

How to pray for unreached groups/nations

There is a tremendous revival in intercession for the unreached groups all over the World. In October 1993, for example, more than 20 million intercessors all over the World prayed for the 10/40 Window countries. On 25 June 1994 probably more than a 100 million people prayed for the same prayer targets. An unprecedented revival in prayer and the mobilization of intercessors to pray for the unreached groups is taking place at this moment.

I am convinced that persistent, intelligent, intensive and focused intercession is the single largest element that is lacking in reaching the unreached nations with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The following paragraphs contain practical guidelines for intercessors who wish to co-operate in executing the Great Commission. The real Great Commission is recorded in Matthew 9:37-38.

In Matthew 9 the harvest and prayer are connected directly with one another. Prayer is the key word as far as the execution of this commission is concerned. The Great Commission therefore lies in the word "pray" rather than in the phrase "therefore go" which is used in Matthew 28:19-20. The Great Commission in Matthew 9:37-38 applies to all Christians. The section in Matthew 28:19-20 and that in Mark 16:15 contain instructions to those who have been called by God specifically to go into the harvest field. It is clear that not everybody is called to preach, but Matthew 9 makes it clear that everybody is called to pray. Matthew 9:37-38 therefore contains a greater commission.

General guidelines for intercession for the unreached

- Ask The Lord for specific Scriptures when you pray for a particular group. What is God's plan/will for that group? (John 3:16-17; 2 Pet.3:9)
- Pray for the most important leaders of that nation/group those who exercise the greatest influence on the members of the group - that The Holy Spirit will take away their spiritual blindness (2 Cor.4:4)
- Pray that the specific group/nation will become disillusioned and dissatisfied with their demonic gods (John 8:32; 16:13; 2 Tim.3:7)
- Pray for supernatural/extraordinary manifestations of God among such groups (revelations, dreams, visions, healing, etc) (Acts 2:19; 4:30; Heb.2:4)
- Pray for open doors so that missionaries will be able to take the Gospel to that group (Ps.2:8; Col.4:3; Matt.9:37-38)
- Pray for the protection and safety of missionaries and other workers, for wisdom, for the anointing with the Holy Spirit in order to do their work, unity among the workers and Divine Love for the unreached (2Chron.16:9; Ps.34:7; Ps.91; Eph.1:17-19; Zech.4:6; John 17)
- Make ample use of worship and praise when you pray for an unreached group (Ps.66; 67; 95-100)
- Know that persistent prayer breaks down the resistance of demonic powers and that it steadily weakens the hold that evil has on people.

- Pray for the Lord to reveal to you (and your prayer group) where the strongholds of evil are and how to conquer them. Ask the Lord for a strategy according to which to pray against those strongholds and demonic rulers and apply this strategy to conduct spiritual warfare.
- Pray that the Spirit of God will raise people from that unreached group to build a strong church among their own people.

When one prays for the unreached in greater detail, the following three basic issues should receive attention:

A. The church all over the World

It is the task of the church of Jesus Christ to take the Gospel of Salvation to the nations of the World. Therefore, when we pray, we have to pray that the Church of Christ all over the World will take the Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 literally.

- Pray for the church to gain a new vision for mission work. Pray that missionary information will reach congregations and make them aware of the need that exists. Pray that the ministers/pastors will preach about this matter more regularly and that it will become a matter of urgency in every congregation.
- Pray that the church will send out missionaries. There is hardly a congregation that cannot afford to send out and maintain at least one missionary - even if these are only short-term missionaries. There are thousands of congregations that can afford to send out and maintain two missionaries and more. Pray that more and more church members who experience God calling them to do full-time or part-time mission work will actually obey this call. God calls enough people - the problem is that too few obey the call.
- Pray that the church will make available funds in order that the Gospel may be taken to the unreached. At present the church all over the World gives approximately 10 cents per member per week for the reaching of the unreached. Pray that this amount will increase dramatically.
- Pray for a prayer vision that the church may realize the power that is inherent in intercession and that each congregation will include intercession for the unreached in its weekly prayer programme.
- Pray that the congregations will realize what a privilege it is to be able to take the Gospel to the unreached nations of the World.
- It is the task and privilege of the church to pray together with Jesus Christ for the redemption of the nations (Heb.7:25)
- Pray that the church will realize that God rules over the nations and that He hold the nations of the World in His Hand (Psalm 2:8; 47:3-4, 8-9)
- God has authority over the nations, therefore the children of the Lord should call out to God to save them (Job 12:23; Isa.52:10)
- The church must pray that God's plan for each nation on Earth will be fulfilled (Rev.5:9; Ps.22:28-29)

- The church has to pray from the awareness that He who is within us, is greater than he who is within the World (1 John 4:4)
- The church of Christ should once again humble itself before God because up to now it has taken His Great Commission so lightly.
- We have to confess our lovelessness and disunity. We have to pray for unity within the body of Christ and among us as its members so that the unreached will accept our credibility and we will be able to execute our assignment with a united front.
- Pray for men and women with vision and with the ability to mobilize the church and guide it to fulfil The Lord's commission, namely to take the Gospel to the ends of the Earth.
- Pray that the men and women who go out into the harvest fields are people who are filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13; Eph.5:18)
- Pray for the missionaries who go into foreign countries that they will easily and quickly acclimatize, learn the indigenous language, get to know and understand the locals' culture and habits and that they will manage to live among these people in Christian wisdom and holiness.
- Pray for the necessary resources to effectively convey the Gospel to the unreached, i.e. media ministry. (TV and radio), videos and audio cassettes, Bible and literature in the indigenous language, correspondence courses, etc.
- Pray in particular for further growth as far as the extension of youth ministries are concerned.
- Pray that the churches and different mission organizations will start networking and working together to reach the various unreached groups. A lack of unity in the approach / advance of the church is probably the single greatest reason for the poor progress made by the church as far as reaching the unreached is concerned.
- Pray for cross-cultural missionaries and especially for tent makers and Christians in professional occupations to go to these unreached groups and work among them. Pray that they will be employed in strategic places and so prepare the way for mission teams and the showing of a Jesus film. Pray for Every Home For Christ and other groups to come and do mission work there later.

B. The Church in unreached groups / countries

In many countries and among the majority of unreached groups a small number of Christian churches have already been established and in some cases a small following of believers has also come together. It is for these small churches and groups that we should pray continuously. They already bring a ray of hope into the darkness that surrounds the unreached group.

- Pray for the development of leadership in such groups and churches. Good leadership is imperative for healthy church growth. Pray that the believers will grow rapidly in their spiritual life to become mature disciples of Christ. Pray that the Spirit of God will open the Scriptures to them so that they will understand them well and know clearly how to apply them practically every day.
- Pray for perseverance despite persecution. The Christian faith is hardly tolerated in countries where Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc have a very wide following. People from

these faiths who become converted to Christianity are often persecuted and banned from the local community.

- Pray that the Lord will fill His children among the unreached with His Holy Spirit and in particular inspire them with an ardour for mission work. Pray that these believers will realize their responsibility and that they will not pull back in the face of the challenge or because of any form of resistance or intimidation.
- Pray especially that converts will not emigrate, since such action in fact weakens the Christian testimony in these regions and groups.
- Pray for unity among the small groups and against false doctrines that often come in and destroy the young congregations.
- Pray that they will be allowed the freedom to come together for worshipping God and preaching the Gospel. It is unfortunately a well known fact that the majority of unreached groups live in countries or regions where restrictions are placed on the proclamation of the Gospel.
- Pray for an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit on these small churches (Acts 4:31). In 1992 there was a tremendous revival in hundreds of Egyptian villages. The effect of it was that more than 25 000 Muslims were converted to Christianity within eight months. The revival in the different towns originated in their small churches.
- Pray for these believers to put great emphasis on intercession.

Pray in practical terms and specifically for the salvation of people from these unreached groups

- Pray that whole families will become converted - it makes it a lot easier for the converts to remain standing.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will work in their hearts in a divine way and urge them to search for the True God in Jesus Christ.
- Pray that the Spirit of the Lord will prepare their hearts to receive the Gospel when they hear it.
- Pray for a revelation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the World among the unevangelized. Ample evidence is received that God is revealing Himself in supernatural ways, particularly to Muslim communities.
- In supernatural ways thirty-five per cent of Turkish Muslims who have become converted testify that their conversion was preceded by visions or dreams or even a visit from angels.
- Pray for the unsaved to be convicted of sin and that this will drive them to search for the peace and redemption that there is in Christ.
- Pray that the unreached nations will be exposed to the Gospel in different ways (by means of the radio, television, Bible, spiritual books, mission work, social action, etc) and that they will in this way be drawn to Christ.

- Pray especially for the redemption of individuals who are leaders or who are in positions of authority. Pray that these people will openly confess their sins and their faith in Christ and that they will also follow Him openly.
- Pray that the unsaved will grow tired of sin and that they will realize that their own religions are false and evil. Pray that a desire for the truth and for lasting peace in their hearts will grow within them.
- Pray that the Lord will reveal the demonic strongholds among the unreached to the church that blind people to the truth of the Gospel. Through his Holy Spirit spiritual warfare should be conducted against these demonic powers that keep entire nations or communities in the darkness of sin.
- Pray for the unsaved while you Praise The Lord - know that God saves and heals people.

(Much of the information is taken from a pamphlet by Joy Damson titled Pray for the unevangelized)