

**OPEN DOORS, OPEN HEARTS**  
**Colossians 4:2-6**

**INTRODUCTION:**

When we approach the Lord in prayer, His glory is our first and greatest concern. But we also should have the concerns of others on our hearts because we know that the Lord has those concerns because of His great compassion. Therefore, our praying should include time for intercession that arises from an interest in the heart-felt concerns of the Lord.

...Open doors for the gospel message and open hearts...for those whose needs we take to the Father and in those who have till now been closed to the gospel.

Paul gives us an indication of his passion for the glory of the name of the Lord in the salvation of men and women who have no way to know Christ unless someone like you tells them.

**I. PRAY FOR OPEN EYES FOR THE LABORERS**

--God calls on us to pray for laborers who will go out and work in the harvest of souls, joining in the blessing of leading people to the knowledge of Jesus Christ as Savior.

--When we become self-absorbed in our praying, we forget that the overwhelming majority of people in this world are lost and apart from Christ.

--Jesus Christ calls for us to pray for workers who will join together and take the gospel message from the house next door to the ends of the earth!

***Matthew 9:37-38*** Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.<sup>38</sup> "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

**A. MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION**

***2Corinthians 5:18-20*** Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,<sup>19</sup> namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

--God wants to send us as His ambassadors to the world so that He might reconcile them to Himself.

--We have to pray for the Lord to send more and more workers who will embrace that challenge...including us and our children!

**B. AROMA OF CHRIST**

***2Corinthians 2:15*** For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing;

--We also must pray for the aroma of life in Christ to be sweet to those we meet so that they will be drawn to Him, not repelled by us!

### **C. SEASONING OF GRACE**

**Colossians 4:6** *Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.*

--As we pray for open doors, we also are called to speak graciously, tastefully, winsomely, so that we know how to communicate to each person as we should.

--We cannot hope to do this in our own strength—we get tired and testy, impatient and abrupt, argumentative and insensitive.

--Only as we pray for one another and for ourselves will we succeed in making our words and our conduct such that Christ is adorned with that which is attractive and good.

### **D. PASSION FOR THE PERISHING**

**2Peter 3:9** *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.*

--Christ cares that people are perishing and came to do something about it—leaving us to care also and have a passion like His for people who are condemned in their sin and will die lost if we refuse to care enough to help them come to repentance.

--Christ knows and understands what awaits the lost and has deep compassion on them, not wishing that awful end on anyone.

--And so we pray that God would open our eyes and keep them open so that we might see what He sees when looking at a world lost and without hope.

### **E. LOVE FOR THE LOST**

**2Timothy 2:24-26** *And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, <sup>25</sup> with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, <sup>26</sup> 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.*

--Only prayer can change our hearts from indifference to the lost to love for them.

--We need gentleness and kindness, patience and love, when we come into contact with those who have yet to meet the Lord Jesus and do not know God.

## **II. PRAY FOR OPEN HEARTS AMONG THE LOST**

--So once we have prayed for the laborers, we also need to pray specifically for those who are searching, seeking something which they cannot quite define, cannot really describe...they just know they have not found it yet.

--What can we pray when we pray for them?

### **A. TO SEE THE LIGHT OF THE GLORY OF GOD**

**2Corinthians 4:4-6** *in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is*

the image of God. <sup>5</sup> For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup> For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

## **B. TO EMBRACE THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST**

--When eyes are blinded, the truth is suppressed, minds are deceived and hearts remain desperate.

**Romans 1:18-19** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

## **C. TO RECOGNIZE THE SIN OF UNBELIEVING HEARTS BEFORE GOD**

**John 16:8-11** "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; <sup>9</sup> concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; <sup>10</sup> and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; <sup>11</sup> and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

## **D. TO HAVE THE FAITH TO BELIEVE THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST**

**Romans 10:9-10** that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; <sup>10</sup> for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

## **III. PRAY FOR OPEN DOORS FOR THE WORD**

--Praying for laborers and praying for the lost—both are critical concerns for us as we learn how to pray and are led in that effort by the Spirit who shows us what to do and how.

--But one last area calls for our attention in prayer—praying that doors which have apparently closed, people who are seriously lost and have no interest in spiritual things, countries where opportunity to speak freely do not exist, friends whose hearts are closed because of bad experiences with churches and professing Christians—praying that these doors will at last spring wide open!

**Colossians 4:2-4** Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; <sup>3</sup> praying at the same time for us as well, that God may 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; <sup>4</sup> in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

--Is there someone in your life to whom this applies? Someone you might be inclined to give up on but could be an open door for the word?

<p><b>Note:</b> Use the 3x3 cards as a tool to remind you to pray for people who are apart from Christ. Join with three others and begin to pray for the nine people God puts on your hearts, that God will open doors for the gospel where none exists right now</p>
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## **CONCLUSION:**

## **Prayer Groups**

We are going to break up now into prayer groups to practice praying together, and as part of that time, let's put into practice some of the things we have learned so far.

## **Different Kinds of Prayer**

1. Alone with the Lord
2. Two or three gathered (spouses, families)
3. Small groups
  - Sequential/Circle prayer*—everyone in the group prays once as each contributes as his turn comes around
  - Conversational prayer*—people in the group engage on each topic as it comes up in the conversation, limiting their remarks in prayer to just a couple of sentences or so until the next topic is raised; not everyone necessarily contributes on each point and the order is random as to who prays when...challenge: staying on the subject!

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