

Motivating and Mobilizing Evangelistic Prayer

By Elaine Helms



While working as a church prayer coordinator and as a national prayer leader, I learned that Christians do not automatically pray for the lost. Many are lulled into complacency, believing that everyone lives in a safety zone until they choose to follow either Jesus or the devil. Scripture, however, does not validate that. Rather, because of Adam's sin, we are all born in captivity to the devil.

Therefore we need to give believers a biblical foundation about the condition of those without Christ. We must address the why before the how to.

Condition of the Lost Jesus says in John 12:46, "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness." Paul says in Romans 5:8 and 18: "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people."

Condition of the Christian's Heart In Romans 9:1–3, Paul says, "I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit—I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race."

With this verse in mind, we have to ask, "Do we feel that kind of grief? Do we care enough to pray for the lost? When was the last time we lost sleep, staying up all night weeping before the Lord, asking God to draw our family members, neighbors, and/or friends to Jesus?"

Discovering Lost People Before we can pray for the lost, we must discover lost people around us. One method for raising awareness is to hand out index cards. Ask members of your prayer group to write numbers on the card. Then, make a list: #1, the name of their neighbor to the right; #2, the name of their neighbor on the left; and #3, the name of their neighbor across the street. Typically, people do not even know their neighbors' names. This exercise can help Christians see their neighborhoods as a mission field.

Other questions to ask: Who do we see regularly at the grocery store, dry cleaners, or favorite restaurant? Does that cashier know Jesus? What about the waitress who serves you? Ask them if there is any way you can pray for them; their answer will give you insight about their spiritual condition. Once we allow God to give us a heart for lost people, we can begin to pray using specific strategies:

- **Prayerwalking:** One method of evangelistic prayer is prayerwalking. Praying on site will give us insight about our neighbors and their needs. In nice weather, people may be in the yard and you can engage them in conversation. If we offer to pray for our neighbors and they give a request, we then have a reason to go back to follow up with them. When neighbors know you are a praying person, they will find you in a crisis.
- **Prayer Triplets:** Prayer triplets are three friends joining in agreement to pray for three lost people each, with accountability to faithfully pray. Choose people who live near you or who you see weekly at Bible study, church, work, or in your neighborhood. Your prayer time can be as short as 15 minutes, allowing each one to lift

up the three people for whom they are praying.

- **List Praying:** In preparation for an evangelistic outreach, it is a great idea to make a list of people you will commit to pray for regularly and invite to attend the event. My Hope America and Mission America's LOVE2020 are both tools to encourage Christians to live a prayer-care-share lifestyle. We pray with a list, show kindness when possible, and get to know them. As God gives us the opportunity, we can share the gospel and/or show a video gospel presentation followed by our testimony and invitation.

Praying for the HEARTThe goal of evangelistic praying is for the lost person's heart to be changed by the saving power of Christ. The acrostic HEART is a memory jogger. Pray for him or her to have:

- A receptive HEART (Luke 8:8,15)
- EYES that are open (Matt. 13:15; 2 Cor. 4:3-4)
- God's ATTITUDE toward sin (John 16:8)
- RELEASE to believe (2 Tim. 2:25-26)
- A TRANSFORMED life (Rom. 12:1-2).

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