



**A process and
conversation guide
for sending pastors,
church planters, and
teams**

STRATEGIC PRAYER



STRATEGIC PRAYER

The first description of a church plant in the New Testament begins with an emphasis on prayer - an important insight for church-planting teams today. As soon as Acts 1 moves from the ascension of the Lord Jesus to the subsequent actions of the apostles, it describes them as being in prayer. The team that God had put in place for the planting of the Jerusalem church began with a focus on unified prayer.

-Elbert Smith

In the Apostle Paul's writings, he challenged the early church to pray with intention, clarity, and faith. Throughout his Epistles, we gain a glimpse into the heart of a man who was actively engaged in the harvest and invested his life in expanding the reach of the Gospel to new cities, provinces, and language groups. Paul challenged the members of the early church to pray five specific and strategic prayers as they worked to evangelize their cities. It is in prayers like these that missionaries (sent out ones) are born.

- **Paul strategically prayed for a door of opportunity.**

Meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Colossians 4:3-4.

These two verses reveal Paul's desire for an open door into the harvest. Your "harvest" is the place of your calling (city, friends, nation, age group, etc.). As we pray, God will open a door for us and allow us to *enter* our cities with the favor and power of the Spirit.

- **Paul strategically prayed for wisdom in his speech and the ability to make the gospel clear.**

These verses also reveal Paul's desire to *connect* with his mission field. He wanted the Gospel to be easy to understand to those he taught. In like manner, we must be intentional to communicate in ways that resonate with the people in our cities. As we open our mouths in faith, God will give us the words to say (Matthew 10:19, Luke 12:11).

- **Paul strategically prayed for boldness in his presentation of the gospel.**

And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. Ephesians 6:19-20.

This prayer reveals Paul's desire to be bold in the face of foreign lands, new people-groups, and persecution.

Boldness is an essential ingredient in the life and calling of a missionary. As we step out into the harvest, let us pray that we will do so with courage and confidence in God.

- **Paul strategically prayed that the Word would spread rapidly and have a free course.**

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith. 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2.

These verses reveal Paul's desire to be effective in reaching the lost. By praying that the word would "run swiftly" he is asking God to turn the Gospel into a free-flowing, rushing river. Likewise, we must pray that God grants our evangelistic efforts liberty, freedom, and favor. Let there be no hindrances and let the Gospel fall on listening ears and receptive hearts!

- **Paul strategically prayed for victory over opposing forces.**

These verses also reveal Paul's desire to triumph over the influences that oppose the work of the Gospel and the growth of the church (people, strongholds, human agendas, etc.).

By using the word "unreasonable" he is referring to forces that are not willing to give an inch. In prayer, he prayed for deliverance from these forces. As we step into our harvest, let us pray that God will give us victory over the things that oppose the work of the Gospel!

~

The next time your team gathers, take time to pray strategically as the Apostle Paul prayed:

- **God, give us a wide-open door of opportunity.**
- **God, give our team wisdom with our words and the ability to make the Gospel clear.**
- **God, when we have an opportunity to present the Gospel in a new place or to a new person in our city, let us do so with boldness.**
- **In our city, let the Word spread rapidly and have a free course.**
- **In our city, give us victory over any opposing force (bad actors, dark spiritual forces, religious traditions, etc.).**