

TAKING PRAYER TO  
THE STREETS

Leader's Guide

## INTRODUCTION

Probably one of the greatest sins among Southern Baptists is our prayerlessness. It is our greatest neglect, but at the same time, it is America's and the world's greatest need. The reason we aren't experiencing a sweeping revival in America is because of the lack of urgent prayer. The reason our baptisms have been going down in the Southern Baptist Convention is because of the lack of prayer.

Prayer must be the foundation of any evangelism effort. We have learned that taking prayer to the streets is critical to the success of taking the gospel to our inner cities. We have taken the gospel to the streets of major cities throughout America. Where these efforts were preceded by an organized prayer effort, there was an amazing harvest of souls. We could clearly tell which streets had been faithfully prayer walked and which had been neglected. Those that had, there was an open response and acceptance of the gospel. In contrast, those that were not, there was sometimes an open opposition to our attempt to share the gospel.

Back in the early 1990s, the Home Mission Board sponsored a School of Evangelism in Portland, Oregon. Portland was known as a pagan society and one of the attempts to change this was to make our school practical and take the gospel to the streets. The local leadership there was skeptical that such a confrontational approach would work in their city. It was suggested that the local churches begin prayer walking their streets to prepare their communities for witness encounters. They faithfully did that for six weeks prior to the planned witnessing encounter.

One of the first encounters one of our witnesses had that day was with a young lady who was involved in witchcraft. She allowed the witness to share the gospel but didn't pray to receive Christ. She told the witness that she didn't know why but he was the first person she ever allowed to share the gospel with her. The witness responded that he knew why she allowed him to share; it was because Christians in Portland had been walking her street and praying that she would be receptive to a witness. She was impressed with that and promised the witness that she would give the tract he left with her another reading. She also allowed the witness to pray for her concerning her salvation before he left. Prayer puts the Spirit of God at work in the lives of those we want to share the gospel with.

John Knox of Scotland was so passionate in prayer that Queen Mary of England used to say that she feared his prayers more than all the armies of Europe. John was in such spiritual agony over his country that he could not sleep. He was passionate for revival in Scotland. He often stayed up all night praying and weeping for lost people. God rewarded his prayers by sending revival. Our heart cry needs to be that this will happen in America.

## PREPARING THE WARRIOR

➤ **Soldiers must be trained before going into battle.**

1. They go through boot camp or basic training.

You would never send an untrained soldier into battle, would you?  
You don't just put a weapon in their hands and tell them to do the best they can.

2. We prepare them for whatever they may encounter.

We send them through vigorous training.  
We make sure they know how to use their weapons.

3. They are trained to become part of a team.

➤ **Christians are engaged in daily battle too.**

1. Most are not adequately prepared.

We are sending Christians into battle without adequate preparation or training.  
The results are devastating.

2. The results are anxiety, discouragement, worry, etc...

They fall to Satan's schemes and are filled with hopelessness.  
Most don't understand what is taking place.

3. They tend to blame others for their problems.

They blame others for their circumstances or their failures.  
The enemy camouflages himself and his attacks so well that most Christians don't recognize that the attacks are coming from him.  
The blame is usually directed at those closest to us.

## THREE STEPS TO PREPARE THE WARRIOR

### ➤ First step is to acknowledge the enemy.

1. The enemy is not one of flesh and blood.

Read Eph. 6:12 where Paul describes our enemy.

Our enemy is not another physical person although the enemy may use that person to trouble you – but realize that person is not the enemy.

2. Our battle is against Satan's forces.

Paul identifies them as rulers, powers, and world forces of darkness.

He calls them spiritual forces of darkness in heavenly places.

He is describing Satan and his legions of demons.

To do battle with these forces, the warrior needs to be prepared.

We can't do battle in our own strength because our enemy is a supernatural spiritual being.

He is the ultimate source of evil and has many minions as his accomplices.

### ➤ Second step is to put on the armor of God.

1. Each piece of armor is needed in the battle.

Read Eph. 6:11-13 where Paul describes the armor Christians are to put on before going into spiritual battle.

2. All items of the armor are defensive except for one.

Only when we put on the full armor of God will we be able to stand firm against our enemy's schemes.

### ➤ Third step is the engage the Lord in prayer.

Read Eph. 6:18-19 where Paul asks for prayer.

He asks for prayer that he may clearly and boldly proclaim the gospel.

That needs to happen in our lives if we expect to get results when we share.

Paul encourages us to pray at all times in the Spirit.

Pray for boldness on your part and that of other saints to share the gospel.

Matthew Henry says, "*Prayer buckles the armor together.*"

Bill Hybels says: If the request is wrong, God says, "No." If the timing is wrong, God says, "Slow." If you are wrong, God says, "Grow." But if the request is right, the timing is right and you are right, God says, "Go!"

## PRAYER WARRIORS STAND IN THE GAP

Read Ezekiel 22:23-31 and note the conditions in Israel. Note in verse 30 that God searched for a prayer warrior who would stand in the gap and found none. There are five characteristics of a prayer warrior that stands in the gap.

➤ **They pray with hearts of compassion.**

The Bible says Jesus was moved with a heart of compassion when He saw the blight of the multitudes.

Sometimes His compassion was accompanied with tears.

➤ **They pray for the impossible as readily as the possible.**

Ron Dunn, Pastor and author, trained his people for 15 weeks on intercessory prayer. First request came in from a young mother with a two-year old son who had swallowed some engine cleaning solvent. Doctors gave no hope the child would live. If he did, he would likely be blind and be internally damaged for life. Ron didn't want to give the request to his prayer warriors. He was sure the child would die and his prayer warriors would become discouraged. God impressed on him to give it to them. The intercessor came to the church and laid at the altar weeping and praying for the little boy. Finally, the mother called saying that a miracle had happened according to the doctors. Her baby was completely well and showed no residual effects of having swallowed the poison. Ron wanted to start with the possible and move to the impossible. God wanted to start with the impossible to inspire the prayer warriors.

➤ **They pray with intensity.**

They aren't afraid to challenge God like Moses did and say, "Your reputation is at stake here God. If you don't come through here, people are going to talk about you."

➤ **They pray about anything and everything.**

They understand the admonition in James 4:2 "You have not because you ask not."

They understand the instruction of Jesus to pray for "whatsoever."

Their requests are tempered by the word of God – they pray for His will to be done.

➤ **They pray with authority.**

They've been through Prayer 201 – they pray in Jesus' name – See John 14:13, 14:14, 15:16, 16:23, 16:24 and 16:26.

## **THREE WAYS TO TAKE PRAYER TO THE STREETS**

### **First Way**

➤ **Pray for the saved but uncommitted.**

1. They live in every community.
2. They have become apathetic or complacent in their walk.
3. Ask God to convict them of sin, righteousness, and judgment.  
(See John 16:8)
4. Pray they will become obedient to assemble. (See Hebrews 10:25)
5. Pray they will overcome a bad church experience.
6. Pray for those that live next door to you.

### **Second Way**

➤ **Pray for the unsaved in your community.**

1. Ask God to remove the blindness from their minds.  
(See 2 Corinthians 4:4-5)
2. Ask God to bring light into the darkness they are experiencing.  
(See Ephesians 5:8)
3. Ask God to deliver them from the spirit of disobedience.  
(See Ephesians 2:1-2)
4. Ask God to reach through their hardened minds.  
(See 2 Corinthians 3:14)
5. Ask God to set the captives free. (See 2 Timothy 2:26)

➤ **Why pray for the unsaved?**

1. They can refuse to go to church.
2. They can refuse to listen to your witness.
3. They can throw away your tracts.
4. They can refuse to let you in.
5. They can hang up on you on the phone.

6. But they can't prevent Jesus from knocking of the door of their hearts in response to your prayers.

### **Second Way (Cont'd)**

➤ **How to intercede for the lost.**

1. Present them to the Father in the name of Jesus.
2. Ask God to bring His Holy Spirit to bear on their lives.
3. Ask God to take away any false sense of security they may be relying on in their lives.
4. Ask God to exercise mercy and grace.

Good sources for knowing how to intercede for the lost:

Peter Lord's Prayer journals – "29/59 Plan" or "19/29 Plan."

Other sources include books by Oswald Chambers, E. M. Bounds and Watchman Nee.

### **Third Way**

➤ **Claim your community for Christ.**

1. This is the crowning step in putting feet to our prayers.
2. Paul describes a very well organized enemy. (See Ephesians 6:12)
3. Their goal is to hinder the work of God.
4. We need to reclaim our streets for God
5. We need to bind the powers of the evil one over the homes in our communities – whatever we bind of earth is bound in heaven.

## THE PRAYER JOURNEY

- **We can pray as we walk, drive, roller blade, or bicycle through our community.**
  1. You get insight by being on site.
  2. Prayer teams are made up of two to four people.
  3. Walk through the community and be aware for what you see.
  4. Pray for those in every home watching for prayer indicators.
  5. Support teams are made up of those who can't walk in the community – they stay at the church and pray.
  
- **Things to look for as you go through a community:**
  1. Toys tell you there are children in the home – their greatest need is Christian parents.
  2. Possessions may indicate worship of the god of materialism.
  3. Beer and liquor bottles may indicate a drinking problem.
  4. Drug paraphernalia may indicate an addiction problem.

## LOOK FOR DIVINE ENCOUNTERS

- **Talk to those you encounter on the street.**
  1. Tell them why you are there.
  2. Ask for prayer requests and pray for them on the spot.
  3. You may want to announce ahead of time that you are coming – send flyers into the community telling them you will be making a prayer walk – ask them to meet you with their prayer requests.
  4. Try to share the gospel with any you encounter who are not saved.

## LETS OBEY OUR LORD'S COMMAND

- Jesus said to them, *“The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.”* (See Luke 10:2)
- Note Jesus didn't say, *“Ask the Lord of the harvest to send the harvest to the church where the laborers are.”* He asked us to go into the harvest fields to pray and to witness.

## FINAL CHALLENGE

- Let's get serious about being prayer warriors.
- Let's follow the example of the disciples.
  1. They gathered in earnest intercession prior to Pentecost.
  2. They prayed for ten days, preached for ten minutes and 3,000 got saved.
  3. Today, we pray for ten minutes, preach for ten days and get excited when one or two get saved.
  4. Want to shorten your pastor's sermons? Then get really serious about praying.
  5. Today we need to get rid of dry eye disease. We need to learn how to weep for the lost again. **Psalm 126:5-5 says: “Those that sow with tears shall reap with joyful shouting. He, who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.”**