**EE Practicum – Session # 2**

**Building a Strong Prayer Partner Ministry**

**Matthew 9:37-38**

1. **Introduction** - Evangelism without prayer is presumption!

* Often in ministry we are guilty of running ahead of God because we haven’t begun with prayer. The longer I live the more I realize that prayer must be our primary concern.
* E.M. Bounds wrote “The Necessity of Prayer” in 1929. This little book has become the textbook for the practitioners of prayer in the United States. Dr. Kennedy, our founder in EE loved this little book and states, “what an inestimable privilege it is to be able to talk to the King of kings and Lord of lords at a moment’s notice and never worry about getting a busy signal.” He hoped this little book would cause all of us in Evangelism Explosion to take prayer more seriously in our ministries.
* The Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 9:38 says **“pray the Lord of the Harvest to send forth laborers into His harvest.”** The Greek word “deomai” literally means we are to “beg” the Lord of the Harvest that He would send forth laborers in to His Harvest field.
* The Lord’s focus right before He sends the Twelve out in Matthew 10 is for us to “beg” God for more workers. In the Old Testament David was a mighty warrior who repeatedly before he rallied the troops would call the people together and ask for direction from God. This must be our first call as well, to wait upon the Lord for His guidance.
* Waiting on the Lord is a crucial part of serving Him. In Acts 1:4 we read that Jesus commanded His disciples to **“wait for what the Father had promised.”** Isaiah 40:31 says, “those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength and mount up with the wings of eagles.” How easy it is for us to not make the important time to wait upon the Lord.
* So as we begin the teaching of this EE Practicum I want us to highlight the necessity and importance of prayer and the imperative to put this first in our training.

**B. Building a Strong Prayer Partner Ministry**

**1. Priority of Prayer** - The Examples of Christ, John the Baptist, Paul and James

* Jesus used parables in Luke 18:1 to emphasize the fact that **“men ought always to pray and not to faint.”** Jesus didn’t just talk about the priority of prayer, He actually models it for us. None of us are busier than Jesus was and in His time pressured life He made time to pray. We can always make time for what we deem important!
* In Luke 11:1 the disciples observed Jesus communing with His Heavenly Father and these men were so impressed with the intimacy and fervency that He displayed that they said, **“Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.”** So the example of John the Baptist and Jesus indicate how important prayer is in the mentoring of disciples and help them to experience the very presence of God.
* There is no greater example of prayer at it’s finest than the high priestly prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ in John 17. If we really want to know how to pray this passage of Scripture is a place for us to mine the finest nuggets of prayer gold. Here Christ prays for His disciples and goes on record in praying for believers today.
* The ministry of intercessory prayer is vital for accomplishing God’s work in this world. Andrew Murray, a well-known authority on prayer made the statement that “the man who mobilizes the Christian church to pray will make the greatest contribution to world evangelization in history.”
* All the more reason to make intercessory prayer the foundation on which to build an EE ministry. I truly believe the most sacred duty to which you and I are called is prayer. It is the one spiritual activity that every single one of us can participate in.
* The Apostle Paul was an incredible prayer warrior and let those he had led to Christ and Christ followers in each of the churches he planted in Asia Minor know that he was always lifting their names to the Lord. In Philippians 1:3, 4 Paul says, **“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for all of you.”**
* It was Paul who admonished the Ephesian believers to **“be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might”** (Ephesians 6:10). He went on to remind them that **“our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly realms.”**
* Satan hates for Christ followers to share the good news of the gospel because he knows that **“the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek”** (Romans 1:16). We know for certain that Satan is upset with anyone who is training people to share the gospel but that he shudders when he sees believers on their knees.
* It was the half brother of Christ who said in James 5:16 that **“the effectual fervent pray of a righteous man avails much”** and then he refers to Elijah as a prime example of what God could do through one man who was totally given to prayer.

1. **The Pattern of Prayer – Partners in Praying Booklet**

* A prayer partner is a person who shares in your evangelistic activity by praying for you as an EE trainee or a trainer as well as for the people with whom you will share the gospel. Dr. Kennedy wrote in his book “in the first training semester that prayer partners were required for all EE participants at his church the number of professions of faith increased more than 100% over the previous training semester.
* A prayer partner must be seeking to walk with Christ and must believe that God answers prayer. Potential prayer partners should be lead through the little booklet called “Partners in Praying.” At the beginning of each new semester I had all of the prayer partners join me on the opening night of EE training. I wanted our prayer partners to understand how important their role was in the battle for the souls of men.
* I wanted them to know that we were counting on them to intercede on our behalf. The first night of every semester we close out the evening with the six prayer partners and the EE team, all nine members pray together and ask the Lord for His blessing in their efforts to share the gospel as well as model for the two trainees how to share it as well.
* I have found in leading EE ministries for over 40 years that trainees and trainers with faithful prayer partners were more fruitful and less likely to become discouraged and drop out of the training process. Prayer coverage for teams really does work!
* In the little “Partners in Praying Booklet” we are given a simple pattern for our prayer partners to use in their prayers. The **ACTS** acrostic provides a simple and practical guide for a experiencing a meaningful time of prayer with God. The four letters stand for **Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving** and **Supplication**. This is the pattern that we are using to build a Prayer Network over the staff and ministries of the U.S.
* Bill Hybels wrote the book “Too Busy Not to Pray” and says that “it is essential to begin times of prayer in a posture of adoration for 4 reasons”: (1) it sets the tone for the entire prayer; (2) it reminds us of God’s identity and inclination; (3) it purifies the one who is praying and (4) it’s a worthwhile place to start because God is worthy of adoration.”

1. **ADORATION** reminds us that God is a Person, not a commodity to be used. He is the

sovereign ruler of the universe. God is to be worshipped and adored for His goodness, mercy, kindness, justice, glory, wisdom and love. David said in

Psalm 63:3,4, **“Because Your love is better than life, my lips will glorify You. I will praise You as long as I live and in Your Name I will lift up my hands.”**

1. **CONFESSION** is merely agreeing with God about your sin and inviting Him to reveal

anything wrong that may be in your heart or life realizing that sin stands in the way of us experiencing God and confessing it opens the way to his full blessing.

Psalm 66:18,19, **“If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.”**

1. **THANKSGIVING** recalibrates our heart and reminds us that God is Our Father and that

He loves to pour out blessings on His children. God is genuinely moved when He hears a child expressing his or her heartfelt gratitude. Like David says in Psalm 103:2, **“Bless the Lord oh my soul and forget none of His benefits.”**

1. **Supplication** are requests that we make of God and nothing is too big for God to

handle and nothing is too small for Him to be interested in. When we have attuned our heart in adoration; honestly confessed our sin and then poured out our gratitude for answered prayer and His many blessings we are now in a place to approach His hand. We should always approach His face before we approach His hand. God invites us to **“ask anything in His Name and He’ll grant it!”** And in the context of evangelism we need to pray like Paul who said, **“Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly as I should.” Ephesians 6:19**

1. **The Power of Prayer**

* When you get your Prayer Partner team praying like this you can walk forward with a Holy boldness that will take your Evangelism Explosion ministry to a whole new level. The writer of Hebrews 4:16 says, **“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”**
* The prophet Jeremiah exclaims in Jeremiah 32: 17, **“Ah Lord God, behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm and there is nothing too hard for thee.”**
* Our Heavenly Father actually gives us as open invitation in Jeremiah 32:27 when He says, **“Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for me?** I wonder if we really do believe God is waiting to hear and grant our requests?
* Jesus throws out a similar invitation in John 14:13,14, **“Whatever you ask in My name that will I do so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.”**
* When are we going to see God as our Loving Heavenly Father who longs to pour out blessings of every kind? Jesus said in Matthew 7:11, **“If you then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him.”**
* Paul says in II Corinthians 10:4, **“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.”**
* When you get your prayer partners involved in warfare praying you will see amazing things begin to happen. Encourage them to pray daily for you and your team members by name. Encourage them to pray for Divine Appointments. Ask them to pray daily by first name only for the people whom you are planning to visit. Have them pray for the Evangelism Explosion leadership in your church.
* Keep a list of answers to prayer so that you can thank and praise the Lord together for His and their faithfulness. Nothing fuels prayer more than answered prayer!

**Two Books to Reference**

1. “The Necessity of Prayer” by E.M. Bounds, ISBN 10: 0-8010-1007-1

2. “Too Busy Not to Pray” by Bill Hybels, ISBN 978-0-8308-3475-4