

## PRAYING FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL

### No. 1: Praying With God's Heart

*My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message  
(John 17:20)*

**Use It – Lose It News:** How did you find using the TryPraying booklet? Has anyone had a chance to “lose it” (give it away)? Who to / what was the context/result?

#### Intro

Over 6 house church gatherings we are going to be *learning* about praying for the spread of the gospel. We are also going to be *praying* for the spread of the gospel. We will pray for those who are not-yet Christians, for the prodigals, and for ourselves as messengers of God's good news. However, before we start with all of that, we want to begin by discovering or rediscovering God's heart for the lost – those currently outside of his family or estranged from the family. If we don't have God's heart we can't pray with passion and effectiveness. So, let's jump into God's Word and find again the heart of God for those who aren't saved.

But first, let's pray. *Dear Lord, you came to seek and save the lost. We pray that you would break down the hardness in our heart. Renewed by your Holy Spirit, may we see things from your perspective and cry out to you from a transformed heart for those who aren't yet saved.*

#### Teaching

God's heart has always been for relationship. Trust and obedience in this relationship brings blessing. Unbelief and rebellion brings judgement.

But God “wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”

His heart yearns for those who spurn his love, rebel against him and think they can live life without him. Those who reject God now are also choosing to reject him for eternity. This is a sobering thought. And God weeps. He longs that people might turn and follow him.

Read these verses: Ezekiel 33:11. Read it again. Read it again. Can you hear and feel God's heart in this?

Jesus came “on a mission from God” (no that's not a bible verse). But THIS is: Read Luke 19:10 to hear what the mission was.

Luke 15 records 3 parables that Jesus told to make clear what his mission was. Actually, the religious people didn't like Jesus' mission. They thought fine sermons in the synagogue were more becoming of a holy man, rather than hanging around “sinners”.

Turn to Luke 15. Everyone should read the chapter quietly to themselves for 5 minutes. You will read about a determined Shepherd, a desperate woman, and a broken-hearted father. Ask God to show you his heart in these stories.

When people have finished reading come back together and share what stood out to you. One rule: share from your heart, not from your head.

### **Prayer time**

Spend time in God's presence. Repent of indifference towards those living outside of God's family. Ask for a renewed heart, a fresh infilling of compassion and a revitalised prayer life.

### **During the week**

Go back over the verses we looked at in this study. Use these verses in prayer for those God leads you to pray for. Perhaps keep a journal of who you are praying for and how God is leading you to pray.

Look for opportunities to give away your TryPraying booklet. This could be to the person/s you are praying for – or God may surprise you with an opportunity to give it to someone else.

## PRAYING FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL

### No. 2: Praying For Unsaved People Known To Us

*My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message*  
(John 17:20)

**Use It – Lose It News:** How did you find using the TryPraying booklet? Has anyone had a chance to “lose it” (give it away)? Who to / what was the context/result?

**Intro:** Over 6 house church gatherings we are going to be *learning* about praying for the spread of the gospel we are also going to be *praying* for the spread of the gospel. We will pray for those who are not-yet Christians, for the prodigals, and for ourselves as messengers of God’s good news.

### Teaching

We all know people who don’t know Jesus. They might believe in God, but they don’t know that God sent His Son to die for them, and was raised to life that they might have life – both now, and forever. OR – maybe you know people who don’t even believe in God. Perhaps, they have shown evidence of real faith in the past but like the prodigal in Luke 15, are currently living away from their heavenly father.

Now we could say, well everyone has their own beliefs and I don’t want to force my beliefs on anyone. True. But, if we truly believe that living with Jesus is how we were created to live AND, if we truly believe that our response to Jesus in this life impacts our eternal destiny, then we won’t be content to sit by and watch people amble through life without Christ. Rather, we will pray for them. We will pray that God makes himself known to them and that they follow Jesus.

So HOW do we pray for these people??

1. Number One – with God’s heart (refer to last weeks teaching!)
2. Led by Gods Spirit. Rom 8:26. There are billions of unsaved people in the world. God will direct you specifically who to pray for and how to pray.
2. With faith. Read Hebrews 11:6. Any questions? N.B we can specifically declare back to God any promises God has given us concerning those we are praying for. Declare God’s faithfulness!
3. Conscious of the spiritual battle we are in. Read 2 Cor 4:4 and Eph 6:12. Thoughts?
4. So if unbelievers are “blinded” what can we do? We can pray that the Sovereign God turns their thoughts to him and removes the veil that blinds. Read 2 Cor 10:4-5. How is “praying with authority” different from “Lord, whatever your will is, so be it”?
5. Pray for God to release his angels as ministering spirits to serve those who will inherit salvation. Read Heb 1:14. How does this happen. God, and his angels, organises circumstances and people to be in the right place at the right time to hear the gospel. Do you have a story about that?

6. Pray for conviction of the Holy Spirit. One of the specific roles of the Holy Spirit is to bring conviction of sin. See John 16:7-9. 1 Thess 1:5. Without this conviction people do not feel the need for a Saviour. In the story of the prodigal son Jesus says, “when the son had come to his senses”. We can pray for that conviction and spiritual awakening.

\*\*The above points are not a formula to be prayed in order, but they are a helpful guide. There are other tips beyond these. So pray as God shows you to pray.

### **Prayer Time**

Have a time of prayer specifically crying out to God for those you know who are not walking with Jesus – family, friends, work colleagues, neighbours. Pray that the Holy Spirit would lead you to pray for those God is drawing to himself.

### **During the week**

Guided by what we learnt this week, pray for those God is giving you to pray for this week. It might be one person, it could be several. Use the Scriptures we discussed in your prayers for these people.

Look for an opportunity to “lose” your TryPraying booklet. Maybe to those you are praying for. Maybe to someone else.

## PRAYING FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL

### No. 3: Praying For The Workers In The Vineyard (Ourselves)

*My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message*  
(John 17:20)

**Use It – Lose It News:** Who has had a chance to “lose” your TryPraying booklet this last week? Who to/what was the context/result? Did anyone recommend the app to anyone? **Have you asked the person you gave the booklet to for an update on how things are going?**

**Intro:** Over 6 house church gatherings we are *learning* about praying for the spread of the gospel we are also going to be *praying* for the spread of the gospel.

THIS week our focus is on praying for ourselves in our calling as messengers of the gospel. It’s interesting that when the great apostle Paul is asking for prayer for the spread of the gospel he doesn’t write something like: “as you know I am heading off to Athens next week. Please pray for the heathen Athenians that they will repent and turn to Christ.” Now maybe those kind of prayers were prayed, but it seems the main focus of Paul’s request for prayer in his missions was for himself! Let’s look more at that now.

#### **Teaching**

Read John 4:35; Matt 9:35-38. Summary: *there’s nothing wrong with harvest!* What is it the harvest lacks? What does the harvest need?

All those who believe in Jesus have been commissioned by God as “workers in his vineyard”. True – some are more gifted, more eloquent, and more effective at seeing others come to faith – BUT, all are workers, and all have a role to play.

If the above is true, *prayer for the spread of the gospel* must include prayer for ourselves.

Read the following Scriptures. In turn, note exactly how we can pray for ourselves and each other in our calling as workers.

Scripture	What can we pray for ourselves and each other in the work of spreading the gospel?
Acts 4:29-30	
Eph 6:19-20	
Col 4:2-6	
Col 1:9-10	
Heb 13:20-21	
John 15:4-5	

### **Prayer Time**

This week we will not pray for the unsaved, we will pray for ourselves. Now pray the prayers in the column above for each other as you go into the week ahead. (Commit to continue to pray this way for each other during the week).

### **During the week**

Write down a list of your house church members. Each day pray for 2 people on the list. Choose one or more of the Scriptures we looked at this week and pray that Scripture into their lives; that they might be empowered, emboldened, articulate, and wise in spreading the gospel this week.