on specific prayer for believers and congregations to embrace as never before the biblical mandate for evangelistic prayer. Pray that believers will become more sensitive to the spiritual condition of lost people.
As noted earlier, effective evangelistic prayer involves specific prayer on behalf of unbelievers, believers, personal spiritual needs and evangelism efforts. These four categories can easily be combined to simplify the way you pray evangelistically. The following are biblical ways to pray for Christian witnesses, evangelism efforts and the lost.

Praying for Christian Witnesses and Efforts

Believers who are seeking to share their faith are in desperate need of specific prayer. Effectiveness in witnessing does not depend on fancy techniques or smoothly prepared gospel presentations. Effective witnessing depends on a Holy God who is constantly seeking to save those who are lost. Christians are filled with boldness and power to share the Good News as they are spiritually prepared and undergirded with specific prayer.
Matthew records that when Jesus saw a vast crowd in need of the gospel He was moved with compassion and commanded His disciples to “Beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.” (Matt. 9:38) There is a definite connection between our praying and His sending.

When we apply this text to the individual(s) we are praying for, we can pray to the Lord of the harvest that He will place someone in the lost person’s path to share the gospel, to water spiritual seeds already sown or help to bring in the harvest.

Scripture gives many specific prayers to pray for Christian witnesses:

1. Ask the Lord to send laborers into the harvest.

“He was saying to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” (Luke 10:2)

2. Ask the Lord for opportunities to witness.

“Praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned.” (Col. 4:3)
3. Ask the Lord for boldness for the messenger.

“And pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” (Eph. 6:19-20)

“And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence.” (Acts 4:29)

4. Ask the Lord for clarity in presenting the gospel.

“That I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.” (Col. 4:4)

5. Ask the Lord to focus the hearts of His people.

“No there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were ministering to the Lord
and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” (Acts 13:1-2)

Ask God to grant you the courage to be willing to be the answer to your prayer. Jesus instructed the disciples to pray for laborers in Matthew 9:38. In Matthew 10:1, the disciples are called and sent out as an answer to the prayer.

Praying for Christian Witnesses & Special Evangelistic Efforts

Pray for Christ to motivate and send witnesses into His harvest fields. (Matt. 9:38)

Pray for Christ to prepare His witnesses spiritually, making them holy and blameless in every way. (Jn 17:11)

Pray for the Lord to protect the witnesses spiritually, mentally and physically from the evil one as they share their faith. (Jn 17:15)

Pray for witnesses to be filled with spiritual wisdom, pleasing in all ways to Christ, and bear fruit in every good work. (Col. 1:10-11)

Pray for Christian witnesses to have open doors to share a Gospel witness. (Col. 4:2-3)

Pray for evangelism and mission efforts to be fruitful and productive for the kingdom. (Matt. 6:9-10)

Pray that believers will experience divine encounters with lost persons as they are sent out and participate in witnessing events and opportunities. (Acts 8:26-41)
Praying for the Lost

Praying for the lost results in changed lives for eternity. Paul said that when a person is converted he is “delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the Kingdom of (God’s) beloved Son, in whom there is redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” God desires that all men, women, boys, and girls might come to a faith relationship with Christ (see 1 Tim. 2:1-4). What the lost need is a new heart, a cleansed and regenerated life in Jesus Christ. Lost people need hearts that are born from above (Matt. 15:15-20). Therefore as you pray for the salvation of the lost, pray for unbelievers to have changed HEARTS. Use the HEARTS acrostic to help you remember how to pray.

Pray for Receptive Hearts
(Luke 8:5-15)

In the parable of the sower (see Luke 8:5,12), the seed that fell beside the road was trampled under foot, and the birds of the air ate it up. Jesus explained that the seed is the Word of God and the seed that fell beside
the road represents those who heard the Word. The devil then takes away the Word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved. We need to pray that God will prepare the heart so that the seed would take root.

**Pray for their Spiritual Eyes & Ears to be opened** *(Matt. 13:15; 2 Cor. 4:3-4)*

The lost person is blinded by Satan.

“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” *(2 Corinthians 4:3-4)*

Only God can open their eyes.

The individual must hear God speak.

“For the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them.” *(Matt. 13:15)*

“That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.” *(Rom. 10:9-10)*
“How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10:14)

Pray for unbelievers to have & understand God’s **Attitude** toward sin (John 16:8)

This will require that they admit they are sinners who face judgment and are in need of the righteousness of Jesus. The Christian, on the other hand, with God’s attitude toward sin, will be proactive. The role of the Holy Spirit is to convict and convince of sin.

“And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.” (John 16:8)

Pray for the lost to be **Released** from barriers and strongholds that hinder faith (2 Tim. 2:25-26)

“With gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and
escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”  
(2 Tim. 2:25-26)

God will grant repentance, then the lost individual will come to his or her senses and escape the trap . . . which includes the destruction of barriers and strongholds in the individual’s life.

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.”  
(2 Cor. 10:3-4)

Praying specifically for a lost individual is warfare. Satan will go to any extent to keep a person lost and in his kingdom. We are involved in praying for and sharing with individuals who need to be rescued from the kingdom of darkness and transferred by God to the kingdom of His dear Son.

“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.”  
(Col. 1:13)

In this spiritual warfare, we do not fight with weapons of flesh, but with mighty weapons of God. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces in the heavenly realms.
“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (Eph. 6:12)

Pray for unbelievers to experience a Transforming life in Christ
(Rom. 12:1-2)

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Rom. 12:1-2)

Pray for the Lord to Send believers to witness to lost persons
(Matt. 9:35-38)

Prayer is the key to effective soul winning efforts. We cannot win lost souls in our own wisdom and strength. Therefore it is imperative
that we call upon the Lord of the harvest to save the lost, send us into the fields, and empower us with bold speech to be His witnesses in this generation. Let us then be about the task of winning souls as we labor on our knees in prayer!

Testimony Time

At this point, invite participants to share brief testimonies concerning ways they have seen God answer prayer on behalf of Christian witnesses, special evangelism and mission efforts, and how they have seen God answer prayer on behalf of lost people.

Prayer Prompts

Instruct the group to break up into teams and then lead the group in a directed prayer time using the specific prayer bullets and the Heart acrostic above. Lead the group to pray specifically for the persons and events listed on the Praying Toward His Passion Bookmark.

9This acrostic is adapted from Praying Your Friends to Christ (Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board, SBC, 1997), 16-18.
Evangelistic praying is spiritual work and requires spiritually fit individuals. Thus it is necessary to prepare to pray evangelistically. We do so through specific prayer. At this point, divide the participants into teams (preferably teams of three). If this is not suitable for your study, group accordingly. Then lead the group through a focused time of prayer using the following categories and scriptures.

**Pray with Praise and Thanksgiving**

“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, and bless His name.” (Ps. 100:4)

“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men.” (1 Tim. 2:1)
Think about some things for which you might be thankful. Allow the group to suggest some reasons before showing them the following three.

**Thank God for your own salvation.**
In most cases, someone prayed for you. “And all things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ.” (2 Cor. 5:18)

**Thank God for His redemptive work.**
“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2)

**Thank God for allowing you to join him in his redemptive work.**
“Now all these things from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” (2 Cor. 5:18)

**Prayer Prompt**

Father, we come to you in the name of Jesus Christ, thanking you that you not only died for our sins, but you died for the sins of the whole world. Thank you that you love us and have given us the task of sharing your Good News with the world in which we live. We worship you for who you are, your greatness, goodness and daily provision and grace. Thank you also for your mission and purpose in life. We truly do have full and meaningful lives in Christ!
Pray with a Cleansed Life

Our prayers will be ineffective if we pray with unconfessed sin in our lives. The healing James writes of is that which is necessary to bring about spiritual health according to James 1:21.

“Confess your sins one to another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” (James 5:16)

In Psalm 66:18, the Psalmist said, “If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.”

The prayer life cannot be separated from the pray-er's life. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayer for the lost.

Prayer Prompt

At this point, ask participants to bow their heads and silently ask God to reveal any unconfessed sins, such as: anything I do that displeases God; anything I say that displeases God; anything my mind dwells on that
displeases God; anything that I committed to that I should not have done (read Ps. 15). Instruct them to confess, forsake, and claim 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

**Pray According to the Promises of God**

God desires to save people.

God wants “all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim. 2:4)

“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

We can have confidence in our prayers for the lost because they are according to the will of God. Not only does the Word of God command us to pray for the lost but the will of God demands it.

“This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.” (1 John 5:14-15)
Nothing Is Impossible for God.
Sometimes we are tempted to believe that some people will never respond and, during these times, we fail to prevail in our praying. We have been given a promise from God to pray back to Him when these times come. *(Mark 10:27)*

The rich young ruler had rejected Christ in exchange for his wealth. Jesus then makes the statement that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to be saved. His disciples asked, “Who then can be saved?” That is when Jesus gives the promise “With God all things are possible” *(Matt. 19:26)*. You are to prevail in your praying for the lost realizing that no one is beyond the reach of God.

Prayer Prompt

Instruct participants to look at the prayer lists they have made. Ask them to see if there are individuals listed that seem impossible to reach. Ask them to select one or more of God’s promises to pray on behalf of the unresponsive lost people from their list. Then lead them to pray for those
individuals in small groups. Before they pray remind them that:

“Prayer will reach down, down, down into the deepest depths of sin and ruin and take hold of men and women who seem lost beyond all possibility or hope or redemption, and lift them up, up, up until they are fit for a place beside the Son of God upon the throne.”¹

“At all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart.” (Luke 18:1)

In this final session lead participants to apply what they have learned in sessions 1-4. Spend time introducing and describing the four different approaches to evangelistic prayer listed below. Then lead the participants to choose one of the four approaches listed below to apply what they have learned in the earlier sessions concerning evangelistic prayer (give the participants around 45 minutes to complete the prayer experience). Use the remaining time in the session to dialogue concerning their experiences.

**List praying**

Make a list of persons to pray for. Specific prayer on behalf of others results in specific answers to prayer (see 1 Thess. 3:10-11; 2 Thess. 1:3). Encourage participants to take their lists and find a place where they can get alone with God and pray.
Prayerwalking

Journey through your world and pray for others as you walk, run, bicycle, or drive. As participants prayerwalk they will be able to pray according to what they observe, know and are inspired to pray for (1 Tim. 2:1-4). Break participants into teams of two and send them out into the community to prayerwalk. Provide evangelistic tracts for the teams for divine encounters. Encourage teams to look for opportunities to share the gospel with people they meet. Be sure to contextualize the prayerwalking experience. Some teams may need to prayer drive the community. (For more on prayerwalking see the booklet Prayerwalking Made Simple available at www.PrayNC.org).

Prayer Visitation

Break up into visitation teams of two and not more than three to a team. Visit homes, hospitals, prisons, etc. and ask for prayer requests. Provide evangelistic tracts and information concerning the church for each team. This approach allows for open doors for believers to care and share Christ with others. As we pray for people and their needs, God builds relationships and opens hearts to the Good News of Jesus (James 5:13-18). One way to begin the conversation is . . ., “Hi, we are from _________ Baptist Church and we are walking
and praying for our community. Are there prayer concerns we can pray for?”

Prayer Groups

Unite with other believers in focused prayer. There is power in united prayer toward the Great Commission (Acts 4:31). Prayer groups can be as small as three and as large as wanted or needed.

Dialogue Session

After participants have had their prayer experience and returned, spend the remaining time in dialogue concerning the various experiences people had with the four prayer approaches listed above. Ask participants to share testimonies of divine encounters with people and to reflect on their experiences. Ask them to share how they were led to pray and what they specifically prayed for. Ask for specific answers to specific prayers. Conclude the session with a focused prayer time as a group.
Dwight L. Moody was correct when he said, “Those who have left the deepest impression on this sin-cursed earth have been men and women of prayer. You will find that PRAYER has been the mighty power that has moved not only God, but man.”

Ron Dunn certainly understands the influence that believers have through prayer when he says, “That God would place such an incomparable privilege and such responsibility in our hands is past understanding—but He has done just that. Through intercession we can become the instrument of salvation to men and women we never see face to face in this life.”

All Christians are faced with the question of how to balance the being with the doing of their lives. One of the most overlooked aspects of prayer is the element of consecration and obedience. There are many examples in the Old and New Testaments of individuals who renewed their

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devotion to God. However, every time Abraham, David and Paul renewed their devotion to God, it was in a specific area of obedience. This is also true of the early church. Following the first persecution in the book of Acts, the early church offered a specific prayer of consecration to share the gospel boldly, which they did in a powerful way (Acts 4:23-33).

Thus it can be said that when we pray evangelistically, we often begin to strive in obedience following our prayers. In our praying, the Spirit will often stir our hearts to put feet to our own prayers. Thus, consecration through prayer results in a changed obedient life. When we consecrate ourselves through prayer to pray evangelistically, we need to be available to respond to our own prayers. So, as you pray evangelistically for people—get your witnessing shoes ready.

In a nutshell, what we are saying is do not stop praying and do not stop at just praying. Evangelism without prayer is ineffective, and prayer that does not lead a person to deeper compassion for and actions to reach the lost is flawed. Be willing
to be the answer to your prayer or the evangelistic prayers of others. Be obedient and boldly share the gospel.

**Final Note to Facilitators**

At some point following the completion of the training, lead church members, and the church as a body, to yield themselves afresh to specific consecration to God in praying evangelistically from this day forward. If the following commitment card does not express the consecration needed, develop your own.

I, ______________________ , consecrate myself to God afresh to the following, to honor God and participate in the Great Commission:

*(Check all that apply)*

- I commit to pray consistently for the evangelistic ministry of my church.

- I commit to set aside time regularly to discover and pray for specific lost people.

- I will join with the following believers to pray evangelistically on a regular basis.
Sharing the Gospel with Others

God’s Purpose
God is a spiritual being who is both holy and loving. He loves everyone and desires a personal, spiritual relationship with each individual. John 3:16

Our Problem
We are born into this world without a personal relationship with God because we are sinners. Our sin carries the penalty of spiritual separation from God, both in this life and throughout eternity, unless we are rescued. Romans 3:23; 6:23

God’s Provision
Because God loves us, He provides a way to forgive our sin and bring us into a personal relationship with Him. Jesus died for us and was later resurrected from the dead. Romans 5:8; 4:25

Our Response
We must individually accept His forgiveness and establish a covenant relationship with Him through faith in what God has done through Jesus Christ. Romans 10:9-10, 13; Ephesians 2:8-9, John 1:12
Our Prayer To God
The following words can be presented to God as a sincere expression of one’s desire to establish a spiritual relationship with Him.

Dear God, I believe that your son, Jesus, died on the cross and was raised from death. Because I am a sinner, I need your forgiveness. Please forgive me for all my sin and come into my life. Right now, I turn away from my sinful life and acknowledge Jesus as my Savior and Lord.

Thank you for forgiving me and giving to me the gift of eternal life. Thank you for the abiding presence of your Holy Spirit in my life. Amen.

Suggested Prayer Resources

For additional prayer resources, strategies, and for prayer ministry development contact your associational prayer coordinator, visit www.PrayNC.org or call the Office of Prayer for Evangelization and Spiritual Awakening, Dr. J. Chris Schofield, Baptist State Convention of NC at (919) 459-5514 or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5514.


And the Place was Shaken: Leading a Dynamic Prayer Meeting. John Franklin. Nashville, TN: Lifeway, 2005.


My Utmost for His Highest. Oswald Chambers. Grand Rapids, MI; Discovery House.


J. Chris Schofield serves...

on the staff of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina as Director of the Office of Prayer for Evangelization and Spiritual Awakening. Prior to coming to North Carolina in March 2004, Dr. Schofield served with the North American Mission Board, SBC, as Manager of the Prayer Evangelism Unit from 1997-2004.

His heart’s desire is to equip and encourage believers and churches to walk with Jesus in a life of prayer toward global evangelization and awakening. He enjoys an itinerant preaching and teaching ministry which includes Prayer Revivals, Prayer Conferences, and Evangelism Training. He has served several churches as pastor and often teaches as an adjunct Professor in our SBC Seminaries. His writings include The Gospel for the New Millennium (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), Prayer Prompts for Prayer Groups (Cary, NC: Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, 2004); PrayerWalking Made Simple (Cary, NC: Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, 2005) and numerous articles and resources relating to the subjects of evangelism and prayer.

He and his wife, Tamee, have four children: Heidi, Hannah, Haley, and Hilary and reside in Wake Forest, NC.

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