

How to Love Your Neighbor

Part 3: Pray for Them

1 Timothy 2:1-6

Summary:

Praying for others can be the key to loving your neighbors and inviting them to enjoy God.

Main Ideas:

Talking about Jesus is part of what it means to follow Jesus and love our neighbor.

Talking about Jesus can be one of the most daunting parts about following Jesus and loving our neighbor.

Before we talk to our friends about Jesus we need to talk to Jesus about our friends.

Praying for others is a main reason the Church exists

Praying for peace is part of loving our neighbor.

We pray for people because God wants all people to know, love, and enjoy him.

Prayer is an act of trust and hope.

God has chosen now to be the perfect time for our neighbors to discover his love.

Praying for our neighbor is the key to loving our neighbor

Invitation:

I commit to pray for _____ once a day every day this week

Discussion Questions:

1. Does talking to others about Jesus seem daunting to you? Why do you think that is?
2. Why do you think prayer is such a big part of following Jesus and loving our neighbors?
3. Re-read 1 Timothy 2:1-6. What stands out to you?
4. Who has God put in your path that you would like to pray for? As a group, take some time to pray for these people specifically by name.
5. How can your group pray for you this week?

Transcript:

ME: If JF... Has your life been positively impacted by following Jesus?

- Following Jesus makes your life better and you better at life.
- Not easier... but better... purposeful, fulfilling, peaceful?

Personal Example: Benji's ortho crap. The ability to trust even when things seem desperate and always seeing him come through.

- Times I've experienced God in my life are some of my favorite stories to tell.

And if you've experienced it you can share it

- If you've experienced Jesus making a difference in your life you can share that with someone else.

WE: And what's fun is... It's actually the mission Jesus has given his followers...

- **Matthew 28:18-20**

- Acts 1:8

- Acts 8:4

Talking about Jesus is part of what it means to follow Jesus and love our neighbor.

Now listen... On one hand that's amazing...

As we said last week... Everyone is someone God is purposely pursuing.

And he has purposely put people in our path b/c he is purposely pursuing them.

We are invited to tell our neighbors that God loves them and enjoys them and that they can discover true life by loving and enjoying him... one person at a time.

What could be more loving then to invite them to experience the life and love they were made to enjoy?

That can be exciting to think about... But there's another side to it...

Talking about Jesus can be one of the most daunting parts about following Jesus and loving our neighbor.

- Get pictures of people standing on the corner with signs... do you know Jesus?
- Knocking on doors.
- Making friendly conversations awkward.

Makes some of your palms sweat right now, huh?

And we want to join God... invite our neighbors to experience what we have... but how?

Where do we even start?

- It actually begins much simpler than you might be thinking
- Might have already guessed it from the title... pray for them

Before we talk to our friends about Jesus we need to talk to Jesus about our friends.

Seems simple... But let me try to convince you why it's important, why it's something you actually want to do, and why it's something you CAN do... effectively.

GOD: Timothy background:

- Someone who knew about talking about Jesus... Apostle Paul
- Started churches around mediterranean world
- Mentored Timothy for many years
- Sent Tim to help clean things up in Ephesus
- Around 65 AD... Sent letter to help instruct him on how to go about fulfilling his mission

Gives instructions on how to be the Church/fulfill purpose...

V. 1 First of all: "This is the most most important thing."

According to Paul... Praying for others is a main reason the Church exists

JFs have the privilege of bringing people's needs, hopes, lives to the God of love that sees us and knows us.

But why pray? One of those questions that you can get stuck on when you really think about it.

- Does he get bored/lonely and wants someone to talk to him?
- If God knows everything and is unchanging...
- If God loves everyone and knows everyone and what they need... why does he tell us to pray?

Though there is still a bit of a mystery around prayer... it is what God uses to allow us to participate with him in what he is doing in the world.

- Though God is all-powerful and all knowing he still invites us to participate with him.
- He promises that somehow it makes a difference.

And not only does it make a difference "out there" it makes a difference for us...

- It changes our perspective...
- Makes us focus on him and what he is doing in the world,
- Makes us ready to participate in what he is doing.

So Paul says Pray for **ALL** people...

- Even that person you think is too far gone
- That person you really don't like or really doesn't like you.
- Whomever God has put in your path...

Ask God to help them, intercede on their behalf, give thanks for them.

- Not 3 step plan... comprehensive prayer that covers everything
- Pray that God will be active in their lives... that they would experience his love and enjoyment of them.

And as you do you will start to love and enjoy them... which they will sense... and if they know you love and enjoy them it'll be easier to believe Jesus loves and enjoys them.

Then Paul says... to also pray specifically for people who can make other people's lives better or worse...

V. 2 Pray for those in authority... WHY?

When our leaders govern wisely it creates more peace, which gives room in people's minds/lives to think about things like God/Life/Eternity.

What's interesting... in our country, who actually has the authority?

- We the people.

So when we are praying for those in authority... we pray for our elected leaders but I think it also means we pray for the WE the People too...

- That we would be united, at peace with each other, and turn down the rhetoric.
- Stop judging and arguing and start being civil and even loving.

How many people have been turned off to Jesus b/c of some Xian's extremely strong political views and words?

What do our friends/neighbors/family experience about us when it comes to Gov/politics?

- Complaining, arguing or prayer?

- **2 Tim 2:23-26**

Praying for peace is part of loving our neighbor.

But why is it so important to pray for people and leaders?

V. 3-4 God wants **EVERYONE**

Think of a friend/co-worker/family member/boss... Do you believe God wants them to know him?

- Do they belong to the EVERYONE category?

Change out the word everyone with their name... "This is good and pleases God our Savior who wants ROY to be saved and to understand the truth."

See We pray for people b/c God wants all people to know, love, and enjoy him.

When we pray for someone like this, it is part of us playing our role in God's plan/mission/desire for all of humanity.

He wants everyone to be saved and understand the truth... What truth?

5-6a [...for everyone.]

What Paul quotes here is probably an early Xian creed.

- A core, easy to memorize statement, that sums up the main teaching of.

This is what God wants people to know and experience...

There is one God

- Who created, loves, sustains, and pursues all of humanity.
- Who wants to create one people out of all the peoples... Forgiven children of God

One Mediator... Someone who declares his people clean/free before God

Who can reconcile God and humanity...

- Who can bring God's children home
- Who can restore us to our proper place in the arms of our Heavenly Father

It's why God, as Jesus, came to earth...

“He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone.”

Freedom... debts.

- Freedom from paying for hurt you've caused
- Freedom from same old way world has always worked... eye for eye. Out for self.
- Freedom from guilt
- Freedom from fear of death
- From the trap of focusing on our self

And there's that word again... EVERYONE.

“He gave his life to purchase freedom for CARL.”

When we pray for people we are acknowledging that God loves/cares about them enough to do something for them.

When we pray for people we are expecting God to do something for them... to bring them to him

Prayer is an act of trust and hope.

Now there's a little more to this...

V. 6b [This is the message...]

At just the right time...

- For some reason God knew that around 33 AD
- When Israel was under the occupation of the Roman Empire
 - Relative safety in travel, roads, common language, etc.
- Was the perfect time to come to earth and save humanity.

God always has perfect timing... think about it.

Which, if that's the case... Right now is our perfect time.

We as a church community were brought together at just the right time to play our part in God's story of Salem.

- Knew that 7 years ago was the perfect time to start a church like ours.

And even more exciting... He knew NOW was the perfect time for you to be alive now!

- He loved you so much he knew this was the best time for you to discover him.

AND he has put people in our lives at just the right time too!

- They are in our lives now b/c now is the perfect time for us to pray for them and invite them to the life Jesus offers.

God has chosen now to be the perfect time for our neighbors to discover his love.

YOU: God loves you and is pursuing you

- He has orchestrated your life, even the time of your birth, for NOW to be the perfect time for you to know him and love him and enjoy him.

And God loves our friends and is pursuing our friends.

- He has orchestrated their lives, their births, and their friendship with you, for NOW to be the perfect time for them to know him and love him and enjoy him.

And the first step in being part of that perfect timing is praying for them.

- Praying that God shows up in their lives.
- That they see God loving and enjoying them.
- Pray for your own attitudes toward them,
 - That you will see them as God sees them, care as He cares, love and enjoy them like He does.
- Thank him that they are in your life.
 - It's for a reason
- Pray for opportunities to love them, be with them, do things for them
 - To see what God is doing with them
 - How can God use you to bless them/contribute to their joy?
 - Pray for the ability meet their needs
- And most of all pray that they discover his love and choose to come home to their Heavenly Father.

This is God's desire for everyone. And when we pray for people like this we are praying in God's will.

- Everyone is someone God is purposely pursuing

You are praying a prayer that God is longing to say "YES" to!

Might not always see immediate progress...

- Everyone has their own timeline and story to live out.
- Might even get frustrating.
- But maybe this is the perfect time for you to just plant a seed

But what will happen is you will start changing too.

- You'll see this person in a new light.
- See them with the love of God
- It's very difficult to judge people you are praying for

Even if not a JF... this is something you can try.

- Just doing the practice of praying for someone will help you change your opinion of them and become more loving.

Last week: God loves _____ and is pursuing _____.

This week: I commit to pray for _____ once a day every day this week

And watch what God does either in them or in you or both!

WE: Think about it... What would happen if we all prayed this way?

- What would happen if we became a community dedicated to praying for our neighbors?
- If we committed to praying for God to make his love clear to those in our lives?

God would probably do some pretty amazing things.

- We'd have some amazing stories to tell and celebrate
- Our lives and hearts would be changed and I think our community would be changed.

Following Jesus makes life better and makes you better at life.

One of, if not the, most loving thing we can do for our neighbor is invite them to experience the life Jesus offers.

And when we pray, God hears us, he hears us praying for someone he loves and is purposely pursuing.

- Someone he died for.

In some mysterious way, prayer lets us participate in this pursuit.

You are invited to participate with God in changing someone's life forever.

And it all begins with talking to Jesus about your friend.

Praying for our neighbor is the key to loving our neighbor