



Praying For Open Doors

The foundational principle of reaching people with the gospel of Jesus Christ is that we must pray for them. If we want to see lost people enter into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, we must pray for their salvation. This is absolutely crucial.

Yet, our responsibility does not end there. We must also share the gospel with those who are lost. We should not stop at praying for the lost. We should be committed to intercede for them. Yet, this should not feel that this is the end of our responsibility. We need to labor to share the message of Christ with them. Evangelism without prayer will be ineffective and prayer that does not lead a person to deeper compassion for and actions to reach the lost is flawed. We must be willing to be the answer to our praying for the lost. We need to be obedient and boldly share the gospel.

It is the responsibility of all believers to share the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. All Christians are not expected to use the same methods of sharing the gospel, but all Christians are expected to share the same gospel. Our methods may be different, but we are to share the message of Jesus' transforming power. Why is this expected of the believer? The Lord Jesus Christ Himself has commanded us to witness. Consider the words of the Lord Jesus Christ:

Matthew 28:19-20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."

Mark 16:15: "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.'"

Luke 24:47: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

John 20:21: "So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

Acts 1:8: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

These commands were not given to the apostles only. For example, the apostles never came to this nation. For the command of Jesus Christ to be fulfilled and for America to hear about Jesus Christ, the gospel had to come here by other Christians. And the apostles will never come to your home, your neighborhood, or the place where you work. For the Great Commission to be fulfilled there, believers must share the gospel in those areas. This responsibility rests on the shoulders of believers.

Since every believer has the responsibility of witnessing to the lost, the believer needs to combine prayer with his or her witness. Not only should you pray for lost people, you should also pray about your witness to lost people. Through my own personal witnessing and training other believers to witness, I have developed a plan for praying for one's personal witnessing. This plan is not perfect and it is not the only one. Yet, it is a simple plan that covers the basics of personal witnessing. This plan can help you saturate your witnessing with prayer and power. This plan can be used in a variety of ways: a believer praying for his or her own witnessing, praying for those you are training to share the gospel, a pastor and other believers praying for the outreach and witness of a church.

This plan is based on the acrostic D.O.O.R.S. Each letter stands for an area of your personal witnessing that you can cover in prayer. The reason that it is based on D.O.O.R.S. is because a "door" in the Bible sometimes referred to an opportunity to proclaim the gospel to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12; Colossians 4:3; Revelation 3:8). An open door is an opportunity to share the gospel with a lost person. This is exactly what believers should want and should be seeking. We do this primarily through prayer.

One of the ways to pray for your personal witnessing is by praying through the acrostic D.O.O.R.S.:

Discipline

Sharing the gospel with others should be the natural overflow of the Christian life. Because of who Jesus Christ is and what Jesus has done for us, it should be natural to the believer to share about Him and how to be saved. All believers should be able to talk about what Jesus has done for them and what He means to them. Yet, at the same time, sharing the gospel with others is something that we need to discipline ourselves to do. You must be looking for opportunities to share the gospel with others. You should plan on witnessing to the people that you encounter throughout your daily life. You



need to develop at least one way of intentionally witnessing to an unbeliever. One of the ways that I do this is by asking others what I can pray about for them. This will usually lead to an opportunity to talk with them about their relationship to God. This is just one way of intentionally sharing the gospel with others. We do need to look for opportune times and moments to witness to others. However, too many believers fail to witness because they do not plan on sharing the gospel. You are a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ; discipline yourself to talk with others about Him (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Pray that God will give you the discipline to witness intentionally with those people that you encounter throughout your life.

Opportunities

You should ask God to give you opportunities to share the gospel with others (Matthew 7:7-8). We need to combine praying for opportunities and looking for them. It is not enough to pray for an opportunity to witness. You are to pray for an opportunity and then look for that opportunity. Pray that God will prepare the hearts of people so that you can witness to them. When you pray for the right circumstances to witness, you pray in one of two ways. You can pray that God will grant you the opportunity to witness to those that you encounter on a daily basis. Pray that God will create the right circumstances and that He will prepare the heart of the person. Another way that you can pray for opportunities to witness is to make a list of the people that you want to see God save. I call this an "Impact List". These are people that you have a burden for and that need to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. Your list can be as large as you want it to be. I usually suggest that you have at least three to five persons on this list. Once you establish this list, begin praying fervently for opportunities to witness to these people. Plead with God to prepare them to receive the gospel. As you pray for these opportunities, start looking for them with eyes of faith.

Pray that God will give you numerous opportunities to witness to those that you encounter or to those who are on your "Impact List".

Obstacles

Each believer has reasons why he or she does not witness. There are hindrances that make witnessing difficult for each believer. For some believers, the obstacle to their witnessing is fear. They are afraid of rejection and ridicule from the persons to whom they witness. For others, the obstacle is a lack of knowledge. They do not feel that they know enough to share the gospel with others. These are only some of the obstacles that hinder believers from witnessing. You may have these or others that hinder you from sharing your faith in Jesus Christ. In order to pray about these obstacles, make a list of the hindrances or reason that keep you from sharing the gospel. If you are praying for others, you can make a list of the obstacles that are hindering them. Once you identify these obstacles, begin praying that God would help you overcome these obstacles. Plead with Him to give you ideas of how to share your faith with others in a fresh and creative way. Ask Him to remove any hindrances to your personal witnessing.

Pray that God will enable you to deal with every obstacle that is hindering you from sharing the gospel with others.

Requirements

When I use the term "requirements", I am referring to certain qualities. There are some qualities that you need in your life in order to be a powerful and effective witness. One quality that is essential is wisdom. The Bible says in Colossians 4:5, "Walk in wisdom toward those who are without, redeeming the time." Paul teaches that believers need to "walk in wisdom toward those who are without." The phrase "those who are without" is referring to lost people. Believers are to be wise in their relationship with lost people. This refers not only to how we live around them, but also how we approach them with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we attempt to reach people with the gospel, we need wisdom to know how to do this. Another quality that is needed is understanding. The witness does need to understand the gospel and how to answer the questions of lost people. This does not mean that you have to be an expert in theology in order to be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, the believers should be growing in their understanding of the Bible and how to answer questions about the faith. Peter declares that this is necessary for every believer by writing, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear (1 Peter 3:15). We should be diligent to pray and study the Word in order to clearly present the Word of God. Pray for a greater understanding of the gospel so that you can clearly present the truth to others. A final quality that is required for being a powerful witness is a godly life. We need to share the gospel. But, we must live out the gospel on a daily basis. Our lifestyles must reveal the transforming power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus has taught that our lives need to reveal a difference, "You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it give light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:13-16)." Your lifestyle can attract people to you and cause them to know why you are different from others. Pray that



your lifestyle will reveal the transforming power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pray that God will produce in you the wisdom, understanding, and godly lifestyle so that you can become a powerful and effective witness for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spirit

The Holy Spirit is absolutely essential to leading people to the Lord Jesus Christ. Only the Holy Spirit can convict the lost person (John 16:7). Only the Holy Spirit can draw a lost person to Jesus Christ and enable him or her to trust Jesus Christ (John 6:44; Ephesians 2:8-9). The Holy Spirit has to do a work of grace in the lost person so that he or she can repent of sin and believe in Christ. This is His work and He alone can do it. No amount of persuasion can ever substitute for the Holy Spirit's work. Pray that the Holy Spirit to bring the person under conviction and to draw him or her to Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit also empowers you to witness (Acts 4:31; Ephesians 5:18). Ask the Holy Spirit to control you so that you can powerfully witness to others.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will powerfully work in those to whom you will witness and that He will empower you to faithfully share the gospel.