

### → Evangelism and Prayer: Holding the Tension

*Phillip and Esther are fellowship leaders co-leading a freshmen bible study. They both feel led by the Lord to begin an intentional outreach to the freshmen in the dorms. They are both really excited when they first meet to plan the outreach. Phillip starts off by saying that he thinks that they should split up the missional freshmen in the study and hold separate GIG type bible studies in the common areas of the dorms. Esther responds by saying that the mission has to be driven by prayer and the Holy Spirit. She suggests that they should instead hold missional prayer meetings in the dorms and lead prayer walks through the hallways praying for their non-Christian friends to meet Jesus. This she reasons will lead to curiosity and spiritual conversations. Phillip argues that no one will get to hear the gospel if all they do is hang out in their "prayer closet." Esther then accuses Phillip of trying to do everything by human strategy and his own strength. She begins to wonder if he is really "spirit led." Phillip ends the meeting thinking that Esther doesn't actually care about the lost, but wants to just spend all day selfishly singing and praying to God in her room.*

Discussion:

- Do you relate to Phillip or Esther more in this story? Why?
- If Phillip and Esther came to you for your counsel what would you tell them?

### → Evangelism and Prayer: A Biblical Basis

- A. Good evangelistic strategy was key in how Jesus taught missions and evangelism. Prayer is an integral part of this strategy. To Jesus evangelism strategy and prayer are not opposing forces, but rather both needed in reaching the lost.

*After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest... Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road... Do not go from house to house... Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' (Luke 10:1-10 ESV)*

- B. The empowerment of the Holy Spirit was so important to the mission that Jesus commanded his disciples to wait for the Pentecost before beginning their ministry.

*He gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:2)*

### → Intercession: Cultivating a Heart for the Campus

*"It is simply staggering that God, the sovereign ruler of the universe, would ordain that prayers cause things... to happen that would not happen if you did not pray."* -John Piper

- A. Prayer is more than an inner spiritual practice. It is more than just connecting with God. It is more than something that shapes and spiritually forms us. There is real ministry and work that happens when you pray.

So why pray?

- B. We pray because we have come to the conclusion that Jesus is the only solution. He is the only resolution to the pain and brokenness in our world today. We pray because realize that we as human beings can do nothing to convince our friends to know Jesus. We pray because we need God. Period.
- C. We pray because our ministry is as much of a spiritual work (if not more) as it is a physical work. When we pray we wage war against the forces of darkness in this world. There is a real spiritual enemy that is actively trying to keep our friends from knowing God. Intercession breaks his power!  
*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12)*
- D. We pray because we need supernatural resources and tools to fuel our evangelism.  
*And my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Corinth 2:4-5)*

How to start missional prayer meetings:

- A. Allow your heart to break over the things that break God's heart on campus. Make a non-Christian friend. Open your eyes to see the brokenness on your campus. Where are the places of greatest need on campus? If you don't immerse yourself in that need, it's going to be hard to pray!
- B. Seek after the two fundamental ingredients for sustainable prayer
  - a. Humility- Knowing who you are in light of who God is.
  - b. Faithfulness- Praying when no one else is praying.
- C. Start missional prayer gatherings on campus. These kinds of prayer meetings should connect you with non-Christians on campus and catalyze outward focused prayer in your fellowship.
  - a. Prayer Walks
  - b. Location based prayer meetings
  - c. Establish a Prayer Room

- d. 24 Hour Prayer Chains
- e. Prayer Hospitals- Hold up a “Want Prayer?” sign outside.

### → **Listening: Evangelism Led by the Whispers of God**

- A. God is always speaking to us, and will often whisper to us a particular person He wants us to reach out to or give us a particular way to show an unbeliever His love. The problem is that we expect Him to speak in a particular way and often miss out on what He’s saying. To make our evangelistic efforts more effective, we need to learn how to use our spiritual ears and tune them to be sensitive to God’s voice.
- B. A whisper is an experience with the gentle voice of God speaking to us experienced through a thriving relationship with Him. Whispers are very subtle and easily missed if one does not practice actively waiting on God. They can sometimes be confused for one’s own thoughts, intuitions, or skills. Whispers are not necessarily “quiet,” but rather easy to miss if not in an active relationship with the presence of God. For most people this is the most common way in which God speaks to them.
- C. Examples of whispers- Scripture passages, promptings, nudges, images, phrases, words, inclinations, feelings, thoughts, past memories, etc.
- D. As Jesus said that He only does what He sees the Father doing, the idea here is to begin focusing our spiritual eyes to see what the Spirit is doing on campus. The more we pay attention to the whispers of God, the more we come in line with what God is already doing in the hearts of non-believers on campus.

How to grow in hearing whispers for evangelism:

- E. Create space in your life to grow in listening prayer in general. Set aside time regularly to make space and sit in God’s presence and listen to His voice. Using Scripture as a guide, act in faith to anything you think you might be hearing! Often, the first voice you hear is God, the second voice you hear is yourself, and the third voice you hear is Satan’s telling you that the first voice was not God! Journal everything you hear and see what words actually comes to pass.
- F. Take a prayer walk around campus and pay attention to the nudges and promptings that the Spirit may give you to engage with someone in conversational evangelism. Act in faith to those nudges! Don’t be afraid to be wrong!

### → **A Ministry Tool: Prayer Evangelism**

Prayer evangelism is an evangelism method where you pray and ask God to give you some specific information about the person that He wants you to look for. Although this method is faith stretching, it is a great way to partner with the Holy Spirit in reaching people on campus who you wouldn’t normally interact with.

1. Ask the Holy Spirit for words of knowledge. These provide clues for the divine appointments where God wants to a particular person:
  - a. Location
  - b. Person's Name
  - c. Person's Appearance (color of clothes, hair color, etc)
  - d. What they need prayer for (knee injury, marriage, elbow injury, etc)
  - e. The unusual (anything that doesn't fit into the above categories)
2. Make groups of 2 or 3. Share what you've all received to make a plan or a map for where to go search for the people God gave you to find.
3. When you've found the person that you're looking for, engage them in conversation. You can say something like, "Hi, this may seem a little odd, but we were just praying for people on campus and we felt like God wanted us to pray for you."
  - a. Build rapport and ask questions to get to know them.
  - b. You could share any words that God gave you and see if it connects.
  - c. Pay attention for things that you can help them with or pray for.
  - d. As the conversation wraps up ask if you can pray for them.
4. If they let you, engage in prayer with the person. Listen for any words that God may give you. If they need healing for anything, pray for healing in Jesus name!
5. Make sure to offer follow up! End the conversation by inviting the person into a GIG or if they are ready invite them into a relationship with Jesus! You never know if they might be ready to come into the Kingdom!

### → Further Reading

- *The Power of a Whisper: Hearing God and Having the Guts to Respond* by Bill Hybels
- *The Ultimate Treasure Hunt: A Guide to Supernatural Evangelism Through Supernatural Encounters* by Kevin Dedmon
- *Red Moon Rising: How 24/7 Prayer is Awakening a Generation* by Pete Greig