



2022 PRAYER GUIDE

WEEK SIX

A CALL TO PRAYER

COLOSSIANS 1:9-14



Week 6

The Great Commission, “Go...make disciples...,” was not given to just the disciples present at Galilee. It is our commission, and the purpose of every church. It is natural for us to prefer the company of our friends and to prefer familiar environments. These preferences, however, are continually confronted by God’s Word, as He calls us to go and to give, to invest our time and our finances in seeing that people hear the Gospel, and in inviting them to respond to the Gospel.

Evangelism – talking with people about Jesus, and *generosity* – giving freely and cheerfully to meet needs, put on display the character of Jesus Christ. He gave His life generously at the cross in order that we might have life. Paul reveals the connection between evangelism and generosity in **2 Corinthians 9:6-8**.

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

He explains that the abundance of our harvest will be in direct proportion to the level of generosity with which we sow our seed. The financial gifts of the generous giver, like seed, initiate a process toward harvest. Great giving invites great harvests. Cautious, reluctant, or grudging giving yields meager harvests.

This week as we pray, we are asking God to keep us from being self-centered. Our prayer is that He will create in us a love for others that motivates us to speak with them about Jesus, and demonstrate His love through acts of generosity.

Day 1

John 6:44 - No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

Romans 3:10-12a - ...as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹² All have turned aside...

While it is true that there are many who seek for more significance in their lives, it is the testimony of Scripture that they don't seek God unless He draws them. The Holy Spirit draws people to Jesus through the witness of His Word and the testimony of His people. While it is clear that God has given us the ministry of reconciliation (connecting people with God by being His ambassadors), it is equally true that only God can soften a person's heart to be receptive to the Gospel. Therefore, the first step in evangelism is to pray that God will draw people to Himself, and that He will convict them of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

I am grateful to You, Father, for the love and grace that You gave me when You saved me! There are so many of my family and friends and residents of the West End who need to experience that same grace, but their eyes are blinded to the truth. I pray that You will draw them to Jesus, that You will open their eyes, that You will give them understanding of Your truth, and that You will grant them repentance from sin and faith in You alone. I ask that You let me be a part of seeing someone come to You in salvation.

Day 2

Luke 10:5-6

⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' ⁶ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you.

Luke tells us about the time Jesus sent seventy-two of His followers out ahead of Him, and he recounts the instructions Jesus gave them. Included in those instructions is the phrase, "a son of peace." As they went, if there were those who would receive them, open doors to them and be welcoming, they were to stay with them.

We live in a time where people tend to stay in their homes and have little interaction with their neighbors. As we prepare to move back to the West End, and as we get to know our neighbors through visits, activities and events, and other opportunities, we need to be asking God to open doors for us to befriend and genuinely care for our community.

Father, I am always amazed at how you make "divine appointments" for your ambassadors. You orchestrate events and schedules that bring us into contact with the right people at the right times. I ask now that you will lead us to people of peace, neighbors who are willing to open their doors and lives to relationships. Give us wisdom to know how to meaningfully connect with our community. Teach us to love our community well.

Day 3

1 Peter 3:15 - But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

Do you have hope? Just scanning the news headlines or social media posts these days can make us question what hope there is. As Christians and as the church we do have hope through Christ's resurrection. Praise God!! Peter is encouraging us in this verse to be ready with an answer for our hope. First, we need to make sure we are letting our hope shine through the discouraging events and news in today's world by focusing on God's word and His promises. He is still in control. Secondly, are we ready to explain to whoever may ask where our hope comes from? Our paths are filled everyday with people who have no hope. Are we seeing the opportunities to share the hope we have in Christ with those who are living a hopeless life? God calls us to this task; let's be the church He has called us to be and share our hope. What a great opportunity during these discouraging days to shine the hope of Christ in our community.

Lord, thank you that through the resurrection of Christ we have assurance of our hope. Help us to display an attitude of hope that points to You as we go through our day. Open our eyes to see those around us who need the hope that we have. Give us the words and courage to share the reason for our hope with gentleness and respect.

Day 4

Matthew 9:36-38 - *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸ therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."*

It is popular in churches today to hear the encouragement to be a "kingdom-minded" church, and I'm glad that it is. One aspect of being kingdom-minded is that we become more focused on how our church can expand the kingdom by reaching those outside of our walls, rather than how the church can serve our needs. Too many times we forget that the church is intended to equip and send people out into the world with the gospel. We think of the church as a destination without remembering that the very nature of the church from its inception is to be *going*, making disciples.

Jesus illustrated this beautifully in Luke 15 when he told the parable of the shepherd who left the 99 in the fold, to go look for the one who was lost. We must be continually asking God to keep our hearts compassionate for the lost, and be praying for more believers and more churches to be laborers in the harvest.

Lord, today I thank you for the person/people who told me about You. I ask that You will let me have that same role in someone's life. I pray for our church and ask that you will make us a church that cares deeply for the lost, that goes into the harvest with the gospel, and that sees many people come to you in repentance and faith. Equip us, grant us courage, multiply our efforts, and keep us dependent upon Your strength and we labor in your harvest.

Day 5

Ephesians 4:18-19 - *They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.*

It takes a work of God to change a heart. Paul described the lost people in Ephesus by saying, *"They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity."*

While we may call many of our neighbors "good" people, the truth is that those who have not come to Christ *"are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God."* The good news is that God does change hearts. He opens the eyes of the blind, and brings light into darkness. He is gracious and forgiving, with a multitude of tender mercies. As Jesus said in John 6, the Father draws people to Jesus. Let's pray together for their hearts to be made receptive to the Gospel.

Father, thank you for being merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. Thank you for opening my eyes to my need for Jesus to save me. I ask that you do the same to our neighbors on the West End of Greenville. Help them to see their need for forgiveness and for life eternal that is only found in Jesus Christ. Draw them to your Son. As we share Your Gospel with them, let it take root in their hearts, and bring about the fruit of repentance and faith.