

BLESS: Begin to Pray

Opener: Have you ever felt like God wanted you to reach out to someone? If you did, what happened?

Scripture: I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. ³This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. ⁵For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. ⁷And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles. ⁸Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. I Timothy 2:1-8

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. Colossians 4:2-6

Discussion Questions

1. We're beginning a series called BLESS, which focuses on five everyday ways we can bless others: **B**egin with prayer, **L**isten, **E**at, **S**erve, and **S**hare your story. Which of these five practices is easiest for you? (Don't say "eat" unless you mean eating with others!) Which is most difficult?
2. First things first—let's pray. Prayer is a conversation in which we talk to God and He talks to us. In this series we're praying for guidance on how to build relationships with others so we can minister to them. In I Timothy 2:1 Paul says to pray for "all people." What does he mean by that? What doesn't he mean?
3. What reason does he give for praying for all people, including those in authority? How would praying promote that? I Timothy 2:2
4. In Colossians 4:4 Paul asks for prayer that he will proclaim the mystery of Christ clearly. How can prayer make a difference in our ability to communicate who Jesus is and how to have a relationship with Him?
5. It's one thing to pray for opportunities to share the Gospel, and another to pray that we will actually do it as opportunities arise. When have you missed an opportunity? When did you make the most of an opportunity? What made the difference?
6. How does speaking in a way that is "full of grace" and "seasoned with salt" make a difference in the way we talk and relate to others? What makes it difficult to notice how we're coming across? Colossians 4:6
7. In I Timothy 2:8 Paul singles out men and tells them to pray without anger or quarreling. Why do you think Paul specifically addresses men? Assuming his instruction also applies to women, what's an example of someone who prays with anger and quarreling? How does that affect our prayers for others?

Wrap Up: We have a Creator who wants a relationship with us, which requires communication. And He has spoken to us—through nature, prophets, the Bible, and His Son. Perhaps the most intriguing way He communicates with us is through prayer. Prayer tailors His presence and instruction to us because we don't know how to reach out in ways that make a difference. But God does. He knows who is receptive and who never will be. While He took the initiative to provide the opportunity for us to pray, now the ball is in our court. We have to actually pray. So what's it going to be—will we pray about how to reach out? Or not.