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ABSTRACT

MISSIONAL PRAYER: THE EBENEZER MODEL AS A  
RELATIONAL CATALYST FOR DISCIPLE MAKING  
THROUGH THE COLLEGEDALE SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

James Gordon Moon, Sr.

Adviser: James R. Wibberding

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Professional Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: MISSIONAL PRAYER: THE EBENEZER MODEL AS A  
RELATIONAL CATALYST FOR DISCIPLE MAKING THROUGH  
THE COLLEGEDALE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Name of researcher: James Gordon Moon, Sr.

Name and degrees of faculty adviser: James R. Wibberding, DMin

Date completed: August 2021

Problem

In a 2010 missional assessment, the Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church was made aware of a missional blind spot in relation to the external needs of its ministry context. A 2017 MinistryInsight.com Priorities Report also identified the region's desire for warmth and friendship from religious communities as a top ministry preference. In a 2018 effort to begin addressing these needs, Collegedale's pastoral staff chose "Christ has called us to Make Friends," as an actionable expression of Jesus' commission to make disciples. In light of these factors, the Collegedale Church needs a relational catalyst to encourage attenders and members to make friends for Jesus.

## Method

In this study the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer was created to be a relational catalyst for discipleship and tested through a series of eight Ebenezer LifeGroup lessons. The purpose of this ministry intervention was to increase participant's missional instincts; specifically, awareness of God's presence, responsiveness to His voice, and interpersonal courage in making friends for Christ through listening and prayer. Group participants experimented with prayer as communion and prayer as commission through the four missional HELP practices of Heeding, Engaging, Listening, and Prayer. The Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer and Ebenezer LifeGroup intervention were evaluated through an online survey, before and after focus groups, and exit interviews.

## Results

Eleven out of 14 recruits attended the opening focus group and orientation. Nine people completed the eight-week Ebenezer LifeGroup. Members in this study experienced a clear and identifiable shift toward a more missional outlook in relation to their awareness of God, responsiveness to His voice, and interpersonal courage for Christ. They grew in their willingness to minister to people through the HELP Practices of Heeding, Engaging, Listening, and Prayer.

## Conclusions

Through the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer there is an opportunity for church goers to grow in their courage to make disciples as they learn to minister through listening and prayer. The Ebenezer Model is effective for new and established believers. It affirms prior discipleship experiences and provides tools for greater effectiveness and confidence in disciple making.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

MISSIONAL PRAYER: THE EBENEZER MODEL AS A  
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ADVENTIST CHURCH

A Professional Dissertation  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by  
James Gordon Moon, Sr.

August 2021

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APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

---

Adviser,  
James R. Wibberding

---

Director, DMin Program  
Hyveth Williams

---

Tara J. VinCross

---

Dean, Seventh-day Adventist  
Theological Seminary  
Jiří Moskala

---

S. Joseph Kidder

---

7-12-2021  
Date approved

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Adventist	Seventh-day Adventist
ARC	Awareness, Responsiveness, and Courage → Missional Instincts
DMin	Doctor of Ministry
ESV	English Standard Version
HELP	Heed, Engage, Listen, and Pray → Missional Practices
NET	New English Translation
NIV / NIV11	1984 New International Version / 2011 New International Version
NASB / NAS95	New American Standard Bible / 1995 New American Standard Bible
NKJV	New King James Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
SAU	Southern Adventist University
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
TN	Tennessee

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE NEED FOR A RELATIONAL CATALYST

#### **The Ebenezer Model**

The Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer is designed to equip followers of Jesus in prayer as communion and prayer as commission. My purpose in creating the Ebenezer Model was to strengthen the courage of Jesus' followers to make disciples one step at a time (see *Figure 1*, p. 8). Before examining the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer and the missional needs which led to its development, it is important to consider the history of how and where it began to grow.

#### Developmental Roots

The roots of this discipleship intervention lie in the fertile soil of the Adventist-Christians living in the San Luis Valley of Southern Colorado. Soon after arriving as the new district pastor of the Monte Vista and Alamosa Seventh-day Adventist churches, the head deacon of the Alamosa church asked me the following question during a Saturday evening conversation: "With all the time and effort we invest in reaching people, why does it seem that no one ever darkens the door of our church?" (D. Kanen, personal communication, November 15, 2008).

"Maybe we're asking the wrong question" I responded. "Rather than asking, 'who came to our church services this weekend?,' maybe we need to be asking, 'who did we have church with this week?'; whether it was in a coffee shop, on the golf course, at the bowling alley, or in a community book club."

As an outgrowth of this conversation, I began to articulate a ministry vision in the Alamosa and Monte Vista Seventh-day Adventist Churches that included a challenge to have church all week long by seeking to: (a) join Jesus in the ministry of prayer, (b) serve our community with no ulterior motives, and (c) help each other and our fellow valley residents to follow Jesus one step at a time. Building on the idea that the world is our parish (Wesley, 1739), I invited the members of Alamosa and Monte Vista to think of the people of the San Luis Valley as the congregation we were called to serve. Our goal was to befriend and relate to them as if they already a part of our church family.

#### Clarifying the Vision Through Mission

Winema and my wife, Ingrid (see Appendix H, p. 223), are two women from Alamosa who took hold of this vision by deciding to invest a couple hours each Tuesday afternoon ministering to whoever the Lord prompted them to visit. On one occasion they took a loaf of bread to an inactive member. On the day they stopped by her house, Winema and Ingrid did not realize it was her 90th birthday. As a result of the providential visit, the woman decided to start coming back to church.

Winema (personal communication, January 3, 2017) told of another occasion in 2015 when she and Ingrid reached out to a husband and wife whose 10-year-old son was battling cancer. The ladies asked if they could bring their children to meet the couple's son and pray with him. His family deeply appreciated the prayer time and a friendship began to form. As a result, the Alamosa Church School decided to host a fun run in which they raised \$4,000 for the young man's medical expenses.

Sometime later his family would have the opportunity to express their appreciation. They started a Go-Fund-Me page for Alamosa's school teacher when she found out she had cancer. Through the Go-Fund-Me campaign, enough money was raised to pay the teacher's rent for an entire year as she recovered from chemo-therapy and a stem-cell transplant.

Experiences like these birthed a desire to involve the rest of the church, and I began to think and strategize on how to organize our district into prayer support teams who could pastor their community. In processing the idea over the phone with the Pacific Union Prayer Coordinator, Karen Martell, she said (personal communication, January 28, 2014): “Jim, you need to make this a project and document it.” Karen’s words were catalytic; in my heart I found myself asking, “God, are you trying to tell me to pursue a Doctor of Ministry degree?” Excitement and fear filled my prayer, because that evening I was scheduled for a phone conversation with Dr. Walshe, the director of the Doctor of Ministry Discipleship Concentration at Andrews University. Karen was unaware I would be talking to Dr. Walshe about pursuing a DMin in discipleship when she challenged me to document prayer support teams as a project.

Through Karen’s Spirit-led challenge, much prayer, and conversing with other ministry colleagues, I sensed the Lord calling me to launch into this doctoral journey. Eventually, the idea of a prayer support teams’ strategy would become a pilot LifeGroup curriculum for teaching church members to commune with God and minister to people through listening and prayer. However, through the Lord’s call to a new ministry context, the doctoral journey He invited me to begin in the San Luis Valley of Southern Colorado would be completed at the Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church in the hills of Southeastern Tennessee.

### A New Ministry Context

Situated on the campus of Southern Adventist University (SAU), our church is located in the city of Collegedale, a suburb of Chattanooga, TN in Hamilton County. According to an Executive Insight report generated from the demographic service MissionInsight.com (2019), the estimated population of Collegedale-Ooltewah was 10,519 in 2018; that is a 17.9% increase from the 2010 count of 8,923. In the next five years this area is expected to grow by 7.4% to a population of 11,296. Within the region, individuals outside a religious congregation and those who were considering withdrawal from a religious congregation identified “religious people too

judgmental” as their number one concern in relation to organized religion (MissionInsight.com, 2017, pp. 3-4). Surveyed residents of Collegedale-Ooltewah area and Hamilton County also indicated their number one ministry preference of religious communities was for “warm and friendly encounters” (MissionInsight.com, 2017, p. 5).

### **Problem: The Need for a Relational Catalyst**

In light of this preference, a problem surfaces when one considers Sahlin’s missional assessment of the Collegedale Church in the 2010 data: “There is a big blind spot in the congregation regarding the mission field that God has called them to reach and caring about the needs of the community... the members of Collegedale seem to not think about the needs of the community” (2010, p. 78). Seventeen percent of respondents in Sahlin’s assessment were able to identify specific external ministry needs in the surrounding community, while 28% of respondents mentioned internal needs and concerns of the Collegedale Church.

Since moving to the area in August of 2015, I have personally observed this emphasis on internal concerns. Longtime residents, along with many who move to the area, are seeking the best possible cultural and educational experiences Adventism has to offer themselves and their children. Between grade school, sports, academy, university, and church events, it is not unusual for families in Collegedale to spend most, if not all, their recreation and possibly work time with other Adventists. In addition to our in-house busyness, another evidence of our missional blindness comes from our most immediate mission field: the student body of Southern Adventist University. According to a study of millennial graduates from Southern and other Adventist campuses between 2001 and 2012:

There seems to be among Adventist young adults a huge, unmet desire for the church to listen to their questions, concerns, and opinions. One respondent wrote,

‘As I am filling out this survey, I am hesitant to be contacted, but if I change my mind, I’ll email the above address. I would enjoy dialoguing with someone about my experiences (as long as there’s no pressure to ‘please come back’), but I really haven’t found the right person/people with which I can open up that conversation.’ (Jacobs et al., 2019, Conclusion, para. 5).

Possible consequences of our busyness and failure to listen to our children and community may include the following: (a) a decline in average church attendance from 1735 per week in 2012 to 1414 per week in 2018 (Cole, 2019), (b) minimal participation in collegiate Sabbath School, (c) a disconnectedness from our neighboring campus and community, (d) a missional disengagement where 16% of members value small groups, 11% value reaching the lost (Sahlin, 2010, p. 71); and very few members are involved in soul winning, and the majority of baptismal studies are conducted by Collegedale's pastoral staff (Norton, 2015, p. 3), and (e) a "declining proportion of new converts in the Adventist movement" throughout North America where only "four percent have been baptized in the last six to ten years and only about three percent have been baptized in the last five years" (Sahlin, 2018, p. 19).

As these trends have taken place, our pastoral staff has begun to wrestle with how to address our missional blindness toward the SAU Campus and surrounding community. One step we have taken is to clarify our purpose as a university church. While on retreat in December 2018, we composed a working draft of the following mission and vision statement (Collegedale Church Pastoral Staff, personal communication, December 4, 2018): "At the University church, Christ has called us to make friends. We're all about building God's kingdom through a culture of prayer where we experience belonging, develop leaders, and launch them into service." "Make friends" is our contemporary restatement of Christ's great commission to make disciples of all nations (see Matt 28:16-20). Based on His testimony to the disciples, "no longer do I call you servants... but I have called you friends" (John 15:15), we believe disciple-making ultimately means helping people to become a friend of God, a friend of others, and friend-makers.

Therefore, in light of our missional blind spot, the desire of our community for "warm and friendly encounters," and our working draft mission statement, there is a great need at the Collegedale Church for a relational catalyst to encourage attenders and members to make friends for Jesus. In order to work, a relational discipleship catalyst must be simple and memorable. It should equip disciples to HELP others follow Jesus one step at a time.

### **Task: Missional Prayer as a Relational Catalyst**

As an attempt to develop such a relational catalyst, the task of this study was to create the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer, and test it through a series of eight Ebenezer LifeGroup lessons designed to train participants in the essentials of missional prayer. The purpose of this task was to increase participant's awareness of God's presence, responsiveness to His voice, and interpersonal courage in making friends for Christ through listening and prayer. Group participants learned and experimented with prayer as communion and prayer as commission through the four missional HELP practices of Heeding, Engaging, Listening, and Prayer.

### **Delimitations: Participants and Timeframe**

The number of Ebenezer LifeGroup participants was limited to no more than 15 members/attenders of the Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church. The reason the participants were chosen from members and attenders at Collegedale, is because of my current ministerial assignment as worship pastor within this congregation. Due to the competing calendars of the Collegedale Church and SAU campus, the duration of the initiative was limited to 10 weeks.

### **The Ebenezer Model's Development Process**

The ten-week intervention included the following three elements: (a) a three-hour pre-launch focus group and orientation in week one, (b) an 8-session Ebenezer LifeGroup training held during weeks two through nine, and (c) a two-hour post-launch focus group and reflection time in week ten. The intervention's assessment was qualitative in nature; with outcomes and evaluation based on a short before and after online survey, focus group conversations, and personal interviews.



## A Name for the Model

Working within these limitations, the title of this study's pilot curriculum and LifeGroup is *Ebenezer: A Missional Prayer Journey*. The reason Ebenezer was chosen as the name for this missional prayer training model is because of the thematic connection between the Heed-Engage-Listen-Pray, HELP Practices, of the model and the biblical meaning of Ebenezer found in 1 Samuel 7:1-14. In this foundational passage, the prophet Samuel calls the people of Israel to repent:

If you return to the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods... , and prepare your hearts for the LORD, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines (1 Sam 7:3 NKJV; unless otherwise noted all biblical citations are from the NKJV).

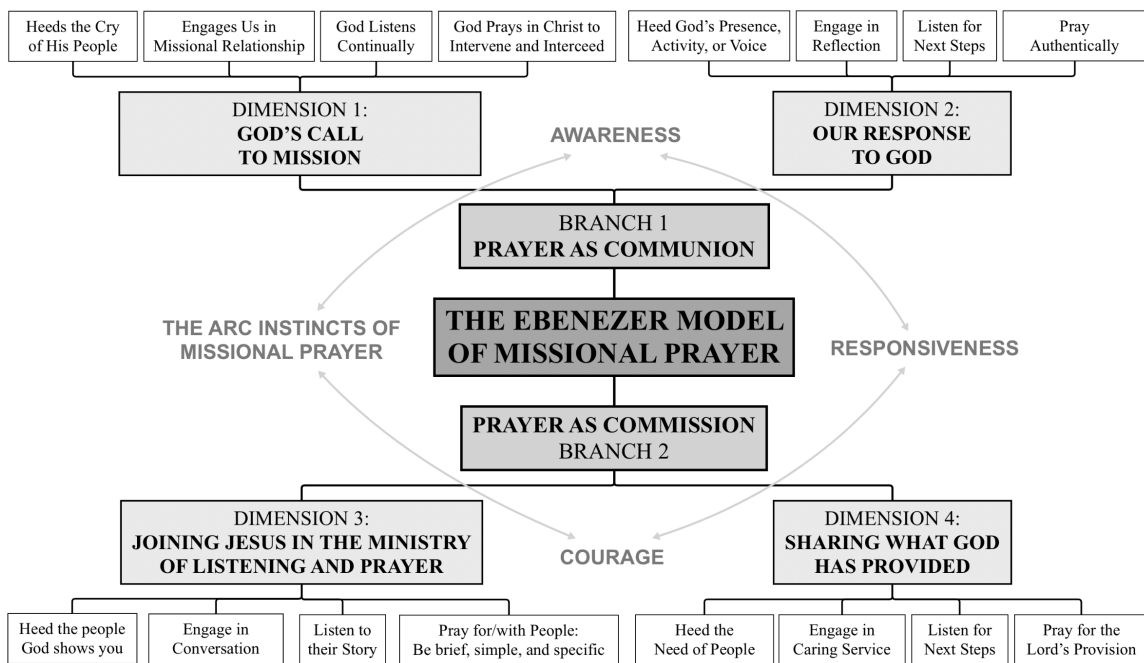
In response to the prophet Samuel's appeal, Israel put away their foreign gods and gathered together at Mizpah that Samuel might pray for them. As Samuel presented the burnt offering and cried out to the Lord on behalf of Israel, "the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel" (1 Sam 7:9-10).

In an act of grateful worship for God's deliverance, "Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far the LORD has helped us' (1 Sam 7:12).

Rooted in this affirmation "thus far the LORD has helped us," the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer presents the Heed-Engage-Listen-Pray, HELP Practices, as an intentional strategy to enhance the missional instincts of participants' (a) awareness of God, (b) responsiveness to His voice, and (c) courage to minister interpersonally through listening and prayer. The formation of the Ebenezer Model was influenced by the development of a biblical theology of missional prayer, an examination of current literature related to effective interpersonal prayer, lessons from my own missional prayer journey with Jesus, and important missional resources.

## A Biblical Theology of the Model

In the field of biblical spirituality, the Ebenezer Model sees missional prayer as a disciple making experience where followers of Jesus grow together through prayer as communion (Mark 1:35, Luke 5:15) and prayer as commission (Matt 11:25-30, John 11:41-42). Inherent to this theology of missional prayer are the ARC instincts of Awareness, Responsiveness, and Courage. Chapter 2 will consider these missional instincts, and how the Heed-Engage-Listen-Pray, HELP Practices, function within the four dimensions of missional prayer: (a) God’s call to mission, (b) our response to God, (c) joining Jesus in the ministry of listening and prayer, and (d) sharing God’s provision (See *Figure 1*). Within the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer, otherwise



*Figure 1.* The Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer Community

known as the HELP Model, Dimensions 1 & 2 comprise the prayer as communion branch of the model’s framework; while Dimensions 3 & 4 comprise the prayer as commission branch of the framework.

## A Literature Review of Interpersonal Prayer

In addition to developing a biblical theology of missional prayer, a study of relevant literature informed the development of the Ebenezer Model as a strategy to address missional indifference and insecurity. Due to the expansiveness of the Ebenezer Model, and the need for a focused conversation on the area of joining Jesus to disciple people through listening and prayer, Chapter 3 narrows its examination of relevant literature to the following areas: (a) a survey of the meaning of missional prayer, (b) prayer partnerships, (c) establishing personal connection, and (d) praying with people.

### A Description of the Model

Chapter 4 begins with a developmental narrative of the personal experiences and missional resources which coalesced with the theology of missional prayer from Chapter 2 and Chapter 3's insights from relevant literature to inform the creation of the eight-week Ebenezer LifeGroup as a missional prayer intervention. After the developmental narrative, a detailed description of the eight-week intervention covers the following prayer as communion and prayer as commission lessons:

- Lesson 1: God is Our Help – A Communion Lesson in Praise and Thanks
- Lesson 2: Seeking God's Help – A Communion Lesson on Prayer Journaling
- Lesson 3: Joining Jesus – A Commission Lesson on Learning to Listen
- Lesson 4: Ministering in Prayer – A Commission Lesson on How to Pray with People
- Lesson 5: Father, You Said... – A Communion Lesson on Praying God's Word
- Lesson 6: Helping Others – A Commission Lesson on Service as Prayer
- Lesson 7: This is My Story – A Commission Lesson on Connecting thru Your Story
- Lesson 8: Come Apart & Rest – A Communion Lesson on Resting in Christ

Through these lessons, participants learned to incorporate the HELP practices of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer within their discipleship journey with Jesus.

Chapter 4 concludes its intervention description with a summary of the following intervention recruitment and evaluation steps: (a) LifeGroup selection, (b) the three-hour pre-launch focus group and orientation plan, and (c) the concluding two-hour focus group session. All

total, the duration of this project with the LifeGroup intervention, and the before and after focus group sessions covered of a span of ten weeks from September 22 – November 17, 2019.

#### A Narrative of the Model's Implementation

The implementation narrative chronicles the timeline, adaptation, discipleship impact, and insights from the post-intervention steps of the Ebenezer LifeGroup. The beginning of the Chapter 5 describes the pre-launch steps of preparatory trainings, recruiting interviews, the pre-launch focus group, and the Ebenezer LifeGroup Orientation. The middle portion of the narrative describes the discipleship impact of each LifeGroup Lesson by pairing it with correlational excerpts of individual group member's dialogue from the concluding focus group session and interviews. The narrative concludes with a comparative summary of insights gleaned from the post intervention focus group, personal exit interviews, and the pre-launch focus group.

#### Evaluation and Learnings

Due to the developmental nature of this study, Chapter 5's comparative summary is the result of a qualitative evaluation of participants' responses to the six before and after questions designed to assess how the eight-week missional prayer curriculum effected their awareness of God, responsiveness to His voice, and interpersonal courage in making friends for Jesus. Chapter 6 provides the following insights at the conclusion of this study: (a) an overview of the method of evaluation, (b) a summary of the intervention's impact and potential as a discipleship catalyst, (c) a description of outcomes, (d) recommendations for future missional prayer initiatives, (e) a brief review of each chapter, and (f) the clarification of life calling I experienced through the convergence of my personal journey with Jesus, pastoral ministry experience, and doctoral examination of missional prayer.

## Initial Results

Eleven out of 14 recruits attended the opening focus group and orientation. Nine people completed the eight-week missional prayer training and attended the post LifeGroup focus session. Each of them found the journey to be of great benefit to their growth as disciples for a variety of reasons that will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. Those who did not complete were unable to do so because of scheduling or personal reasons.

## Definition of Terms

In preparation for subsequent chapters, several key terms will be defined to enhance the understanding of the reader. These terms will take on additional meaning as they are used within the larger context of this study.

*Missional prayer:* As the foundational term of the Ebenezer Model, missional prayer is a discipleship endeavor of prayer as communion and prayer as commission which fosters relational connectivity with God and people.

The branches of missional prayer are prayer as communion and prayer as commission (See Figure 1, p. 8).

The *dimensions of missional prayer* expand out from the two branches of prayer as communion and prayer as commission (See *Figure 1*, p. 8). Dimension 1 is God's call to mission. Dimension 2 is our response to God. In the Ebenezer Model, Dimensions 1 & 2 are a part of the prayer as communion branch of missional prayer. The prayer as commission branch of missional prayer includes Dimensions 3 & 4. Dimension 3 is joining Jesus in the ministry of listening and prayer, and Dimension 4 is sharing God's provision. Within the four dimensions of the Ebenezer Model, God models and man engages in the four Heed-Engage-Listen-Pray, HELP Practices.

*The HELP practices:* Within the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer, disciples recognize and strengthen their ARC Instincts (see below) by seeking to Heed, Engage, Listen, and Pray. These four practices are summarized in the acronym *HELP*. *The HELP practices* are carried out by God or His children within each of the four dimensions of missional prayer. In addition to growing a disciple's missional instincts, *The HELP practices* turn missional prayer into an intentional disciple making experience. See *Figure 1*, p. 8 for a diagram of the two branches, four HELP Practice dimensions, and the ARC Instincts of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer.

*Missional instincts* pervade the four dimensions of missional prayer, and refer to spiritual impulses that are both implanted in humanity by God and strengthened as disciples engage in spiritual practices. Regarding their origin, Folmsbee suggests that missional instincts “were breathed into each one of us when God chose to imaginatively and outwardly express what was a native impulse from within... We have missional instincts because we share the natural likeness of God.” (Folmsbee, 2015, pp. 22-23).

*ARC Instincts:* Awareness, Responsiveness, and Courage are the essential missional instincts of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer (see *Figure 2*, p. 13). Chapter 2 provides a biblical theology of these *ARC Instincts*. As a core feature of the Ebenezer Model, *The ARC Instincts* were initially principles or traits in my thinking. It was not until completing the before and after focus groups of this missional prayer intervention that I began to realize the traits/principles I had identified should be thought of as instincts.

*Awareness:* In the Ebenezer Model, *awareness* is the missional instinct which recognizes God's presence, activity, or voice through Scripture, life experiences, prayer, and the body of Christ. The missional instinct of *responsiveness* is the impulse to relationally engage by responding to the voice of God or choosing to interact with people based upon what the missional prayer minister notices about them. Responsiveness is closely related to biblical obedience. The

ARC Instinct of *interpersonal courage* is the willingness to listen with one’s whole heart, along with a willingness to share one’s personal story and/or God’s story wholeheartedly.

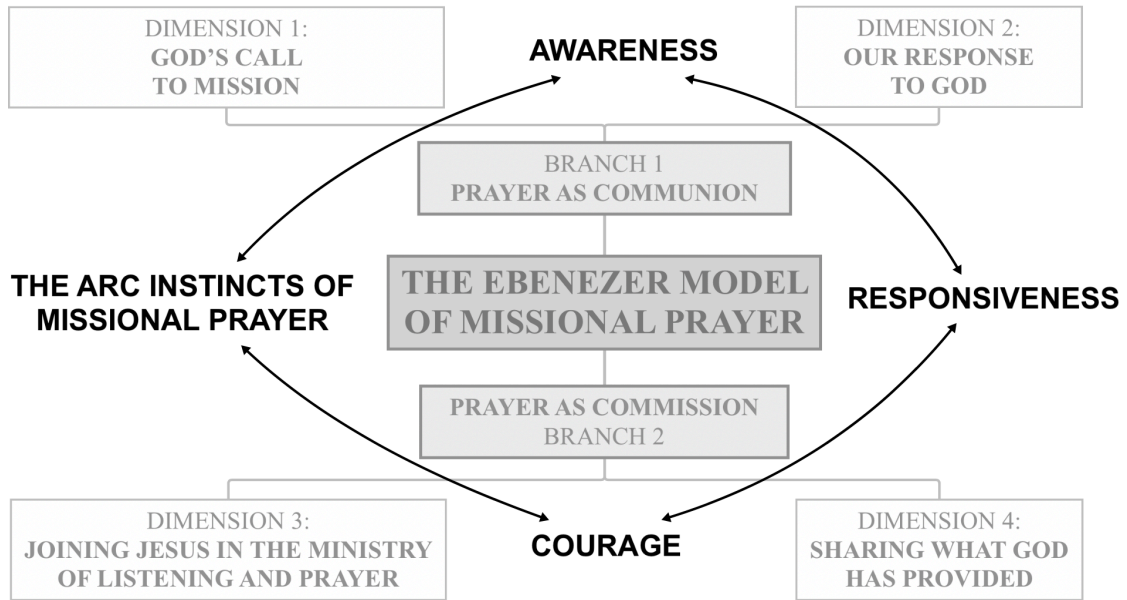


Figure 2. The ARC Instincts of Missional Prayer

*Interpersonal prayer:* In the Ebenezer Model, *interpersonal prayer* means listening to the story of other people and praying with them about their stories. The missional prayer minister who practices healthy interpersonal prayer, seeks to actively listen and offer a simple, specific, and brief prayer with the people who share their stories.

*Discipleship:* In this study, the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer is evaluated for its potential to be a relational catalyst of discipleship. While the field of discipleship is broad, and definitions of discipleship are varied and complex, this study has chosen to define discipleship in a simple but actionable way. *Discipleship* means asking oneself or the person being discipled, what is one’s next step toward or with Jesus? Through listening and prayer, a disciple who engages in the ministry of missional prayer, may help people take a step toward or with Jesus.

*Disciple:* Within the Ebenezer Model, a *disciple* is a person who follows Jesus one step at a time and seeks to help others follow Jesus one step at a time. For this reason, a disciple is also referred to as a follower of Jesus or a Christ follower in this study. The Ebenezer Model chooses to define a disciple in this way because of the mis-perception within the church that disciples must have an advanced understanding of biblical doctrine in order to help people follow Jesus. The Ebenezer Model is an attempt to simplify discipleship and make it accessible to people with varying levels of maturity in their discipleship journey with Jesus; especially inexperienced and new believers.

A *prayer partner* is a disciple who chooses to meet consistently with another disciple to pray together. Prayer partners may also choose to engage in two-by-two missional prayer ministry by visiting with strangers or people within their circles of influence.

*Circle of influence:* A disciple's *circle of influence* includes family members, friends, other disciples, work associates, acquaintances, and strangers who cross their path. In the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer, it is assumed that every disciple is called to engage in the HELP Practices to minister to their circles of influence.

*LifeGroup:* For the purpose of this study, a *LifeGroup* refers to a small group of disciples who gather together to grow in their relationship with God, each other, and those they have been called to disciple. The LifeGroup terminology has been chosen because of its pre-existing familiarity within our ministry context at the Collegedale Church and on the campus of Southern Adventist University. As a core component of campus ministry at Southern, LifeGroups are designed to “provide opportunities for students to belong in spiritual small group communities, to personally and intimately behold God, and to become empowered as disciple makers of Jesus Christ” (Southern.edu, 2021).

*Ebenezer LifeGroup:* Within this study, *Ebenezer LifeGroup* refers to a small group of disciples who are learning the HELP Practices of the Ebenezer Model in order to connect with God and others through listening and prayer. As mentioned earlier, Ebenezer was chosen as a



descriptor of this study's missional prayer LifeGroup because of the thematic link between its meaning, "thus far the Lord has helped us," and the HELP practices mentioned above.

### **Summary**

The four-dimensional nature of missional prayer within this study is developmental. While each dimension is influenced by various aspects of discipleship thought within the field of biblical spirituality, the combination of the dimensions in partnership with the HELP practices offer a new strategy for growing interpersonal courage for Christ in the field of disciple-making. As a discipleship approach, the Ebenezer Model of Missional is not comprehensive in nature, but should be thought of as a tool or methodology in the life of a disciple that may be combined with other tools and methods like Sabbath School lessons, Bible study guides, personal ministry initiatives, discipleship curricula, felt need events, or evangelistic resources.

This study is a starting point for discussion of missional prayer as a relational catalyst for Christ followers to help unbelievers, seekers, and believers experience interpersonal connection with God and others. In this chapter the need for such a catalyst has been identified and The Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer is offered as the proposed intervention. Chapter 2 seeks to establish why the Ebenezer Model is a biblical solution by offering a theology of missional prayer based on the Bible and the writings of Ellen White. Chapter 3 provides an in depth look at the definition of missional prayer and unpacks issues related to joining Jesus in the ministry of listening and prayer through an examination of relevant literature related to prayer partnerships, establishing personal connection, and praying with people. Chapter 4 describes the missional prayer intervention in specificity. Chapter 5 tells the ten-week implementation narrative of how the intervention played out. Chapter 6 provides evaluation, outcomes, and recommendations of next steps in the development of missional prayer as relational catalyst for discipleship.

## CHAPTER 2

### A THEOLOGY OF MISSIONAL PRAYER

In the biblical narrative, mission precedes creation: “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Eph 1:3–4). Responding to Lucifer’s attempt to “ascend into heaven” and “sit on the mount of the congregation” (Isa 14:13), Jesus “came down from heaven,” (John 3:13) and “became obedient to *the point of death*, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:8). In this manner “the plan of salvation... laid before the creation of the earth” was carried out (White, 1890, p. 63).

Missional prayer is an integral part of heaven’s plan to bring salvation through “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8). As one who “felt the need of prayer,” Jesus interceded “between the mountain and the multitude,” in order to demonstrate that “God does not mean that any of us should become hermits or monks and retire from the world in order to devote ourselves to acts of worship” (White, 1892, p. 101). On the mountain, Christ modeled *prayer as communion* to His disciples by choosing quiet and secluded places to spend time alone with His Father (Matt 14:23; Mark 1:35; 6:46; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18). Among the multitude, Jesus modeled *prayer as commission* to His disciples by teaching them to pray in the presence of seekers and unbelievers (For greater detail, see Dimension 3: Joining Jesus, p. 32).

A compelling summary of the interplay between Christ’s mountaintop experience in prayer as communion, and His prayer as commission experience among the multitude is found in the following observation: “What He had been doing in secret with the Father and what He agonized for in the garden became vocal and open on the cross, when He said, ‘Father forgive them’” (Duewel, 1990, p. 38). As the heartbeat of missional prayer, the passion of Jesus manifest

at Gethsemane and Golgotha radiates backward to the prayer narratives of the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, His earthly ministry before the cross, and forward to the rest of the New Testament prayer narratives of the early church. Through an examination of select Old and New Testament narratives, a four-dimensional theology of missional prayer begins to take shape. Dimension 1 is God's call to mission. Dimension 2 is our response to God. Dimension 3 is joining Jesus in the ministry of listening and prayer, and Dimension 4 is sharing God's provision. The rest of the chapter will consider missional instincts, and the function of the Heed-Engage-Listen-Pray, HELP Practices, within the four dimensions of missional prayer.

### **Missional Instincts**

Love is the “most basic... missional instinct” (Folmsbee, 2015, p. 29); for this reason, missional instincts are inherently relational. When sin entered the human experience, the love of God instinctively activated the mission He established before creation by implanting enmity toward evil within the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). This hatred of evil was graciously manifest through the incarnation of Jesus as He loved His enemies, blessed those who cursed Him, did good to those who hated Him, and prayed for His persecutors (Matt 5:44-45). Through the fragrance of Christ's love (Eph 5:2), three missional instincts are strengthened and worthy of examination. In the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer those three instincts are known as the ARC Instincts of Awareness, Responsiveness, and Courage.

#### **The Instinct of Awareness**

Awareness is the ARC Instinct of recognition, or the first impulse of missional prayer. As disciples recognize God's presence within the conversation of prayer, they begin to experience transformation. One might call awareness the missing addend of the following discipleship equation: God's presence + x = transformation (A. Walshe, personal communication, April 15, 2015). Without an awareness of God's presence, prayer can become like the lyrics from “Bouncing off the Ceiling” by the Ragamuffin Band (1999): “Sometimes I get the feeling my

prayers bounce right off the ceiling, and they spin around the room with me and they never get to You.”

Bounce back prayers and a deficiency in awareness can occur when:

the world is too much with us so that the invisible and the eternal seem to be quite forgotten or at least we are not aware of it. We’re only briefly aware of it when somebody dies. The Church has lost the consciousness of the divine Presence and the concept of majesty. (Tozer & Fessenden, 2003, Chapter 10, Section 2, para. 1)

Further explanation for a loss of spiritual consciousness may be a first world that is “hyperaware of lack... We spend inordinate amounts of time calculating how much we have, want, and don’t have” (Brown, 2012a, p. 25). Our focus on “lack” blinds us to seeing evidence of our ever-present God and His activity. Like the first disciples of Jesus who asked one another, “has anyone brought Him anything to eat?” (John 4:33), many contemporary followers of Christ fail to recognize the fields “are already white for harvest” (John 4:35). Missional prayer ministry is a relational attempt to break away from the post-modern “reverie of lack” (Twist & Barker, 2003, p. 44) and strengthen an instinctive recognition of God’s awareness of us, His presence in our midst, the sound of His voice, His work in the stories of other people, and the invitation of His Spirit to help people through listening, prayer, and service.

#### The *Shema* Instinct of Responsiveness

As the second ARC Instinct, responsiveness is the active impulse of missional prayer. It begins with God: “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). In the biblical narrative, the Lord sees, hears, and responds to the need of humanity “by taking the form of a slave” (Phil 2:7 NRSV), in order to redeem us from the slavery of sin (see Rom 6:1-11). Whether one is an outsider like the Egyptian slave, Hagar (Gen 16), or an insider like Moses, who led the Hebrew slaves in the Exodus: “God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him” (Acts 10:34–35).

In Christ, God “our help” (Ps 33:20; 46:1; 124:8) came not “to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). The plan for Christ to live as a servant was the result of the Lord’s inherent aptitude to respond in love, and through such innate benevolence, “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption” (White, 1912, para. 3). This impulse to give came from a heart simultaneously heavy with reluctance: “It was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race” (White, 1890, p. 63). Because of His inner struggle to give His beloved Son, the Father can relate to the humanity’s instincts of self-preservation, and the incarnation is His gift of empathy to the human race born from His own heart wrenching sacrifice.

Through the sorrow and affliction of His incarnation, the Father’s Suffering Servant awakens human empathy. As disciples respond to this empathic mission of their Lord and Savior, a sanctifying process is set in motion where they “become more and more emotionally safe and available for others” (Brace, 2020, para. 8). A significant part of this availability to others is the development a “spiritual ear for God” (De Graaf, 2013, p. 36) where disciples recognize the Lord’s prompting to serve as Philip did in Acts 8:26-40. When he responds to Spirit’s prompting by approaching the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch to engage him in a spiritual conversation, Philip demonstrates what it means to hear in the sense of the Hebrew word *shema*. However, Philip is not the first biblical account to illumine the meaning of *shema* (the act of hearing).

Starting with a reference to the ancient Jewish prayer, commonly known as the *Shema* (Deut 6:4-5), the creators of the BibleProject unpack the linguistic breadth of the Hebrew word *shema*. While the aforementioned prayer gets its name from *shema*, the term has a broader and more expansive meaning when examined within the entire context of the Hebrew Bible. According to the BibleProject, innate to the meaning of *shema* is the idea that “listening and doing are two sides of the same coin” (BibleProject, 2021). Based on this listening-doing

interplay within *shema*, missional prayer ministers who seek to engage with others based on the practice of heeding (*shema*), are following in the footsteps of their missional God.

At the burning bush, the Lord models *shema* when He speaks to Moses:

I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed (*shema*) to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians. (Exod 3:7–8 NAS95)

In this passage, *shema* is translated “heard” (ESV, NET, NIV11, NKJV, NRSV) or “given heed” (NAS95). Contextually, the meaning of *shema* can include the sense of an audible instinct triggering a planned course of action. When God hears, God delivers; and the most compelling biblical example of intent informed by instinct is found in Jesus’ words to Nicodemus: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). The instinct of His love prompts His giving (Singlehurst, 2016). When He hears the cries of those enslaved in sin, perception gives way to action, and instinct activates the intention God established “before the foundation of the world” (Eph 1:4).

Similarly, in the life of the disciple, there is an active quality to hearing (*shema*) which means to “listen,” “obey,” or “proclaim” (Strong, 1995). In addition to an audible awareness of God’s voice, this active or responsive sense in the meaning of *shema* involves obeying the voice of the Lord:

If you diligently heed (*shema*) the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I *am* the LORD who heals you. (Exod 15:26)

In this passage, “the Lord who heals” will preserve the health of His people through a hearing that responds in obedience. According to His promise, as they choose to obey, they become a special treasure: “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey (*shema*) My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine” (Exod 19:5).

In addition to being God’s special treasure, the followers of God who practice obedient hearing in the narratives of Scripture experience God’s power and provision in a variety of ways.

For example, in the case of Joshua leading Israel into Canaan, when he heard unto obedience, walls fell, and giants fled (Num 13, Josh 6), or in the case of Christ and/or his disciples administering the gospel of the kingdom, the blind received their sight, the dead were raised, the lame walked, the demons fled, and the lost received salvation. (John 9, John 11, Acts 2-10). So, while the outcomes of obedience may vary based upon the Lord's instruction and intervention, what remains constant in these missional partnerships is the need for courage.

### The Instinct of Wholehearted Courage

According to Brown (2010a), the meaning of courage comes “from the Latin word ‘cor,’ meaning ‘heart’ – and the original definition was to tell the story of who you are with your whole heart” (para. 23). Courage may also be defined as wholeheartedly telling Jesus' story; as exemplified by Stephen, the first martyr of the church (Acts 6-7). Faithful unto death, Stephen demonstrated a mature missional instinct when under duress by courageously loving God with all of his “heart... soul... mind... and strength” (Mark 12:30). In a world of angry people, like the mob that stoned Stephen, it takes instinctive courage to acknowledge God's presence and obey His commandments in the face of hardship (Prov 3:5-6, Josh 1:7-8).

As the third ARC Instinct in the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer, Courage is first manifest when a person answers the call of God; but it always follows fear. From Genesis to Revelation, scripture is filled with stories of individuals, like Adam, who hide from God, or stories of people like the apostle John, who fall face down in fear. When the Lord of Glory comes calling, men and women begin to tremble. However, courage follows fear as God responds to the trembling of his children by engaging them in conversation, clarifying mission, and implanting an added measure of courage through the promise of His presence.

A landmark call to courage is God's appointment of Joshua, son of Nun, as the successor of Moses. After Moses disobeys the Lord in Numbers 20 by striking the rock, instead of commanding it to bring forth water, the Lord tells the patriarch:

Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; set him before Eleazar the priest and before the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. (Num 27:18-19)

Following the inauguration, Moses reassures Joshua of victory over the nations of Canaan with this promise: “God Himself fights for you” (Deut 3:22). Then, just before Moses’ death, he exhorts Joshua with these words: “Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them” (Deut 31:7).

As Moses’ protégé, Joshua is certainly in need of strength and courage to lead the children of Israel after the ten unbelieving spies, who scouted Canaan with Joshua and Caleb, give their fearful account of what they saw:

We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we... The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants... There we saw the giants... and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight. (Num 13:31-33)

On account of their fears, Israel refuses to trust God, and their entrance into Canaan is delayed.

When the time comes to take the land, Joshua is significantly older, Moses is dead, and the Lord Himself appears to Joshua to reaffirm the call to courage:

Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you... as I was with Moses, so I will be with you... Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (Josh 1:3, 5, 9)

As a result of choosing to trust the promise of God’s presence and obey God’s commandments, Joshua manifests an instinctive courage throughout the conquest of Canaan.

Jesus’ followers, like Joshua who came before them, also demonstrate a courageous instinct in disciple making through their obedience and trust in the word of Christ: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations... And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20). An example of the early church’s missional courage occurs when Peter and John are interrogated by the religious establishment about the healing of the paralytic who used to beg at the temple gate (see Acts 3-4). On the morning after the miracle, they are brought before the



Jewish leaders and asked, “By what power or what name did you do this?” (Acts 4:7). In response the disciples boldly proclaim:

Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

Jesus is ‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:8–12 NIV11)

The rulers, elders, and teachers of the law are amazed by the boldness of Jesus’ disciples: “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13 NIV11). Furthermore, when Peter and John testify to their fellow disciples after being released, their report emboldens the prayers of their companions:

Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:29–31)

In summary, biblical personalities like Peter, John, Joshua, and Stephen, demonstrate how:

Missional instincts direct our life. Out of these missional instincts gladhearted disciples re-narrate meaning, purpose, and hope, causing us to live into a new story. These instincts are not to remain internal. Ultimately we are to allow the Holy Spirit to take the instincts within each of us and turn them into missional expressions—evidence of a life as God designed it to be. (Folmsbee, 2015, p. 26)

Missional instincts not only lead to missional expression or practice, but well-designed missional practices may become habit through disciplined exercise, and thereby intensify one’s missional instincts. Therefore, within the context of this study the Heed-Engage-Listen-Pray, HELP Practices, are four intentional expressions of mission designed to sharpen missional instincts.

## The Four Dimensions of Missional Prayer

The HELP practices of missional prayer community function in these four dimensions: (a) God’s call to mission (b) our response to God, (c) joining Jesus in the ministry of listening and prayer, and (d) sharing God’s provision (see Table 1). In order to gain an understanding of how the practices of missional prayer function within these four dimensions, a good place to begin is at the epicenter of all mission, God’s initiative.

Table 1

*The Four Dimensions of the Ebenezer Model’s HELP Practices*

<b>PRAYER AS COMMUNION</b>				
<b>Dimension 1:</b> God’s Call to Mission	<b>HEED</b> God heeds the cry of His people.	<b>ENGAGE</b> God engages us in a missional relationship.	<b>LISTEN</b> God Listens to our prayers continually.	<b>PRAY</b> In Christ, God intervenes and intercedes.
<b>Dimension 2:</b> Our Response to God	Heed God’s voice.	Engage in reflection about what He means.	Listen for next steps.	Pray authentically.
<b>PRAYER AS COMMISSION</b>				
<b>Dimension 3:</b> Joining Jesus in Listening and Prayer	<b>HEED</b> Heed the people God shows you.	<b>ENGAGE</b> Engage in conversation.	<b>LISTEN</b> Listen to their story.	<b>PRAY</b> Pray for/with people. Be brief, simple & specific.
<b>Dimension 4:</b> Sharing God’s Provision	Heed the need of people.	Engage in Caring Service.	Listen for next steps.	Pray for the Lord’s provision.

## Dimension 1: God's Call to Mission

In Dimension 1, God initiates the Ebenezer Model of missional prayer. Modeling the HELP practices of missional prayer for His children, the Lord: (a) heeds their cries, (b) engages them in a missional relationship, (c) listens continually to their prayers, and (d) in Christ, intervenes and intercedes in answer to our prayers. With this framework in mind, please consider the biblical evidence for the Lord's initiation of the HELP practices.

### **Heeding the Cries of His People**

God's missional initiative is instinctive and intentional. He instinctively heeds (*shema*) the cries of His children in bondage (Exod 3:7 NAS95), like a mother who recognizes the cry of her child on a crowded playground. He also models heeding as the first of four missional HELP practices. In the Garden of Eden, the God notices the absence of the fearful husband and wife who "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord," and calls out to them in the cool of the day (Gen 3:8). He also finds the Egyptian maidservant, Hagar, "by a spring of water in the wilderness" (Gen 16:7) when she is on the run from her mistress, and He asks her: "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" (Gen 16:8). After listening to her plight, the Lord gives the frightened mother purpose and direction: "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand... I will multiply your descendants exceedingly... you are with child, and you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has heard (*shema*) your affliction" (Gen 16:9-11). In addition, when the "outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah" ascends to heaven, we see the interplay between the heeding instinct and heeding intent of the Lord when He says: "I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me" (Gen 18:20-21). The "going down" is His intent to heed based upon His innate ability to hear the outcry of the oppressed.

## **Engaging in a Missional Relationship**

The same God who heeds the cries rising from Sodom and Gomorrah, and hears Israel in Egypt, models the second HELP practice of engaging when He invites Moses into missional relationship:

The cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt. (Exod 3:9–10)

As Israel's Deliverer and the Lord of mission, "God is not a concept or a doctrine. He is a Person who seeks a close, one-on-one relationship... Within this intimate connection, God will reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways" (Blackaby et al., 2007, Introduction, paras. 4 & 7), in order that those who partner with Him in mission may receive His heart and know His will.

As one who will receive the Lord's heart for the oppressed, Moses will later rejoice in the Almighty's missional support when he writes: "There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides the heavens to help you" (Deut 33:26). In the HELP practice of engagement, the Lord does not ride alone:

God could have reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work. In order to enter into His joy,—the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice,—we must participate in His labors for their redemption. (White, 1898, p. 142)

Unfortunately, Israel failed to fully enter into His joy. Only three days after singing the Lord's praise at the banks of the Red Sea for drowning Pharaoh's army in the waters, Israel began to murmur:

So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water... And the people complained against Moses, saying, 'What shall we drink?' (Exod 15:22–24)

Their grumbling at Marah would become a pattern of murmuring, complaining, and bitterness against Moses and Aaron throughout their wilderness wanderings (Exod 16:1-3; 17:1-3; 32:1-6; Num 11:1-9; 12:1-2; 14:1-10; 16:1-3; 16:41; 20:2-5; 21:4-6). But Israel's grumbling was not

against Aaron and Moses alone, it was also against God. Reminding the people of God's listening ear, Moses tells them: "He hears your complaints."

### **Listening Continually**

The faithful shepherd's missional participation in the Exodus journey reveals how God models listening as the third missional HELP Practice. Through the Lord's example, it is evident that *shema* means more than a one-time recognition. In addition to the initial action of heeding and responding to Israel's cry in Egypt, the Almighty demonstrates a long-term commitment to listening during their forty years in the wilderness. In the accounts of Exodus and Numbers, God hears the continual cries of His people, and listens to the prevailing prayers of intercession and petition from Moses their leader (Exod 17:4-6; 17:10-16; 32:31-32; 33:7-34:10; Num 11:2, 4-17; 12; 14:1-35; 16:1-38; 20:6-13; 21).

### **Prayer Intervention**

God enters into the fourth HELP Practice of missional prayer when He intervenes by (a) sending Manna from heaven in Exodus 16, (b) providing water from the rock in Exodus 17 and Numbers 20 (c) promising His presence and revealing His glory in Exodus 33-34, (d) healing Miriam after her insubordination in Numbers 12, and (e) providing the serpent on a pole so Israel might look and live in Numbers 21. Furthermore, the story of the serpents foreshadowed the Father's ultimate answer to prayer: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). Through the life-giving intervention of Jesus, the Father invites the new Israel to join His Son in the ministry of missional prayer. However, before considering the third dimension of joining Jesus in the ministry of listening and prayer, it is important to examine the second dimension of missional prayer.

## Dimension 2: Our Response to God

In order to join in God's missional initiative, the HELP practices must be applied in response to His activity, presence, and call.

### **Moses and the HELP Practices**

The first practice in the response dimension of missional prayer is to heed. When the Angel of the Lord appears to Moses in the burning bush, Scripture says: "He looked, and behold the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn" (Exod 3:2-3). Acting from the instinct of spiritual awareness, Moses seeks to investigate why the flames do not consume the bush. Heeding gives way to a pursuit of meaning, as the shepherd engages in reflection about the significance of the scene. These are the first two practices in the response dimension of missional prayer: (a) heeding God's presence, activity, or voice... and (b) engaging in reflection.

As a result of heeding and engaging, Moses finds himself listening to the directives of the Almighty: "Come now... and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt" (Exod 3:10). In response, the shepherd instinctively prays, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" In this conversational exchange, the last two practices of the response dimension are evident: (c) Listening for direction, and (d) Praying authentically.

While Moses actions at the burning bush appear to be instinctual, they are also instructive and formative. From his interaction with God, the HELP practices are derived as disciplines with the potential to deepen a believer's spiritual instincts. In addition, as an extension of His friendship with Moses, God was ultimately calling the entire nation of Israel into a missional relationship. He promises the shepherd that they will "serve God on this mountain" after the Exodus from Egypt, and upon their arrival at Sinai, the Lord tells Israel:

If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (Exod 3:12; 19:5–6)

His call of the entire nation to priestly ministry affirms that “a community fit for purpose is a community that prays. Out of prayer arise hospitality, service and mission” (Chatfield, 2016, p. 13). From this perspective, one might argue that a theology of missional prayer should include three major branches, prayer as communion, prayer as commission, and “prayer as community” (A. Chatfield, personal communication, August 25, 2020). However, for the sake of simplicity, we will assume on the basis of God calling a priestly community at Sinai, and a priestly community at Pentecost (Acts 2), that prayer as community is an implicit part of prayer as communion and prayer as commission.

### **Daniel and the HELP Practices**

The missional practices found in Moses’ response to God are echoed in the spiritual discipline of Daniel the prophet. With determination, Daniel refused to stop praying to his God; even after the officials of Medio-Persia convinced King Darius to establish a thirty-day decree mandating that “whoever petitions any god or man” other than Darius was to be thrown into the lion’s den (Dan 6:7). According to the courageous prophet’s account,

when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. (Dan 6:10)

Daniel’s courage to pray under threat of death was the fruit of a disciplined prayer life; a relational instinct flowing from his consistent practice of missional prayer.

The relational nature of Daniel’s missional prayer life is also evident in the account of his conversation with God in the first year of King Darius: “in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years” (Dan 9:2 NIV11). In this narrative, the HELP practices are apparent. First, Daniel gave heed to God’s word in the Scriptures. Second, by engaging in reflection, he came to understand “that the desolation of

Jerusalem would last seventy years” (Dan 9:2 NIV11). Based on his understanding, Daniel’s third step was to cry out in prayer to his covenant keeping God with praise, confession, and petition on behalf of his people. His missional plea ends with the request: “Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name” (Dan 9:19 NIV11). As a result, the Lord sends Gabriel to assure Daniel that God is about to act in answer to his prayer. Daniel learns there will be a “command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem” in fulfillment of God’s word to Jeremiah; along with, the revelation of another period of prophetic time leading up to the coming of the “Messiah the Prince” who “shall be cut off” (Dan 9:25, 26).

To summarize this conversation between Daniel and God, after heeding and reflecting on God’s word (Dan 9:2), and asking the Lord for clarity (Dan 9:3-19), Daniel listens as God’s reveals his missional intent for the near and distant future through His angel Gabriel (Dan 9:20-27). In this particular encounter, Daniel’s HELP response is to Heed, Engage, Pray, and Listen. The order of each practice is not as important as the practices themselves. By relating with God through the HELP practices, Daniel gains a clearer understanding of the Lord’s missional activity on behalf of His people. In addition, Daniel’s missional prayer life of petition (Dan 2:17-23; 9:4-19), faithfulness (Dan 6:1-28) and prophetic understanding (Jer 29:10-14; Isa 45:1-6, 13) had a missional impact on the Persian King Cyrus:

The deliverance of Daniel from the den of lions had been used of God to create a favorable impression upon the mind of Cyrus the Great. The sterling qualities of the man of God as a statesman of farseeing ability led the Persian ruler to show him marked respect and to honor his judgment. And now, just at the time God had said He would cause His temple at Jerusalem to be rebuilt, He moved upon Cyrus as His agent to discern the prophecies concerning himself, with which Daniel was so familiar, and to grant the Jewish people their liberty.

As the king saw the words foretelling, more than a hundred years before his birth, the manner in which Babylon should be taken; as he read the message addressed to him by the Ruler of the universe... his heart was profoundly moved, and he determined to fulfill his divinely appointed mission. (White, 1917, p. 557)

Cyrus’ commitment to carry out His God-given mission is impacted by Daniel’s missional prayers for the fulfillment of the prophetic messages God gave to Isaiah and Jeremiah. When



God's people respond to His invitation into missional relationship, as Daniel and Moses did, their prayers have historic ramifications that affirm and anticipate the fulfillment of prophecy. In addition, their time in prayerful communion with God prepares them to join Jesus in the ministry of listening and prayer.

### Dimension 3: Joining Jesus in the Ministry of Listening and Prayer

In the theological backdrop of missional prayer, Jesus is the seed promised to the patriarchs (Gen 3:15; 22:17-18; Gal 3:16), the Prophet promised to Moses (Deut 18:18-19; Acts 3:19-24), the Messiah promised to Daniel (Dan 9:24-27; John 1:41; 4:25), and the Priestly-King promised to David (Ps 110:4; Heb 7:11-24). As the One who “always lives to make intercession” (Heb 7:25), Christ's legacy of prayer is often remembered for His time in private communion with God the Father. However, in his disciples' gospel accounts, there is also an interpersonal nature to the intercession of Christ where He models the HELP Practices in personal ministry. From Jesus' example, contemporary disciples may learn to join Him in the third dimension of missional prayer of ministering to people through listening and prayer. This is in keeping with the first century invitation of James, the brother of Jesus, to be agile listeners: “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry” (Jas 1:19 NIV11). Such advice is timely; considering the present age in which “nearly two-thirds of U.S. adolescents have experienced an anger attack that involved threatening violence” (Harvard, 2012, para. 1). Insight for addressing the rage and blame of the present age is also found in the wisdom writings: “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Prov 15:1 NIV11).

#### **Heed the People God Shows You**

In the ministry of Jesus, sometimes a gentle request de-escalates prejudice and establishes personal connection. When He meets the woman at the well (John 4:1-45), Jesus demonstrates how the HELP Practices can open a door of missional effectiveness by breaking down racial barriers of fear, anger, and resentment. His first practice is to give heed to the woman the Father

shows Him. In following the Father's lead, Christ confirms that: "the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does" (John 5:19 NIV11). In like manner, because Christ-followers are to imitate "the example of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1 NIV11); John works through his narrative to help the reader join Jesus in giving heed to one approaching the well: "it was about noon; when a Samaritan woman came to draw water" (John 4:6-7 NIV11). This was uncommon time for a person to visit the well. "Morning and evening were the usual times for drawing water, and there would no doubt have been others at the well" (Nichol, 1980, p. 937), if she had not come in the blistering hours of the midday sun. By the time she begins to draw water, Jesus has already noticed the oddity of her noontime presence at the well. He is also aware of the emotional tension between Jews and Samaritans; and "seeking to find the key to this heart, and with the tact born of divine love, He asked, not offered, a favor. The offer of a kindness might have been rejected; but trust awakens trust" (E.G. White, 1898, p. 184).

### **Engage in Conversation**

Through His vulnerable request, Jesus engages the woman in conversation. This is the second HELP Practice in this dimension of missional prayer. Christ's strategic move helps her break the silence of apprehension she felt upon seeing a Jewish Rabbi sitting at Jacob's well in the blistering mid-day sun. Sometimes starting the conversation is one of the most profound acts of listening a disciple can perform. It is the act of engagement with the potential to bridge between the first practice of heeding the person God identifies, and the third HELP practice of listening to their story. Many people are longing to tell their story, but shame, guilt, or regret can rob them of the courage to speak first. With such individuals, there is opportunity for missional disciples to give them permission to speak by breaking the emotional ice. In the woman's case, the thaw began as she responds to Jesus initial request: "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (John 4:9). By affirming her Samaritan identity, she reveals a bit of her story; and through a contextual response, Jesus draws her closer to the wellspring of

His saving grace: “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water” (John 4:10).

### **Listen to Their Stories**

At this point in the narrative, Christ is living out the third HELP practice within the interpersonal dimension of missional prayer; He actively listens to her story through question, response, and invitation. Throughout the conversation, Jesus reflects her thoughts as He listens, and He seeks to awaken hope by responding with truth relevant to her needs. This is evidenced by her response to His mention of living water:

Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock? (John 4:11–12)

Even though Jesus was the seed promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He did not fall into this theology trap; a common error for Christians who are well versed. The woman did not need a historical or theological explanation of Jacob, Israel, or propositional truth; nor was she ready to know Jesus’ identity. What she needed was to be known and loved, and so Christ kept drilling down to her need in an effort to open a wellspring within:

Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. (John 4:13–14)

By this time, she is really thirsty, and the listening love of Jesus evaporates her prejudice. With parched soul she replies: “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw” (John 4:15). Considering her past, the thought of no longer coming to draw water was desirable. She preferred the heat of the noonday sun instead of the blazing shame of stares and whispers from the local villagers; what a relief to think of never drawing again.

But before Jesus could give her the living water she longed for, there was more she needed to disclose:

Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’

The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’

Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five

husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.’  
(John 4:16–18)

At this point in the story, listening to the Spirit comes into play. It was the Holy Spirit who gave Jesus inside information about the woman. In light of Jesus divinity, one might choose to conclude, “this is because He was God; that doesn’t happen to me.” But, in His word, God promises to speak to His children: “Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This *is* the way, walk in it,’ Whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left” (Isa 30:21). Christ himself told His disciples: “do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak” (Matt 10:19). The same Spirit who instructed Christ as to the woman’s situation, can instruct every disciple who is willing to listen to His voice while simultaneously listening to the story of the one they are called to serve.

Regarding this principle of dual listening, there is also biblical evidence of the Holy Spirit speaking to disciples about details of a person’s life which would remain unknown if the Spirit did not choose to reveal them. One example is the Lord’s instruction to Ananias after Saul had encountered the Risen Christ on the Damascus road:

Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision, he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight. (Acts 9:11–12)

In this case, both Ananias and Saul received inside information from the Lord. God also gave inside information to the Roman Centurion Cornelius when an angel appeared to him and said: “send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do” (Acts 10:5–6). In the case of Philip, the Spirit of the Lord told him to go toward the road leading to Gaza, and instructed him to get into the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch. Following the Spirit’s lead, Philip asked the man, “Do you understand what you are reading?” (Acts 8:30). He also listened to the Ethiopian’s questions and shared Jesus with him.

In a similar manner, after the Spirit prompts Jesus to say “go call your husband,” the Lord will listen as she explains “I have no husband.” He will then respond to her story with what the Spirit is disclosing: “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly” (John 4:17–18). Rather than criticizing her for what she does not share, Jesus affirms the woman for speaking truth, and tenderly unfolds the awkward details of her painful past. The non-judgmental nature of His response is evidenced in the fact that after He revealed His divine identity, the woman forgot her water pot and ran back to tell the men of her village, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (John 4:29). Her heart thrills to think she had unknowingly been speaking with the Messiah; Israel’s long expected Prophet, Priest, and King. Like this woman of Samaria, when people meet Jesus in their story, they forget about their shame, and run to tell whoever will listen. As disciples practice a two-fold approach of listening to the Holy Spirit and the story of the individual, people discover the presence of God in their story, their hearts thrill, and they cannot keep quiet.

### **Pray With People**

The final practice in joining Jesus is to pray with people. Jesus began this practice with His inner circle. When His disciples overheard him praying, they said, “teach us to pray.” The prayer He modeled for them was specific, succinct, and simple: (a) praise and adore your Heavenly Father, (b) ask for His will to be done, (c) ask for daily provision, (d) ask for the strength to forgive others, and (e) ask for protection and deliverance from the evil one (Luke 11:1-4). Jesus also encouraged them to persevere in prayer and ask for the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:5-13).

In addition to giving His disciples a basic prayer template, Jesus demonstrated how to pray with people in a variety of contexts by: (a) offering prayers of thanksgiving, (b) blessing His Father’s provision of the loaves and fish, (c) blessing the little children in prayer, (d) talking to His Father at His baptism, (e) praying before His disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration,

(f) praying publicly in John 12 for His Father to be glorified through the cross, (g) singing a hymn before departing to the Garden of Gethsemane, (h) praying “Thy will be done” in Gethsemane, (i) asking His Father to forgive His enemies as He hung on the cross, and with his dying breath, and (j) crying out to His Father, “into Your hands I commit My spirit” (Matt 11:25-26; 14:19; 19:13; 26:30; 26:36-42; Mark 14:32-39; Luke 3:21; 9:28; 22:39-46; 23:34, 46; John 6:11; 12:27-30).

A key discipleship moment took place when His prayed before raising Lazarus from the dead: “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me” (John 11:41–42). Christ’s prayers awakened faith and a desire for communion with the Father. The night before His crucifixion, He again spoke with His Father in the presence of His disciples:

I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. (John 17:20–21)

Christ’s purpose in prayer is missional. He desires people to know the Father sent Him, and He wants them to know they may commune directly with the Father:

The time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you. (John 16:25–27)

Christ’s goal in praying with His disciples was to help them understand they may pray directly to the Father in His name; this means “to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works” (White, 1892, p. 100). A part of working His works, is to join the Father in the ministry of intervening in answer to prayer.

#### Dimension 4: Sharing God’s Provision

Disciples who join with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the ministry of intervention, seek to live out the HELP Practices in the fourth dimension of missional prayer by supporting others in tangible ways. It is a natural shift from the third dimension of listening to people and

ministering in prayer to looking for tangible ways to share what God has provided. In this dimension of practical assistance, disciples apply the HELP practices by (a) heeding the needs of people, (b) engaging in caring service, (c) listening for next steps, and (d) praying for added provision, resources, and support. In many cases, as disciples partner with Jesus in prayer as commission, they may also find themselves moving from tangible support in Dimension 4 into listening and prayer in Dimension 3. But regardless of the sequence of the prayer as commission dimensions, a key question in Dimension 4 is: What good can we do for people?

Sometimes we can plan to do something good in advance for people. But most of the time the good God has prepared in advance for us to do looks spontaneous and serendipitous to us. We weren't planning it, but we were looking for it. And so we recognized the opportunity when it arrived to bless someone with a word of hope, an act of kindness, an attitude of grace, a little time or a little help. The good God has prepared for us to do often seems small but will always be significant. (Finke, 2014, pp. 119-120)

### **The Action of Intercession**

Biblical evidence for the significant work of helping others in tangible ways is found in the parable of the man who asked his neighbor for bread at midnight. In this parable, Jesus establishes a connection between prayer and practical help:

Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and he will answer from within and say, "Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you"? I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. (Luke 11:5-8)

From the parable's context, it is evident that Jesus is addressing the topic of prayer because the story follows the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:1-4), and precedes Christ's exhortation to ask for the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:9-13). Within the parable, the missional practice of praying for resources is comparable to the man persistently asking his neighbor for bread; but sometimes believers mistakenly think the words of prayer are enough. However, the man's service isn't complete in the asking. The message of the parable is that intercession involves action.

In the parable, three of the Dimension 4 HELP Practices are present. The first HELP Practice is implied; the man who went to his neighbor's house for bread had already heeded the

need of his tired and hungry friend who was staying in his home after a long journey. The gracious host carries out the second HELP Practice by engaging in the service of going on behalf of his guest to the neighbor's house in the middle of the night. The third practice of listening for next steps could have taken place at breakfast the next morning; this is left to the reader's imagination. The fourth HELP Practice of praying for resources has already been compared to the man's persistent asking. In summary, "Christ represents the petitioner as asking that he may give again. He must obtain the bread, else he cannot supply the necessities of a weary, belated wayfarer" (White, 1900, p. 140).

### **Becoming the Answered Prayer**

An instructive compliment to the lessons of tangible help in the parable of the midnight bread run is found in Christ's feeding of the great multitude (John 6:1-13). In the story, Jesus heeds the need of the people when he says to Philip: "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (John 6:5). Jesus was testing Philip to see if he had the faith to engage with Christ in the supernatural act of service He was about to perform on behalf of the multitude. But all Philip could see was the impossibility of the circumstance: "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little." (John 6:7). Andrew chimes in with a sliver of hope, but his faith is not much stronger: "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" (John 6:9). These two disciples were trying to listen for next steps, but the noise of unbelief was drowning out the silent reality of who was in their midst. Nevertheless, Jesus accepts the lad's lunch and offers a prayer of thanks to His Father. Then, He gave the blessed loaves and fish to the disciples who in turn gave to the multitude; that which was miraculously supplied in answer to prayer, became an answered prayer through the service of the disciples. Within missional prayer, this is the essence of helping others in tangible ways; disciples giving what they have received; disciples becoming answered prayers for those Christ has called them to serve.



## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented a theology for The Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer by examining missional instincts and missional practices in relationship to the dimensions of (a) God's call to mission (b) our response to God, (c) joining Jesus in the ministry of listening and prayer, and (d) sharing God's provision (see Table 1, p. 24). The first two dimensions take place on the mountaintop in the experience of prayer as communion. The last two dimensions take place among the multitude as disciples join Jesus in the experience of prayer as commission. Building upon this theological backdrop, Chapter 3 will examine literature from the past two decades related to this study's working definition of missional prayer, and narrow its review focus to joining Jesus in Dimension 3 of the Ebenezer Model.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE RELATING TO INTERPERSONAL PRAYER

#### **Introduction: Joining Jesus as a Conceptual Foundation**

The goal of this literature review is to provide a conceptual foundation for the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer by focusing on the third dimension of joining Jesus in the ministry of interpersonal listening and prayer. Based on the academic parameters of this project, it would be impractical to attempt a literature review of all four dimensions in the missional prayer framework: (a) God's call to mission, (b) our response to God, (c) joining Jesus in the ministry of listening and prayer, and (d) sharing God's provision (see Chapter 2, Table 1, p. 24). However, it is possible to build a foundation for the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer by narrowing the focus to joining Jesus in the ministry of listening and prayer.

In this review, joining Jesus in interpersonal ministry will emerge as the foundational dimension of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer, in part, because of its apparent absence in existing definitions of missional prayer. As a first step in building a conceptual foundation, this review selects a cornerstone for the Ebenezer Model through the creation of a working definition for missional prayer. Rather than competing with existing missional prayer definitions, or seeking to become a contrasting strategy, the Ebenezer Model provides a complimentary explanation of missional prayer by fusing existing meanings into an interpersonal definition. Working from this interpersonal definition, this review continues to build a conceptual foundation for the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer by identifying, summarizing, and comparing sources from the social

sciences and biblical discipleship studies that speak to the topics of prayer partnerships, establishing personal connection, and praying with people. The timeframe of this examination has been limited to sources published in the last two decades. Works outside these parameters have been cited when considered essential to the conversation.

### **The Meaning of Missional Prayer**

Laying the cornerstone of the Ebenezer Model's conceptual foundation begins with a survey of missional prayer definitions. After reviewing the current conversation regarding the meaning of missional prayer, the definition for the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer is given.

#### **Current Definitions**

According to InterVarsity leaders, missional prayer is “praying for the God-given mission of the Campus Mission and/or chapter. It is praying that God will establish and advance witnessing communities of students and faculty who declare Jesus as Savior and Lord” (Hull & Slaughter, 2008, p. 13). As a collaborative practice in the saving work of Christ, (Ingram, 2014; Sanou, 2015), missional prayer involves “praying our vision” of God’s finished mission “into reality” (Marshall, 2008, p. 5.03). This dynamic is alluded to in Chapter 2’s theological review of the prophet, Daniel, who prayed God’s vision into reality by asking the Lord to fulfill the 70-year-old promise He made to Israel through the prophet Jeremiah (Dan 9:1-3; Jer 29:10-14).

Like Daniel before him, Jesus’ parting prayer for unity in John 17 demonstrates missional alignment with His Heavenly Father (Brister, 2008; Gaiton, 2018). In addition, Christ’s unity prayer is the culmination of a teaching ministry in missional prayer that began when His disciples said, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). As “a seedbed of missional spirituality and radical discipleship” (Cronshaw, 2017, Introduction, para. 8), the Lord’s prayer helps disciples experience missional prayer as “any way of being with God that allows us to better understand God’s work in the world and that empowers us to participate more deeply in that work” (Harader,

2014, para. 7). Following in the footsteps of Christ, missional prayer warriors join the Father's work through: (a) "prayers of worship" in which we recognize that "our God is a missional... self-sending God," (b) "prayers of confession" in which we recognize that "what is wrong with the world begins with us," and (c) "Prayers of intercession" which include "prayers of forgiveness of our enemies" (Stone, 2009, para. 6).

Behind-the-scenes missional prayer is a catalyst that "propels you from your prayer closet into the world. It is interactive and provocative and helps us visualize the world we live in and gives us accessible prompts to help us know what and how to pray" (Carney, 2015, para. 6). A part of missional prayer's move into the world is seeking divine appointments by asking the Lord to "bring whomever he wanted us to bless across our paths" (Barnes, 2014, para. 3), and/or by asking God how to be "his agent of grace right where you are" (Eyb, 2017, para. 4). As agents of grace, who are with God in the presence of others (Willits, 2019), missional prayer ministers invite God to make himself known as Elijah did when he asked the Almighty to reveal Himself to Israel and the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel (Vanden Berg, 2014).

#### A Working Definition

Expanding on these definitions and descriptions, this study sees missional prayer as a person-to-person activity in which Christ's disciples listen to people and invite them into the throne room of grace by praying with them in response to the real needs, concerns, and dreams they have shared in conversation. Building on insights from Finke's chapter "Ministering Through Prayer" (Finke, 2014, pp. 125-134), in this study missional prayer is presented as an incarnational strategy to help disciples step out from behind their prayer closet door, to pray with people of diverse backgrounds and belief systems on the street, in the marketplace, at the office, or in their homes. Specifically, this involves the missional prayer warrior talking with God about their own story, asking Him to reveal people desiring to be heard, listening to their story with empathy, and praying for and/or with them about their story. As stated in Chapter 1, missional

prayer is a discipleship endeavor of prayer as communion and prayer as commission which fosters relational connectivity with God and people. Building upon the cornerstone of this working definition, a conceptual foundation for the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer comes together by examining what relevant literature has to say about the interpersonal aspect of missional prayer in relation to (a) prayer partnerships, (b) establishing personal connection, and (c) praying with people.

## **Prayer Partnerships**

### Historical Examples

Throughout Christian history people of missional faith have experienced the power of united prayer as they have partnered together in practical ways to pray and minister for the advance of God's kingdom. One of the most fruitful prayer partnerships was between the evangelist, Charles Finney and Daniel Nash, an Episcopal priest who provided behind-the-scenes prayer support for Finney as he helped spearhead the Second Great Awakening of the early 19th century. In a brief history of Nash and Finney's partnership, Reno (1989, paras. 18-20) recalls:

This evangelistic team operated on the basis of prayer being essential for the preparation of an area for evangelism... When God would direct where a meeting was to be held, Father Nash would slip quietly into town and seek to get two or three people to enter into a covenant of prayer with him. Sometimes he had with him a man of similar prayer ministry, Abel Clary. Together they would begin to pray fervently for God to move in the community. One record of such is told by Leonard Ravenhill:

'I met an old lady who told me a story about Charles Finney that has challenged me over the years. Finney went to Bolton to minister, but before he began, two men knocked on the door of her humble cottage, wanting lodging. The poor woman looked amazed, for she had no extra accommodations. Finally, for about twenty-five cents a week, the two men, none other than Fathers Nash and Clary, rented a dark and damp cellar for the period of the Finney meetings (at least two weeks), and there in that self-chosen cell, those prayer partners battled the forces of darkness.'

In describing Nash's intercession preceding an evangelistic effort, Finney is reported to have said: "He would pray until he got an assurance in his mind that God would be with me in preaching;" and after receiving God's assurance, Nash would come to Finney and say: "'The Lord has come, and He will be with us'" (Finney, 1792-1875, p. 106; Reno, 1989, para. 49).

Three to four months after Nash's death in 1831, Finney would leave his traveling evangelistic ministry for a pastorate (Reno, 1989); presumably because Finney did not feel he could continue in the Lord's evangelistic and revival efforts without Nash's ministry of intercession (D. Augsburg, personal communication, December 7, 2020).

In addition to the intercessory relationship of Nash and Finney, other significant prayer partnerships in the accomplishment of the Great Commission have included teams such as George and Mary Müller (Müller, 2003, 2020); Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, and his little sister, Amelia (Wade, 2008; Wei, 2013); James Fraser of China Inland Mission and his mother back in England (Fraser Crossman, 2011; Kuhn, 1966); the Operation Auca team of Jim Elliot, Pete Fleming, Nate Saint, Ed McCully, and Roger Youderian (Peña, 2019); in addition to the biblical examples of Barnabas and John Mark, Paul and Silas (Acts 15:37-40); and, Peter and John who went "up together to the temple at the hour of prayer" (Acts 3:1). When Jesus first called the twelve disciples, and later the seventy, He "sent them two by two," and told them to "pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Luke 10:2). From accounts of the Gospel writers, it is evident that Jesus wanted His disciples to partner in ministry and prayer:

I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them. (Matt 18:19-20)

Like the burning presence of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and the Almighty descending upon the Old Testament Sanctuary in a pillar of fire, Jesus promised to be present when two or more disciples gather in his name.

#### The Power of United Prayer

In regard to Jesus' united prayer promise in Matthew 18:19-20, early Adventist pioneer White (1993, p. 303) wrote in a letter to Brother and Sister Farnsworth:

The promise is made on condition that the united prayers of the church are offered, and in answer to these prayers there may be expected a power greater than that which comes in

answer to private prayer. The power given will be proportionate to the unity of the members and their love for God and for one another--Letter 32, 1903, p. 5.

In the words of the renowned pastor and evangelist Dwight Nelson, White's statement begs the question:

Why would we need to band together to pray for someone or something, some event or some need, when (1) God already knows the need, and (2) God surely doesn't need to hear multiple reminders from a group in order to respond to that particular (earnest or urgent) need? (Nelson, 2008, para. 1)

Nelson made this inquiry during an interview with the physicist and Anglican clergyman Polkinghorne; the theologian's reply was similar to what he writes in his book on science, religion, and truth:

Using a scientific metaphor, one may say that prayer seeks a laser-like coherence between divine and human wills. Laser light is powerful because it is what the physicists call coherent. All the waves are in step, so that all the crests coincide and add up, and all the troughs coincide and add down, yielding maximum effect. In incoherent light, crest and trough can coincide and cancel each other out. Prayer is seeking an act of laser-like coherence in human-divine cooperation. (Polkinghorne, 2011, p. 92)

In other words, greater unity in prayer will harness more of God's power for what God's people present to Him in prayer. Jonathan Graf (2010), president of the Church Prayer Leaders Network, identifies three major benefits of laser like prayer:

(1) Praying together invites the power and presence of the Holy Spirit... (2) praying together increases the faith of a congregation to believe God for the miraculous..., and (3) praying together moves people from seeking their purposes to desiring God's purposes. (paras. 4-17)

Part of the power of united prayer is not being limited to physical proximity. People may agree upon a specific time to be praying even if they are apart from one another. Additionally, as a supplement to in-person prayer gatherings, God is building a prayer movement through tele-conferencing and web-conferencing calls (NAD Prayer Ministries, 2019). In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of people turning to online prayer platforms is increasing (Abdollah, 2020). Around the world, and in the context of the local church, missional prayer partners can experience the power of united prayer via internet services like Google Hangouts (2015), Greater Calling (2015), Turbo Bridge (2015), and Zoom (2015).

Whether in-person or via technology, united prayer readies missional prayer partners to join Jesus in united mission (Mason, 2019; Perrin, n.d.). When they watch and pray together, the Holy Spirit brings a unity which empowers them to see and serve together (Fuqua, 2012; Sacks, 2004). Their shared anticipation in prayer paves the way for a corporate recognition of God’s hand at work. Gathered together in the upper room, Christ’s first disciples made themselves available to Him through united prayer, and when they heard the sound of a “mighty rushing wind,” and saw the Spirit appear above their heads as tongues of fire, they began to proclaim the risen Christ in various languages to the multi-ethnic multitude who had assembled because of the Spirit’s dramatic descent (Acts 1:14; 2:1-41 ESV).

An example of the power of united prayer is the story of the Brooklyn Tabernacle. As a basketball player and sociology graduate from the University of Rhode Island, Jim Cymbala had no theological training when God called him to pastor the Tabernacle. Writing about his early days in Brooklyn, the pastor recalls: “The embarrassing truth was that sometimes even I didn’t want to show up for a service— that’s how bad it was” (Cymbala & Merrill, 1997, p. 24). During this spiritual drought, God spoke to Cymbala’s heart on a fishing boat in Florida:

If you and your wife will lead my people to pray and call upon my name, you will never lack for something fresh to preach. I will supply all the money that’s needed, both for the church and for your family, and you will never have a building large enough to contain the crowds I will send in response. (p. 25)

From that moment forward, united prayer became the ministry benchmark at the Brooklyn Tabernacle and God grew their congregation from a small, dying church to a house of prayer with global impact. In addition to the inspiring narrative of *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, (Cymbala & Merrill, 1997), disciples who are looking to experience the power of united prayer may consult *The Lost Art of Praying Together* (Banks, 2009), *Mighty Prevailing Prayer* (Dewel, 1990, pp. 129-148), and *Praying for Rain: A Mini-Handbook for United Prayer* (Mason & Page, 2011).



## The Pragmatics of Prayer Partnerships

Within missional prayer ministry, a basic building block for harnessing the power of united prayer is a prayer partnership where at least two disciples agree to intercede together for the people in their community, and then enter their community to pray with those people (Matt 18:19–20). Such a partnership strengthens the courage of its participants as they minister “between the mountain and the multitude” (White, 1892, p. 101), and fulfill God’s desire for “us to be prayerful people of action: people who pray first and then act in response to His leading” (Banks, 2009, p. 71). This “pray... then act” principle is the heartbeat of Jesus’ missional commitment to only do “what he sees his Father doing” (John 5:19 NIV11). Replicating Christ’s example, His first century disciples followed the Lord’s “pray... then act” instructions by waiting in Jerusalem until the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8, 12-14). In addition, a thorough study of the book of Acts reveals that in the events following Pentecost, they continued to “pray... then act.”

Following the “pray... then act,” principle, disciples may establish an effective missional prayer partnership by implementing a series of helpful suggestions from Garlock and Sherrer (2001): (a) find someone who will provide accountability, (b) find a person with a similar life experience or background, and/or (c) wait for the Lord to bring the right prayer partner (pp. 27-40). Garlock and Sherrer also identify several “obstacles” that may hinder a prayer partnership from developing, or cause it to fizzle (pp. 41-43).

When it comes to jump-starting a prayer partnership, Klomp (2000) offers this counsel:

When you first begin meeting, it will be helpful to spend some time finding out about each other’s lives... (1) Tell each other about your families... (2) Tell each other about a best friend you have now or have had in the past... (3) Tell each other about your relationship with God... (4) Describe your spiritual history. (paras. 6-10)

As the prayer partnership progresses, Wright’s (Wright, 2010a, paras. 2-7; 2010b, paras. 3-10)

“Dozen Rules for Prayer Partners” will aid the journey. Some of her most helpful rules are

“practice gratitude... share yourself... structure topics...” and “what’s prayed here, stays here.”

What Wright means by “structure topics,” is to choose one or two areas of focus for a prayer time like children, church, or country. However, her 12 rules lack a strong missional guideline; challenging prayer partners to pray for people in their circle to become followers of Christ. While some might choose to leave this to the prayer partners to decide, in considering Christ’s command to make disciples, it seems every prayer partnership should intentionally make the great commission a priority.

In an effort to keep mission central within the prayer partnership, Christenson (2003) recommends forming prayer triplets where each partner prays for three people “in their own sphere of influence to be born again.” While her section entitled “How to Pray for Those Who Need Jesus” is helpful, a deficiency in Christenson’s approach is the lack of instruction on how to consistently “pray with people” as a part of the discipleship process. There can be a significant discipleship difference between only praying for others as compared to praying both, for and with people.

Trousdale (2012) gives a picture of prayer as discipleship (p. 61) in his chapter entitled “Jesus’ Counterintuitive Disciple-making Strategy” (pp. 32-65). According to Trousdale, “without intending to dilute the gospel, the traditional approach to evangelism sometimes settles for making converts, instead of Jesus’ final command to ‘make disciples . . . teaching them to observe all things’ that He commanded” (p. 39). As missional prayer partners pray with the people before conversion, they collaborate with the indwelling Christ in His work to move people toward a saving relationship involving faith, prayer, repentance, and salvation. Such a relationship represents a move beyond traditional conversion models of evangelism which suggest that “before people can be discipled, they must be saved and transformed by the Holy Spirit” (Gallaty, 2015, p. 169). Rather than converting people to a system of beliefs alone, prayer modeling serves as significant step in the discipleship journey of the pre-convert by introducing them to what it means to walk and talk with Jesus. In this manner, missional prayer is a starting

point for any number of disciple-making models based on the principle of helping others grow in their relational engagement with Jesus.

### **Establishing Personal Connection**

Engaging people through missional prayer requires a move from the mountaintop of prayer as communion, to prayer as commission among the multitude. The first step in this move is establishing personal connection. This might seem intimidating for those who are shy, introverted, or reserved, but in the words of Daniel Goleman (2006, p. 4) the good news is:

We are wired to connect. Neuroscience has discovered that our brain's very design makes it sociable, inexorably drawn into an intimate brain-to-brain linkup whenever we engage with another person. That neural bridge lets us affect the brain—and so the body—of everyone we interact with, just as they do us.

An affirmation of Goleman's conclusion, is the work of health psychologist McGonigal (2013), who says the activity of the brain's connection circuitry increases "as a part of the stress response" through the release of the neurohormone oxytocin. Popularly known as the "cuddle hormone," oxytocin is involved in much more of neuroscience's connection equation than physical contact alone:

It enhances your empathy. It even makes you more willing to help and support the people you care about... And when oxytocin is released in the stress response, it is motivating you to seek support. Your biological stress response is nudging you to tell someone how you feel, instead of bottling it up. (McGonigal, 2013, para. 36)

Because stress creates a longing for support, a compassionate disciple of Jesus who is committed to connecting with stressed out people, can make a significant difference as they minister through listening and prayer. Even introverts who "tend to engage well with people one-on-one" (Kuzmeski, 2014, para. 8) can effectively fulfill what Goulston (2010) calls the "mirror neuron receptor deficit" (p. 19).

Mirror neurons have been called "empathy neurons" (Ramachandran, 2007, para. 8), and "may prove to be one way nature causes us to care about other people" (Goulston, 2010, p. 19). In

addition to the empathy dynamic of mirror neurons, Goulston examines mirror neurons through the longing to be seen and heard:

Why is it that we often tear up when someone is kind to us? Why is it that we get a warm feeling when someone understands us? Why is it that a simple caring “Are you okay?” can so move us?

My theory, which my clinical findings support, is that we constantly mirror the world, conforming to its needs, trying to win its love and approval. And each time we mirror the world, it creates a little reciprocal hunger to be mirrored back. If that hunger isn’t filled, we develop what I refer to as ‘mirror neuron receptor deficit.’

In today’s world, it’s easy to imagine that deficit growing into a deep ache. Many of the people I work with— from CEOs and managers to unhappy spouses to clinically depressed patients—feel that they give their best, only to be met day after day with apathy, hostility, or (possibly worst of all) no response at all. In my belief, this deficit explains why we feel so overwhelmed when someone acknowledges either our pain or our triumphs. (p. 19)

Disciples who practice missional prayer have the opportunity to meet people’s need for support and fill their “mirror neuron receptor deficit” through the practice of three critical components for establishing personal connection: (a) listening well, (b) exercising empathy, and (c) practicing vulnerability.

### Listening Well

As the fifth habit of highly effective people, “seek first to understand, then to be understood” (Covey, 1989, p. 235) is central to listening well. Listening is practicing the golden rule through the intentional exercise of one’s eyes, ears, heart, mind, and speech to seek a clear understanding of another person’s experience. Listening involves more than just hearing what a person is saying, it “means you are consciously paying attention” (Center for Creative Ministry, 2010, p. 5). In contrast to paying attention, Nichols (2009) says:

Lack of listening impoverishes our most important relationships. We hurt each other unnecessarily by failing to acknowledge what the other one has to say. Whatever the arena, our hearts experience the failure to be heard as an absence of concern. (p. 3)

Nichols goes on to say: “Most failures of understanding are not due to self-absorption or bad faith, but to our own need to say something” (p. 3). Could seeking to tell before listening be the reason why some Christians are ineffective in sharing their faith? Or possibly they do not listen long enough? Rather than listening for understanding, they listen until they find some unbelief to

address, or error to correct. What might happen if a conscious effort were made to listen to the stories of unbelievers and seekers as the starting point of evangelism and discipleship?

Savage (1996) defines story listening as, “listening for the unconscious meaning in a person's story, told through themes and metaphors” (p. 76). The implication is that we listen between the lines for the deeper meaning of the story a person is telling. Savage also distinguishes between “primary” and “abstract” stories. A primary story is more concrete and the “metaphors and themes of the story are easily picked up” (p. 77). Children tend to tell primary stories. In contrast, an abstract story is more complex, and its purpose “is to protect the teller from becoming too exposed when the environment is threatening” (p. 78). Apparently, the older a person becomes, the more they feel the need to potentially protect themselves. Effective listening helps create a safe environment by paying attention to four levels within a storyteller’s narrative: (a) “Data back then,” i.e. information from their past, (b) “feelings back then, (c) feelings now,” and (d) “self-disclosure (or the moment of ‘Aha!’) (Savage, p. 79). This self-disclosure moment is when a person comes to a “conscious awareness” of the meaning of their story; it may be accompanied by laughter or tears (pp. 80-81).

From the perspective of the prayerful listener, the moment when the storyteller discovers the meaning of their story, may be considered an affirmation of the Lord’s exhortation to “be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (Jas 1:19 NIV11). “Spirit-led listening and wondering” is the gift of grace a prayer minister extends to the storyteller through the ministry of presence and attentiveness which creates “safe places” for storytellers “to bring their real selves into the light” (Pollock, 2009, p. 18). This gift has the potential to help the storyteller discover a new understanding of self, and more importantly, a new understanding of God’s work and presence in their life. Consequentially, the missional prayer minister who listens internally to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and externally to the narrative of the storyteller will often be given the opportunity by the Spirit to highlight God’s presence and work in the midst of the stories being communicated. Such a response is actually the greatest blessing a prayerful listener

can give, because this is when they begin introducing the storyteller to the Divine Author of their story.

Experts like Covey (1989), Goulston (2010), Nichols (2009), Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler (2011), and Savage (1996), offer a host of insights and listening strategies applicable to those in the ministry of discipleship through story discovery, but these resources are the proverbial tip of the listening iceberg. In spite of the impossibility of learning and applying all there is to know about listening from the vast array of literature and resources, developing a listening component within missional prayer ministry may be as simple teaching people to notice, pray, ask open ended questions, invite others to share, and reflect content and feeling. An excellent biblically based resource for moving prayer ministers in this direction is *The Arts of Spiritual Conversations* (QPlace, 2021). After beginning the journey of listening, other techniques and tips may be incorporated at a later time.

In light of these insights, the most important aspect of listening well is to be Spirit-led. Jesus told His disciples not to worry about what they would say when they were brought before governors and kings because the Holy Spirit would speak through them (Matt 10:18-20). In like manner, the Spirit of God is able to direct the prayer minister in the listening process as He did for Simon Peter during his meeting with Cornelius (Acts 10), or Philip with the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39). In principle, this promise may be claimed as the prayer minister listens to the stories of those in need: “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it’” (Isa 30:21 NIV11). This is not to take away from learning various listening strategies, but one should not wait to become a perfect listener before following the lead of God’s Spirit to exercise empathy in listening to others and praying with them.

## Exercising Empathy

If seeking understanding lies at the heart of listening, then empathy is about listening with heart. Empathy is a heart-connecting understanding that moves beyond mere head knowledge to show a genuine interest in the person who is sharing their story. According to Nichols (2009):

The essence of good listening is empathy, which can be achieved only by suspending our preoccupation with ourselves and entering into the experience of the other person. Part intuition and part effort, it's the stuff of human connection.

A listener's empathy—grasping what we're trying to say and showing it—builds a bond of understanding, linking us to someone who hears us and cares, and thus confirms that our feelings are legitimate and recognizable. The power of empathic listening is the power to transform relationships. When deeply felt but unexpressed feelings take shape in words that are voiced and come back clarified, the result is a reassuring sense of being understood and a grateful feeling of shared humanness with the one who understands. (pp. 9-10)

This kind of “shared humanness” is found at the heart of the gospel when the biblical account declares “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14), and later in Hebrews “we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4:15–16). Jesus exhibits empathy without sin. He completely understands because of His human nature, and yet He is completely able to deliver because of His divine nature. His very name is a picture of empathy: “Immanuel... God with us” (Matt 1:23).

The power of empathy lies in its ability to break the stronghold of sin and shame. Sin has been defined as “the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4 KJV), and shame comes as the result of this disobedience of God: “‘I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’ And He said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?’” (Gen 3:10–11). Before sin there was no shame: “they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Gen 2:25). After sin the man and woman were afraid and felt unworthy of being in God's presence. Brown (2012a) captures this sense of unworthiness in her contemporary definition of shame: “Shame is the intensely painful feeling or

experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging” (p. 68). According to Brown, love and belonging are, “irreducible needs of all men, women, and children. We’re hardwired for connection— it’s what gives purpose and meaning to our lives” (pp. 10-11). In her research Brown identifies 12 shame categories: “Appearance and body image, money and work, motherhood/fatherhood, family, parenting, mental and physical health, addiction, sex, aging, religion, surviving trauma, and being stereotyped or labeled” (p. 68). Potentially, any unwanted exposure of one’s personal life can induce shame.

So how does empathy work to break the power of shame? According to Brown (2012b):

If you put shame in a Petri dish, it needs three things to grow exponentially: secrecy, silence and judgment. If you put the same amount of shame in a Petri dish and douse it with empathy, it can't survive. The two most powerful words when we're in struggle: me too. (Brown, 2012b)

“Me too” is Brown’s catchphrase definition of empathy; to put it in God’s terms, “I am with you... I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Isa 41:10; Heb 13:5). Therefore, shame cannot survive empathy, because empathy speaks to the lie of being unworthy of belonging by showing up, listening, and being with the person who is experiencing the isolating fears of shame. The voice of empathy says, “me too. I understand what it is to feel rejection, fear, criticism, isolation, loneliness, and longing. You’re not alone, and you’re not crazy.” One might consider empathy to be the essence of Christian sanctification, or “the process by which we become more and more emotionally safe and available for others” (Brace, 2020, para. 8).

Building on the current empathy conversation, the Bible offers a second shame killer that a missional prayer minister may include in the Petri dish of empathy: Grace! If empathy says, “me too,” grace says, “I delight in you.” As missional prayer ministers grow in intimacy with Christ and one another through united prayer, the Holy Spirit can fill them with empathy and a godly delight for hurting people. As a result, missional prayer ministers’ conversations with those hungry for connection are infused with the joy of a Heavenly Father who sings over them (Zeph 3:17). Peter calls those who would join Jesus in His mission “stewards of the manifold grace of



God” (1 Pet 4:10). Such grace declares that in spite of a person’s sin and shame, God has chosen to be with them because He delights in them. Missional prayer ministers model this gospel in commission with Christ when they listen and pray with a vulnerability that says: “me too,” and “I delight in you.”

### Practicing Vulnerability

The vulnerability of empathy and grace begin when a disciple is alone with God in the prayer closet. When the pressure of ministry mounts, a healthy vulnerability will require the missional prayer warrior to come away from the multitude for extended time on the mountaintop. Failing to follow Jesus’ example makes missional prayer ministry impossible for the long haul. As Miller (2009, p. 45) says,

Jesus is, without question, the most dependent human being who ever lived. Because he can’t do life on his own, he prays. And he prays. And he prays. Luke tells us that Jesus ‘would withdraw to desolate places and pray’ (Luke 5:16).

When Jesus tells us that ‘apart from me you can do nothing’ (John 15:5), he is inviting us into his life of a living dependence on his heavenly Father. When Jesus tells us to believe, he isn’t asking us to work up some spiritual energy. He is telling us to realize that, like him, we don’t have the resources to do life. When you know that you (like Jesus) can’t do life on your own, then prayer makes complete sense.

In addition to making sense to the powerless, prayer is possibly the most vulnerable activity a person will engage in. The observation that “vulnerability is the currency of connection” could just as easily be made in the realm of missional prayer. Without an authentic prayer experience we have no collateral to connect with God; or others for that matter. If it is true that “faith minus vulnerability equals extremism,” (Brown, 2010b) could it also be true that ministry without a healthy vulnerability in moments of prayer as communion and/or prayer as commission might prove fatal?

Jacob appears to have escaped such a fatality during a formative moment of prayer-wrestling with “a Man” who was God (Gen 32:24). With his hip out of joint, the schemer pleaded in complete vulnerability: “I will not let You go unless You bless me” (Gen 32:26). In answer to his cry, the Divine opponent called him Israel; meaning “you have struggled with God and with

men, and have prevailed” (Gen 32:28). This identification of Israel as an overcomer is paradoxical in a world which sees vulnerability as weakness. “Now that Jacob was truly weak the Wrestler could not leave him. For Jacob depended on Him. It is when our thigh has been touched that we can hold God the closest. We are strongest when we are weakest (2 Cor 12:10)” (Nee, 2007, Chapter 14, para. 27).

Jacob’s moment of complete vulnerability before God, was a deliverance from a life of striving. His grappling at the intersection between his story and God’s story, prepared him to meet His older brother, Esau, at the intersection of reconciliation. Over 4000 years later, this paradoxical victory of weakness over strength will be echoed in the words of Theodore Roosevelt (1910):

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again... who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly. (para. 9)

Drawing upon Roosevelt’s 1910 portrait of “The Man in the Arena,” Brown (2012a, p. 2) says of vulnerability: “Rather than sitting on the sidelines and hurling judgment and advice, we must dare to show up and let ourselves be seen. This is vulnerability. This is daring greatly.” Calling her readers to dare greatly in spite of weakness, Brown makes room for a biblical courage which dares to show up and let God be seen.

The apostle Paul certainly dared to let God be seen: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief... that in me (Paul) first, Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.” (1 Tim 1:15–16) Like Paul and Jacob, missional prayer ministers who dare to wrestle with God at the intersection of their story, will be able to draw upon the vulnerable moments of their past to help others wrestle out their own stories with God. The compassion and empathy of the disciple who grapples with God in the prayer closet can effectively disarm the Father’s broken, doubting, and

frightened sons and daughters. By listening well, exercising empathy, and practicing a vulnerability that dares to let God be seen, personal connection is established, and a door for praying with others about their deepest needs and concerns is often left ajar.

### **Praying Effectively With People**

As a resource for stepping through this ministry door, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary compiled a five-part series of essays from faculty, program directors, and leaders on “ways Christians can pray with people experiencing life’s challenges” (2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e; 2020f, para. 1). However, according to the introductory comments in each of these PDF essay compilations, their goal is “helping Christian leaders—especially newer leaders—navigate theologically complicated issues with the people to whom they minister” (Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e; 2020f, para. 5). While the essays are informationally rich reference tool, they feel potentially complex for the average Christian and are explicitly geared toward Christian leaders with professional or clinical training. There is a lack of a clear and memorable prayer ministry strategy which may be utilized across the spectrum of 36 life challenges addressed by this compilation of essays.

The real challenge for any missional prayer resource is making this type of ministry accessible to ordinary Christians who may be new, inexperienced, or feel insecure about listening to people and praying with them. In his chapter entitled “Ministering through Prayer,” Finke (2014) addresses the fear of many Christians about praying aloud with people in their community:

People who try it report that you will be terrified only the first time. If you can step out beyond your fear and find out what it’s like to sense the kingdom coming near as you bless someone through prayer, you will suddenly realize it isn’t so bad. In fact it’s awesome! (Finke, 2014, p. 125)

The fear factor Finke mentions is real, and surfaced as a central part of participants’ concluding focus group discussion at the end of their missional prayer journey (see Definitions of Discipleship, Chapter 6, p. 121). In addition, one Alamosa prayer warrior experienced the

excitement Finke promises to anyone who will push past the fear factor and engage another person in a missional prayer moment.

Sue Kanen (see Appendix H, p. 223) related a story of overcoming her fears and experiencing the presence of God with a distraught twenty-something outside an Al-Anon meeting (personal communication, February 21, 2014). While Sue and her husband were in the meeting, the young woman walked in and asked if it would be okay for her to pray in the sanctuary. The group leader said: “Sure. No problem.”

A little while later, the young lady came back, expressed her thanks for being allowed to pray in the church, and went out the door. Sue could sense the young woman’s distress as she was thanking the group leader, and following the prompting of the Holy Spirit, Sue exited behind her and asked if it would be okay to pray with her. This was outside Sue’s comfort zone. She is not the type of person who would walk up to a total stranger and say, “I felt impressed to ask you if we could pray together.”

However, as Sue began to pray, the Spirit of God took over. When Sue referred to the young woman as her Heavenly Father’s princess and mentioned how precious she was to God, the woman burst into tears. “She hugged me with a profound sense of gratitude,” Sue says. “We were standing out in the cold, but it was a warm and healing hug. So much so, I could physically feel it.”

Some might feel they could never have the courage to pray with a stranger or even a friend out loud. But throughout his book, Finke (2014) removes much of the fear factor by laying a foundation for ministering through prayer that includes “seeking the kingdom, hearing from Jesus, talking with people, and doing good” (p. 125). Through these simple steps, those in a disciple’s circle of influence see that they care and can be trusted. This strategy echoes Jesus’ approach. “The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’” (White, 1909, p. 143).

With some people, it may take several encounters and acts of kindness before they are willing to receive prayer; for others who are hungering for the support of an empathic listener, a single conversation may be all it takes. Whether a person accepts prayer in the first interaction or not, the key is to stay engaged and ask God to provide opportunities to build relationship. The call of Christ is to love and bless others even when they are hostile or resistant.

Based on a growing relationship of trust, the friend of the prayer minister will eventually share a burden or concern. According to Finke, “Instead of wishing them ‘luck’ with their burden, we can help them with their burden. We can say something like, ‘Wow. That’s a lot to be going through. Would you like me to pray with you about that?’” (Finke, 2014, p. 126). Many will be receptive to this kind of an offer. When a person shows a genuine appreciation for the invitation to pray, it is a great time to ask:

‘May I pray with you right now?’ You see, people who say yes to prayer often assume that the praying will be done later... So while people may be thankful that you offered to pray for them, your follow-up invitation to pray in this moment moves them from mild gratitude to an actual encounter with the kingdom and the King. (Finke, 2014, p. 126)

Like a hotel attendant assisting a customer with their luggage, through on-the-spot listening and prayer, a disciple can help people bring their baggage to Jesus.

As one moves forward in the process of praying with people, uncomplicated prayers are best because “if we keep it simple, we give the person a model of prayer they can imitate” (p. 126). The goal of missional prayer ministry is ultimately making disciples, and if the prayers being modeled are complex and filled with a lot of flowery language, the seeker or unbeliever will be discouraged from praying. As one pastor said about his praying spouse, “Wherever we go, she asks the people to pray with her, even if they are not believers. She tells the people that prayer is simply asking God what they need. She prays with people, not just for them” (Trousdale, 2012, p. 61). In summary, the key principles of missional prayer ministry are to prepare in prayer, listen with empathy, demonstrate vulnerability, and model simplicity when praying with others.

A Neurosurgeon's memoir (Levy & Kilpatrick, 2010) of learning to pray with his patients illustrates the potential of these principles as a discipleship catalyst for believers who have a deep insecurity about interpersonal prayer ministry. At first, Dr. Levy was terrified to pray with his patients, because surgeons are expected to be superheroes that show no weakness. However, through the strength of vulnerability, he stepped out of his professional box and into the world of missional prayer. Over time, he moved from praying with patients when the other medical staff were not around to inviting other nurses and doctors to join him in prayer before a major surgery.

One of Dr. Levy's most compelling accounts is of a woman named Claudia who came to him because of severe headaches. She believed they were caused by an aneurism, even though her scans were negative. "You are much more complex than your MRI scan shows," Dr. Levy told Claudia, "There is more to you than what we can see on these studies. How are your relationships?" (p. 261) As it turns out, Claudia's relationship with her parents was strained, and she claimed not to believe in God because she was molested at the age of nine. Dr. Levy told Claudia,

'I'm very sorry about what happened when you were nine... A lot of people would be angry with God and would be asking why he allowed that to happen.'

'Yeah,' she agreed.

I noted to myself that she had just agreed that there was a God and that she was indeed angry with him. That was progress. (Levy & Kilpatrick, 2010, pp. 262-263)

At this point Dr. Levy encouraged Claudia to consider telling God how she felt. When she argued in irritation that God already knew her feelings, Dr. Levy replied: "God can read your mind. He knows all your thoughts, but eavesdropping does not constitute a relationship." (p. 263). His response brought a smile to Claudia's face, and based on her positive response, Dr. Levy encouraged Claudia to tell God she was choosing to trust He is good, and to give the Lord permission to address her unanswered questions according to His timeframe. When Dr. Levy said this, Claudia began to cry and pray spontaneously from her heart. After opening up to God, she was ready to forgive her parents in prayer. By the time they were finished, Claudia told Dr. Levy:

“I feel very strange right now... Lighter, like a lot of stuff just left me” (p. 267). In this case Levy was Heaven’s bellhop, and through the HELP Practices, he heeded Claudia’s circumstance, engaged with her in conversation, listened to her story, and helped her take her baggage to the throne room of grace through interpersonal prayer.

### **Conclusion**

As the culmination of this literature review of joining Jesus in the ministry of listening and prayer, Dr. Levy’s interpersonal prayer journey illustrates the elements of this chapter’s conceptual foundation for the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer. Levy’s experience affirms this study’s working definition of missional prayer as a discipleship endeavor in prayer as communion and prayer as commission which fosters relational connectivity with God and people. His experience of learning to minister through listening and prayer also demonstrates that prayer partnerships, establishing personal connection, and praying with people are critical parts of the conceptual foundation this chapter has built for the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer. As Levy sought to listen, empathize, and practice vulnerability in his consultation with Claudia, he demonstrated missional prayer’s potential as a relational catalyst for discipleship.

Moving forward, Chapter 4 will address how the discipleship journey of the researcher shaped the development of the missional prayer intervention. Chapter 5 will tell the story of implementation by describing pre-launch steps, the impact of the Ebenezer LifeGroup, and post Ebenezer LifeGroup insights. Chapter 6 will discuss this study’s method of evaluation for the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer, provide learning outcomes, and offer recommendations for the reader and researcher.

## CHAPTER 4

### A MISSIONAL PRAYER INTERVENTION

#### **Introduction**

The LifeGroup curriculum, *Ebenezer: A Missional Prayer Journey*, was written as a pilot intervention to help a small group of Collegedale Church attenders/members grow in their interpersonal courage to make friends for Jesus through listening and prayer. The Ebenezer LifeGroup participants in this study were able to expand their understanding and experience of prayer as communion and prayer as commission through eight missional prayer lessons which introduced them to the HELP Practices of Heeding, Engaging, Listening, and Prayer. Following a developmental narrative, this chapter provides a description of each lesson in the eight-week curriculum, and concludes with a description of the intervention steps (See Appendix A, p. 133 & Appendix B, p. 137 for the Ebenezer LifeGroup Leader's materials).

#### **The Story Behind the Ebenezer Model's Development**

The development of the Ebenezer LifeGroup Curriculum was influenced by my personal discipleship journey and the missional resources described in this chapter 4. In partnership with Chapter 2's theology of missional prayer, and Chapter 3's insights from relevant literature, the personal experiences and missional insights described in this narrative shaped the language, tools, and Ebenezer LifeGroup Lessons that became a part of this study's discipleship intervention.



## A Discipleship Journey of Discovery

I was introduced to the experience of missional prayer long before discovering a language and conceptual framework for the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer. Some of the formative experiences the Lord used to disciple me in missional prayer included learning to pray from my mother and grandmother, Christian Nurture Class at Andrews Academy, a teen prayer conference in the Ozarks, walking through a living parable in Manitou Springs, befriending our next-door neighbors in Wyoming, and being reunited with one of their children over a decade later.

### **Learning to Pray as a Child**

My earliest memories of talking to God were kneeling to say bedtime prayers with my mother. I also remember, my paternal grandmother, Nani, teaching me this prayer: “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer” (Ps 19:14 KJV). David’s prayer for God-honoring words and thoughts is the first Bible verse I committed to memory. While I did not realize it at the time, my mother and grandmother were discipling me in core aspects of prayer as communion. Mother taught me I could talk to God, and Nani introduced me to memorization and praying His Word.

### **Christian Nurture Class**

The discipleship experiences of home were complimented by those at Andrews Academy in Berrien Springs, Michigan. In the spring of 1989, I was a part of the Christian Nurture Class taught by Glenn Russell and Gary Burns. Our chief task was to lead the student week of prayer at the end of the semester. In class, we learned to intercede for our fellow students, pray Bible promises, study God’s word for messages of hope, and share testimonies of the ways God was working in our daily lives. At the time, the discipleship moments of home and school prepared me to minister to my peers through prayer, singing, and the spoken word. In the future, they

would serve as an experiential foundation for the four-dimensional missional prayer framework and its Heed-Engage-Listen-Pray, HELP Practices (see Chapter 1, *Figure 1*, p. 8).

### **Ozark Academy Teen Prayer Conference**

Another formative experience came at the 1995 teen prayer conference at Ozark Adventist Academy in Gentry, AR. Shortly before the start of seminary, I served as an adult sponsor on this trip. As a final confirmation of my call to ministry, the Holy Spirit worked through the stirring prayer sessions, courageous testimonies, and heart to heart conversations with the group of Michigan high schoolers I accompanied. God also used this conference to lay the groundwork for my service as Rocky Mountain Conference prayer coordinator several years later. From my freshman year at Andrews Academy in 1987, to graduating from seminary in 1998, Jesus was fostering a longing in me to minister through prayer.

### **The Manitou Incline: A Living Parable**

After seminary, I spent 10 months pastoring in Colorado Springs and Woodland Park, Colorado. Toward the end of my tenure, I hiked the Manitou Incline with a church member one evening. Converted into a hiking trail, the Incline is an old cog railway that gains over 2000 feet of elevation in less than a mile; 2,744 railroad ties comprise its rugged steps (Visit Colorado Springs, 2020). During the grueling ascent, with heart pounding and lungs burning, I would put both hands behind a thigh and alternate lifting each leg from one step to the next. While struggling through every next step, I began to pray for strength. In response to my cry, the Holy Spirit brought this little mantra to mind: “Every step you take I am with you; I am with you every step of the way.” Lifting one leg up, I would say, “every step you take I am with you.” Then, lifting the opposite leg to the next railroad tie, I would say, “I am with you every step of the way.”

After God walked me through this living parable, when I arrived home at 10 p.m. that evening, I received a phone call from my conference president, “Are you sitting down?” He asked. “We’d like you and Ingrid to consider moving to Northern Wyoming to pastor a five-

church district” (J. Brauer, personal communication, May 1999). God anticipated Elder Brauer’s call before he dialed, and on the incline the Holy Spirit promised to be with us every step of the way in Wyoming.

This Ebenezer moment is a reminder in my discipleship experience of God’s abiding presence and our basic task as disciples to answer two questions: (a) What is our next step with Jesus? and (b) How can we help those in our circle of influence take their next step with Jesus? Through the parable of the incline, and subsequent discipleship experiences, missional prayer would eventually surface as a potential catalyst for helping others follow Christ one step at a time.

### **“You May Not Withhold Your Help!”**

In the summer of 1999, my next step in the principles of missional prayer occurred in Northern Wyoming. Like God’s missional activity before speaking our world into existence, mission would precede creation in my own life. Eighteen years before the Lord provided a language and structure for the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer, HELP practices, and ARC Instincts; He worked through listening and prayer to launch my wife, Ingrid and me on the mission of making friends with our neighbors Benito and Rhonda (pseudonyms).

Shortly after our arrival, Ingrid and I knelt to pray in the empty dining room of our recently purchased home on 1112 Grace Ave: “Father God, will you help us to reach our neighbors for Christ?” Before we finished praying, we heard guitar music coming through the window. Through Ingrid, the Holy Spirit encouraged me to join our neighbor, Benito, who was strumming on his back deck. Only now, do I realize how the Lord was leading me through the first two HELP Practices by inviting me to heed Benito’s guitar playing, and engage him through a request to play together.

Following my back-porch jam with Benito, Ingrid became friends with Rhonda, Benito’s live-in girlfriend. They began to attend a once-a-month women’s ministry night at the Worland

church. Ingrid also took Rhonda's 12-year-old son, Alex (see Appendix H, p. 223), to Pathfinders and Christmas caroling.

In addition, Rhonda began reaching out for computer support. After she left several voice messages, I began to feel guilty for not responding. While driving home from the other side of the district one evening, I was struck with the thought, "You're going all over creation to reach people for Jesus, but ignoring the requests of your next-door neighbors." I did not dwell on the thought, but a couple of days later I had a missional prayer moment as I was reading my Bible. In Deuteronomy 22, Moses tells the children of Israel what to do if a neighbor's ox, sheep, or donkey wanders away, and concludes with this mandate: "You may not withhold your help" (Deut 22:3 NRSV). Through this imperative, God had my attention; and heeding His word, I wrote the following prayer in my journal:

Lord, You know I have felt rebuked before about not reaching out to Benito and Rhonda, and this text speaks volumes. Maybe this is the text I'm looking for to go over there this morning... Help me step out in faith and do this. I don't know what You want to say or do through me. But I pray they will be home and I'll be able to minister to them. God, please help Benito to open his heart to You. Help him to give his life over to You, rather than simply saying he is strong and trying to get by. (Moon, 2000)

I was not much help when it came to Rhonda's computer; but in answer to this prayer, I had the opportunity to invite Benito to return to God and rekindle his first love for Christ. Through our time together, a seed was planted for God's kingdom, and a crucial conversation took place because I chose to respond to the Lord's command: "You may not withhold your help" (Deut 22:3 NRSV).

In retrospect, Jesus was walking me through the second dimension of missional prayer by allowing me to: (a) heed His word in Deuteronomy 22:3, (b) engage in reflection about Moses' instructions regarding a neighbor's wandering livestock, (c) listen for the Lord's instructions regarding my next steps with Benito and Rhonda, and (d) pray for the courage to go over and help. While Benito and I had this heart-to-heart conversation in 2000, it was 17 years before the Lord led me to the Heed-Engage-Listen-Pray, HELP Practices, during my doctoral studies.

## **Riding Shotgun**

Over a decade after my conversation with Benito, Rhonda's son, Alex, contacted me on Facebook Messenger: "I was just telling my band mates about you the other day when I sent a friend request. I told them you helped me discover music" (A. Carrillo, personal communication, January 13, 2016). The Lord had used my back-porch jam with Benito to establish a relational bridge with Alex. During this initial reconnection, we discussed Alex's efforts to stay sober and apprehensions about fatherhood. With his firstborn son on the way, Alex wanted to provide a better life for his son than he'd experienced as a child.

A year later, we spoke again. On February 10, 2017, the Lord brought Alex to mind in my quiet time. After seeing a picture of Alex and his new baby on Facebook, I sent this message: "Alex, just wanted you to know that I'm praying for you today. Your son is a handsome little man... May the peace of God guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus today... Love you brother" (J. G. Moon, Personal communication, February 10, 2017). Six weeks later, Alex sent this desperate reply (A. Carrillo, personal communication, March 28, 2017):

Hey Mr. Jim!!! I know I'm very late with this message and I'm sorry!! Thanks for the prayers and kind words. I remember those days of you coming over playing guitar. I remember you and Ingrid treating me like family. I never forget that trip. We went to the mountains... went sledding and ate homemade chili with some kind folks.

My son makes me very happy Jim. I've been meaning to get back with You. But Mr. Jim I've been lost! Drugs and alcohol have taken over my life and I'm trying to find a way out!!! It's been since March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017 that I've allowed drugs in my body and I'm suffering extreme anxiety and facing depression. My body is detoxing very bad and I'm slowly losing myself. But I'm trying to stay strong for my son and family! I can really use your help Mr. Jim. I'm tired of living the life I've been living the past 12 years!!!!

Alex's message was sobering. I did not know what to say or do. Asking the Lord for help, I encouraged him that he was making good choices by reaching out and sharing his story. In response, Alex simply wrote: "I'm scared Jim!!! I'm scared it's too late" (A. Carrillo, personal communication, March 28, 2017). At this point, I knew I had to reach out by phone, and immediately, his story started pouring out.

From his laundry list of shame and regrets, these words were most sobering:

Jim, my friends don't even know my real name. They all call me 'Solo,' because I'm the lead singer in my band, the life of the party, and the one who brings drugs to the gigs. But they don't even know my name. (A. Carrillo, personal communication, March 28, 2017)

In this moment the Holy Spirit gave me a reply: "Alex," I said, "maybe you need to let Jesus be 'Solo,' and you can ride shotgun" (J. G. Moon, personal communication, March 28, 2017). This response illustrates one of the key principles of the interpersonal dimension of missional prayer: let the person's story tell you the next thing to say, or the next question to ask. In this case, the Holy Spirit put it on my heart to suggest riding shotgun. His reply startled both of us:

It's funny you would say that, because there is this Christian couple that befriended my girlfriend and I. About a week ago the wife messaged me on Facebook and said, "Alex, you need to let Jesus be in the driver's seat of your life... turn over control, and let Jesus take the wheel!"

Mr. Jim, I texted her back and said, 'Yeah, maybe I do need to give Jesus the wheel, and I can ride shotgun.' (A. Carrillo, personal communication, March 28, 2017)

Recognizing the work of the Holy Spirit in Alex's own words, I responded with confidence:

'God is telling you it's not too late Alex. I didn't know about your conversation with this woman. I didn't know she told you to give Jesus the wheel or that you had said you could ride shotgun. In Revelation Jesus promises to give those who are victorious a white stone with a new name on it. God is giving you a new name Alex: It's Shotgun. As you let Him take the wheel, He's going to get you to where you need to go'. (J. G. Moon, personal communication, March 28, 2017)

Christ has worked through my friendship with Alex to teach me the practices of missional prayer, by providing an experiential understanding of what it means to heed the person He shows me, engage with them in conversation, listen to their story, and pray with them. In addition, as a result of our ongoing conversations, Alex now prays aloud over the phone. Through our journey, I have seen the potential of missional prayer as relational catalyst for discipleship, the two-way nature of discipleship. In this two-way dynamic, when followers of Jesus listen to those they engage for God's kingdom, Jesus teaches them through the people they are discipling.

## Language and Tools

My relationship with Alex is a continuation of my journey with Jesus from childhood to the present. Along the way, the Lord provided first-hand experience in various aspects of listening and prayer that helped me recognize and develop the name, HELP Practices, *Ebenezer Journal* (see Appendix C, p. 142), check-up questions, missional instincts, and missional prayer curriculum for this study through theological study (Chapter 2), a review of relevant literature (Chapter 3), and the missional resources referenced below.

### **A Name for the Ministry of Listening and Prayer**

An early discovery in the formulation of the *Ebenezer Curriculum* came from the ministry of Dwelling 1:14 (2017). In his book *Joining Jesus on His Mission*, Dwelling 1:14's founder, Greg Finke (2014) shares the story of a woman who prayed with her lawn guy after he shared about his mother's battle with cancer. In her email account to Finke, she wrote: "I had the opportunity (and it's really a first for me!) to [take up the practice of missional prayer] with our lawn mowing guy" (Finke, 2014, p. 136). Missional prayer was the key term I was seeking to describe the process of listening and praying with people about their story; what Finke calls "Ministering Through Prayer" (pp. 131-142).

### **The Practices of Missional Prayer**

In addition to Finke's work, the formulation of the HELP Practices for this study was influenced by "The 9 Arts of Spiritual Conversations" (Schaller & Crilly, 2016). However, I was looking for something more memorable than Schaller and Crilly's (2016) nine arts of noticing, praying, listening, asking questions, loving, welcoming, facilitating, serving together, and sharing. In seeking to synthesize what I was learning from Finke (2014), Schaller, and Crilly (2016), four missional practices surfaced: (a) notice, (b) engage, (c) listen, and (d) pray. During a 2017 conversation with Alphonse Rotinsulu, the student leader for our Renewal Worship Service, he suggested, "If you had a word for notice that began with H, it would spell the word HELP" (personal communication, September, 2017). Through our shared brainstorm, we came up with

the word “heed,” the launching point of the HELP Practices. As a clear, simple, and memorable framework, the HELP acronym became the catalyst for an effective missional prayer curriculum.

### **The Ebenezer Journal**

Backtracking to 2014, I initially thought the discipleship training would be limited to teaching people how to listen to others and pray with them. However, in our 2015 class on *The Personal Practice of Biblical Spirituality*, Professor Walshe challenged me to make space in the missional prayer curriculum for those who would not be ready to minister to others through listening and prayer: “How can you help them get to this place, and then teach them to listen and pray interpersonally?” (A. Walshe, personal communication, April 22, 2015).

Building on this observation, I understood the most effective disciple makers teach what they have experienced. In contemplating practices that would help people grow in their relationship with God, Cordeiro’s (2013) *Life Journal* strategy quickly surfaced as a clear choice. *Life Journaling* is a relational Bible reading strategy I have followed for years. It teaches disciples to hear and respond to God by prayerfully journaling through Scripture. Each day, after reading passages from a Bible reading plan, a person writes out the verse that spoke to them, journals a few lines of observation about the meaning of the verse, writes how they think the verse applies to their journey with Jesus, and concludes by responding to God in prayer.

I was confident the *Life Journal* model and *Experiencing God* principles (Blackaby et al., 2007) could be combined in the HELP framework to create an expanded discipleship tool that would allow Christ followers to chronicle what they hear God saying through Scripture, prayer, circumstances, the church, and their missional interactions with people. Based on this expanded discipleship capacity and the biblical meaning of Ebenezer as “the stone of the help” (Nichol, 1976), I created an *Ebenezer Journal* (see Appendix C, p. 142) that allowed disciples to utilize the HELP Practices to build a written Ebenezer of God’s faithfulness in their missional prayer journey on the mountain and among the multitude.



With the *Ebenezer Journal*, LifeGroup participants had the opportunity to chronicle their prayer as communion and prayer as commission moments. Following the framework in prayer as communion, they could: (a) heed God’s word by writing the verse which caught their attention, (b) engage in reflection by journaling a few lines about the meaning of the passage, (c) listen for the next step or word of encouragement the Holy Spirit was bringing to light from the passage, and (d) pray about what the Spirit is saying through Scripture. In a prayer as commission entry, participants could: (a) heed, by writing the person’s name and what they noticed about the individual, (b) engage, by writing about how they initiated a conversation, (c) listen, by writing a summary of the other person’s story and how they saw God working, and (d) pray, by journaling about the person’s receptivity to God and prayer, and asking God to continue working in their lives.

**The HELP Check-up**

In addition to journaling, the intervention would reinforce the HELP Practices through a series of weekly check-up questions (see Table 2, p. 72). The initial check-up questions were customized in lessons one and two of the small group leader’s guide (see Appendix A, p. 133). In lessons three through eight, the questions remained the same (see Table 2, p. 72). The choice to include the HELP Check-up in the Ebenezer LifeGroup sessions was influenced by Finke’s five practices and questions (Finke, 2014, p. 155), the Discover Bible Study questions outlined in *Miraculous Movements* (Trousdale, 2012, pp. 191-196), and the Discovery Groups questions in *Contagious Disciple Making* (Watson & Watson, 2014, pp. 151-152).

Table 2

*HELP Check-up Questions*

	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Commission</b>
<b>H:</b>	How did you heed God’s Voice?	Who did you heed?
<b>E:</b>	How did you engage in reflection?	How did you engage in conversation?
<b>L:</b>	How did the Spirit invite you to obey?	What was their story?
<b>P:</b>	How did you pray?	What was your prayer response?

In contrast to predominately informational forms of discipleship used in Adventist public evangelism, Sabbath School lessons, Bible studies, or sermons, the questions used in these resources are designed to create a more relational discipleship experience through a process of listening, story-telling, and facilitated discovery of the gospel. The HELP Check-up was intended to aid Ebenezer LifeGroup members in recognizing the points of intersection between one another's stories and God's story; thereby helping them prepare to listen and pray with people in their community

### **Missional Instincts**

Based on their engagement with the HELP Practices and check-up questions throughout the eight-week training, the Ebenezer LifeGroup members participated in before and after focus group sessions which sought to discern their understanding and growth in the missional traits of (a) awareness of God's presence, (b) responsiveness to His voice, and (c) interpersonal courage in the mission of making disciples. Additionally, the execution of the Ebenezer LifeGroup intervention led to a clarification process in which these traits came to be known as missional instincts. The "Outcomes" section of chapter 6 describes this clarification process.

### **Developmental Summary**

To summarize this narrative of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer, its development as a relational catalyst for attenders and members of the Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist church to make disciples is the result of my past and present discipleship journey with Jesus. This journey has included formative experiences at home, Andrews Academy, the Adventist Theological Seminary, and within pastoral ministry from 1998 to the present. Without Christ's presence and activity in my story there would be no missional prayer intervention. In conjunction with the theological reflection and literature review of Chapters 2 and 3, plus key missional resources referenced in this chapter, the experiences Jesus brought me through have been central

to the recognition and creation of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer and Ebenezer LifeGroup Curriculum described below.

### **Ebenezer: A Missional Prayer Curriculum Overview**

The weekly LifeGroup Curriculum entitled, *Ebenezer: A Missional Prayer Journey*, included eight lessons designed to foster the growth of group members' relationship with Jesus and others by teaching them to engage in prayer as communion and prayer as commission. The four prayer as communion lessons sought to build on the theology of Chapter 2 by helping disciples recognize the first dimension of God's call to mission. They were also designed to help Ebenezer LifeGroup members engage in missional prayer's second dimension of responding to God by heeding His voice, engaging in reflection, listening for direction, and conversing in prayer. The prayer as commission lessons also drew upon insights from Chapter 2's theology of missional prayer, as well as insights from chapter three's literature review on prayer partnerships, establishing personal connection, and praying with people. A small group leader's guide and accompanying keynote presentation were created for each lesson (see Appendices A & B, pp. 154 & 158). Following an overview of the basic lesson structure and assignments, a brief summary of each Ebenezer LifeGroup lesson is provided.

#### **Ebenezer LifeGroup Lesson Structure**

The Ebenezer LifeGroup lesson structure was adapted from my lecture notes for *Mentoring for Discipleship and Biblical Spirituality* (A. Walshe, personal communication, February 8, 2016). Organized under the headings of Heed, Engage, Listen, and Pray, the 90-minute missional prayer lessons included the following seven elements (See Appendix A, p. 133):

Heed:

1. *Transition Moment*: A five to ten-minute time for Ebenezer LifeGroup members to unplug from the stress of the day and engage together in a non-threatening question.

2. The *HELP Check-up*: A time for the group to discuss assignment outcomes from the previous week and engage with the check-up (see Table 2, p.72).

Engage:

3. *Teaching Time*: A ten to fifteen-minute lesson covering essential skills related to prayer as communion and prayer as commission. This segment usually begins with the words “a lesson in...”

Listen:

4. *Connection Segment*: Twenty minutes to practice connecting with God or people through a specific skill relating to missional prayer. Practice sessions took place individually, with a prayer partner, in groups, or with the entire Ebenezer LifeGroup.
5. *Debrief*: A time for group members to share key learnings from the teaching and practice times.

Pray:

6. *Worship*: A thirty-minute season of group worship and prayer.
7. *Pray It Forward*: Two to three assignments for Ebenezer LifeGroup members to complete in the coming week.

### Assignments

In addition to the Ebenezer LifeGroup meeting, weekly assignments were to include practicing devotional habits or missional prayer skills for a minimum of one hour and praying with one’s prayer partner at least once before the next meeting. The combined time commitment of the weekly Ebenezer LifeGroup meetings and assignments was to be approximately three hours for each missional prayer participant.

### Lesson Descriptions

*Ebenezer: A Missional Prayer Small Group Leader’s Guide*, was comprised of four lessons on prayer as communion, and four lessons on prayer as commission. This description of the Ebenezer LifeGroup leaders guide highlights the core teaching and connection segments of each lesson.

## **Lesson 1: God Our Help**

Lesson 1 is the first prayer as communion lesson in the curriculum. Through the teaching and connection segments of the lesson, Ebenezer LifeGroup members learned to commune with the Father by praising Him for who He is and thanking Him for what He has done.

In the first part of the connection segment members engaged in an activity called Confessional Praise by journaling on the question: who is God for where an individual is currently at in their present thoughts, feelings, and experiences? For example, if a person were to be feeling anxiety, his or her confessional praise might be: “Lord in the midst of my anxiety and stress I declare that You are my Prince of Peace, my Comforter and Friend.” By seeking to combine emotional honesty and praise, the purpose of this exercise was to lift participants above their circumstances to a vantage point where they can see from God’s perspective (A. Walshe, personal communication, April 17, 2015). The second part of lesson one’s connection segment was an exercise called Thanks-Listening in which participants asked God to bring His blessings to mind. As the Holy Spirit reminded them of specific blessings, they were to record words of gratitude in their *Ebenezer Journal* (see Appendix C, p. 142).

## **Lesson 2: Seeking God’s Help**

*Seeking God’s Help* is the second prayer as communion lesson in the curriculum. The lesson’s teaching time highlights God’s initiative from Dimension 1 of the missional prayer process, introduces the theological background of the Ebenezer (see 1 Sam 7:1-12), and proposes that journaling through God’s word can be a way to raise a written Ebenezer in remembrance of the things the Lord has said and done in our personal quiet time and interpersonal ministry moments.

After learning the theological background for the *Ebenezer Journal*, Ebenezer LifeGroup members were introduced to the process of utilizing the HELP Practices to journal step by step through the story of the woman at the well. Falling under the prayer as communion branch of missional prayer, the process included the following steps: (a) heeding God’s word by writing the

portion of the passage which peaked their interest, (b) engaging in reflection by writing questions or observations about the meaning of the passage, (c) listening for next steps from the Holy Spirit by writing down how He was seeking to provide encouragement, correction, and direction through the passage, and (d) praying authentically about what God is saying as a directive, word of exhortation, or word of encouragement. An instructional slide was left on the screen for Ebenezer LifeGroup members to refer to at any time as they journaled on John 4:1-42. Group members who struggled with writing were encouraged to write brief bullet points about their observations and applications from the word. The purpose of the exercise was not to write a lengthy essay, but to create a written Ebenezer of God's help that can be revisited for future encouragement and clarity.

### **Lesson 3: Joining Jesus**

After the initial two lessons on communing with God in prayer, Lesson 3 focused on prayer as commission by applying the HELP Practices to joining Jesus in the ministry of listening. Building on Chapter 3's theological discussion of *shema*, the teaching segment highlighted the significance of Jesus' disciples noticing others with the intent to act and engage. In regard to heeding, participants were encouraged to notice a person's body language, stage of life, facial expressions, companions, and the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Participants also learned to engage others in conversation through a request, observation, or open-ended question. The final portion of the teaching segment included the following listening tips: (a) realize you are not alone, (b) reflect content and feeling, (c) respond with genuine interest and empathy, (d) refrain from judgment, over-reacting, and one-upmanship, (e) rest by being present, silent, and content, and (f) remember God's listening promises (Jas 1:19; Prov 21:28).

Within the teaching segment, members were also asked to choose an individual they would want to talk to from one of three pictures on the screen. The first picture was a woman reading a book, the second was a man throwing a clay vase, and the third was a middle-aged graduate. After identifying the person, they would choose to talk to, group members were invited

to share with a partner what they noticed about the person and how they would seek to engage them in conversation.

Expanding on this “Heed” activity, members were asked to pair off during the lesson’s connection segment to experiment with the Heed, Engage, and Listen elements of the HELP practices; with one person being the speaker and the other person being the listener. The listener could engage the speaker based on something they noticed since the beginning of the Ebenezer LifeGroup session or based on something they wanted to know about the speaker’s FORM (family, occupation, relationships, or motivations/interests). In seeking to engage the speaker, listeners were instructed to frame what they noticed or would like to know about their speaker in the form of an observational statement or open-ended question. After engaging the speaker in conversation, listeners were to utilize the listening tips to learn more of the speakers’ stories. Following this step, the speakers and listeners were to trade places and repeat the process. At the end of the connection segment, Ebenezer LifeGroup members were instructed to identify individuals from their people (family and friends), their community (campus, co-workers, and neighbors), and their world (errands, recreation, and travel) who they would like to engage and listen to in the coming week.

#### **Lesson 4: Ministering in Prayer**

Lesson 4 continued to focus on prayer as commission by sharing how to effectively pray with people. The primary principle in effectively praying with people was to practice care then prayer. While praying with people is a certainly a priority, it should not come at the expense of violating an individual’s receptivity. Ebenezer LifeGroup members were encouraged to always *pray for* those they were listening to, and *to pray with* them if there is a clear sense of receptivity.

For people who are receptive to praying together, Ebenezer LifeGroup members were encouraged to: (a) practice care before prayer, (b) be sincere and specific, (c) keep prayers brief and simple, (d) be real by praying authentically, (e) faithfully pray for people even when you cannot pray with them, (f) be ready to help people in response to their prayer needs, and (g) ask

the Lord for discernment about when to lead with listening, and when to lead with a request to pray together. After covering these aspects of how to pray with people, Ebenezer LifeGroup members were invited to find a partner, listen to them, and pray with them. Following a time of mutual listening and prayer, they were asked to share with the entire Ebenezer LifeGroup which pointers about praying with people were utilized when they prayed with one another.

### **Lesson 5: Praying God's Word**

Lesson 5 returned to prayer as communion by teaching the Ebenezer LifeGroup members to pray God's Word. Building on the idea of talking faith (White, 1900, p. 147), there was a group discussion of when the first century disciples prayed God's word in Acts 4:23-30. Following the dialogue, Ebenezer LifeGroup members were invited to select three of their favorite passages of Scripture and given 15 minutes to individually pray through one of them by finding a place where they felt comfortable praying out loud, or by journaling alone through the passage. Afterward, they had opportunity to debrief what it was like to commune with God by praying His word.

### **Lesson 6: Helping Others**

Influenced by Finke's (2014, p. 156) missional question "what good can we do around here," and a sermon on active intercession from Ferguson (2017), Lesson 6 returned to a prayer as commission focus; specifically the fourth dimension of sharing God's provision. Ebenezer LifeGroup members discussed how Luke 11:5-8, and Isaiah 58:1-9 give insight into helping others by sharing God's provision. They were also invited to journal and share together about past and present experiences of helping others in tangible ways.

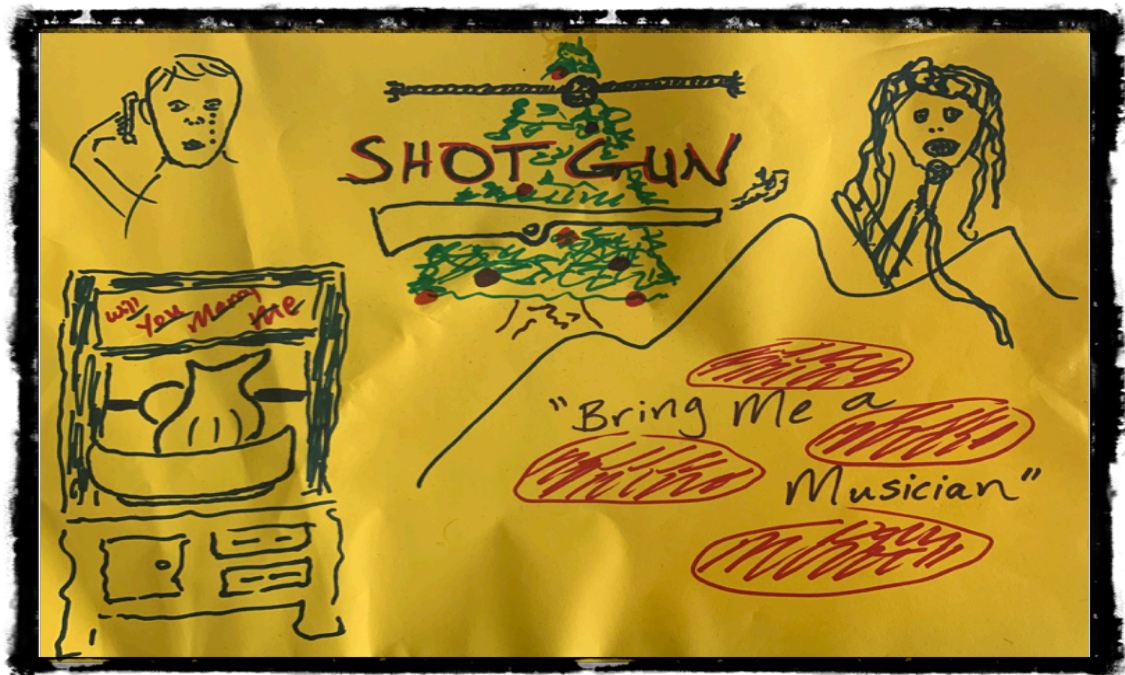
### **Lesson 7: This is My Story**

As a part of prayer as commission, Ebenezer LifeGroup members learned to tell their story in lesson seven. The lesson began with the following transition moment where Ebenezer LifeGroup members were invited to share a brief experience from their day. After discussing this question, group members were given the following insights during the teaching time: (a) the



original definition of courage is to “tell the story of who you are with your whole heart” (Brown, 2010a, para. 23), (b) John speaks of the courage of the righteous who overcome Satan “by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony” (Rev 12:11), and (c) Jesus is the word of our testimony or center of our story.

Based on these three insights, Ebenezer LifeGroup members were led through a story sketching activity (see *Figure 3*, p. 80). In the story sketching exercise, they were instructed to capture some of Jesus’ activity in their story by drawing various images and pictures on a letter sized piece of paper that depicted significant moments from their life where Christ said or did something memorable. Those moments could be chronological or non-linear. After drawing their story, group members were given the opportunity share their stories with a partner and then the group as a whole. They were invited to look for the connections between God’s story and each other’s stories.



*Figure 3.* Story Sketch Sample

## **Lesson 8: Come Apart and Rest**

Luke 5:16 says Jesus “*often* withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.” As “a sharer in our needs and weaknesses, He was wholly dependent upon God, and in the secret place of prayer He sought divine strength, that He might go forth braced for duty and trial” (White, 1898, p. 363). Building on Christ’s example, Lesson 8 provided Ebenezer LifeGroup members a few moments to experiment with the biblical practices of silence and solitude. The purpose was to provide group members with a small taste of the following description of quiet communion with God: “when every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God” (White, 1898, p. 363).

Group members were instructed to begin their time of silence asking Jesus for the Holy Spirit. Additionally, they were given the options to simply sit in God’s presence, ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind a prayer point to focus on, or ask the Lord to give them a Scripture passage to meditate on. After thirty minutes of silently communing with God, participants were given the opportunity to debrief the experience with each other. The lesson concluded by asking the Ebenezer LifeGroup members to write a personal retreat plan in which they identified an activity, location, date, and time where they could withdraw in God’s presence. This plan might include going on a walk with God, writing a song or poem, painting, or finding a location for more time in silence, solitude, and quiet prayer.

### **Preparation and Evaluation Steps**

The intervention lessons described above were bookended by the following preparation and project evaluation steps: (a) Ebenezer LifeGroup selection, (b) a pre-launch focus group and orientation, (c) concluding focus group, and (d) exit interviews.

## Ebenezer LifeGroup Selection

Ebenezer LifeGroup group members were chosen through prayer and personal interviews. The criteria for potential members included teachability, a desire to grow in intimacy with God, and a desire to connect with people. In addition, a diversity of age, spiritual experience, gender, and ethnicity were important considerations in team selection. After identifying potential participants, they were prioritized, and interviews were scheduled. During the interviews, I shared a brief vision cast of the project and sought to assess the following in relation to each prospect: (a) their willingness to grow in communion with God, (b) their desire to learn to pray with people effectively as a part of Christ's commission to make disciples, and (c) their willingness to journal during their missional prayer journey. If an individual appeared to be a promising Ebenezer LifeGroup candidate, they were asked to pray about joining the team and reply to the invitation within seven days.

## Orientation and Pre-Launch Focus Group

The three-hour orientation and pre-launch focus group plan included: (a) reviewing key missional prayer assumptions like God is always working, the world is our parish, and discipleship in its most basic form is asking ourselves and others, "What is your next step with Jesus?" (b) a vision cast and discussion of training objectives contained in the acronym HELP, (c) a description of the weekly Ebenezer LifeGroup meetings, assignments, and prayer partner guidelines, (d) an overview of journaling as an important tool for chronicling key learnings, and reporting the perceptions of Ebenezer LifeGroup participants regarding the effect of missional prayer on themselves and those they pray with, and (e) an explanation of the end of journey focus group session in which participants were to discuss key learnings and personal growth through their involvement in the Ebenezer LifeGroup on missional prayer.

## The Concluding Focus Group

The intervention concluded with a focus group session where Ebenezer LifeGroup members discussed key learnings from their missional prayer journey. Before the final focus group, they were encouraged to journal key insights and stories from their prayer as communion and prayer as commission experiences. Additionally, the plan was to provide Ebenezer LifeGroup members the opportunity to share excerpts from their journals at the concluding focus group, as well as the option to submit a journal summary of key learnings, insights, and stories for inclusion in the Missional Prayer project report. However, during implementation of the plan, the concluding focus group session was limited to the completion of a Google Forms survey and group conversation described in Chapter 5.

## Exit Interviews

As an additional step of clarification, missional prayer exit interviews were held with individuals and couple to gain understanding of their responses in the concluding Google Forms survey and focus group conversation. From the before and after focus group sessions, exit interviews, and my own observations regarding the missional prayer intervention, a summary of outcomes and recommendations for further study is included in Chapter 6.

## **Conclusion: A Vision for the Future**

In looking to the future, The Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer holds great promise as a relational catalyst for discipleship. It is my desire to continue leading Ebenezer LifeGroups at the Collegedale Church so others may experience some of the same joys and discoveries I have experienced in my missional prayer journey with Jesus. By introducing more and more people to the Ebenezer Missional Prayer experience, I want to help the Collegedale Church develop a reputation as the people who pray with people in Hamilton County and beyond. In Chapter 6 I

will share even more about possible next steps with the Ebenezer model, but now it is time to move to Chapter 5's implementation narrative of the Ebenezer LifeGroup intervention.

## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLEMENTING THE EBENEZER MODEL

Implementation of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer took place between November 2018 and November 2019. This chapter provides a narrative of pre-launch steps, the impact of the Ebenezer LifeGroup intervention sessions, and insights from the post intervention steps. Together, they form a dynamic backdrop for the evaluation, outcomes, conclusion, and recommendations described in the final chapter.

#### **Pre-Launch Steps**

The pre-launch steps are the first portion of the Ebenezer Model's narrative backdrop for Chapter 6. Some of these pre-launch steps were anticipated, while others were unanticipated. They included two preparatory trainings, a series of recruiting conversations, a pre-launch focus group, and Ebenezer LifeGroup orientation.

#### **Preparatory Trainings**

The preparatory trainings were not anticipated in the development phase of the intervention. However, in the evolving course of ministry life, two opportunities to prepare as facilitator of the missional prayer intervention presented themselves. The first opportunity took place outside of my ministry context, and the second occurred within my context.

#### **Atlanta Korean Missional Prayer Weekend**

The first preparatory training was the result of an invitation from Pastor Justin Yang to hold a prayer emphasis weekend at the Atlanta Korean Seventh-day Adventist Church on April

12-13, 2019. In anticipation of the Missional Prayer training weekend, church members at Atlanta Korean were invited to utilize the *10 Days of Missional Prayer Guide* during the week and a half leading up to the event (see Appendix D, p. 167). The guide was written specifically for the weekend and as a preparatory step for writing *Ebenezer: A Missional Prayer Small Group Leader's Guide* (see Appendix A, p. 133).

### **An Ebenezer LifeGroup With Collegedale's Pastoral Staff**

Walking the pastoral staff of the Collegedale Church through the Ebenezer curriculum was the second preparation step for facilitating the pilot Ebenezer LifeGroup intervention for Collegedale attenders and members. From July 16 through September 10, 2019, I led our pastoral team through the eight lessons of *Ebenezer: A Missional Prayer Journey* on Tuesday mornings from 9am to 10am. Our time together allowed me to test the curriculum and receive suggestions for improvement before leading the pilot intervention group for Collegedale members and attendees. During this time of experimental development and instruction, I was concurrently beginning the work of participant recruitment for the pilot Ebenezer LifeGroup study presented in this dissertation.

### Recruiting Conversations

While ministering between the mountain and the multitude, Jesus chose twelve followers to join in His mission (Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16). After a night in prayer, Christ selected an inner circle of disciples who would learn to minister in prayer. Based on Jesus' example, I chose to handpick participants for the Ebenezer LifeGroup intervention rather than putting out a church wide announcement. In compiling the original list of 36 people, I was looking for a mix of experienced and inexperienced Christians. I wanted to include people I had previously connected with in a meaningful way. In narrowing the list of potential participants, my wife and I prayed together about who would be best to recruit for the missional prayer intervention through a sit-down conversation.

My goal was to engage a group of people diverse in age, experience, gender, and ethnicity. After narrowing the list, I met individually with the prospective participants for a series of formal and informal conversations. As a result, seven men and seven women were invited to be a part of the intervention. All of the men began the journey, and five of the women were a part of the launch. By the time of the concluding focus group, five men and four women had completed the intervention and ranged in age from 24 to 55. The following summary of recruiting conversations provides a brief introduction to the Ebenezer LifeGroup. Names of the Ebenezer LifeGroup recruits and participants have been changed to protect privacy, and their background information has been generalized.

**John: A Son of Immigrants**

On November 7, 2018 John and I met for supper together. John is a son of immigrants, a recent college graduate, and elementary school teacher in the arts. His passion to intercede for people was a significant part of his decision to join the group.

**Matt: An Attorney on a Mission**

At breakfast on April 24, 2019, Matt and I discussed his passion for sharing Jesus with his legal clients. As a long time Adventist, Matt's approach to witnessing and discipleship has been fairly traditional; sharing literature or looking for people who are interested in doctrinal Bible studies. Based on his passion for evangelism, Matt decided to join the Ebenezer LifeGroup.

**Evelyn: A Woman Who Feels Stifled**

On the afternoon of September 2, 2019, Evelyn described her fear of God asking her to do something she did not want to. Growing up, she was surrounded by family members and believers whose faith felt strict and stifling. While she has longed for intimacy with God, her mind is tormented with impressions of things she needs to do to live up to God's expectations. The internal voice she hears feels judgmental and harsh. Although Evelyn attended the missional prayer orientation, it appears her fear of what God might ask in this journey of listening and prayer kept her from participating.



### **Allen and Briana: A Physician and Homemaker From Different Faiths**

On September 3, 2019, my wife and I met with Allen and Briana to discuss the missional prayer intervention. Allen is an administrative physician at a local hospital, and his wife Briana oversees the household, homeschools their youngest child, and transports their eldest back and forth from high school. Briana was influential in helping Allen come to faith in Christ. She grew up in the church, while Allen came from a different religious background. His mother was very religious; while his father's engagement in the family faith was minimal. I met Allen on a hike with friends, and we started hanging out together. As a new Christian with strong relational skills, Allen was a good candidate for the Ebenezer LifeGroup. Briana was a natural choice because of her lifelong relationship with Jesus and her experience in helping Allen come to faith.

### **Angie: A Student With Uncertainties**

On September 9, 2019, I met with Angie. She lost her younger brother in a tragic accident a few months after my brother died in 2017. Between the death of her brother, divorce of her parents, a strict religious upbringing, and her father's abandonment of the strict morals he held when she was growing up, Angie was not sure what to believe. The uncertainty resulting from these life events stripped away all she thought to be true, and she found herself frustrated with a church that claimed to have all the answers. In the face of her existential crisis, the overzealous religious certainty of the people and institutions of her past left her feeling abandoned and betrayed.

During our visit about missional prayer, I asked Angie, "What if faith isn't so much about answers, as it is about conversation? What if it is more important to talk to God about our uncertainty, and journey with him through our sorrow, than to find definitive answers? What if uncertainty is part of the journey?" These questions appeared to be helpful to Angie and she agreed to join the Ebenezer LifeGroup. However, the intensity of her school responsibilities prevented her from following through on her commitment. However, a relational bridge was built

through the conversation, and I have periodically called to pray with Angie. Maybe there will be an opportunity for her to join a future Ebenezer LifeGroup.

**Bill and Jordan: Student Bible Study Partners**

Bill and Jordan are buddies from high school in their late teens. I met Bill through worship ministry, and we started having Bible studies together in the summer of 2019. Jordan ended up joining Bill and me for Bible studies, and at our September 15, 2019 study I asked the two of them if they would be interested in the Ebenezer LifeGroup on missional prayer. They came to the pre-launch focus group and orientation, but unfortunately their work/study schedule did not allow for them to continue

**Dana: A Woman of Faith**

During an informal conversation with Dana in the fall of 2019, it appeared she would be a strong candidate for the Ebenezer LifeGroup. While she was not familiar with the HELP Practices, she already had a strong awareness of God's activity in her life, and responsiveness to His leading. There was an intuition and simple obedience in her walk with Christ that I believed would allow her to easily assimilate the practices of missional prayer and help disciple others in the future.

### **Friends and Family: My Wife, her Walking Partner, and Two Brothers in Christ**

The other members of the Ebenezer LifeGroup joined through a simple invitation. One was my wife. Another was her walking partner Brenda, and Brenda's husband Will. Their experience with prayer and small groups made them strong recruits with the potential to run a missional prayer group in the future. Justin is a friend of mine who served as a church leader at one time. A painful experience led him to step out of leadership; but, through the Collegedale Church prayer team, he has been reengaging in local ministry.

The life experiences of the missional prayer recruits were diverse and led to a rich group dynamic for those who chose to join the intervention. Additionally, the stories of those who opted out are worthy of thought and reflection in future recruiting efforts. In Evelyn's case, highlighting the potential of the Ebenezer LifeGroup to facilitate healing in the area of one's perceptions of how God speaks could be helpful. In Angie's case, the relational connection established through the initial recruiting conversation and follow-up prayer calls might lead to future engagement in an Ebenezer LifeGroup.

#### **The Pre-Launch Focus Group**

In the final preparations for the pre-launch focus group, the need for a slight modification to Chapter 4's intervention plan became evident. With approval from the IRB Committee, the decision was made to email participants an online survey on September 19, 2019 prior to the opening focus group session and orientation on September 22, 2019. The survey gave participants the opportunity to share their initial responses to the questions for discussion in pre-launch focus group. Additionally, in case the quieter participants choose to be silent in the focus group, this step ensured their voices were heard. Of the 12 people who participated in the September 22 focus group, 10 submitted responses to the pre-launch questionnaire.

Following the opening focus group, missional prayer orientation, and Ebenezer LifeGroup intervention lessons described in Chapter 4, subjects revisited these questions through

a final online survey and focus group session (see Table 3). The mirrored questions of the before and after focus group sessions were an attempt to determine the impact of the Ebenezer LifeGroup upon participants' awareness, responsiveness, and courage. Before considering a comparative summary of participants responses to these questions, it is important to review:

- (a) The missional assumptions that led to the formulation of the focus group questions, and
- (b) The goal of the focus group conversations and questions.

Table 3

*Before and After Evaluation Questions*

**Before the Ebenezer LifeGroup:**

1. How are you most aware of God's presence, activity or voice? Explain. On the flipside of the question, if you are struggling to see or recognize God's presence, activity or voice, please explain.
2. What do you believe is missing in your experience with God?
3. Jesus said, "Go and make disciples." Write a definition of what it means to be a disciple.
4. Who do you know that is responding of the mission of making disciples and how are they doing it?
5. Share a story of when you exercised interpersonal courage for Christ in a conversation with another person.
6. What would you like to be different in your relationship with God at the end of this eight-week Ebenezer LifeGroup journey?

**After the Ebenezer LifeGroup:**

1. In what ways has your awareness of God's increased or decreased in the past nine weeks? Explain.
2. How did this Ebenezer LifeGroup address or not address what you said was missing in your experience w/ God?
3. In light of our Ebenezer LifeGroup experience, define what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Describe any differences between your original definition and nine weeks ago and today.
4. Based on our missional prayer journey together, who would you say should respond to Jesus' disciple making commission, and what are some ways they could do it?
5. How has your interpersonal courage for Christ been affected by this missional prayer journey?
6. Nine weeks ago, you identified what you wanted to be different in your relationship with God. What has been the most significant change in your journey as a disciple of Christ as a result of this Ebenezer LifeGroup, and how does it compare to what you were hoping would happen?

## **Early Missional Assumptions**

Prior to developing the missional prayer intervention, three missional assumptions were at the forefront of my thinking: (a) God is always at work, (b) Discipleship happens one step at a time, and (c) As disciples of Jesus, the world is our parish, i.e., we are called to minister to our relational circles of influence. In order to minister relationally, I believed it was important to recognize God is already working in the lives of those we listen to and pray with before we establish connection (Ps 68:19; Lam 3:22-23; John 5:17, 19-20; Phil 1:6, 2:13). Second, in its most basic form, I considered discipleship to be a process of helping people learn to respond to the activity of God in their lives by taking their next best step toward Jesus or with Jesus (Matt 4:19, 16:24, 19:21; Mark 1:17, 2:14, 8:34, 10:21, 10:28-31; Luke 5:27, 9:23, 14:27, 18:28-30; John 1:43, 8:12, 10:27, 12:26, 21:15-23; 1 Cor 11:1). Finally, by embracing Wesley's assumption that all the world is our parish (Wesley, 1739), God's promise to give the nations as an inheritance, and the assurance of His presence (Josh 1:3; Ps 2:8; Matt 28:18-20), I found an interpersonal courage for disciple making that any church goer would need.

## **Goals of the Focus Group Questions**

Upon further reflection, these missional assumptions were synthesized into three areas of discipleship evaluation: awareness, responsiveness, and courage. Having identified these areas, the goal of the before and after evaluation questions was to gain understanding of how the philosophy and HELP Practices of missional prayer impacted Ebenezer LifeGroup members' spiritual awareness, responsiveness to God, and interpersonal courage for Christ.

Question 1 from Table 3, p. 90, focuses on God's presence, activity, and voice, as an attempt to understand the nature of the participant's spiritual awareness in relation to the assumption that God is always at work. Question 2 sought to learn what aspects of awareness, responsiveness, or courage might be missing in the spiritual experience of the Ebenezer LifeGroup members at the beginning of the intervention.

Question 3 sought to discover to what degree subjects understood discipleship to be a journey of responsiveness, where disciples follow Jesus one step at a time and help others follow Him one step at a time. Question 4 was an attempt to discover who participants would identify as disciple makers. Would they view discipleship as the work of professionals or as the responsibility of every church member? Before launching the intervention, I had a general sense that the average attender tended to view discipleship as the work of professional pastors and evangelists.

Question 5's invitation to share a time when they had exercised interpersonal courage for Christ was driven by a curiosity to see how subjects had utilized relational courage, with whom they were courageous, and if the moment of courage they described gave a sense that they viewed the world as their parish. Were their interactions more of the traditional forms of Adventist sharing like, Sabbath School, Bible studies, literature distribution, and/or evangelistic meetings? Or did their moments of courage with unbelievers and seekers have a one step at a time nuance that involved a contextual responsiveness which was less of a doctrinal agenda and more of a needs-based witness? How would their before and after stories of exercising interpersonal courage for Christ compare with my initial thoughts regarding Adventists and discipleship? Finally, through a before and after examination of Question 6, I desired to learn something about their growth expectations at the beginning of the intervention, and how those expectations were addressed by the end of the intervention.

#### Ebenezer LifeGroup Orientation

Following the focus group conversation with the intervention participants at the September 22 project launch meeting, I conducted a brief Ebenezer LifeGroup orientation. In preparing to implement Chapter 4's intervention, I created an *Ebenezer Journal Draft* (see Appendix C, p. 142) as a supplemental resource for participants to use in the orientation and subsequent Ebenezer LifeGroup journey. Originally, I was hoping for participants to submit

summaries of their journals as data for evaluating the project. However, after further reflection, I decided to keep the journals as curriculum resource alone. This allowed Ebenezer LifeGroup members to be more transparent in their journaling.

During the orientation, the meaning of Ebenezer as a memorial of God's help was explained and the *Ebenezer Journal* was introduced as tool for chronicling personal time with God and missional prayer moments with people. In walking participants through some of the journal's explanatory pages, the missional assumptions were alluded to and the function of the HELP Practices within the four dimensions of missional prayer was emphasized. I concluded the orientation by referring participants to the Missional Prayer Readings page and lesson topics we intended to cover during the eight-week journey (see Appendix C, p. 142).

Due to the intensity of my full-time ministry schedule and time involved in preparing the Ebenezer Small Group Leaders Guide, and the missional prayer journal entitled, *Ebenezer: "Thus Far the Lord Has Helped Us"* (see Appendix C, p. 142), I chose to simplify my discussion of weekly assignments and eliminate the requirement to have a prayer partners during this initial pilot group. In the Chapter 6 recommendations section, I discuss next steps for future Ebenezer LifeGroups that will include prayer partners.

### **Impact of the Ebenezer LifeGroup**

The Ebenezer LifeGroup met once a week from 7pm to 8:30pm in the Focus Room of the Collegedale Church. Our first Ebenezer LifeGroup meeting was on Thursday, September 26, 2019 and the concluding session was on Tuesday, November 12, 2019. Based on responses from the before and after online surveys, focus group transcripts, and notes from the exit interviews, the Ebenezer LifeGroup sessions appear to have had a missional impact upon participants' awareness of God, responsiveness to His voice, and interpersonal courage for Christ. This portion of the implementation narrative seeks to correlate excerpts of participant responses with the prayer as communion and prayer as commission intervention lessons.

## Impact of Lesson 1: God is Our Help

In the Ebenezer LifeGroup launch on September 26, 2019, Lesson 1 focused on experiencing prayer as communion through praise and thanks. Following this initial session, Allen and I discussed the initial Ebenezer LifeGroup. He felt Lesson 1 made God more approachable by providing strategies to cultivate a relational prayer experience. His November 17<sup>th</sup> response to the awareness question in the final online survey reinforced his September comments: “I have learned a new language to communicate with God and by increasing the level of communication, I feel a greater presence of God in my life and my family’s life.” Additionally, at the exit interview on December 5, 2019, Allen clarified the intervention impact on his prayer life:

One of the hardest things was trying to connect with God through prayer. I was seeing it as rote; or through repetition you find connection. But this is actually more like a Hindu experience of praise, prayer, and worship. The redundancy has never worked for me.

One of the first things I realized was your relationship is not routine, rote, memorized, or repetitive.

Rather, your relationship with God is unique; each prayer has a unique purpose for your connection with God on a daily basis. It’s kind of like your relationship with Your spouse and children when you ask: “How is your day going for you today?”

God wants to know what is unique for you about today. God wants to know how he can be a part of your unique day. Sometimes the prayer experience will be mundane, or exciting, or uncertain. It has a variation to it that routine prayers do not. It is unique and personal. It ebbs and flows like human relationships.

The dynamic nature of the prayer relationship Allen’s describes and his shift away from ritualistic prayer likely began before his participation in the Ebenezer LifeGroup. However, the lessons, conversations, and applications of the missional prayer HELP Practices appear to have clarified this shift in his mind, increased his awareness of God’s activity, and strengthened his responsiveness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

## Impact of Lesson 2: Seeking God’s Help

On October 3, 2019, Ebenezer LifeGroup members learned to commune with God by utilizing the HELP practices to write in the *Ebenezer Journals* they received at the missional



prayer orientation. Briana said, “The HELP tool helped me to search my heart as I’m reading God’s word.” She referred to a women’s HELP Sabbath School my wife led before the launch of the Ebenezer LifeGroup intervention. Like the activity portion of the *Seeking God’s Help* lesson, ladies in the HELP Sabbath School would journal through God’s word with the Heed-Engage-Listen-Pray, HELP Practices, and share with one another from their journals. Briana says:

I was surprised that through the tool I was able to open up in the group setting. The process facilitated great vulnerability in a group setting. It gives you a more concrete opportunity to share true thoughts and feelings; combining introspection and connection. It builds your authenticity/vulnerability muscle.

This building of vulnerability muscle can also be classified as a strengthening of the missional instinct of interpersonal courage for Christ. Through wholehearted journaling, storytelling, listening, and interpersonal prayer in the Ebenezer LifeGroup or small group Sabbath School context, missional prayer ministers are training to listen and engage with the seekers and unbelievers they encounter in their day-to-day experiences.

### Impact of Lesson 3: Joining Jesus

At the October 10, 2019 Ebenezer LifeGroup session, participants received an in-depth look at how to minister to others through the listening portion of missional prayer’s Dimension 3: Joining Jesus in the ministry of listening and prayer. Irene described a conversational interaction which correlates well with this lesson:

I met with a gal this week... It was somebody I knew a little bit. I wanted to hear her story. She's gone through a lot, and I didn't use all the principles that we had learned about good listening...

I wasn't even thinking, “okay, reflect content and feeling as you listen...” I just kind of stumbled around, but she got into her car and left. She wasn't even in the car two minutes, and a song came on that was God ordained from our conversation...

To me it was just so encouraging... it's really nothing about us... It spoke everything to her... that God is still for her... He still has a mission for her and it was encouraging to me because I really didn't feel like I did the best job listening.

Beyond the act of effective listening, Irene’s story illustrates the power of attempting to listen. Her experience affirms the transformative intersection between God’s story, the story of

the speaker, and the story of the listener. As disciples minister through listening, healing occurs at this intersection. When Irene's friend heard the song on the radio, she realized God was a part of her story and felt compelled to tell Irene. Her phone call helped Irene realize God was working to bless her friend and reveal His presence in both of their narratives.

Furthermore, the interaction of both women demonstrates Jesus' desire to awaken the awareness of seekers and unbelievers through the listening presence of His disciples. Irene's interaction with her friend brings to mind Chapter 3's discussion of the "self-disclosure" level of listening, and affirms the following insight: "story is a type of container that holds deep meaning, and because our stories are expressions of our own inner mysteries, it is helpful to bring those to awareness. When we are in the act of discovering our own perplexity, life takes on greater meaning and understanding" (Savage, 1996, p. 81).

While disciples who join Jesus may not always do the best job of listening, the Holy Spirit goes with those they have heard, and seeks to awaken the speakers to the meaning and purpose heaven is seeking to pour into their life. Often, being a ministering presence in the life of a seeker or unbeliever is all the Lord needs from His followers. When disciples make themselves available as Jesus' eyes and ears, He is able to build on their ministry of listening by working through the Holy Spirit's still small voice to talk to the speaker when they are by themselves. Using moments like Irene's "song on the radio" story, Jesus affirms that He is active in divinely ordained conversations between speakers and listeners, and leverages the listening heart of the missional prayer minister to awaken the speaker to an awareness of God's presence.

#### Impact of Lesson 4: Ministering in Prayer

In the *Ministering in Prayer* lesson on October 17, 2019, Ebenezer LifeGroup members were introduced to several key principles of how to effectively pray with people. Allen described praying with Neil, his teenage son. As his kids were getting ready for school, Allen could tell from the rumbling voices outside his bedroom door that Neil was upset. Responding to the Holy

Spirit's prompting, Allen got out of bed to see what was happening in the living room. As he listened, the teenager relaxed and, before the conversation concluded, Allen said a brief prayer with Neil that specifically addressed his concern.

While discussing the experience at his exit interview, Allen said: "As head of household, there was a need for me to say, 'Let me take the wheel for a minute. Now, let's ask Jesus to take the wheel.'" Allen's willingness to cooperate with the Holy Spirit's prompting to live out the HELP practices made all the difference for his family. Without cooperation with the Holy Spirit, missional prayer is powerless as a ministry strategy.

#### Impact of Lesson 5: Praying God's Word

After reviewing the focus group surveys, transcripts, and exit interview notes, it is apparent that Lesson 5 on praying God's word could use more thought and development. Ebenezer LifeGroup participants did not provide any correlational thoughts or reflections in the evaluation activities which pointed back to the October 24 lesson specifically, or suggested its missional impact on awareness, responsiveness, or courage.

However, there are a number of ways in which the lesson could be improved. One way is to emphasize how the disciples in Acts 4 asked Christ for interpersonal courage and boldness to impact their world for the Kingdom of God. It would also be valuable to share the idea of contextualized witness with Ebenezer LifeGroup members. Just as the disciples prayed a portion of Scripture relevant to their dilemma in Acts 4, or Jesus quoted a relevant portion of Scripture when tempted to turn the stones to bread in Matthew 4, praying God's word is about claiming and sharing Scripture in relevant ways. In the case of one's personal time with God, it might be claiming a verse in prayer where the Lord promises peace for anxiety, boldness for timidity, or courage to meet fear. In the case of ministering interpersonally, it might be asking the Holy Spirit for a relevant verse to claim in prayer when listening to someone's story. Within the missional prayer framework, the key to praying God's word, is seeking a specific word for one's personal

time with God and interpersonal conversations with people (Morris, 2011, p. 52). Praying God's word is both a prayer as communion and prayer as commission activity, and falls within the classification of spiritual weaponry the apostle Paul speaks of in his letters to the Corinthians and Ephesians (see 2 Cor 10:4-5; Eph 6:17).

#### Impact of Lesson 6: Helping Others

On October 29, 2019 Ebenezer LifeGroup members delved into missional prayer's Dimension 4, sharing God's provision through a lesson entitled *Helping Others*. Several stories surfaced in the Ebenezer LifeGroup discussions and closing focus group conversation which reinforced the lesson's main premise that service is a form of prayer.

On one occasion, Brenda was sitting next to a couple and their young boys during a worship service in the Collegedale Church. One of the little fellas was sprawled under the pew playing with his Hot Wheels, making car noises, and mumbling to himself. Over his car noises, Brenda heard the frantic whisper of an older woman sitting near the couple, "get them to be quiet!" Brenda could feel the woman's glare and noted its unsettling effect upon on the mother and her husband.

In the midst of the tension, the Holy Spirit prompted Brenda to write this note to the mom: "I have three sons and I love boys. Your boys are not being a problem at all." As she read the note, the mother's countenance relaxed, and broke into a broad smile. Her entire demeanor changed as she hugged her son and he soaked in his mother's love.

Brenda's story resonated with the group; especially Dana: "This is really interesting to me to hear this story," Dana observed, "because I was in the prayer room during the Renewal Worship Service. As we were taking our turns praying, I just spoke, and said, 'Lord, if there's a spirit of restlessness among the children of the church, send your spirit and quietness to them so their parents can focus on the message.'" Through Brenda and Dana's account it is apparent that as we share what God has provided through a note of encouragement or an act of kindness, we

become an answered prayer. In this case, Dana was the intercessor, and Brenda was an answered prayer of encouragement to the distraught mother. At this intersection of story involving an intercessor, a mother of adult boys, a mother of little ones, and their Heavenly Father, three strangers experienced the transformative power of His presence.

Finally, while the *Helping Others* lesson provided new insights to group members about service as a form of prayer, the lesson also affirmed ministry moments precipitated by the Holy Spirit in the lives of group members before their participation in the missional prayer intervention. In the pre-launch focus group, Briana told a story about her husband Allen ministering to a family who lost their baby at the hospital:

Over the last three years, at work he shares that he's a Christian and offers prayer for families and their baby. He has gone out on a limb at times.

One time he actually baptized a baby. It was three in the morning and the baby was dying... it was inevitable and the family was distraught. The chaplain wasn't available, and Allen offered to baptize the baby and pray.

Allen's willingness to perform the baptism allowed the baby's family to experience a moment of assurance, meaning, and significance in the midst of their loss. In this case, there was no medical solution, no miracle cure, and prior to experiencing the *Helping Others* lesson, Allen demonstrated the principle of sharing God's provision by baptizing the baby and praying for their family. Like my own discipleship journey with Jesus described in the *Developmental Narrative* of Chapter 4, the Holy Spirit helped Allen to practice missional prayer before introducing him to the Ebenezer Model and its HELP Practices.

#### Impact of Lesson 7: This is My Story

Informed by the "Establishing Personal Connection" section of Chapter 3's literature review, the debrief segments of the missional prayer lessons gave members the opportunity to experiment with listening well, exercising empathy, and practicing vulnerability. During these segments, there were moments when the men and women divided into two separate groups. One of the most significant segments occurred during the lesson seven debrief on November 5, 2019.

After being especially vulnerable during this lesson, Justin spoke in the final focus group and exit interview about finding strength and blessing as a result of sharing with the Ebenezer LifeGroup the pain of his past experience as a church leader.

I've been through some group settings before; but in this group I opened up a little bit more than I have since the major trauma of my career a few years ago. I was surprised that I did as well as I did. I went home and was scared... and I came back and everybody was still kind.

The change in me internally was from fear that I would spill my guts about being a former leader to a realization that the group was more than surface or superficiality... It was an "aha" group... a self-discovery group... a personal development and understanding group.

A critical part of the discovery experience Justin references appears to be lesson seven's story sketching activity. As members paired off to share their story sketches with one another, and then the larger group, the practices of listening, empathy, and vulnerability drew them together. In the closing focus group, Irene affirmed the lesson's effectiveness but questioned its placement in the curriculum sequence: "I really liked sharing the drawings; that was really connecting to me. We should have done it the very first night, but I don't know if we would have shared to the level that we shared if it was the very first night." Irene's uncertainty regarding the level of vulnerability the group would have exercised during the first lesson in contrast to their openness in lesson seven highlights a potential area of improvement for the missional prayer intervention that is addressed on page 146 under the heading "Modify the Ebenezer LifeGroup Experience" in Chapter 6.

#### Impact of Lesson 8: Come Apart and Rest

The last Ebenezer LifeGroup took place on November 12, 2020. Returning to prayer as communion, participants had 20 minutes of solitude to conclude the missional prayer journey in one of the following three ways: (a) sit in silence with no agenda but to be in God's presence, (b) ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind a prayer point, and (c) choose a favorite Scripture passage to meditate on. Reflecting on the Ebenezer LifeGroup, John said,

As a result of this group, I spend more time listening to God's voice and not just talking 'at Him.' I hope I would seek God's face and not his hand; that I would do things out of love. I

don't want the blessings for blessings sake. I have also found freedom in the structure of missional prayer.

While this response correlates with lesson eight's principles, the nature of silence and solitude require more time to experience and fully appreciate. The "Modify the Ebenezer LifeGroup Experience" section of Chapter 6 gives suggestions for improving the impact of lesson eight's silence and solitude principles.

### **Post Ebenezer LifeGroup Insights**

Following the missional prayer training, Ebenezer LifeGroup members answered the closing questionnaire, participated in the concluding focus group conversation, and exit interviews to see how their awareness of God, responsiveness, and interpersonal courage for Christ was affected by learning and experimenting with the HELP Practices. In the survey, participants were also invited to share how the intervention addressed what was missing in their discipleship experience at the beginning of the journey, and how the intervention addressed their hopes for what would be different in their relationship with God as a result of the experience. This concluding section of the implementation narrative identifies key insights through a comparative summary of before and after responses to the evaluation activities mentioned above. Chapter 6 includes an evaluation of these insights and recommendations for further study.

#### Awareness of God

In a before and after comparison of Ebenezer LifeGroup responses, there were a number of similarities and differences regarding how participants were aware of God's presence, activity, and voice. Ebenezer LifeGroup members in the before and after evaluation sessions identified the Bible, life circumstances, hardships, people, and prayer as key factors in recognizing God's presence. In addition, they indicated an ongoing struggle to recognize God's presence in both the before and after focus group sessions.

A closer examination of participant feedback regarding the ways God makes himself known through others seems to indicate a shift in how they recognized God's activity, voice, and presence through people. Before the Ebenezer LifeGroup, responses seemed to point to receiving a message from God through other people. Briana said, "He speaks to me through trusted people who talk with me about problems," while Irene mentioned loving to "hear Him through others." Jordan mentioned "peoples' testimonies," as a way God speaks to him.

After the Ebenezer LifeGroup, the nature of recognizing God's presence in people was more relational and missionally oriented as evidenced in Briana's response to the awareness question at the end of the missional prayer intervention: "It has increased through an awareness of others around me and their stories." Expanding on this awareness of peoples' stories, Briana stated in her exit interview:

Interpersonally, the Ebenezer LifeGroup has been an added value to pre-existing friendships and given me a vision for how I might more effectively engage with seekers or skeptics... I have some tools for the future...

The course has opened my thoughts more of when I am in conversation. With my friends it has opened up more awareness of where the Lord is at work in our lives. It has given me more confidence in talking about everyday experiences; connecting it with the Lord's activity and will.

Like Briana's experience, hopefully there will be opportunity in the future for others to experience a shift towards a more external focus in relation to recognizing and affirming God's activity in conversations with pre-existing friends, seekers, and skeptics.

Awareness factors unique to the pre-launch conversation were receiving divine answers to life questions, impressions or promptings, music, silence and solitude, and writing. Unique awareness factors from the post intervention focus group included references to "how I spend my time," watching for God, and the HELP Practices. In relation to the HELP Practices, the group shared several stories within the concluding focus group session which demonstrated a recognition of God's presence resulting from missional engagement with others. Many of these stories have already been mentioned in the "Impact of the Ebenezer LifeGroup" section; they include Allen praying with His Son, Irene's "song on the radio" story, Briana's story about her



husband conducting an infant baptism, and Dana's intercession in the prayer room when Brenda was passing a note to a struggling mother in church.

### Responsiveness to God's Voice

The issue of responsiveness undergirded the two discipleship questions of the before and after focus group activities. Question 3 dealt with the meaning of discipleship. It considered how closely participants' definitions of discipleship aligned with the idea that discipleship is an issue of relational responsiveness where people move step by step toward Jesus or with Jesus. Question 4 sought to clarify the "who" of discipleship. It considered who is responding to Jesus commission to make disciples and who should respond to His disciple making commission.

### **Definitions of Discipleship**

Group members' definitions of discipleship from the pre-launch focus group can be categorized under four major groupings: (a) evangelism and witnessing, (b) following Jesus, (c) friendship, and (d) leadership. After the Ebenezer LifeGroup, the survey responses and focus group conversation regarding the meaning of discipleship centered on intentionality, friendship, and fear. When asked to identify fear factors in disciple making, focus group participants mentioned: (a) being perceived as "crazy," (b) the fear of losing a friend because of one's faith, and (c) the fear of peoples' hostility toward God. These fear factors are closely related to the fear of rejection.

The post intervention discipleship definitions from Ebenezer LifeGroup members address the fear of rejection by emphasizing intentionality and friendship. Before the Ebenezer LifeGroup, Allen felt discipleship meant "going out and converting others to Christianity." Now he feels "as if it is a way to engage others by listening and praying for them, and having them walk beside you." As a result of the missional prayer journey, Briana came to view discipleship as a proactive endeavor of "interacting intentionally with people" by asking questions "to hear their story. When I hear their story and understand them better, I can look for ways to bring

Jesus/faith into our conversation. I can always look to befriend someone if I can't find a way to bring Jesus into our first conversation." Pointing to Christ's example, she notes how He sought "to get to know individuals and meet their needs" before encouraging them to get to know His Father.

In John's concluding definition, he wrote, "to be a disciple means to draw others one-step closer on their walk with Jesus." For John, this represents a shift from a solely doctrinal perspective of discipleship to a more relational and responsive definition. Commenting on discipleship before the Ebenezer LifeGroup, John saw discipleship as "more about the tenets of Christianity," and now sees it "on a broader plane. Discipleship is more accessible as a result." When discipleship becomes accessible, fear becomes less of a factor in carrying out the great commission.

Before her Ebenezer LifeGroup experience, Dana said, "to be a disciple of Jesus is to do what He did. So, first one needs to know what He did through Bible study." After her experience in the Ebenezer LifeGroup, she said "A disciple goes where the Master goes, sees what He is doing, and does the same thing or works with Him." In reflecting on the difference between her before and after definitions, Dana said her second discipleship definition "seems to indicate more of a relationship with Jesus in that it is more action oriented rather than preparation oriented." Her observation points to an unspoken fear among Christians in relation to making friends of Jesus; the fear of not knowing enough. The benefit of action-oriented discipleship is following one step at a time. Rather than feeling they have to know everything to help others follow Jesus, the action-oriented disciple seeks to listen for the next best step; whether it is their next best step, or the next step of the person they are serving through listening and prayer.

### **Disciple Makers**

Prior to the Ebenezer LifeGroup launch, the second discipleship question invited participants to share what type of people they believed were engaged in disciple making. Those identified as disciple makers included pastors, a choir teacher, a basketball coach, a retired police

officer, alumni of the *Light Bearers* and *It Is Written* discipleship programs (*ARISE, 2021; SALT: It Is Written school of evangelism, 2021*), a Collegedale Academy athlete, volunteer Bible workers, and two lay leaders from the Collegedale Church. With the exception of the student athlete, people who appear to be missing from this list are new believers, inexperienced believers, and seekers.

An intriguing contrast to the group's identification of disciple makers in the pre-launch focus group are these two unlikely missionaries of Jesus:

The two restored demoniacs were the first missionaries whom Christ sent to teach the gospel in the region of Decapolis. For a short time only, these men had listened to His words. Not one sermon from His lips had ever fallen upon their ears. They could not instruct the people as the disciples who had been daily with Christ were able to do. But they could tell what they knew; what they themselves had seen, and heard, and felt of the Saviour's power. (White, 1909, p. 99)

According to current discipleship practices within the Adventist church, one might argue these men did not know enough to present Jesus to their neighbors and friends. They had not been through a discipleship curriculum or a set of doctrinal Bible studies. However, based on Jesus' instruction to return home and share the great things God had done, He felt their next step as disciples was to share the experience of God's deliverance. As a result of their obedience, "when Jesus returned to Decapolis, the people flocked about Him, and for three days thousands from all the surrounding country heard the message of salvation" (White, 1909, p. 98).

During the Ebenezer LifeGroup intervention, members had the opportunity to reflect on the "who" question of discipleship through the story of the woman Jesus met at Jacob's well. Her experience is similar to the two demoniacs, and after the Ebenezer LifeGroup journey, there was a shift in the focus of the "who" question. Ebenezer LifeGroup members were asked who they believed *should engage* in disciple making. By the end of the Ebenezer LifeGroup, participants considered disciple making to be a responsibility of all Christ's followers. In answer to the "who" question in the final survey, Will wrote, "Me, for starters!" John's response was, "anybody who claims to love the Lord should respond to Jesus' commission. All it really means is to walk side

by side with our brothers and sisters and step-by-step help them to advance towards the Kingdom.” This shift in participants’ thinking regarding who should engage in disciple making points to the intervention’s potential as a catalyst for relational discipleship.

### Interpersonal Courage for Christ

In the pre-launch focus group, participants shared stories of exercising interpersonal courage for Christ with friends, family members, a stranger, and in the work place. The stories included helping a friend know how to be saved, gently ministering to a friend who was victimized, sending a Bible promise when it was outside the individual’s comfort zone, speaking up for God in a group of kids who were making fun of Him, sharing Christ with an unbelieving boyfriend, sharing the book *Disappointment With God* (Yancey, 2015) with a questioning friend, giving a *Steps to Christ* (White, 1892) to a law client, and baptizing a dying infant for their grieving family.

A noteworthy reflection from the opening focus group conversation on courage came from Dana. In the pre-launch questionnaire, she wrote: “I fail miserably in this area.” She fleshed out this sense of failure in our opening focus group conversation about courage by describing a missed opportunity to share God’s activity with an atheist friend. In the story she shared, God provided a direct answer to prayer by prompting a different friend to give Dana a Fitbit on the morning she asked for it. However, when Dana told her atheist friend about receiving the Fitbit, she left out the detail of asking the Lord to provide a Fitbit. In her mind, this represented a lack of interpersonal courage for Christ.

At the end of the Ebenezer LifeGroup, Dana had this to say about courage and her journey with Jesus:

Although I feel woefully inadequate, I am attempting to step up to the challenge to pray with and for people more, and I may have become a better listener. I am still very uncomfortable with it... My focus in life and prayer has shifted away from self and personal desires and more toward intercession and journeying with others.

Hopefully, future Ebenezer LifeGroup members who share Dana's timidity, will also experience a missional shift in their prayer life and attempt to be more courageous in listening to people and praying with them. As a team member with Dana in this pilot Ebenezer group, Allen also describes a missional shift of courage: "My interpersonal courage for intentional prayer has been significantly increased, because I feel like I've been given a methodology for praying for myself and for others." Based on Allen's experience, the methodology of the HELP Practices has great potential as a catalyst of interpersonal courage and missional effectiveness.

Within this methodology, John found the Ebenezer LifeGroup accountability questions to be an important factor in strengthening his interpersonal courage for Christ.

My courage for Christ has been strengthened by knowing that I have a group to hold me accountable. Thinking ahead to our HELP check-ins gives me the courage to go forth in God's name. I also think praying for courage has been a huge part of growing in missional work.

From John's reflection, it is evident that the courage to make disciples can grow in a missional community which provides one another with a loving accountability to minister through listening and prayer.

### **Conclusion**

Implementation of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer within a LifeGroup has demonstrated the evolving interplay between ministry planning, execution, and learning on the part of the practitioner. The unforeseen trainings of the missional prayer weekend at Atlanta Korean and the Ebenezer LifeGroup with Collegedale's Pastoral Staff arose as opportunities to prepare the researcher to facilitate the intervention described in Chapter 4. In addition, listening to the diverse life experiences of the missional prayer recruits proved informative for future Ebenezer LifeGroups, regardless of participant decisions to opt in or out of the missional prayer intervention.

Preparing to implement the eight missional prayer lessons also led to a clarification of (a) missional assumptions, (b) survey and focus group questions, and (c) the intervention's

evaluation areas of Awareness, Responsiveness, and Courage, also known as the ARC Instincts. Working forward from the Ebenezer LifeGroup Orientation, this implementation narrative provided correlational excerpts from participants closing evaluation activities to highlight the impact of the Ebenezer LifeGroup lessons on their ARC Instincts.

Finally, the Post Ebenezer LifeGroup Insights portion of the chapter offered a comparative summary of participants' before and after perspectives regarding their ARC Instincts. What is most notable in this summary, is the clear shift in participants thinking and language toward a more missional outlook in relation to the ARC Instincts and the HELP Practices of prayer as communion and prayer as commission. The final chapter will provide a concise evaluation of the approach used in this intervention, as well as outcomes, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

## CHAPTER 6

### EVALUATION AND LEARNINGS

#### **Intervention Summary**

The purpose of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer as a discipleship intervention was to encourage attenders and members of the Collegedale Church to engage in the mission of making friends for Jesus, one step at a time. In response to Collegedale's need for a disciple-making catalyst, a series of eight missional prayer lessons on prayer as communion and prayer as commission were written and tested within an Ebenezer LifeGroup. Qualitative insights from the study's before and after focus group sessions suggest that Ebenezer LifeGroup members' experimentation in the missional prayer HELP Practices of Heeding, Engaging, Listening, and Prayer affirmed and/or strengthened their ARC Instincts of Awareness of God's presence, Responsiveness to His voice, and interpersonal Courage for Christ. As a result, further development and study of the effectiveness of the Ebenezer Missional Prayer Curriculum as a catalyst for relational discipleship is needed. This chapter provides a concise description of the method of evaluation, outcomes, recommendations for future initiatives, conclusions, and a discussion of the transformative convergence of my journey with Jesus, pastoral ministry experience, doctoral studies, and life calling.

## **Evaluating Missional Prayer as a Relational Catalyst**

The dynamic nature of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer (see Chapter 1, *Figure 1*, p. 8) necessitated a qualitative approach for evaluating the Ebenezer Curriculum as an effective intervention to address Collegedale Church's need for a relational discipleship catalyst. This portion of the conclusion describes the method of evaluation, provides an interpretive summary of the evaluation data, and identifies important outcomes.

### **Data Entry and Organization**

Evaluation of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer as a relational catalyst for discipleship occurred through qualitative analysis of participants before and after responses recorded in the online surveys, focus group transcripts, and exit interview notes. After the concluding focus group, audio was transcribed and edited from the before and after video recordings. From the focus group transcriptions, a before and after comparison table of participant responses was compiled (see Appendix E, p. 172). A similar comparison table was created from participants' responses to the before and after online survey questions (see Appendix F, p. 173). Based upon analysis of the comparative tables from the online surveys and focus group transcripts, I met individually with the Ebenezer LifeGroup participants for a clarifying exit interview. Data from the exit interviews and comparative response tables was organized into a digital mind map for the purpose of synthesis and interpretation (see Appendix G, p. 187).

### **Summary and Interpretation**

After creating the mind map from the comparison tables, the synthesized evaluation data was utilized in the "Impact of the Ebenezer LifeGroup" section (p. 94), of Chapter 5's implementation narrative. As the starting point of summary and interpretation, the implementation narrative was composed of excerpts from before and after evaluation responses



which appeared to correlate with themes from the Ebenezer lessons. The purpose of these correlating excerpts was to provide a qualitative picture of the potential impact of the intervention on subjects' missional instincts of awareness, responsiveness, and courage.

Based upon Chapter 5's implementation narrative, Chapter 4's intervention description, and the missional prayer framework of Chapter 1, a summary of the *Missional Impact of the Ebenezer LifeGroup Lessons* is provided below (see Table 4, p. 112). In this missional impact table, each Ebenezer lesson is classified within one of the two missional prayer branches found in the Ebenezer Model (see Chapter 2, Table 1, p. 24). Those two branches are prayer as communion and prayer as commission.

Column one of the Table 4 missional impact summary includes: (a) the title of each Ebenezer LifeGroup Lesson, (b) the missional prayer branch each Ebenezer lesson addresses, and (c) which of the four missional prayer dimensions each Ebenezer lesson emphasizes (see Chapter 2, Table 1, p. 24). As mentioned earlier, the four missional prayer dimensions are: (D1) God's initiative, (D2) Our response to God, (D3) Joining Jesus in listening and prayer, and (D4) Sharing God's provision. Column two of Table 4's missional impact summary describes each lesson's connection segment. Column three of the missional impact summary provides a correlational statement from the evaluation responses that draws a thematic link between Chapter 5's implementation narrative and the missional instincts which appear to have been enhanced through participation in the corresponding connection segment of the lesson. For example, Allen's description of learning a more relational way to pray correlates with lesson one's focus on prayers of praise and thanks. In addition, his participation in the intervention appears to have enhanced his awareness of God's presence and responsiveness to God's voice.

The missional impact summaries and supporting data found in Table 4 suggest that the intervention lessons enhanced the missional instincts of the Ebenezer LifeGroup participants. One possible exception is Lesson 5 which focuses on praying God's word. There were no clear

Table 4

*Missional Impact of The Ebenezer LifeGroup Lessons*

<b><u>Lesson, Branch, &amp; Dimension</u></b>	<b><u>Connection Segments</u></b>	<b><u>Missional Impact</u></b>
<b>Lesson 1. God is our Help</b> Prayer as Communion Branch (D1) God’s Call (D2) Our Response	<b>Confessional Praise:</b> Who is God for where I am right now?  <b>Thanks-Listening:</b> Lord, bring to mind the blessings I need to thank you for.	Based on Allen’s description of a more relational prayer strategy, the intervention appears to enhanced his <i>awareness</i> , and <i>responsiveness</i> .
<b>Lesson 2. Seeking God’s Help</b> Prayer as Communion Branch (D1) God’s Call (D2) Our Response	<b>Ebenezer Journaling:</b> Journaling through the Scriptures with the heed-engage-listen-pray second dimension HELP Practices.	Based on Briana’s reflections about using the HELP Practices to journal on God’s word, and share with others her instincts of <i>awareness</i> , <i>responsiveness</i> and <i>courage</i> seem to have been enhanced.
<b>Lesson 3. Joining Jesus</b> Prayer as Commission Branch (D3) Joining Jesus	<b>Conversational Listening:</b> Practicing interpersonal listening with the third dimension HELP Practices and the Rs of listening – Realize, Reflect, Respond, Refrain, Rest, Remember.	Based on Irene’s “song on the radio” story, her friend experienced the power of listening to awaken <i>awareness</i> . Her friend also demonstrated the instinct of <i>responsiveness</i> by calling Irene. In addition, Irene’s <i>courage</i> to listen appears to have increased.
<b>Lesson 4. Ministering in Prayer</b> Prayer as Commission Branch (D3) Joining Jesus	<b>Praying with People:</b> Practicing interpersonal prayer with a LifeGroup partner by utilizing lesson four’s teaching tips for praying with people.	Allen demonstrated the instincts of <i>awareness</i> , <i>responsiveness</i> , and <i>courage</i> when got out of bed to listen to his son and pray with him.
<b>Lesson 5. Father, You Said...</b> Prayer as Communion Branch (D1) God’s Call (D2) Our Response	<b>Praying God’s Word:</b> Asking God to act according to His word by claiming his promises aloud or in prayer journaling.	Based on the survey responses, focus group transcripts, and exit interview notes, there were no points of correlation between participant responses and this lesson. However, the biblical record points to the potential of praying God’s word for enhancing <i>awareness</i> , <i>responsiveness</i> , and, <i>courage</i> .
<b>Lesson 6. Helping Others</b> Prayer as Commission Branch (D3) Joining Jesus (D4) Sharing God’s Provision	<b>Prayer as Service:</b> Sharing with a LifeGroup member about an opportunity to serve as a result of a conversation or missional prayer moment.	Brenda’s story from the TSA line and her story about passing a note in church demonstrate <i>awareness</i> , <i>responsiveness</i> , and <i>courage</i> .
<b>Lesson 7. This is My Story</b> Prayer as Commission Branch (D4) Sharing God’s Provision	<b>Story Sketching:</b> Drawing one’s life story on a sheet of paper and sharing it with another LifeGroup member.	Justin and Irene’s reflections about people sharing their stories in the group point to intervention’s potential go increase <i>courage</i> .
<b>Lesson 8. Come Apart and Rest</b> Prayer as Communion Branch (D1) God’s Call (D2) Our Response	<b>Silence and Solitude:</b> Silently sitting in God’s presence or meditating on a passage of Scripture for twenty minutes followed by sharing with a LifeGroup partner.	Based on John’s reflection about learning to listen through the intervention, there may be a loose correlation to this lesson in the areas of <i>awareness</i> , and <i>responsiveness</i> .

correlations between participants' evaluation responses, the contents of this lesson, and the ARC Instincts of Awareness, Responsiveness, and Courage. However, the biblical account of the disciples' prayer in Acts 4 and the temptations of Jesus in Matthew 4 would suggest a connection between praying/claiming God's word and the ARC Instincts. For this reason, more work needs to be done in helping missional prayer participants pray God's Word in ways that would strengthen their ARC Instincts.

In addition to missional correlations between participant responses and the Ebenezer lessons, evaluation questions two and six (see Chapter 5, Table 3, p. 90) considered participants' thoughts regarding their discipleship needs and expectations of the intervention. Responses to questions two and six in the concluding evaluation exercises appear to affirm the intervention's potential to enhance missional instincts and, as a result, increase disciples' courage to make friends for Jesus, one step at a time. For example, at the beginning of the missional prayer journey, Allen felt like he was missing the reassurance that he is a good person and desired for his feelings of self-worth to improve. However, at the end he wrote, "I'm not sure that my self-worth has improved in this nine-week period, but I definitely feel like I can communicate with the Lord better and let him know of my feelings of self-worth."

Allen's response indicates an increased awareness and responsiveness in his relationship with God. Instead of looking to the Lord to simply make him feel better, Allen is processing life with the Lord; seeing "in every difficulty... a call to prayer" (White, 1898, p. 667), and keeping his wants, joys, sorrows, cares, and fears before God (White, 1892, p. 100). His increased awareness and engagement with God have also resulted in greater interpersonal courage with his family based on the response excerpts which were cited in in Chapter 5.

In the post-intervention discussion of discipleship needs and intervention expectations, there were other Ebenezer LifeGroup members who mentioned an increased awareness of God's presence and activity in their lives as a result of participating in the study. Like Allen, Irene experienced a shift in her relationship with God when her focus changed from seeking more faith

and trust to looking to the Faithful One. Her focus reflects Hudson Taylor's counsel to his sister regarding growth in Christ: "But how to get faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting on the Faithful One" (Taylor, 2013, p. 149). The shift in John's focus through the intervention was to "a more disciplined approach to discipleship," and spending more time "listening to God's voice and not just talking 'at Him.'" John and Irene both seem to have grown in their engagement and responsiveness to God by moving from an "about" posture toward God to a "with" posture.

In Briana's journey there was a priority shift as she became more aware of seeking Jesus first before attempting to help others. She found herself more cognizant of the Lord's influence in her life. "Instead of 'wondering' if God was there" she wrote, "I am more certain that He has been there every step." Brenda mentioned being "more aware and willing to listen" as a result of the group, and Dana's prayer focus shifted from solely personal concerns to a more missional focus on intercession and "journeying with others" as previously mentioned in Chapter 5. This focus on journeying with others aligns with the group's overall shift in missional focus, as noted in the conclusion of Chapter 5's implementation narrative.

In relation to this missional shift, Matt described a "greater freedom to start making friends... without the guilt of instantly inviting folk to church or seeking a Bible study," while also being able to "relax a bit more and just engage" people in conversation. Expanding on these thoughts during his exit interview, Matt acknowledged an increased awareness of the individual uniqueness of people and the need to help them take their next best step toward Jesus as he said, "The process gave me license to slow down and talk further." While Matt already had a strong confidence in helping people move toward Christ interpersonally, the intervention appears to have given him greater courage in working with those who would be unreceptive to traditional Adventist witnessing initiatives like personal Bible studies, evangelistic meetings, or church invites.

### **Missional Prayer Outcomes**

Through the process of data evaluation, summary, and interpretation, the study's most notable outcome was a shift in the Ebenezer LifeGroup's thinking about Christ's call to make disciples. After participation in the intervention, Ebenezer LifeGroup members' reflections and stories pointed to an enhanced missional outlook and awareness in relation to their personal discipleship journeys. They expressed a greater propensity toward interceding for seekers and skeptics, as well as responding to the Holy Spirit's promptings to minister to people. With this enhanced awareness and responsiveness, their feedback suggested a greater sense of courage and confidence to engage people in conversation as a result of learning and experimenting with the HELP Practices of missional prayer. In the process of the overarching missional shift experienced by the Ebenezer LifeGroup, there were a number of additional outcomes worth noting.

#### **A Discussion of Fear Factors**

The first outcome of note arose in the concluding focus groups' conversation regarding disciple making fear factors. By highlighting our shared fears of not knowing enough to be effective witnesses, being perceived as crazy, made fun of, or rejected, the conversation around fear factors helped the group realize, we are not alone in our discipleship anxieties. The simple process of discussing discipleship fear factors has the potential to strengthen interpersonal courage for God's kingdom and should be incorporated in future Ebenezer LifeGroups on missional prayer.

#### **Witnessing Begins With Listening**

A second outcome surfaced through reflection on the relationship between listening, courage, and witnessing. In our concluding focus group, there was a collective synergy around the idea of being able to relax in our conversational interactions with people, focus on their needs, and listen well. Even the most seasoned disciples in our group felt the process of using the HELP Practices to engage in needs-based listening afforded them greater courage and confidence in the

process of ministering to people interpersonally. In brief, we discovered that one's courage to make disciples grows when witnessing begins with listening.

### The Transformational Intersection of Story

A third outcome in this study was the discovery of the transformational intersection located at the crossroads of God's story, the story of the seeker/unbeliever, and the story of the missional prayer minister. Alex and I encountered Christ at this intersection during our "Riding Shotgun" conversation which I described in Chapter 4. Bringing our stories together in 1999, God used my love for music to build a bridge to Alex and Benito, his mother's live-in boyfriend. Eighteen years later the Lord reconnected us through a series of Facebook messages. When Alex shared his fear that it was too late to find freedom from addiction, the Lord prompted me to tell Alex to "ride shotgun" and let Jesus take the wheel. In awe, Alex confirmed that another friend had told him the same thing a week earlier.

Through our conversation, the Holy Spirit was creating a transformational intersection of story, and in response to the Lord's leading I said, "God is telling you it's not too late Alex... In Revelation, Jesus promises to give those who are victorious a white stone with a new name on it. God is giving you a new name Alex: It's Shotgun!" (J. G. Moon, personal communication, March 28, 2017). From the music of my story, to the invitation to "ride shotgun" in Alex's story, to the "white stone" promise from God's story, the Holy Spirit was assuring our hearts that it was not too late to let Jesus take the wheel and experience His transformative power in our lives. Through empathetic listening and prayer, missional prayer ministers have the opportunity to help others see the transformative intersection between one another's stories and God's story.

### The Importance of Relaxed Urgency

An urgency outcome came to light in Matt's exit interview. As noted earlier, Matt is the team member who first suggested the idea of being able to relax during interpersonal ministry

situations as a result of learning to slow down and listen through the HELP Practices. As a busy attorney who enjoys sharing his faith, Matt is also a mature Adventist Christian who loves to talk prophecy, share literature, start Bible studies, and help people get into the baptismal tank. For Matt, end-time urgency is of the essence, and the missional prayer intervention appears to have refined his witnessing passion rather than squelching it.

Matt's dual emphasis on end-time urgency, and the more relaxed witnessing approach of the Ebenezer Model was paradoxical. Based on this perceived paradox of relaxed urgency, I posed the following question: "How can discipleship happening one step at a time enhance the effectiveness of spreading the three angels' messages?"

Matt suggested that the Ebenezer Model helps Christ followers relax in their end-time witness because it teaches them to apply the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation to the context of seekers' thoughts, feelings, and daily lives:

The drum beat of the three angels' messages is that time is short. I still say to my clients that where we are is not sustainable. I try to pick out an area of life that would be relevant to them; especially if they have brought it up.

Heed, engage, listen, pray, is still appropriate in linking them to the three angels' message. It's not enough to know that Christ loves them. There is an urgency to the time in which we live.

There is something in their anxiety level as to where my clients are. Their immigration status is a constant source of anxiety. I try to encourage them with the message: "There is a new world coming. God wants to give you justice. There will be a time when there is no racism, no borders, no issues of hate."

They are open to a spiritual engagement with God. Right here on our borders... in my office... they are going through holocaust of sorts through separation from their family. They are open to spiritual help.

The HELP Method allows me to piggy back on themes of the great controversy. There needs to be a soft and gentle touch.

Matt's reflection illustrates the power of listening to bring a sense of urgent peace in chaotic times. This texture of urgent peace is portrayed in the movie *Hacksaw Ridge*, in the courageous calm of private Desmond T. Doss when he prays, "Please Lord! Help me get one more! Help me get one more!" (Gibson, 2016). Within the Great Controversy missional prayer warriors who listen to others with a courageous calm, may help them realize the urgency of turning to God, without imbedding a counterproductive fear factor in spiritual DNA of those they

serve. Through the relaxed urgency of missional prayer, a disciple may develop greater courage in helping people follow Jesus, one step at a time; while simultaneously instilling courage in the lives of those they listen to and pray with.

### The Need of Missional Prayer at Home

In addition to impacting the market place, listening and prayer can have a profound impact upon the home. While one might say this is the most obvious outcome of the intervention, Chapter 5's description of Allen's missional prayer moment with his teen-age son eluded my pre-launch expectations (see Chapter 5, p. 114). With all my thinking about the discipleship potential of missional prayer in the wider world, I overlooked its transformational impact in the home. When parents practice listening and prayer with their children, it can spill into the mission of Christ's body by empowering future generations to listen and pray with seekers, skeptics, and unbelievers. In addition, because relating with family can be as challenging as engaging with the most hardened skeptic, people who practice missional prayer at home will be able to minister more effectively in the wider world.

### Identifying the Fixer Danger

In relation to engaging with skeptics, identifying the fixer danger was another significant outcome of this intervention. Allen brought the fixer danger to light in his exit interview:

Outsiders get lost by our apparent motivation to "convert" and "correct." A big issue I notice with my friends who are atheist is the Christian push to "correct."

A key challenge for the HELP motif is working with those using it, to apply the principles without seeking to be Evangelical fixers. We as Christians create moral prisons for others. A moral prison is the verbiage Christians will use to describe someone else's behavior as unredeemable.

Similar to the tension a parent feels when helping their children move from adolescence into adulthood, disciples need to be careful about the fixer danger of careless and/or judgmental attempts to correct the behaviors, lifestyles, or beliefs of skeptics. Those who fall prey to the fixer danger can come across as self-righteous, and turn off outsiders through a *know-it-all* mentality



that offers overly simplistic “Biblical” responses. In contrast, conscientious disciples will avoid the fixer danger and listen to the Holy Spirit for contextually appropriate responses that are Biblically based.

### Identifying Missional Instincts

The most significant outcome of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer was a refining of missional prayer theology. By reflecting on the interplay between the Heed-Engage-Listen-Pray, HELP Practices, and the ARC traits after completion of the intervention, it became apparent that the best description for the ARC traits would be missional instincts. Like an athlete or musician who enhances his or her natural talent by developing a muscle memory born of strategic practice (Coyle, 2009, pp. 85-86), there are missional instincts that grow stronger through the intentional use of the HELP Practices to engage with people. One might also refer to these instincts as missional muscle memory.

Another way to think about missional muscle memory is to say: When the Holy Spirit relationally applies “the power of habit” (Duhigg, 2014, Chapter 9, Section IV, para. 16) to a disciple’s missional practices, the inner drive of their missional instincts intensify. As Duhigg so aptly notes, “once you understand that habits can be rebuilt, the power of habit becomes easier to grasp, and the only option left is to get to work.” In the life of the Christ follower, this looks like working out “salvation with fear and trembling,” by cooperating with the Spirit of God who works within “to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Phil 2:12-13 ESV).

Furthermore, as the One who is always working for the salvation of humanity, God declares that He has: “no pleasure in the death of the wicked,” but desires that “all should come to repentance” (Ezek 33:11; 2 Pet 3:9). A part of this repentance is joining Him in “the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:11-21 NIV), where the working out of salvation (Phil 2:12) is for the Christ follower personally, and for those they are called to disciple. As a result, the chief question of this study has been: How effectively does a disciple’s Spirit-led rehearsal of the HELP

Practices serve as a relational catalyst to energize their missional ARC Instincts of Awareness, Responsiveness, and Courage in making friends for Christ?

When thinking of missional instincts, it is important to clarify that such instincts are not mindless and unaware. Instead, the ARC Instincts of Awareness, Responsiveness, and Courage are relationally dynamic, and they grow as disciples intentionally participate in the HELP Practices of the Ebenezer Model. As these dynamic instincts grow stronger, disciples experience a greater openness to respond to the Holy Spirit's promptings to relationally engage with God in their personal life, and their ministry life as they bless people through interpersonal listening and prayer.

#### Affirming Experiential Awareness

It is this dynamic and relational nature of missional instincts which explain a corrective discovery I experienced in this study. Prior to the intervention, I expected responses to the question of how participants were aware of God's presence, activity, or voice to be more academic in nature. Observationally, I felt the Seventh-day Adventist Church predominately disciplined its attenders and members through Sabbath School lessons, sermons, evangelistic meetings, and training seminars. As a result, I expected subjects to refer to these informational frameworks when describing how they were aware of God. However, their responses were more experiential in nature. In addition to Bible study, participants described recognizing God's presence, activity, and voice through hardships, conversations with people, miraculous moments of divine protection, timely answers to life questions, impressions and promptings, music, silence and solitude, and writing.

The diverse nature of subjects' pre-intervention experiences of God's activity, presence, and voice, led to an affirmational dynamic during the missional prayer intervention. Rather than an introduction to entirely new ways of thinking, the intervention provided a language and skill set to help participants go deeper in their discipleship journey with Jesus. It also affirmed skills

they had incorporated in their journey with Christ and ministry to people which they may not have previously recognized as missionally significant. As their pre-existing discipleship experiences were affirmed through the intervention's language, methodology, and activities, participants' courage to help others follow Jesus was strengthened. In this manner, and through the other outcomes mentioned in this evaluation, every participant's life was changed by what they learned and experienced through this study.

### The Inaccessibility of Discipleship

While the intervention affirmed the discipleship experience of its participants, it also appeared to affirm the relative inaccessibility of discipleship to the average church goer. Although participants' identification of disciple makers was more diverse than expected before the opening focus group conversation, there was no mention of new or inexperienced believers making disciples. Those identified as disciple makers were all highly committed volunteers or church leaders in paid positions. As a result, the intervention appears to confirm the need for more accessible discipleship strategies that new and inexperienced disciples may implement.

### Mission Driven Theology

A final outcome of this study was the affirmation of mission driven theology. Just as my discipleship journey with Jesus preceded the discovery of "missional prayer" as a descriptor for the process of ministering through listening and prayer (see Chapter 4, The Story Behind the Ebenezer Model's Development, p. 63), leading the *Ebenezer LifeGroup* intervention also preceded a clarification in thinking regarding the theology of missional prayer.

In reflecting upon the theological training, I received in undergraduate and graduate school, it was predominately an academic exercise in discerning and explaining what the biblical prophets and great Christian thinkers of the past had to say about God and His ways. Subconsciously, there was a season in which I believed theology was solely a work of exegetical

or systematic interpretation of the biblical text. However, upon closer examination via the classrooms of my personal life and pastoral ministry, I have come to see theology as a broader and more dynamic process of seeking to understand what the Lord has to say in the conversation between the real-life challenges of day-to-day ministry, prayerful study of the Scriptures, Christian fellowship, and engagement with the ongoing theological conversation of the body of Christ.

When the apostle Paul wrote his epistles to the church, it was not so much an attempt to write a profound theological treatise, as it was his strategy to address the very real ministry and mission needs of the local churches he had helped to establish. In the case of Paul's writing, and in the case of my doctoral journey, mission preceded the creation of theological words of counsel, comfort, insight, training, and direction for the church. A similar formation of theology occurred in the ministry of Jesus. Before explaining the theological backdrop of Satan's meteoric fall from heaven, Christ sent out His disciples, two-by-two, to cast out demons (see Luke 10:1-20).

From the examples of Paul, my personal discipleship journey, and Jesus' interaction with his disciples, a missional pattern emerges in which God invites His children to engage in ministry before He seeks to provide a theology of ministry. Apparently, it is important for Him to show us before He can tell us, and we must listen through experience before we can learn by lecture. Following in the footsteps of the one who chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, a theology of discipleship and missional prayer is the fruit of a mission which precedes creation.

## **Recommendations for Future Initiatives**

Based upon the mission before creation pattern, there are a number of next steps for future ministry and research which flow from the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer as a relational catalyst for making disciples. For organizational purposes, some of these steps have been categorized as recommendations for the reader, while others have been categorized as recommendations for the researcher. However, the reader or researcher may choose to implement any of the recommendations mentioned in this section.

In addition, it is an overarching recommendation of this study for the reader and researcher to develop and implement relational discipleship methods which encourage ordinary church goers to *be the church* within their circles of influence. Beyond traditional emphases on growing the church through baptisms, attendance, and tithe; being the church takes place as ordinary church goers are empowered to be the pastoral presence for their community and take church to the people who may never choose to enter the doors of our church buildings. Being the church means building the disciple making courage and confidence of ordinary Christ followers by celebrating the smallest gestures of kindness and friend making. Being the church happens when the smallest or largest of congregations choose to bless their community with no strings attached. This recommendation to be the church is offered in the faith that a systematic commitment to empowering and activating ordinary church goers to make friends through relational discipleship initiatives like the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer will lead to a cultural shift in the local church. The missional nature of this shift will lead the churches who experience it to be more relational and grow organically. Under this overarching recommendation to be the church, the subsequent recommendations for the reader and researcher will have greater missional influence and impact.

## Recommendations for the Reader

After reflecting on the content of this intervention, the reader may have an interest in examining other issues related to discipleship and missional prayer. This section offers four areas for consideration. Those areas include seeking to replicate the Ebenezer Model, evaluating existing discipleship modalities, applying the Ebenezer Model within an existing discipleship modality, and conducting a quantitative study of the Ebenezer Model.

### **Seek to Replicate the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer**

As a starting point for continued research in the area of missional prayer, the reader may choose to replicate the Ebenezer Model in an academic or local church context. As an added step in this replication process, the reader may want to consider developing a series of sermons to reinforce the prayer as communion and prayer as commission lessons of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer. The researcher would also be happy to assist the reader in a replication effort as time allows. Address inquiries regarding a replication of the study to James Moon at [disciplemakingdisciple@gmail.com](mailto:disciplemakingdisciple@gmail.com).

### **Evaluate Existing Discipleship Modalities**

While it was not possible within the scope of this study to examine the effectiveness of existing discipleship structures within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, personal experience leads me to believe that our current modalities for discipleship are predominantly information based. Modalities like Sabbath School, evangelism, sermonic instruction, or various Bible study curricula focus on correct interpretation of the Scripture for the purpose of more doctrinal knowledge, while neglecting practical applications which empower church goers to live out the mission of making disciples. In my opinion, these modalities do not consistently equip church members and attenders to grow in their awareness of God's presence, responsiveness to His voice, and interpersonal courage for Christ. A thorough review of existing discipleship modalities and their effectiveness in empowering members to make disciples could be a helpful step in

seeking to modify these modalities to teach church goers to engage in important missional practices like the Heed-Engage-Listen-Pray, HELP Practices of this study.

### **Study the Ebenezer Model Within a**

#### **Pre-Existing Modality**

As a third area of expanded study, the reader may want to consider testing the HELP Practices and questions of the Ebenezer Model within a pre-existing discipleship modality. Possible modalities in which the HELP Practices and questions might be incorporated could include Sabbath School, a Small Group study on a book of the Bible, a pre-existing discipleship curriculum, a set of Bible study lessons, or a weekly prayer meeting. After careful analysis of the curriculum structure of one of these modalities, the reader could seek to create a simple strategy for applying the HELP Practices and questions within the chosen modality. Such a study could help to assess the capacity of the HELP Practices to be taught and integrated within various pre-existing discipleship modalities of the church.

#### **Conduct a Quantitative Study of the Ebenezer Model**

Another option for evaluating this study might involve developing a way to quantitatively measure the Ebenezer Model's impact on the ARC Instincts of Awareness, Responsiveness, and Courage. Such an initiative might serve as a means to assess the strength of this study's correlational observations. This kind of quantitative assessment would involve a deeper dive into the concept of missional instincts, and a more precise clarification of awareness, responsiveness, and courage.

After clarifying these terms, the reader would need to create a targeted assessment for quantitatively measuring the impact of the Ebenezer Model on the ARC Instincts of Awareness, Responsiveness, and Courage. If designed correctly, this quantitative instrument might provide guidance in assessing where subjects are in their missional development. As a result, teaching the principles of missional prayer might be customized to individual disciples based upon their responses to such a quantitative assessment.

## Recommendations for the Researcher

As the researcher, there a number of personal recommendations I have identified as next steps for moving forward in missional prayer ministry. These steps include future modifications to the intervention and future plans for leading *Ebenezer LifeGroups*. In addition, there is a need for the researcher to run a second Ebenezer LifeGroup and publish a missional prayer curriculum.

### **Modify the Ebenezer LifeGroup Experience**

As a result of the evaluation activities in this intervention, a number of important areas of improvement were identified. The first area of improvement is the need to introduce relational community building at an earlier time in the development of the Ebenezer LifeGroup. Participants felt their connectivity could have been stronger if the story sketching and storytelling activities of lesson seven could have come sooner in their Ebenezer LifeGroup journey.

A second area of improvement is the need to strengthen the silence and solitude teaching and connection segments in lesson eight. Twenty minutes of silence and solitude in the connection segment is not adequate to help participants fully experience the power of these practices. In the future, it would be valuable for the content of this lesson to come earlier in the Ebenezer LifeGroup experience.

A third area of improvement involves the selection and activation of prayer partners within the Ebenezer LifeGroup. The original project proposal involved creating two-by-two prayer support teams who would minister through listening and prayer. However, as the project evolved, the need to write a missional prayer curriculum became evident, and it was decided to test the curriculum within an Ebenezer LifeGroup. For the sake of time and simplicity, this intervention's version of the missional prayer curriculum did not include a strategy for selecting a prayer partner. The integration of prayer partners was intentionally reserved for the next Ebenezer LifeGroup. However, in light of the original proposal and future next steps, it was decided to retain Chapter 3's discussion of prayer partners in the literature review.



The last modification would be the addition of an opening and closing discipleship retreat for future Ebenezer LifeGroups. Each of these two retreats would be a day long. Informed by the *Deep Calling Curriculum* (VinCross, 2020, pp. 33-42; 124-131), and seeking to address the needed improvements mentioned above, the opening retreat would fast-track relational connectivity in the Ebenezer LifeGroup, lay a foundation for the Ebenezer Model's missional prayer training, deepen the experience of silence and solitude for group members, and provide a time and space for group members to pair off as prayer partners.

At the beginning of the opening retreat, Ebenezer LifeGroup members would be introduced to Ebenezer Journaling as preparation for their reflection sessions. During the retreat there would be time for the group to discuss the questions of how they are aware of God's presence, their understanding of discipleship, and when they have exercised interpersonal courage for Christ. At the end of the opening retreat there would be a brief overview of the coming Ebenezer LifeGroup Journey.

The closing day long retreat would include a series of exercises and experiences focused on examining how participants ARC Instincts of Awareness, Responsiveness, and Courage were impacted by the journey. In addition, Ebenezer LifeGroup members will identify key learnings from the Ebenezer experience and consider their next steps as missional prayer ministers.

### **Launch a Second Ebenezer LifeGroup**

Moving forward, there are two steps in the development of missional prayer ministry I would like to accomplish. The first step is to launch a second *Ebenezer LifeGroup* 90 days after my graduation from Andrews University's Doctor of Ministry program. As mentioned before, I would like to include an opening and closing Ebenezer Retreat with this second missional prayer group. In addition, it is my desire to raise up a team of Ebenezer LifeGroup leaders, by leading an annual or semi-annual Ebenezer LifeGroup as a part of my ongoing ministry responsibilities. In each Ebenezer LifeGroup I lead, I would like to be mentoring a leader who would start another Ebenezer LifeGroup in missional prayer.

## **Publish a Missional Prayer Curriculum**

A second major step in the development of missional prayer ministry is to publish a missional prayer curriculum called *Ebenezer: A Journey in Missional Prayer*. The curriculum would contain a companion book and journal. The book would be called *Ebenezer: A Missional Prayer Primer*. It would contain practical instructions for how to minister through listening and prayer. The instructions would be paired with stories to illustrate the principles being taught. In addition, there would be a series of companion videos with disciple makers telling stories of ministering through listening and prayer. The companion journal would be called *Ebenezer: Thus Far the Lord has Helped Us* and would include instructions on capturing prayer as communion moments and prayer as commission moments through the HELP Practices. The third major component of the box set would be the teacher's guide. It would spell out the philosophy of missional prayer and provide teaching notes for the *Ebenezer Retreats* and LifeGroup lessons.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

This study sought to address the need for a relational catalyst to help members of the Collegedale Church grow in their courage to make friends for Jesus, one step at a time. Here is a concluding review of each chapter along with a description of the transformation the I have experienced through the process of designing and implementing the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer.

### **Chapter Summaries**

Chapter 1 clarified the terms and parameters of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer, and offered it as a proposed strategy to address Collegedale's need for a relational discipleship catalyst. Chapter 2 provided a biblical theology for the intervention by highlighting Scriptural support of the four missional prayer dimensions, HELP Practices, and missional instincts.

Due to expansive nature of the Ebenezer Model's four dimensions of missional prayer, the Chapter 3 literature review narrowed its focus to the third dimension of joining Jesus in the

ministry of listening and prayer. Critical components of the literature review included a working definition of missional prayer, along with a discussion of prayer partnerships, establishing personal connection, and praying with people. These components were chosen because Dimension 3 is possibly the most overlooked of the four missional prayer dimensions.

Chapter 4 provided a developmental narrative of the intervention and description of the eight Ebenezer LifeGroup lessons of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer. Building on the theology of Chapter 2, and the insights for interpersonal prayer ministry identified in Chapter 3's literature review, *Ebenezer: A Missional Prayer Journey* was written as an eight-week pilot curriculum for this study. It included four lessons on prayer as communion and four lessons on prayer as commission. Its purpose was to help the Collegedale members/attenders grow in their interpersonal courage to make friends for Jesus through listening and prayer.

Chapter 5 provided an implementation narrative of the intervention described in Chapter 4. The narrative introduced readers to the study's Ebenezer LifeGroup participants, offered correlational excerpts of their reflections on the missional impact of the Ebenezer LifeGroup lessons, and discussed how the intervention enhanced their missional instincts of awareness, responsiveness, and courage.

Up to this point, Chapter 6 has evaluated the missional prayer intervention, highlighted its outcomes, offered recommendations for future missional prayer initiatives, and provided a concluding summary of this dissertation. In closing, it is important to describe the transformational effects of this intervention on my journey with Jesus.

### Convergence and Calling

During my time in the Doctor of Ministry program, I have recognized a convergence between my personal journey with Jesus, pastoral ministry experiences, and the development of the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer. The most significant aspect of this convergence is an increasing clarity regarding my life calling:

Calling is not only a career path that a person chooses to pursue, but that a person creates and cultivates. Even people who may not have landed in their ideal career can nevertheless craft or reframe their work, transforming it into a calling—or more accurately, transforming it into a vehicle for living out their calling. (Dik & Duffy, 2012, pp. 13-14)

Throughout one's lifetime, a person may be called to various roles. But true calling involves the way we roll. It transcends job titles as “a vehicle through which” people can share their “gifts to glorify God and serve the common good” (Dik, 2020, p. 122). Calling is a fingerprint. No matter what role people have served in, if they have been living out their calling, the people they serve will find the unique fingerprint of their calling in every role where they have served.

In this doctoral journey, a part of finding my God-given fingerprint has been a recognition and awareness of His ongoing work in my life. At Southern Adventist University's 2017 Fall Colloquium, I was intrigued when Dik told the faculty and staff “Calling is a point of focus that may travel into various areas of vocation” (personal communication, August 9, 2017). In an effort to help us identify such a point of focus, Dik challenged those present to reflect on our life experiences and formulate a short motto or mission statement that would sum up our life calling.

The next morning while reading from John's gospel, I was captivated by the following verse: “The Teacher is here and is calling for you” (John 11:28 ESV). Utilizing the HELP Practices to journey with Jesus through this verse, the prayer that arose in me was: “Lord, You are showing me that *my calling is to glorify God by helping others find their voice...* Lord refine this calling. Clarify this calling. Empower this calling” (J. G. Moon, personal communication, August 10, 2020).

From a convergence of time spent in communion with God and commission with Christ, the “point of focus” calling the Holy Spirit led me to, was *to help people find their voice*. Embedded in this statement are the Heed-Engage-Listen-Pray, HELP Practices. As a result, helping people find their voices has come to mean helping them learn to discern God's voice, and to discern their unique calling within His Kingdom. As an affirmation of this calling to help

people find their voices, a little under two years later the Lord took me back to Deuteronomy 22.

Here is part of what I wrote in my journal on April 10, 2019 (J. G. Moon, personal communication):

Jesus told me in the shower this morning that service is a form of prayer. The God who says, 'I will send you another helper' is our Help. He calls us to be the help. It's exactly what He said to me so many years ago when Rhonda called for tech support: 'You may not withhold your help.' (Deut 22:3 NRSV) We had prayed to reach our neighbors and friends, and while we were praying, God said, "Go be the answer!" Missional prayer is a way of life. Jesus I'm here to help others find their voice!

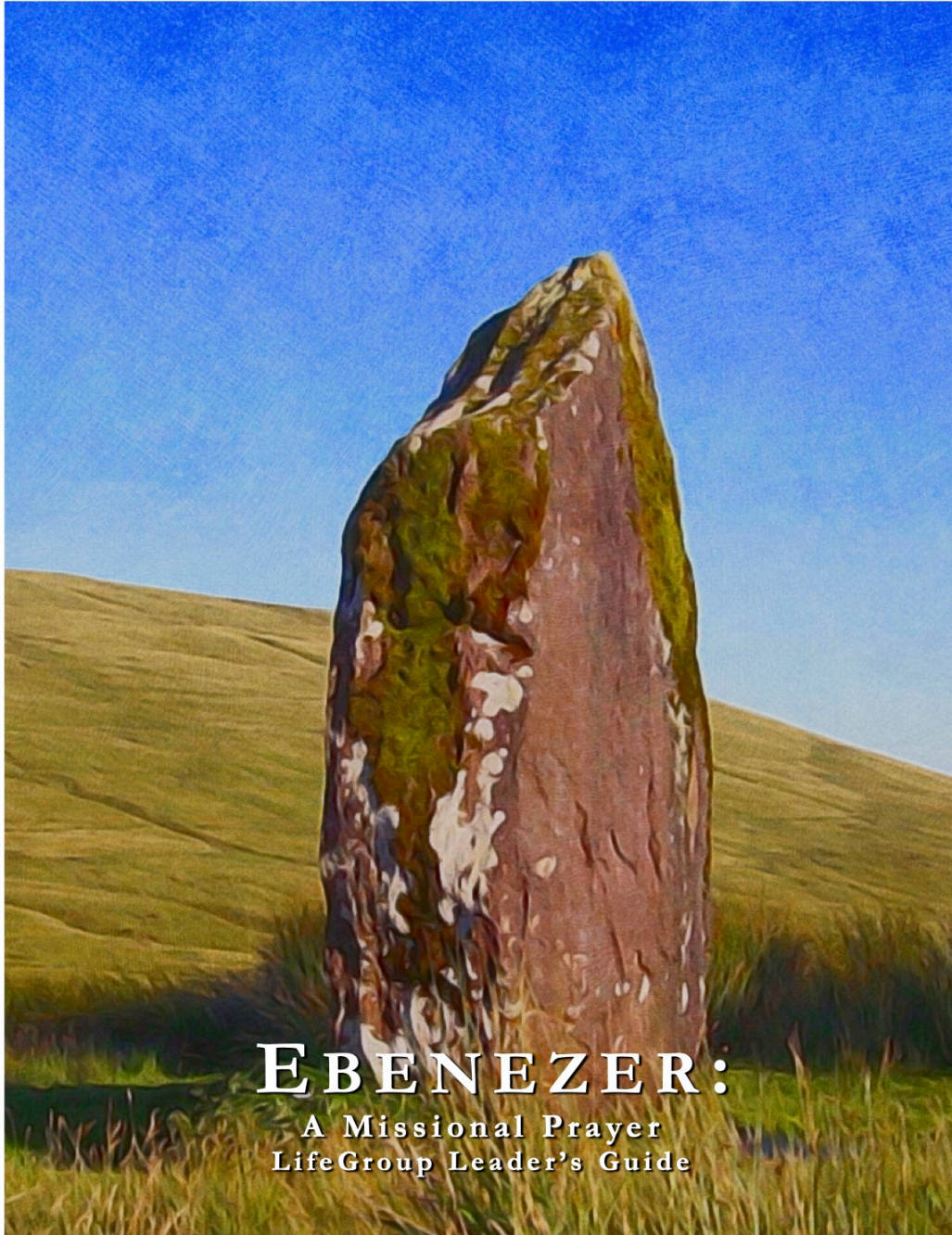
Through the Doctor of Ministry program, the Lord has given me a Gilgal experience by bringing me full circle to my early days of ministry in Wyoming. He has brought me back to when Ingrid and I asked Him to help us reach our neighbors and friends for His kingdom. Through the missional prayer intervention and personal experiences like those in Chapter 4's developmental narrative, Christ has helped me recognize His call in my life to HELP people find their voices. As a result, I now realize that in addition to helping people take their next best step toward or with Jesus, discipleship also means helping them discern the unique way in which God has called them to disciple the people within their own circles of influence.

Within this doctoral journey, empowering people to discern God's unique call to make disciples has meant helping them find their voices by teaching them to follow Jesus and disciple others through listening and prayer. By helping me develop the Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer, Jesus has affirmed my deeply held conviction that

if prayer is the language of our ongoing encounter with God, then inviting others to pray with us, whether or not we deem them to be disciples yet, must necessarily be at the heart of our missional task. Prayer makes disciples; in prayer disciples are transformed; and an apostolic church emerges. (Chatfield, 2016, p. 18)

Over and over again, I have experienced the power of prayer to make disciples. As Jesus' followers commune with their Father on the mountain and join Jesus in His commission to mingle among the multitude, He will help them make disciples through listening and prayer. In the kingdom, the Ebenezer of their journey with Jesus will be the lives of those they disciplined through missional prayer.

APPENDIX A  
EBENEZER LIFEGROUP  
LEADER'S GUIDE SAMPLE



# EBENEZER

## Week 1: God our Help (Outside the Camp)

1. Transition Moment  
2. Help Check-Up

H  
Heed

### HELP CHECK-UP: A Moment of Surprise

**H:** What caught you by surprise today? Was it a stressor? Maybe someone who spoke a word of encouragement. Maybe it was something you noticed in nature.

**E:** Is there anything God might be saying through the surprise you mentioned?

**L:** Is there a connection between the surprise and anything else going on in your life?

**P:** Let's ask God to surprise us during our time together today.

3. Teaching Time

E  
Engage

**A Lesson in Sacrifice:** In the Kingdom of God, sacrifice is a way of life. Jesus is the Father's ultimate sacrifice for us. The Father "choose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). He is called "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8, NKJV). In other words, the Father was not willing to give us life, if he did not have a plan to redeem our lives. And in answer to Heaven's providence, we are called to a life of sacrifice:

*"Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.*

*Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." —Hebrews 13:13–16 NIV11*

In this world of selfishness and self-indulgence, His sacrifice makes us outsiders. We become strangers and aliens on the earth when we choose to embrace Heaven's Gift. Three of the sacrifices The Outsider awakens in us are: 1) Praise, 2) Goodness, and 3) Generosity. In addition, He invites us to give thanks: "*Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High, and call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.*" —Psalm 50:14–15 NIV11

4. Practice Segment

L  
Listen

**Reflect:** Why does the Bible refer to praise and thanks as sacrifices? How do praise, goodness, generosity, and gratitude make us outsiders?

**Connecting through Praise & Thanks:** The Lord is "enthroned in the praises" of His people (Psalm 22:3). When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, His first words were: "*Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Thy name*" —Matthew 6:9 NASB. Powerful prayer begins with praise. "Our Father" is an expression of adoration to the Almighty.

We also give praise when we declare the attributes, names, and descriptions of God; or as we express our love to God. Examples of praise include, "I love You Lord... You are Holy... You are the Alpha and Omega... or You are my Shepherd." But what about the times when you don't feel like praising God? Maybe this is why the Bible refers to praise as sacrifice. Maybe God knows that we are resistant to praise.

# EBENEZER

## Week 1: God our Help (Outside the Camp)

**Confessional Praise** is a great way to bless the Lord when we don't want to; it combines emotional honesty with faith. Confessional praise tells the Lord who He is for where we are in the moment. Here are a few examples: "Jesus, I'm afraid, be my Defender... Lord my spirit is anxious, You are my Prince of Peace... Father my heart is broken, be my Healer."

If praise is expressing our adoration for who God is, thanksgiving is expressing our gratitude for what God has done. The prophet Samuel led Israel in a corporate expression of thanks when He set up a stone "between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, Thus far the Lord has helped us." (1 Samuel 7:12). The stone was a reminder of God's faithfulness. In the future ages, whenever an Israelite came to Ebenezer, it would be an invitation to remember the ways of the Lord and give thanks.

**Thanks-Listening** is way we can raise an Ebenezer in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to bring to mind specific blessings of God's words and ways in our life. For example, "Lord, thank You for allowing me to bump into my friend Wolf at the gas station on the way back from Maryland when we were 2 1/2 hours from home."

*Try to think of a little, seemingly insignificant surprise God has given you this week that you can thank Him for.* Do you have the surprise in mind? Go ahead and share it with the person next to you.

**Activity:** Now we are going to take a few more minutes to write with Confessional Praise and Thanks-Listening. In your journal, write a few lines of Confessional Praise by telling God who He is for where you are in this moment.

### 5. Debrief

After praising Him, practice Thanks-Listening by inviting the Holy Spirit to bring to mind specific blessings He would have you to remember in thanksgiving.

**Debrief:** In groups of three, discuss the following questions together.

- What did you notice through this exercise of praise and thanks?
- How can practicing praise and thanks effect your relationship with God?
- During your time of praise and thanks, was there a next step you felt Jesus inviting you to take in your walk with him?

### 6. Worship

P  
r  
a  
y

**Worship & Prayer:** For our prayer time today. We will be offering ourselves to the Lord as a living sacrifice by using Romans 12 as a springboard for prayer. Having the passage open before us, we will ask the Lord to activate a portion of this chapter in our lives, or in the lives of those that we love.

### 7. Assignments

**PrayIt Forward:**

1. Read the "God is our Help" passages found in your *Ebenezer Journal*.
2. Continue to practice Confessional Praise and Thanks-Listening.
3. Experiment with using the passages as springboard for prayer.



# EBENEZER

## CHECK-UP QUESTIONS

### PRAYER AS COMMUNION

HEED: How did you notice God this week?

- His word?
- His work?
- His ways?

ENGAGE: What was your reflection about what you noticed?

LISTEN: What connection did the Holy Spirit make to your daily life? Was there a way He was inviting you to obey?

PRAY: How did you respond in prayer?

### PRAYER AS COMMISSION

HEED: Who did you notice this week?

ENGAGE: How did you engage them in conversation?

LISTEN: What was their story?

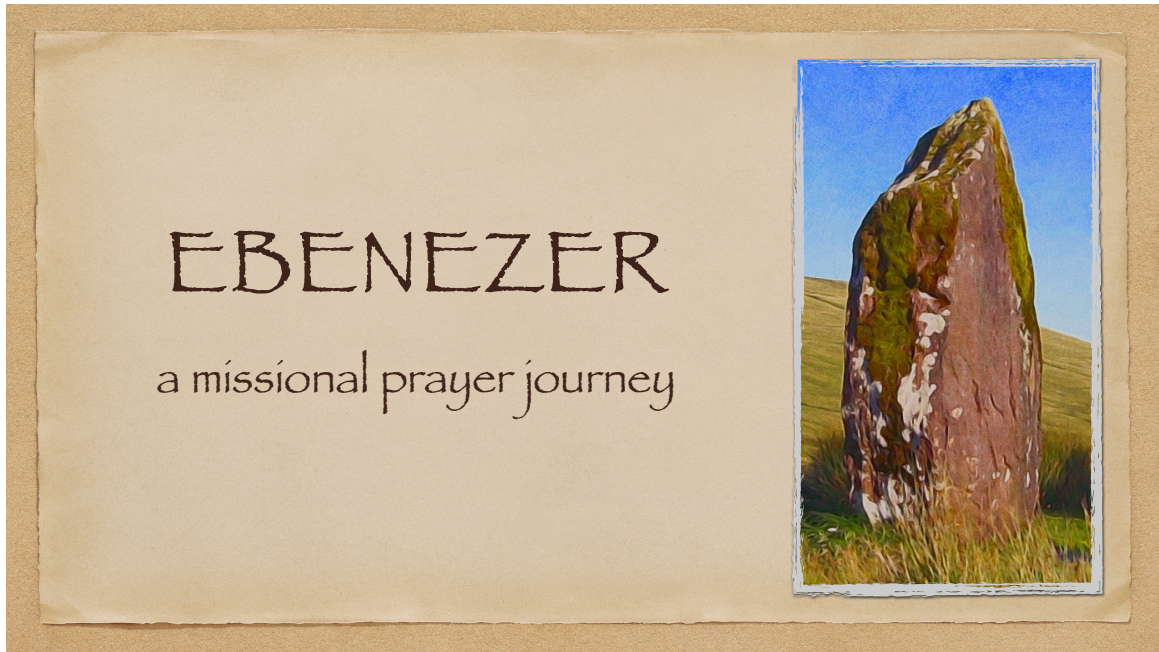
PRAY: Did you pray for or with them? What happened? Is there a way God would have us help to answer their prayer?

### PRAYER AS HELP

How is Jesus inviting you to help others?

Did you help someone this week? What happened?

APPENDIX B  
EBENEZER KEYNOTE  
SAMPLE





## HELP Check-up: A Moment of Surprise

H: What caught you by surprise today? Was it a stressor?  
Maybe someone who spoke a word of encouragement.  
Maybe it was something you noticed in nature.

E: Is there anything God might be saying through  
the surprise you mentioned?

L: Is there a connection between the surprise  
and anything else going on in your life?

P: Let's ask God to surprise us during our time together today.

### HELP Check-up – Weeks 3-8

## HELP Check-up

H: How did you heed God's voice,  
presence, activity this week?

E: What did you learn when you  
engaged in reflection?

L: What life connection or next  
step did the Spirit show you?

P: How did you pray about it?

H: Who did God show you this  
past week?

E: How did you engage with them  
in conversation?

L: What did you learn when you  
listened to their story?

P: How did you pray? What  
happened?



## A Lesson in Sacrifice

“Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.” —Hebrews 13:13–15 NIV11

“Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High, and call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.” —Psalm 50:14–15 NIV11

## Reflect:

Why does the Bible refer to praise and thanks as sacrifice?

How do praise, goodness, generosity, and gratitude make us outsiders?



## Confessional Praise

- ◆ Who is the Lord for where I'm at in this moment?
- ◆ Confess your thoughts, feelings, emotions
- ◆ Declare Who He is.

## Thanks-listening

- ◆ Listening for the ways God has blessed
- ◆ Ask the Holy Spirit to bring His blessing to mind
- ◆ Thank Him for what He's done

## Activity:

In your journal, write a few lines of Confessional Praise by telling God who He is for where you are in this moment.

After praising Him, practice Thanks-Listening by inviting the Holy Spirit to bring to mind specific blessings He would have you to remember in thanksgiving.



Debrief: In groups of three, discuss the following...

- What did you notice through this exercise of praise and thanks?
- How can practicing praise and thanks effect your relationship with God?
- During your time of praise and thanks, was there a next step you felt Jesus inviting you to take in your walk with him?

Pray It Forward:

- Read the daily "God is our Help" passages
- Continue to practice Confessional Praise and Thanks-Listening
- You can also experiment with using the passage as a prayer springboard like we did in Romans 12.



APPENDIX C  
EBENEZER JOURNAL  
SAMPLE



# E B E N E Z E R

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“thus far the Lord has helped us”

a book of remembrance by

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\_\_\_\_\_  
starting date

\_\_\_\_\_  
ending date



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ISBN: DRAFT COPY

DEDICATION

To our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ:  
Only Begotten of the Father,  
Rock of Redemption,  
Stone of HELP!

## WHERE DOES MY HELP COME FROM?

an introduction to Ebenezer  
and the practices of missional prayer

In 1 Samuel 7, after the Lord granted Israel victory over the Philistines, the prophet Samuel set up a rock of remembrance between Mizpah and Shen. He called the rock Ebenezer, meaning “Thus far the LORD has helped us” (1 Samuel 7:12). In the western world, people rarely set up rocks to remember what God has done, but some may choose to journal His activity in their life story.

As a tool for the missional prayer warrior, *Ebenezer* is intended to be a book of remembrance where you may chronicle what the Lord is speaking into your life through scripture, prayer, circumstances, conversations with people, and various other experiences. Logging your journey with Jesus will help you experience the truth that “we have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.”<sup>1</sup>

As you fill this journal with the epic of God’s words and ways in your life, you will experience greater faith in God’s goodness and greater courage for His kingdom. Your testimony shall harmonize with that of the psalmist, who wrote in his prayer journal: “I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:1–2).

### Sky Rider

As you journal, you will also hear overtones in your story from another Hebrew songwriter. Centuries before the psalmist wrote of Help from above, a former prince of Egypt would tell of the One who led Israel out of bondage: “There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides across the heavens to help you” (Deuteronomy 33:26).

In fact, forty years before writing about the Sky Rider, this prince who had become a shepherd met the God of Jeshurun on the western side of the Sinai wildness when a burning bush caught his eye. Astounded by the wonder of the blazing shrub that wasn’t consumed, he said to himself, “I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight” (Exodus 3:3, NASB).

As he took the time to gaze, the aging shepherd heard a voice calling his name, “Moses, Moses!” There from the blaze he heard,

“I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” . . .

. . . “I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters.”

Exodus 3:4, 6–7 NASB

At that moment, Moses met the Almighty who is our HELP: The One who *heeds* our cry, *engages* us in a missional relationship, *listens* continually, and intervenes in answer to our *prayers*. These four HELP practices of heeding, engaging, listening, and prayer are key to keeping a written Ebenezer and learning to join the God of Jeshurun in the ministry of missional prayer for His kingdom. But what is missional prayer?

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1. Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press®, 1915), p. 196.

## Missional Prayer

*Steps to Christ* vividly portrays what missional prayer is all about:

God does not mean that any of us should become hermits or monks and retire from the world in order to devote ourselves to acts of worship. *The life must be like Christ's life—between the mountain and the multitude.* He who does nothing but pray will soon cease to pray, or his prayers will become a formal routine. When men take themselves out of social life, away from the sphere of Christian duty and cross bearing; when they cease to work earnestly for the Master, who worked earnestly for them, they lose the subject matter of prayer and have no incentive to devotion. Their prayers become personal and selfish. They cannot pray in regard to the wants of humanity or the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom, pleading for strength wherewith to work.<sup>2</sup>

Missional prayer involves both prayer as communion with God on the mountain and prayer as a commission with Christ among the multitude. As you chronicle both your times in communion with the Lord your Helper and your times in co-mission with Christ, the journaling experience will help you master the core practices of missional prayer. By learning to heed, engage, listen, and pray, you will also come to appreciate and better understand the four-dimensional nature of the HELP practices within missional prayer ministry. What follows is a summary of how the practices play out within the four dimensions of missional prayer.

### D1 HELP: God's Call

In dimension one, *the Lord heeds the need of His people.*

“I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So, I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey.”

Exodus 3:7–8, NASB

After heeding the cry of his people, *the Lord engages us in a missional relationship* through an invitation to join in His work<sup>3</sup>: “Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt” (Exodus 3:10, NASB).

Throughout the Exodus experience of Israel, *God listens continually* to the cries of his people. As Pharaoh's army was closing in on Israel at the Red Sea, God heard their cry and the response of their leader Moses:

“Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!”

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2. Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press®, 1892), p. 101; emphasis added.

3. This principle mirrors the third reality of Blackaby's seven realities of experiencing God: God invites you to become involved with Him in His work. Henry Blackaby, Richard Blackaby, and Claude King, *Experiencing God* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), p. 44. Kindle Edition.

Moses answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.”

Exodus 14:11–16

When Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, God was still listening: “So Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel, ‘At evening you will know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt; and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, for He hears your grumblings against the LORD’ ” (Exodus 16:6–7, NASB).

At Kibroth-hattaavah, Israel murmured for meat; God gave them quail in response (see Numbers 11). Committed for the long haul, He not only steps into the mess of their situation by heeding their initial cry for help but also stays in the mess by listening continually. And from this posture of daily listening, *Jesus our Lord intervenes in answer to our cries, and intercedes as our example of how to pray*: “I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren” (Luke 22:32, NKJV).

#### **D2 HELP: Our Response**

After recognizing Christ’s initiative to heed, engage, listen, and pray, the first step in responding to His HELP is to *heed God’s voice*. And one of the best places to hear from God is in the Bible. Consider this powerful insight from Henry Blackaby:

Have you ever been reading the Bible when suddenly you were gripped by a fresh new understanding of God? That was God speaking! A person cannot understand spiritual truth unless the Spirit of God reveals it. In fact, the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of truth” (John 14:17). When you understand the spiritual meaning and application of a Scripture passage, God’s Holy Spirit has been at work. Remember: this understanding does not *lead* you to an encounter with God; it *is* the encounter with God. When God speaks to you through the Bible, He is relating to you in a personal and real way.<sup>4</sup>

Everything changes when you realize God is speaking to us through his Word. Speaking to the religious establishment of his day, Jesus said: “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life” (John 5:39–40, NKJV). When you move from reading the Bible to know about God to reading the Bible to come to Jesus, everything changes: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:27, NKJV).

God is always speaking; the question is, Does He know me, and do I hear and follow His voice? Can I discern His voice from the other voices that fill my daily life? If you will listen and give heed, the Lord will reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways through the Bible, your prayers, the circumstances of your life, and the church.<sup>5</sup>

As you heed His voice, you will be transformed when you take time to *engage in reflection* in order to understand the meaning of His Word through observations and questions. Who, what, when, where, why, and how are powerful questions that can help one discern what the Lord is

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4. Blackaby, *Experiencing God*, p. 152; emphasis original.

5. Blackaby, *Experiencing God*, p. 43.

seeking to teach through Scripture, prayer, life experiences, the body of Christ, and conversations with people.

The next step in responding to God's help is to *listen for direction*. With God's Word in mind, ask Him questions like these:

- What are You seeking to show me about who You are?
- What are You showing me about myself?
- What are You inviting me to do in response to Your word?
- How would You have me to abide or rest in Your presence?

David and Paul Watson suggest using the acronym SPECK to listen for the Lord's direction through Scripture:

- S—Is there a Sin to avoid?
- P—Is there a Promise, a prayer, or a praise in this passage?
- E—Is there an Example to follow (or not to follow)?
- C—Is there a Command to obey?
- K—Is there Knowledge that I need to retain?<sup>6</sup>

Whether you use such questions or simply ask God, "How do you want me to apply what you have spoken to my heart?" by developing the habit of listening for the Lord's direction day by day, you will begin to gain greater recognition of His voice. Sometimes He may give a clear directive. Other times He may speak words of encouragement or comfort. And sometimes you may hear silence and sense the Holy Spirit inviting you to delight in His presence.

Ultimately, God's help is about teaching us to abide in Christ. As you heed His voice, engage in reflection, and listen for direction, you shall be moved to pray in response. Let your prayer response be honest and authentic because "the LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit" (Psalm 34:18, NKJV). As you pray, follow the council of Peter: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:6–7).

Don't tell the Lord what you think He wants to hear. Lay every care before Him. Cast your anxiety, anger, and fear at His feet. Tell Him your hopes, joys, and desires. If you don't want to do something that He is calling you to do, tell Him. If you're struggling to obey, ask Him for strength. The key is emotional honesty before God. When the time is right, you will receive His help as you seek to shoot straight with your thoughts, feelings, and needs.

### **D3 HELP: Joining Jesus**

Honesty about our needs combined with honesty about Christ's mission are the starting point for joining Jesus in the third dimension of missional prayer. Modeling this kind of honesty, the apostle Paul says:

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6. David L. Watson and Paul D. Watson, *Contagious Disciple Making: Leading Others on a Journey of Discovery* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014), p. 155.

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

1 Timothy 1:15–16 NIV

Paul's thankful acceptance of Christ's mission to save sinners combined with the humble acknowledgment of his own sinfulness prepared him to be a living example for the lost. And like Paul, when we come to grips with our own story by embracing the story of Jesus, we find the courage to join Jesus in the ministry of missional prayer.

Within this third dimension of missional prayer, the first step is to *heed God's voice and God's people*. In this step, there will be times when the Holy Spirit prompts you to approach someone. There will also be times when you don't realize God's activity in your encounter with a person until you notice and give heed to them as an individual.

Ways you can heed an individual are by noticing his or her body language and facial expression, who they are with, or what they have in their possession. For example, a neighbor might have toys in the yard, or a gas station attendant might look stressed out. Based on what you see and hear, establish a meaningful connection by choosing to *engage in conversation*.

There are a variety of ways to engage others; one of the easiest is through a question. For example, if you notice someone is wearing a Chicago Cubs jersey, you might lead with: "How did you become a Cubs fan?" Remember, opened-ended questions make for great conversation because they invite people to tell their story. This is in contrast to closed questions, which may shut down the conversation because they require only a one-word answer.

A simple observation can also lead to engagement. You might notice someone sitting in the park who looks sad or discouraged. A statement like "It seems like something is bothering you" may be all it takes to open the floodgates of someone's personal experience.

Once you're in the conversational door, the next step is seeking to *listen to their story*. This involves withholding judgment and putting your personal agenda aside. If you are listening well, you will follow the Holy Spirit's promptings about when to be silent or when to reflect the content or feeling of a person's story. For example, if someone is tearing up as they tell about their spouse's battle with cancer, you might say: "It's so hard to see our loved ones suffer. What are you thinking or feeling at this moment?"

At first, you may feel nervous about this dimension of missional prayer, but Jesus' promise to his disciples regarding persecution and appearing in court to bear witness, may also apply when your heart is racing in a missional prayer moment: "Do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time, you will be given what to say" (Matthew 10:19, NIV). In addition, there are many times when it is what we don't say combined with the power of a listening ear that makes the biggest difference. Through Jesus' promise never to leave or forsake us, we can find the courage and confidence to engage people in conversation and listen to their story.

Through the process of good listening, the Holy Spirit will often open the door to *pray with people about their story*. In this fourth step of joining Jesus, the key is care, then prayer. If you lead with listening and a genuine desire to know the person and their story, it is not unusual for others to be open to prayer.

One way to gauge their receptivity is to ask: "Could I be praying for you about [whatever prayer point surfaces in their story]?" The prayer point might be a job situation, a family member, health, or other concern. Based on their response to this question, it may feel appropriate to ask, "Would it be OK to pray together right now?"

If the individual is open to prayer, keep it succinct, specific, and simple: succinct, so they won't be wishing you would stop; specific, so they will know you listened and genuinely care; and simple, so if they have never prayed, they might think to themselves, "If that's prayer, maybe I could do it."

It is helpful to think of ourselves as Heaven's bellhops when we listen to people and pray with them. Like the porter at a posh hotel who takes your luggage and shows you to your room, when we heed, engage, listen, and pray with the people around us, we are helping them find their way to the throne room of grace. And if one gives consideration to the words of the sons of Korah, there may be no higher calling: "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked" (Psalm 84:10).

#### **D4 HELP: Helping Others**

The interesting thing about hotel doorkeepers is that they don't just hold the door. In addition to carrying your luggage and showing you to your room, they may serve as a valet, bring you room service, call a cab, provide directions to a restaurant, or give you a ride to the airport. Basically, they will do everything they possibly can to meet your needs as a guest, and if they can't help, they will seek to refer you to someone who can.

When it comes to missional prayer, we are here to help people take their next step toward Jesus or their next step with Jesus; depending on where they are in their spiritual journey. Through the four practices of missional prayer, we learn to help by recognizing and responding to God's help and by joining Jesus in listening to people and praying with them.

However, after praying with people, we are not done helping. As we listen, a need may arise where the Holy Spirit invites us to be an answer to prayer. Dave Ferguson helped to illumine this fourth dimension of missional prayer on March 25, 2017, in a sermon he gave at the Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church, entitled *Alert*. In his sermon, Dave unpacked Jesus' parable from Luke 11:5–8:

"Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need."

From this parable, Dave highlighted how God is inviting us to help those we pray with. When the man asked his neighbor for bread in the middle of the night, his intercession wasn't complete until he took the bread home to his visiting friend. Likewise, when we listen to and pray with people, if God gives us bread, so to speak, He would have us be the answer to the prayer by meeting a need. He is calling us to be the help:

Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.

Think of yourselves in the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave.

Philippians 2:4–7, *The Message*

Missional prayer is an amazing opportunity to lay aside our rights and serve with Jesus; helping people to the throne room of grace with their baggage and helping them to experience



the love of our Father by meeting their needs. This is the kind of adventure you won't want to forget. So, at the end of this introduction, you will find a set of instructions for raising a written Ebenezer of your journey with Jesus through prayer as communion and prayer as a commission. Before you embark on this adventure with Jesus, consider the following benediction.

**Benediction**

On your missional prayer journey with Jesus, may you come to know the Lord as your Rock of Refuge, Help in ages past, and Hope for years to come. May you learn to heed the voice of the Lord, and the needs of people around you. And as you respond to the help of your Savior, may you become His help to your neighbor. Go in His grace. Remember His ways. And in the pages of this book, raise your Ebenezer.

# E B E N E Z E R

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I N S T R U C T I O N S

## HOW TO USE THIS JOURNAL

This Ebenezer is a book of remembrance where you can record your experiences with God in prayer as communion and prayer as a commission. The prayer as communion steps will help you capture your conversations with God. The prayer as a commission steps will help you remember your missional experiences with Jesus and others. Think of your Ebenezer as a testimony of your personal journey with Jesus.

### PRAYER AS COMMUNION STEPS

#### STEP 1

Choose one the eight-week Bible reading plans from the Ebenezer Readings section in this journal.

#### STEP 2

Find and read today's passages from your chosen reading plan. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart as you read (John 14:26).

#### STEP 3

When a Bible verse or passage sparks your curiosity, turn to a fresh page in the Daily Journal to reflect on what the Lord brings to your attention.

- Write today's date
- Write down the Scripture passage you feel led to consider. (Heed)
- Write your reflections about the meaning of the passage. (Engage)
- Write about how Jesus is speaking into your life through the text. (Listen)
- Write an honest and whole-hearted prayer response to God. (Pray)
- Assign a title and topic to your entry when you finish writing.

#### STEP 4

Turn to the Rock Pile (table of contents). Record your entry date, Scripture, title, topic, and page.

#### STEP 5

Conclude your time with Jesus by turning to the Prayer List and talking with Him about the people and needs He has put on your heart. If you prefer to keep an electronic prayer list, a great resource is the PrayerMate App.

**PRAYER AS COMMUNION SAMPLE**

6/9/2019

DATE

PAGE #

**H**  
**Heed**

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and  
Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the Lord has  
helped us." (1 Samuel 7:12)

**E**  
**Engage**

An Ebenezer is a "stone of help." A rock of remembrance.  
Anytime God's people returned to this place, the Ebenezer  
stood as a reminder of the God who was their Help.

**L**  
**Listen**

How has the Lord helped me thus far? How would He have  
me raise my Ebenezer? As I heed, engage, listen, and pray,  
I will establish a written memorial of His ways.

**P**  
**Pray**

Lord Jesus, be my Ebenezer, the Rock of my Remembrance!  
Speak to me from the pages of Your Word and through the  
experiences of my life. And through the power of Your Spirit,  
I will listen and obey!

## **PRAYER AS A COMMISSION STEPS**

### **STEP 1**

After spending time with Jesus in prayer as communion, ask Him to prepare your heart for divine appointments, open your eyes to the people around you, and direct your steps as you go about your day.

### **STEP 2**

*Heed the people God shows you.* Notice their body language, facial expressions, clothing, personal belongings, what they are doing, or who they are with.

### **STEP 3**

Use an observation or question to *engage in conversation*. A simple request can also get a conversation going. In John 4, Jesus started a conversation by asking the woman at the well for a drink.

### **STEP 4**

*Listen to their story.* Reflect content and feeling as you listen. Let their story inform the questions you ask or the observations you make. Ask God for a genuine curiosity so that you may demonstrate a heart-felt interest in who they are.

### **STEP 5**

*Pray for or with the person.*

- Practice care, then prayer. In other words, some may not be ready for prayer. But kindness and care are always appropriate.
- If the person is receptive, ask to pray together.
- As you pray together, keep it specific, succinct, and simple.
- If they don't want to pray together, pray silently for them.
- Add them to your prayer list.

### **STEP 6**

If there is a tangible way that Jesus would have you be an answer to prayer in their life, then give your help.

### **STEP 7**

Create a journal entry and add it to the Rock Pile.

- Heed: Write the person's name and what you noticed about them.
- Engage: Write about how you engaged them in conversation.
- Listen: Write a summary of their story and how God is working.
- Pray: Journal about their receptivity to God and prayer. If you prayed together, write about what happened. If you didn't pray together, write about what happened after they declined prayer. As you move forward, what is your prayer for them?

**PRAYER AS A COMMISSION SAMPLE**

3/28/2017

DATE

PAGE #

**H**  
Heed

Solo sent me an instant message today about coming off of drugs. He said, "I'm suffering extreme anxiety and facing depression. . . My body is detoxing very bad."

**E**  
Engage

When I first got his message, I texted back, "You're making good choices." But then he said, "I'm scared it's too late." When I saw those words, the Lord prompted me to call.

**L**  
Listen

Solo talked about his friends looking up to him as the leader of the band and the life of the party. I suggested he should let Jesus into the driver's seat, and he could ride shotgun. He said another friend had told him the same thing just a week ago.

**P**  
Pray

We prayed together, thanking Jesus for the affirmation that He was speaking to Solo and telling him through the invitation to ride shotgun that it wasn't too late. Lord Jesus, please continue to help Solo ride shotgun.

## THE ROCK PILE

a table of contents

Welcome to the Rock Pile. Use this table of contents to catalog your daily Ebenezer moments with Jesus in prayer as communion and prayer as a commission. The idea behind the Rock Pile comes from a story Tony Dahlberg's mother told him about his great grandfather. Here's the story in Tony's words:

My great grandfather, Will Mullinax, was born in the 1870s in South Carolina and became a farmer near Cowpens, South Carolina. With a population of 2,300, this southern town is often remembered for the Battle of Cowpens, fought during the Revolutionary War. But for me, Cowpens was home to my great grandfather and prayer hero.

Great Grandpa Will was a member of the Mt. Olive Baptist Church. He served as a deacon and Sunday school teacher. The folk of Mt. Olive referred to my great grandfather as Moses. One day a church member approached my great grandfather with a prayer request. The man handed him a rock and asked my great grandpa to pray for the man's son each time he felt the rock in his pocket.

As a sharecropper, Great Grandpa Will never owned property of his own. But on the farm where he worked, he did have a private place where he prayed on a regular basis. Great Grandpa Will put the rock in his prayer place and lifted up the man's petition for his son every time he came there to talk with God. Others learned about the reminder stone, and with their prayer requests, they also gave my great grandpa a stone that he could take to his prayer spot.

Over the years, the pile of rocks grew and grew, as did the stories of God's miraculous working in the lives of those whom my great grandfather prayed for. In answer to his prayers, many surrendered to Christ, found healing, or made important life decisions regarding marriage and career choices.

After Will was called to rest in Jesus from a life of toil and service, the community began to visit his place of prayer and take a stone from the rock pile in remembrance of my great grandfather's faithful prayer life. And while many stones were removed over the months and years, the remnant of that pile could still be seen over forty years later.

As you add journal entries to the Rock Pile of your times in communion with God and commission with Christ, may your Ebenezer become an inspiring reminder to the coming generations of the God who is our Help!





# E B E N E Z E R

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## R E A D I N G S

Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name.

—Malachi 3:16

## MISSIONAL PRAYER READINGS

### WEEK 1: God our HELP

- Genesis 1–2; Psalm 104; Revelation 4
- Genesis 3; Psalm 22; Rev. 12
- Genesis 6–9; Psalm 29; Matthew 24
- Genesis 11–12; Psalm 33; Rom. 4
- Genesis 18–19; Psalm 83; Rom. 5
- Genesis 22; Psalm 105; John 10
- Genesis 50:15–21; Exodus 3–4; John 8

### WEEK 2: Seeking His Help

- Acts 8:26–40
- Acts 17:1–12
- Acts 17:13–34
- Daniel 9; Psalm 121; Galatians 4:1–7; Revelation 6
- 1 Samuel 13–14; Psalm 20; Matthew 8
- 1 Samuel 17; Psalm 9; Matthew 4
- 2 Chronicles 20; Psalm 18; John 9

### WEEK 3: Joining Jesus

- Psalm 2
- John 3
- John 4
- John 5
- Psalm 110; Isaiah 6
- Jeremiah 1; Daniel 10
- Revelation 1

### WEEK 4: Ministering in Prayer

- Exodus 17, 33:1–11
- 1 Kings 18
- John 11
- Luke 24
- Acts 16
- Ephesians 1:15–23, 3:14–21
- Colossians 1

### WEEK 5: Praying God's Word

- Exodus 33–34
- Daniel 9–10
- Acts 1–2
- Acts 3–4
- Psalm 23–25
- Isaiah 41–43
- Revelation 4–5

### WEEK 6: Helping Others

- Isaiah 58
- Luke 11:1–13
- Acts 6–7
- Acts 9:32–43
- Acts 10–11
- Romans 12–13
- James 1–2

### WEEK 7: This Is My Story

- Genesis 37–39
- Genesis 40–41
- Genesis 42–45
- Genesis 46–50
- Acts 7–8:3, 9:1–31
- Acts 21–24
- Acts 25–28

### WEEK 8: Come Apart & Rest

- 1 Kings 19
- Psalm 46
- Isaiah 40
- Matthew 11–12
- Mark 1
- Mark 6
- Hebrews 3–4

E B E N E Z E R

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D A I L Y J O U R N A L



# E B E N E Z E R

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P R A Y E R L I S T



## Prostrate on the Promise

You hold in your hands a rock... A beautiful stone waiting to be engraved. . . An Ebenezer! As you carve your words into the rock, you will be joining in the legacy of ancient holy writers. You will be like Samuel who *"took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us.""* —1 Samuel 7:12 NIV

May you never forget how has the Lord been your Help. May you fill the pages of this book with your own Ebenezer. May it become a daily reminder of the God who has helped you thus far. May the stories and lessons you etch here become a rock you return to for courage and strength in the months and years ahead.

Speaking of rocks, in his first sermon at the New Park Street Chapel, Spurgeon shared this powerful vignette:

Let me tell you what is the best way of living in the world. I have heard that a gentleman said to a black man, "I can't think how it is you are always so happy in the Lord and I am often downcast."

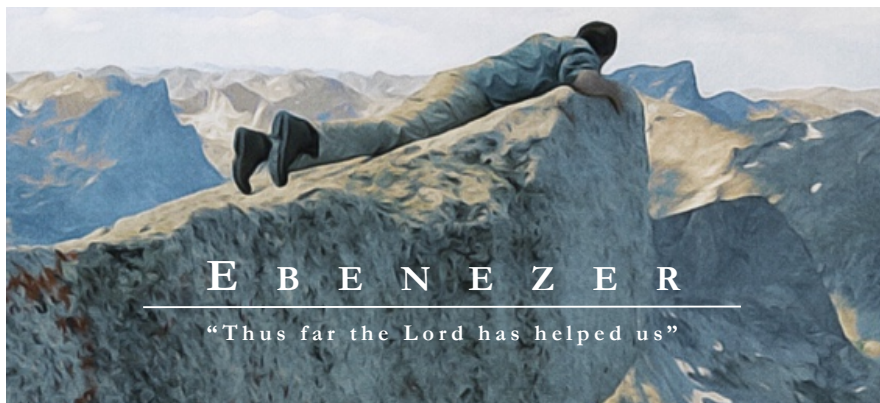
"Why Sir," said he, "I throw myself flat down on the promise—there I lie; you stand on the promise—you have a little to do with it, and down you go when the wind comes, and then you cry, 'Oh! I am down;' whereas I go flat on the promise at once, and that is why I fear no fall."

Then let us always say, "Lord there is the promise; it is thy business to fulfill it." Down I go on the promise flat! no standing up for me. That is where you should go—prostrate on the promise; and remember, every promise is a rock, an unchanging thing. Therefore, at his feet cast yourself, and rest there forever.

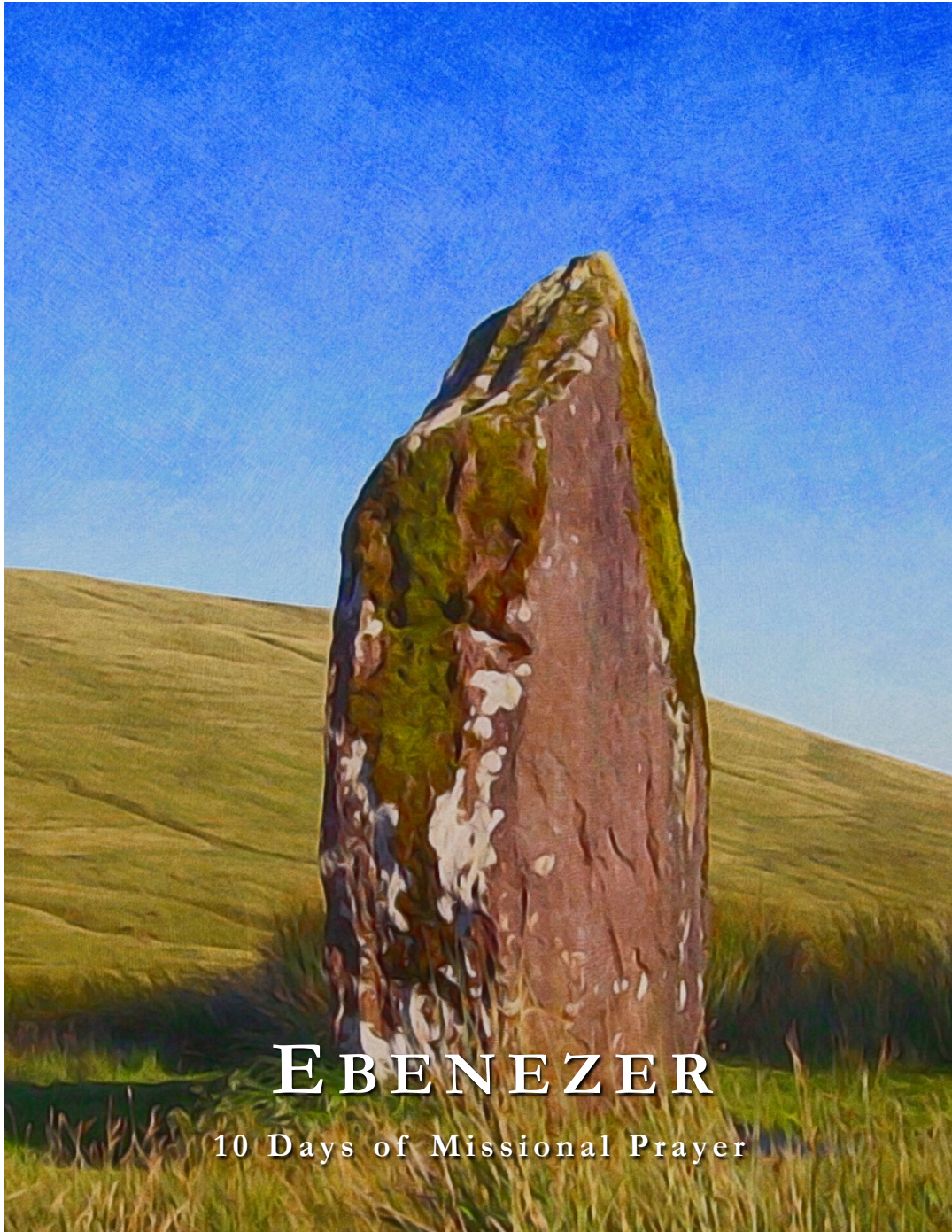
*Delivered on Jan. 7th, 1855, REV. C. H. Spurgeon @ New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.*

I first recorded these words of Spurgeon in my Ebenezer on July 25, 2010. And six years later, as I lay trembling on rugged outcropping of rock atop East Temple in Wyoming's Wind River mountain range, I heard the voice of Christ whispering to my heart, "down I go on the promise flat! no standing up for me." Clinging to the cold granite fashioned by His word, my whole being felt what it means to cleave to Jesus. As you record the wonders of his ways, may you cling too. May you raise your Ebenezer.

Blessings,  
Jim Moon



APPENDIX D  
EBENEZER 10 DAYS OF  
MISSIONAL PRAYER





# EBENEZER:

## A Missional Prayer Journey

### DAY 1: Thanks Listening

**H**  
**Heed**

There is a plaque in my son's bathroom that says, Gratitude turns what we have into enough. The Bible has a lot to say about gratitude. In 2 Chronicles 20 Israel defeats her enemies through a song of thanksgiving. These are the words Israel sang in that historic battle: "Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever." —2 Chronicles 20:21 NIV11

At the end of another ancient Israelite conflict, Samuel "took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us." —1 Samuel 7:12 NAS95

This rock of remembrance was a reminder to give thanks to the God who is our HELP. He is the One who gives heed to our cries, engages us in missional relationship, listens to our needs, and answers our prayers.

Take a few minutes to read through Psalm 50 and on the lines below write down a verse or two which talks about giving thanks:

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**E**  
**Engage**

Write a question or observation about the meaning and significance of gratitude within the verses you wrote above:

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# EBENEZER:

## A Missional Prayer Journey

DAY 1: Thanks Listening

**L**  
Listen

Practice thanks listening by asking the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind specific things the Lord has done for you and write them on the lines below:

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**P**  
Pray

Talk to God about what this exercise of thanks listening has been like. Feel free to write your prayer if you prefer. Sometimes writing prayers makes it easier to focus.

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# EBENEZER:

## A Missional Prayer Journey

### DAY 2: Confessional Praise

**H**  
**Heed**

According to Psalm 22, the Lord is “enthroned on the praises” of His people. Powerful prayer begins with praise. When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, the first words of His prayer were: “Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Thy name” — Matthew 6:9 NASB

“Our Father” is an expression of adoration to the Almighty. We also give praise when we declare the attributes, names, and descriptions of God; or as we express our love to God. Examples of praise would include, “I love You Lord... You are Holy... You are the Alpha and Omega... or You are my Shepherd.”

On the lines below, write the expression of praise which stands out to you from the following passages:

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. —Isaiah 9:6 NAS95

“Sing to the LORD, all the earth; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day. Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples. For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; He also is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the LORD made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before Him, Strength and joy are in His place. Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him; Worship the LORD in holy array. Tremble before Him, all the earth; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; And let them say among the nations, “The LORD reigns.”” —1 Chronicles 16:23–31 NAS95

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# EBENEZER:

A Missional Prayer Journey

DAY 2: Confessional Praise

**E**  
Engage

On the lines below write a question or observation about the the verses of praise you wrote above:

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**L**  
Listen

What is the Lord telling you about Himself through the expression of praise you wrote? What is He telling you about yourself? How is He inviting you to respond to him?

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**P**  
Pray

Take a moment to linger in praise. Mention a name or attribute of God. Express your love and adoration to God with words like, "I love you, I adore you, I worship you."

On the flip side, if you're like me, there are times when you don't feel like praising God. If this is where you're at in this moment, try confessional praise; it combines emotional honesty with faith. Tell the Lord who He is for where you are at in this moment. Here are a few examples: "Jesus, I'm afraid, be my Defender... Lord my spirit is anxious, I claim You as my Prince of Peace... Father my heart is broken, You are my Healer."

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APPENDIX E  
BEFORE AND AFTER FOCUS  
GROUP TRANSCRIPT  
SAMPLE

**Question 1:**

**Pre-LifeGroup: How are you most aware of God’s presence, activity, or voice? Explain.**

**Post-LifeGroup: In the last nine weeks, how would you say you have become more aware of God's presence, activity or voice? Has that increased? Has it decreased? Has there been new ways you've been recognizing his activity?**

<p><b>Dana (17:13):</b> <i>One time I asked God what it would be like if he was not present with me because I think he is present with all of us and we kind of take it for granted. Like you said, the bucket isn't aware. Often a lot of us aren't aware. And just for the briefest fraction of a second, I had this impression of the only physical thing that I can use to express it is outer space. A vacuum, darkness, no air, nothing. Just nothing. And I took that as what it would be like if God was not with us. So even if we're not aware, I think He is with us.</i></p>	<p><b>Justin (00:32):</b> I've been through some groups setting for journey in this group was I opened up a little bit more and I have since major trauma of my career a few years ago, I was surprised that I did as well as I did. I went home and was scared and I come back and everybody's still kind.</p> <p>(01:09) I don't talk much about that stuff, cause people think I'm really nuts when they, you know, and I didn't go into all the details but just, just to be loved after you let go that you having, um, when into therapy because the president made you... So he could make you look like you're sick... Just stuff like that which most people couldn't handle. And you still love me.</p>
<p><b>Allen (18:13):</b> <i>I kind of felt like I lived in life without knowing God was there. Because I wasn't always a Christian. So there were times when life took a serious nose dive... Quite a few times... You just kind of wonder is there really something out there.</i></p> <p><b>Jim Moon (18:37)</b> <b>In those moments of the nose dive you found yourself wondering?</b></p> <p><b>Allen (18:40):</b> <b>Yeah, absolutely. Stuck in a serious nose dive. And trying to figure out a real understanding of what</b></p>	<p><b>Allen (01:41)</b> I have a similar vulnerability. Hangover... More with my son. Just trying to explain to him sometimes why I react the way I do... we had one of those this morning Something, Absolutely stupid. Just traumatizing him. I was like, "What happened?" always?</p> <p>(02:09) Not always does this work correctly. There's a lot inside here that's broken. It's taken a lot of time, a lot of people, a lot of effort to fix... I don't have a lot of good answers for why it occurred, or why I do the things I do. I'm just trying to make it better.</p>

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**role religion has in your life. *Just to sit there and question is God even really present... does He care?***

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I don't always succeed. Briana was like, "He's going to remember that conversation."

APPENDIX F  
BEFORE AND AFTER  
SURVEY RESPONSES

**Question 1:**

<b>Participant's Name:</b>	<b>Pre-LifeGroup: How are you most aware of God's presence, activity, or voice? Explain.</b>	<b>Post-LifeGroup: In what ways has your awareness of God's presence, activity, or voice increased or decreased in the past nine weeks? Explain.</b>
<b>Allen</b>	Answers to questions I'm struggling with appear in a timely manner.	I have learned a new language to communicate with God and by increasing the level of communication, I feel a greater presence of God in my life and my family's life
<b>Briana</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He gives me clear thoughts of directions after I've asked for clarity.</li> <li>2. He speaks to me through trusted people who talk with me about problems.</li> <li>3. Sometimes it feels like He doesn't speak and I'm confused.</li> </ol>	His voice has increased in Bible Study and Prayer. Passages are more applicable to my life.
<b>Brenda</b>	When I sit quietly abiding with Him in His presence.	It has increased through an awareness of others around me and their stories
<b>Bill</b>	Every now and then I'll literally stop my thinking and hear something say would Jesus do this?	
<b>Dana</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I struggle to know His voice.</li> <li>2. Sometimes I see His activity as I seek His will.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I still don't "know" His voice the way I desire to</li> <li>2. I am more aware that He can use any situation to achieve His ends</li> <li>3. He allows difficulties to come to help me to learn to depend on and trust Him more</li> </ol>

**Question 1 Continued:**

Participant's Name:	Pre-LifeGroup: How are you most aware of God's presence, activity, or voice? Explain.	Post-LifeGroup: In what ways has your awareness of God's presence, activity, or voice increased or decreased in the past nine weeks? Explain.
<b>Irene</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The strongest times I hear his voice is when I write.</li> <li>2. I love to hear him through Others</li> <li>3. His word</li> <li>4. Life Circumstances</li> </ol>	<p>It has increased <i>by paying attention and noticing</i> how God is working around me. <i>Being more intentional at looking where He is present.</i></p>
<b>Jordan</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Praise Music</li> <li>2. Others Testimonies</li> <li>3. Answered Prayers in my own life.</li> </ol>	
<b>John</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I'm most aware of God's presence and movement through other people.</li> <li>2. Through their stories... not necessarily their testimonies... but instances in which there is a direct connection to something I have been praying over them or that God has revealed to me through His Word.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By spending intentional time in His Word, with specific people in mind or drawing light to my own experiences.</li> <li>2. Missional prayer has allowed me to track God's work in the lives of those around me as well as my own life.</li> </ol>



**Question 1 Continued:**

**Participant's Name:**

**Pre-LifeGroup: How are you most aware of God's presence, activity, or voice? Explain.**

**Post-LifeGroup: In what ways has your awareness of God's presence, activity, or voice increased or decreased in the past nine weeks? Explain.**

<p><b>Matt</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bible study</li> <li>2. Specific Promptings to Witness / Provide Help to someone</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I have been made far <i>more aware of the fact of an individual's uniqueness</i> in his/her journey and life circumstance.</li> <li>2. <i>One size does not fit all in sharing Jesus.</i></li> <li>3. <i>I have become sensitive to the fact that moving the individual one step towards Christ may be our only job</i> as opposed to planning out their conversion and baptism.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Will</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prayer</li> <li>2. Corporate Worship and Praise</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The way I look at others.</li> <li>2. How I spend my time</li> </ol>

**Question 2:**

**Participant's Name:**

**Jesus said, "Go and make disciples." Write a definition of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.**

**Jesus said, "Go and make disciples." In light of our LifeGroup experience together, define what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Describe any differences or similarities between your original definition nine weeks ago and today.**

<p><b>Allen</b></p>	<p>To spread the Gospel to those who have been hurt by other Christians</p>	<p>In reference to discipleship, I feel as though I have been given <b><i>a new method to communicate</i></b> with individuals who may or may not believe in Christ.</p> <p>And in doing so I feel that <b><i>if I were to sit down and talk to someone about Christ, I would feel comfortable praying with them after our conversation.</i></b></p> <p>Originally, I felt <b><i>discipleship</i></b> meant going out and converting others to Christianity. Now I feel more as if it <b><i>is a way to engage others by listening and praying for them</i></b>, and having them walk beside you.</p>
<p><b>Briana</b></p>	<p>To follow the Bible and Jesus' example to best that you know how to.</p>	<p><b><i>Going and interacting intentionally with people.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the interacting part of "getting to know someone I ought to <b><i>ask questions to hear their story.</i></b></li> <li>• When I hear their story and understand them better, I can <b><i>look for ways to bring Jesus/faith into our conversation.</i></b></li> <li>• I can always look to <b><i>befriend someone if I can't find a way to bring Jesus into our first conversations.</i></b></li> <li>• <b><i>Jesus looked to get to know individuals and meet their needs</i></b>, then He encouraged them to know His Father in Heaven. The Bible instructs us to do the same.</li> </ul>

**Question 2 Continued:**

**Participant's Name:**

**Jesus said, "Go and make disciples."  
Write a definition of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.**

**Jesus said, "Go and make disciples."  
In light of our LifeGroup experience together, define what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Describe any differences or similarities between your original definition nine weeks ago and today.**

<b>Brenda</b>	Letting Him spill out of my countenance onto others on this journey.	Still allow Jesus's love to spill out for others. His joy is contagious.
<b>Bill</b>	To be truly in study of Jesus and want to copy him	
<b>Dana</b>	<p>To be a disciple of Jesus is to do what He did. (Matthew 28:19).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So first one needs to know what He did through Bible study.</li> <li>• One needs to prayerfully surrender one's own agenda, plans, and goals and instead pursue His agenda, plans, and goals</li> </ul>	<p>A disciple goes where the Master goes, sees what He is doing, and does the same thing or works with Him. In this way, the disciple learns what he is to do.</p> <p><b><i>The difference I see</i></b> between this definition and the one I gave earlier is that it seems to indicate <b><i>more of a relationship with Jesus in that it is more action oriented rather than preparation oriented.</i></b></p>
<b>Irene</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hang with Jesus</li> <li>2. Find others to hang with you and him</li> </ol>	The increase has been to be more intentional about what I am doing.
<b>Jordan</b>	<p>Live my life in reflection of His.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, love always,</li> <li>• Be the fruits of the spirit which he calls upon me.</li> <li>• By doing so Christ will use me to lead others to Him.</li> </ul>	

**Question 2 Continued:**

**Participant's Name:**

**Jesus said, "Go and make disciples." Write a definition of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.**

**Jesus said, "Go and make disciples." In light of our LifeGroup experience together, define what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Describe any differences or similarities between your original definition nine weeks ago and today.**

<p><b>John</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the unity of the Holy Spirit to draw all who accept God's call into communion with Him.</li> <li>2. Disciples of Jesus have a relationship with the Father through the Son.</li> <li>3. Disciples follow His tenets and continue the work which was charged to them through His Word, which is to love one another and continue to draw more peoples to this relational discipline.</li> </ol>	<p><i>To be a disciple means to draw others one-step closer on their walk with Jesus.</i></p> <p>My answer from before this group was more about the tenets of Christianity and <i>now I can see discipleship on a more broad plane.</i> Discipleship is more accessible as a result.</p>
<p><b>Matt</b></p>	<p>Help someone fall in love with Christ; teaching them of the great controversy soon ending and the amazing reward that follows.</p>	<p>I had written: "Help someone fall in love with Christ; teaching them of the great controversy soon ending and the amazing reward that follows."</p> <p>However, I believe <b>my perspective has changed somewhat.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>I want to listen more</b></li> <li>• <b>See where they are on their journey</b></li> <li>• <b>Let the Spirit prompt them and me each step.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Will</b></p>	<p>Sold out to Jesus and committed to encouraging others to do the same</p>	<p>Following where Jesus leads with a desire to seek his presence</p>

**Question 3:**

Participant's Name:	Who do you know that is responding to the mission of making disciples and how are they doing it?	Based on our missional prayer journey together, who would you say should respond to Jesus' disciple making commission, and what are some ways they could do it?
<b>Allen</b>	I have no idea.	My personal feeling is that Musician's should become more involved in the disciple making commission.
<b>Briana</b>	<p>Pastor Carole - she purposefully &amp; sincerely ministers to the youngest members around her. Pastor Nudd - again, he ministers purposefully and sincerely to a specific population of young ppl.</p> <p>Pastor Jim (you) - purposefully and sincerely ministering to the students through music.</p>	We all ought to be responding. Get to know people for who they are - take the time to listen and understand them. Then introduce them to Jesus and our Heavenly Father.
<b>Brenda</b>	Irene, Cherie Smith, Jim Moon, Zary, just living their life in the adventure of sharing Jesus and doing His bidding.	Everyone who says they are friends of Jesus'. Listening to others stories and allowing Jesus' agenda to take over what they thought they need to do. Be ready to engage others where Jesus is working.
<b>Bill</b>	Pastors, setting up these groups and doing their job.	
<b>Dana</b>	It Is Written. Through the SALT program.	Anyone who has "decided to follow Jesus" should be doing this. We are the salt and light, so we need to get out of the salt shaker and spread the light around.
<b>Irene</b>	Brenda, one way she does it is by discipling young women, she meets with them, listens to their stories and encourages them.	I would say any follower of Christ.

**Question 3 Continued:**

**Participant's Name:**

**Who do you know that is responding to the mission of making disciples and how are they doing it?**

**Based on our missional prayer journey together, who would you say should respond to Jesus' disciple making commission, and what are some ways they could do it?**

<p><b>John</b></p>	<p>My dear friend, Claudia. She has been fortunate to learn about discipleship through the ARISE program. Her life was so deeply impacted that she cannot help but pour out into this ministry of discipleship. Just one way that she is doing it is by reaching out to me personally and asking to study the Bible together. In doing so, she is enabling me with the tools to also "pay it forward" and make disciples of anyone I come across.</p>	<p>After journeying with this group, I would say anybody who claims to love the Lord should respond to Jesus' commission. All it really means is to walk side by side with our brothers and sisters and step-by-step help them to advance towards the Kingdom. I think this might look like hearing each other's stories and lifting up each other in prayer. Following up on the prayer to track how God has been moving in their lives will help strengthen your own faith also. Making disciples also means being bold in the things that set us apart as Christians and answering any questions that may arise as a result.</p>
<p><b>Jordan</b></p>	<p>My friend Joby. He is always someone that is open to talk to about anything, never judges, humble, and full of compassion. He is doing it by being a friend to everyone, and being willing to counsel others to Christ.</p>	
<p><b>Matt</b></p>	<p>Friends who are conducting bible studies and leading individuals to baptism</p>	<p>Everyone. Discipling is much easier than simply waiting for a Bible study. Making the first step of teaching someone about Christ is gaining their trust. Therefore, my perspective of "Who is doing it" and "Who should be doing it" has changed radically.</p>
<p><b>Will</b></p>	<p>Friends and family; by prayer, study, time spent together, fellowship, and showing love for each other</p>	<p>Me for Starters, keeping my mind stayed upon him</p>

**Question 4:**

<b>Participant's Name:</b>	<b>Share a story of when you exercised interpersonal courage for Christ in a conversation with another person.</b>	<b>How has your interpersonal courage for Christ been affected by this missional prayer journey? *</b>
<b>Allen</b>	My friend Heath feels that Christians are too self-righteous. I gave him a book called Disappointment with God to help him understand one perspective.	My interpersonal courage for intentional prayer has been significantly increased, because I feel like I've been given a methodology for praying for myself and for others.
<b>Briana</b>	When I initially talked with Allen about Jesus at the beginning of our relationship. When I ministered to another neighbor of mine who was also from another culture.	I believe it has been strengthened and through the trials I have, I have become more aware of.
<b>Brenda</b>	My sister is suffering and questioning just an encourager to point her to Jesus.	It has strengthened my commitment to be fully engaged in what Jesus brings before me.
<b>Bill</b>	In a group of bad kids making fun of God I stood up for him and got made fun of as well.	
<b>Dana</b>	I fail miserably in this area.	Although I feel woefully inadequate, I am attempting to step up to the challenge to pray with and for people more, and I may have become a better listener. I am still very uncomfortable with it.
<b>Irene</b>	When God wanted me to send the verse to Cynthia, it was out of my comfort zone	This small group has really been a blessing. I have really enjoyed getting to know the other people's stories.
<b>Jordan</b>	Me and my friend were both struggling with a similar, yet different temptations or struggles. But we were able to reflect God's word on how to conquer and overcome those moments. Also, we were able to remind each other of God's grace and compassionate, knowing we are forgiven.	

**Question 4 continued:**

<b>Participant's Name:</b>	<b>Share a story of when you exercised interpersonal courage for Christ in a conversation with another person.</b>	<b>How has your interpersonal courage for Christ been affected by this missional prayer journey? *</b>
<b>John</b>	In hearing someone's justified indignation for an event that occurred, I was able to stand up for the perpetrator and say that Christ loves them as much as the victim so we cannot wish vengeance on them... It took courage to stare my friend in the face, who had been violated, but to say that in Christ, there are no grudges.	My courage for Christ has been strengthened by knowing that I have a group to hold me accountable. Thinking ahead to our HELP check-ins gives me the courage to go forth in God's name. I also think praying for courage has been a huge part of growing in missional work.
<b>Matt</b>	Every time I have a new client in the office, I share Jesus through word and a Steps to Christ and/or Great Hope. It takes more courage when I know the other person is an atheist and I had several opportunities to do so over the summer at a college reunion and with some dear family friends (former practicing Jews) who are also atheists.	Yes. I feel greater freedom to start making friends with the idea of mission without the guilt of instantly inviting folks to church or seeking a Bible study.
<b>Will</b>	When Jordan asked how to be saved and be confident in the decision	The desire to rely on his courage and not my own



**Question 5:**

<b>Participant's Name:</b>	<b>Pre-LifeGroup: What do you believe is missing in your experience with God?</b>	<b>How did this missional prayer LifeGroup address or not address what you identified as missing in your experience with God at the beginning of our journey?</b>
<b>Allen</b>	Reassurance that I am good person	Significantly increased, because I feel like I've been given a methodology for praying for myself and for others.
<b>Briana</b>	Consistency on my part to spend time in worship of God each day.	I realized how much more I needed to spend time with Jesus to help me ask for His direction and guidance each day. Also, it gave me more awareness to seek Him first and then reach out in His name to others.
<b>Brenda</b>	TIME... more uninterrupted time	I said more time with Him and that is between God and I. No one can help me with this.
<b>Bill</b>	The presence of him 24/7 (Jim's note: an awareness of his presence)	
<b>Dana</b>	I wish to be able to recognize His voice as compared to my own will and desires.	I do not mingle much with non-Christians, but once during this journey I visited someone who is not Adventist, and I prepared the way with prayer, asking God to give opportunity to give testimony that was appropriate for this person and to prepare her heart to receive it. In our conversation, the person asked two questions that enabled me to give testimony to how God has worked in my life.
<b>Irene</b>	TRUST... to believe God will do what he says he will do.	I said what was missing for me was my trust and faith in God. I have redefined that. My focus has been on my faith and trust instead of the Faithful One.
<b>Jordan</b>	Consistency in the relationship. Currently it is not an everyday, it is every other day, and Sabbath's always.	

**Question 5 continued:**

<b>Participant's Name:</b>	<b>Pre-LifeGroup: What do you believe is missing in your experience with God?</b>	<b>How did this missional prayer LifeGroup addressed or not address what you identified as missing in your experience with God at the beginning of our journey?</b>
<b>John</b>	It is hard for me to let go and truly depend on God... even when I know He's never failed me... I believe my own control issues can often hold me from experiencing God's will fully.	I think I am learning to surrender it all. And it is a day-by-day surrender. God has been calling me to humble myself before Him and that has been illuminated to me through various mediums over the past few weeks! As a result of this group, I spend more time listening to God's voice and not just talking "at Him."
<b>Matt</b>	Time - Focused study and meditation that is not rushed	Broadened my idea of my individual job, knowing that God has other people and heavenly agencies working on the heart of the person I am engaging with. My part may be just one in a long line of interactions leading the person to Christ
<b>Will</b>	Consistent Disciple Making	Still considering this one as far as what is missing. The desire for discipleship is there, I want to be more aware and receptive to the opportunities in my life. To be Spirit led and not Will driven.

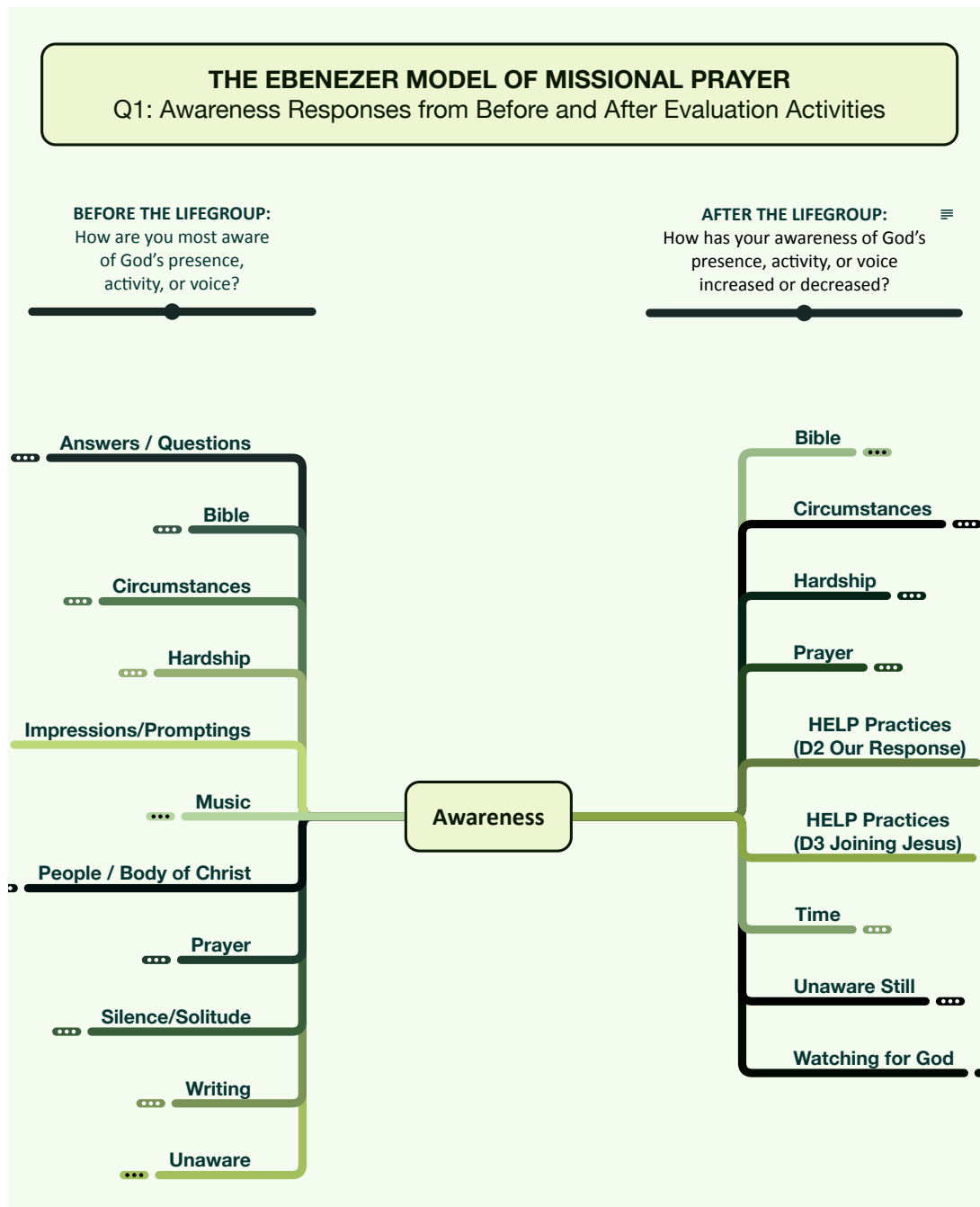
**Question 6:**

Participant's Name:	What would you like to be different in your relationship with God at the end of this eight-week LifeGroup journey?	What has been the most significant change in your journey as a disciple of Christ as a result of this Missional Prayer LifeGroup, and how does this change compare to what you were hoping would happen?
<b>Allen</b>	My feeling of self-worth to improve	I'm not sure that my self-worth has improved in this nine- week period, But I definitely feel like I can communicate with the Lord better and let him know of my feelings of self-worth. I feel that the Lord will be more instrumental in my life and helping me deal with the issues that surround me.
<b>Briana</b>	That I have a better, more consistent worship time daily with Jesus.	The LifeGroup Journey has made me more aware of my suspicion of His influence in my life. Instead of "wondering" if God was there - I am more certain that He is/has been there every step.
<b>Brenda</b>	Stronger in the friendship and bolder no fear.	More aware and willing to listen.
<b>Bill</b>	Feel his presence 24/7	
<b>Dana</b>	I would like to have the courage to speak for Him even when I know the person listening is not a believer or even is hostile to Christianity.	<p>I am realizing more that I need to stop trying to be my own strong tower and life director; that is usurping His position. I have realized how much I focus on worldly concerns rather than spiritual growth and going about His business and am working through that with Him. My focus in life and prayer has shifted away from self and personal desires and more toward intercession and journeying with others. I am more intentional in prayer and more willing to do what God may ask me to do--more willing to surrender my resistance to doing whatever that is.</p> <p>How it relates to what I said earlier: My resistance was due to fearing that He would ask me to witness to unbelievers, who in my experience can be hostile. Upon surrender, I learned that He has other ways that He may wish to work through me, other tasks to perform.</p>

**Question 6 Continued:**

<b>Participant's Name:</b>	<b>What would you like to be different in your relationship with God at the end of this eight-week LifeGroup journey?</b>	<b>What has been the most significant change in your journey as a disciple of Christ as a result of this Missional Prayer LifeGroup, and how does this change compare to what you were hoping would happen?</b>
<b>Irene</b>	I want to be intentional about the unchurched/unsaved	I think it has been fulfilled, awareness is making me more intentional
<b>Jordan</b>	My consistency with him increase. Truly choosing him daily, and have my lifestyle reflect it. Also, be more open to talk to anyone about Jesus.	
<b>John</b>	I want to be able to surrender more fully to Christ. This means in areas of my life that I may not even realize I seek control over. I also hope to gain some insight as to how others along the same journey are able to walk in faith, day-by-day. In other words, to hear each other's stories.	Looking back, I have found a more disciplined approach to discipleship and also just a relationship with God. The listening aspect of my relationship with God has been strengthened. I am also trying to view myself through the lens of the Father as an equalizer - I am no better or worse than anybody else in God's Kingdom. This enables me to humble myself and serve Him out of sheer love. I hope this love is the catalyst for my disciple making.
<b>Matt</b>	More confidence in knowing what things God is specifically asking me to do and not to do in order to achieve His will in my life. Help with volunteering choices, spending time wisely, work decisions, social decisions, raising children etc.	God answered my prayer for my time with my group very differently. I learned about listening to individual's felt needs, understanding their life experience, finding something that is interesting or pressing in their life and making connections with their experiences and God's word. I had a laundry list for the pre-launch wish list of what I wanted to be different. God provided something better.
<b>Will</b>	Continual surrender to Gods calling in my life for Him and others	Most significant change would be my awareness for the need to be in tune continuously with my redeemer and the opportunities that may arise to be an encouragement or just listen to others.

APPENDIX G  
 EBENEZER EVALUATION  
 MIND MAPS





## ⌵ Awareness

### ⌵ BEFORE THE LIFEGROUP:

How are you most aware of God's presence, activity, or voice?

### ⌵ Answers / Questions

- **Answers to questions** I'm struggling with appear in a timely manner. (Allen, Q)
- He gives me clear thoughts of directions after I've asked for clarity. (Briana, Q)
- Questioning: Is God There? / Does He Care? (Allen, S) 
- Asking God Questions (Dana, S) 

### ⌵ Bible

- Bible Study (Briana, S)
- His word (Irene, Q)
- Bible study (Matt, QS)

### ⌵ Circumstances

- Situations (Briana, S)
- Life Circumstances (Irene, Q)

### ⌵ Miracle Moments (Will, S)

#### ⌵ Existence

- Bible Stories about Miracle Kids
- Surgeries / Infections before I can remember

#### ⌵ Surviving

- Cancer
- Motorcycle Accident

- Being Crushed by a Horse as a Kid
- Car Wreck as newlyweds

⊖ **Hardship**

- God Showed Up IN MY DEPRESSION @ 23 (Brenda, S)

⊖ **Grief, Loss, Suffering**

- Through Suffering I've Seen God can take care of His own Reputation. (Brenda, S) b
- My Job is to Love the Suffering (Brenda, S)

⊖ **Impressions/Promptings**

- Impressions (Dana, S) b
- Specific Promptings to Witness / Provide Personal Help (Matt, QS)  
10 Second Rule

⊖ **Music**

- Praise Music (Jordan, QS)
- Corporate Praise/Worship (Will, Q)

⊖ **People / Body of Christ**

- He speaks to me through trusted people who talk with me about problems. (Briana, QS)
- I love to hear him through Others (Irene, Q)
- People's Testimonies (Jordan, Q)
- I'm most aware of God's presence and movement through other people. b  
(John, QS)

⊖ **Prayer**

- Prayer points (Briana, S)
- Sometimes I see his activity as I seek His will (Dana, Q)

- Answered Prayers (Jordan, Q)

- Prayer (Will, Q)

#### ☺ Silence/Solitude

- When I sit quietly abiding with Him in His presence. (Brenda, Q).
- Every now and then I'll literally stop my thinking and hear something say, "would Jesus do this?" (Bill, Q).

#### ☺ Writing

- Writing Music (Allen S)
- The strongest times I hear his voice is when I write. (Irene, QS)

#### ☺ Unaware

- Sometimes it feels like He doesn't speak and I'm confused. (Briana, Q)
- I struggle to know his voice (Dana, Q)
- Often We're not Aware (Dana, S)

#### ☺ AFTER THE LIFEGROUP:

How has your awareness of God's presence, activity, or voice increased or decreased?

#### ☺ Bible

- By spending **intentional time in His Word**, with *specific people* in mind or drawing light to *my own experiences* (John, Q)
- **The Practice of Writing the Scriptures Down...** then I have to stop and consider each and every word. Something will catch me... I will start underlining things... drawing lines from one concept to another... writing down thing to look up. (Dana, I)
- **Heightened Awareness of Scriptures Relevance to daily life** and heightened awareness of the power of prayer in our daily lives... and being able to ask for my needs (Briana, I)



- His voice has increased in Bible Study and Prayer. Passages are more applicable to my life. (Briana, Q)

#### ☺ Circumstances

- I am more aware that He can use any situation to achieve His ends (Dana, Q)

#### ☺ Hardship

- ***What have you learned these past few weeks about hearing the voice of God?*** - Through a series of difficulties I have seen God's faithfulness in growing my dependence on Him... (Dana, Q1)

- ***What has fostered greater awareness for you?*** A recurring conversation that has come up has been in relation to sacrifice... PSALM 107:22 "Let them sacrifice the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and declare His work with rejoicing..."

**Prayer:** Lord I don't want to wait until the storm to praise you... I want to be able to praise you when things are good. I would prefer to be able to talk to God first rather than doing everything I can and then talking to God. (Dana I)

#### ☺ Prayer

- ☺ **TALKING TO GOD:** I have learned a new language to communicate with God and by increasing the level of communication, I feel a greater presence of God in my life and my family's life (Allen, QSI)

- AS A FAMILY WE ASK GOD TO HELP CENTER US (Allen, I)
- What prompted you to get out of bed and help your son?

Allen's Answer: As head of household... There was a need for me to say... Let me take the wheel for a minute... now lets ask Jesus to take the wheel... (Allen, I)

- **Your Relationship w/ God is Unique...  
Each Prayer has a Unique Purpose (Allen, I)**


**Allen, I** - *One of the hardest things was I was trying to connect with God through prayer... I was seeing it as if you do a wrote... or through repetition you will find a connection... But this is actually more like a Hindu experience of praise, prayer, worship... The redundancy has never worked for me.*

*One of the first things I was realizing... Your relationship is not routine, route, memorized, or repetitive.*

*Rather your relationship with God is unique... each prayer has a unique purpose for your connection on a daily basis... w/ Your spouse and children... how is your day going for you today... God wants to know what is unique for you about today... God wants to know how he can be a part of unique day...*

Sometimes the prayer experience will be mundane, or exciting, or uncertain, has a variation to it... that routine prayers do not... it is unique and personal... ebbs and flows like human relationships would...

- **HELP Practices  
(D2 Our Response)**

- Missional prayer has allowed me to track God's work in the lives of those around me as well as my own life (John, Q) 

- **HELP Benefits (Briana, I)** 

- **A Guided process to Search Your Heart w/ Bible Reading and Prayer**
- Helps me think about what I'm going to pray about
- Passages become more Applicable
- HELP allows you to be more aquatinted w/ yourself and your needs

- **In Help Sabbath School, I was surprised how the tool allowed me to open up in a group setting.**

- Builds your vulnerability muscle

- Gives a concrete opportunity to share your true thoughts and feelings
- Combines introspection and group connection

⊖ **HELP Practices**  
(D3 Joining Jesus)

⊖ **Heeding People**

- The way I look at others (Will, Q)
- It has increased through an awareness of others around me and their stories (Brenda, Q)

⊖ **Engagement**

⊖ **Conversation**

- **Journeying in Conversation** b  
w/ my cousin (John, I)
- *Interpersonally it has been an add value to pre-existing friendships and given me a vision for how I might more effectively engage with seekers or skeptics... I have some tools for the future... (Briana, I)*
- *The course has opened my thoughts more of when I am in conversation... With my friends it has opened up more awareness of where the Lord is at work in our lives... It has given me more confidence in talking about everyday experiences... connecting it with the Lord's activity and will... God shows us parallels between God's word and daily life. (Briana, I)*

⊖ **STORY: Awakening the Awareness of Others (Irene, S)** b

- I didn't Listen the Best
- I didn't Reflect.
- She texted me the song... it was perfect.

- **Jim's Insight:** THROUGH YOUR ENGAGEMENT W/ OTHERS, GOD WANTS TO AWAKEN THEIR AWARENESS & YOURS SIMULTANEOUSLY.

☺ **STORY: Write the Mom a Note** 📄

- **Jim's Insight:** Sometimes we don't realize what God's presence is...
- **Jim's Insight:** Sometimes recognizing His presence, is helping others to experience and/or feel welcome in His presence... Reverence may be noisy at times.
- **Dana's Prayer:** If there is a spirit of restlessness, quiet them so their parents can focus. 📄

☺ **Vulnerability / Authenticity**

☺ **STORY: Apologizing to My Son**

- Learning it's OK not to be OK
- Asking God for Guidance on Making Amends
- Explaining why I react the way I do

☺ **Responses to Allen**

- **JIM's insight:** In the Process of Making Disciples we are disciplined. (see Mt. 8 - Roman Centurion) 📄
- **Brenda's Affirmation** 📄
- **Matt's Realization** 📄
- **The Deeper You Share, the More Liberated You are... (Justin, S)** 📄
- **So a strength of the group was it encourage us to speak from the heart and not merely the intellect... sharing your story... sharing your emotion... (Brenda, I)**
- **We Become More Authentic, when We Seek the Father First (Briana, S)**

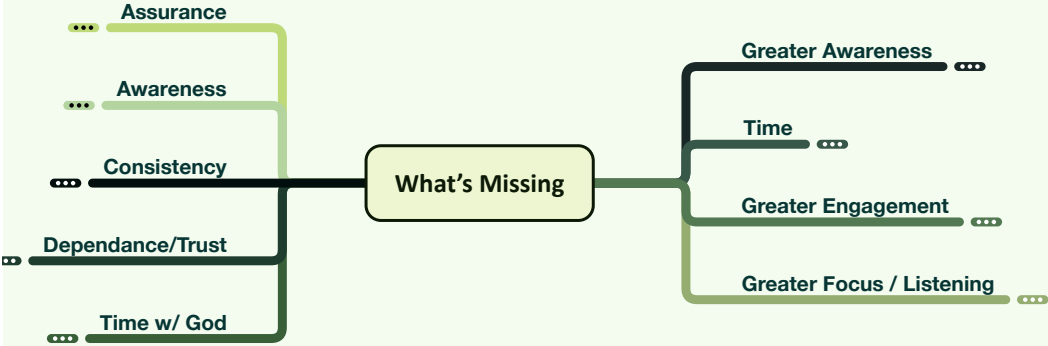
☺ **Listening**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Permission to Listen (Matt, IQ)</li> <li>● I learned the importance of PAUSING TO LISTEN TO PEOPLE. (Briana, I)</li> </ul>	
⊖	<b>LifeGroup</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● LifeGroup Sessions (Justin, S)</li> <li>● Group connectivity was really significant (Will, I)</li> </ul>	
⊖	<b>Time</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How I spend my time (Will, Q)</li> </ul>	
⊖	<b>Unaware Still</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>CLARIFICATION -- I still don't "know" His voice the way I desire to...</b> (Dana, Q)</li> </ul>	
⊖	<b>Watching for God</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It has increased by paying attention and noticing how God is working around me. Being more intentional at looking where He is present. (Irene, Q)</li> </ul>	

**THE EBENEZER MODEL OF MISSIONAL PRAYER**  
 Q2: The What's Missing Question  
 Responses from Before and After Evaluation Activities

**BEFORE:**  
 What do you believe is missing in your experience with God?

**AFTER:**  
 How did this missional prayer LifeGroup address or not address what you identified as missing in your experience with God at the beginning of our journey?



## ☺ What's Missing

### ☺ BEFORE:

What do you believe is missing in your experience with God?

#### ☺ Assurance

- Reassurance that I am good person (Allen, Q)

#### ☺ Awareness

- I wish to be able to recognize His voice as compared to my own will and desires. (Dana, Q)
- The presence of him 24/7 (Bill, Q)  
(Jim's note: an awareness of his presence)

#### ☺ Consistency

- **Consistent Disciple Making (Will, Q)**
- Consistency in the relationship. Currently it is not an everyday, it is every other day, and Sabbath's always. (Jordan, Q)
- Consistency on my part to spend time in worship of God each day (Briana, Q)

#### ☺ Dependance/Trust

- It is hard for me to let go and truly depend on God... even when I know He's never failed me... I believe my own control issues can often hold me from experiencing God's will fully. (John, Q)
- TRUST... to believe God will do what he says he will do. (Irene, Q)

#### ☺ Time w/ God

- Time - Focused study and meditation that is not rushed (Matt, Q)
- TIME... more uninterrupted time (Brenda, Q)

**AFTER:**

How did this missional prayer LifeGroup addressed or not address what you identified as missing in your experience with God at the beginning of our journey?

**Greater Awareness**

- I realized how much more I needed to spend time with Jesus to help me ask for His direction and guidance each day. Also, it gave me more awareness to seek Him first and then reach out in His name to others. (Briana, Q)

**Time**

- I said more time with Him and that is between God and I. No one can help me with this. (Brenda, Q)

**Greater Engagement**

- I do not mingle much with non-Christians, but once during this journey I visited someone who is not Adventist, and I prepared the way with prayer, asking God to give opportunity to give testimony that was appropriate for this person and to prepare her heart to receive it. In our conversation, the person asked two questions that enabled me to give testimony to how God has worked in my life. (Dana, Q)
- Broadened my idea of my individual job, knowing that God has other people and heavenly agencies working on the heart of the person I am engaging with. My part may be just one in a long line of interactions leading the person to Christ (Matt, Q)
- Still considering this one as far as what is missing. The desire for discipleship is there, I want to be more aware and receptive to the opportunities in my life. To be Spirit led and not Will driven (Will, Q)

**Greater Focus / Listening**

- I said what was missing for me was my trust and faith in God. I have redefined that. My focus has been on my faith and trust instead of the Faithful One (Irene, Q)

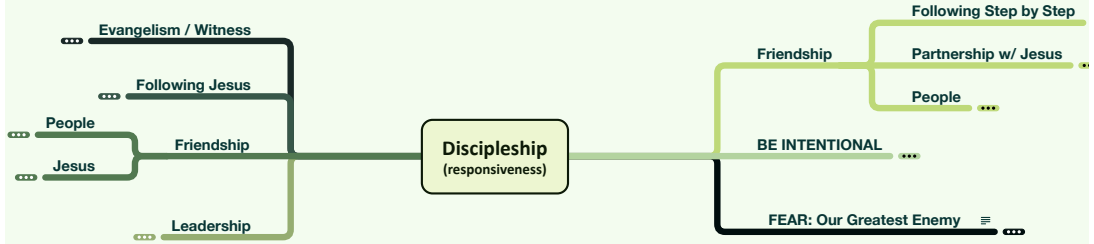


- I think I am learning to surrender it all. And it is a day-by-day surrender. God has been calling me to humble myself before Him and that has been illuminated to me through various mediums over the past few weeks! As a result of this group, I spend more time listening to God's voice and not just talking "at Him." (John, Q)

**THE EBENEZER MODEL OF MISSIONAL PRAYER**  
 Q3: Discipleship (responsiveness) Answers from Before and After Evaluation Activities

**BEFORE:**  
 Jesus said, "Go and make disciples." Write a definition of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

**AFTER:**  
 Jesus said, "Go and make disciples." In light of our LifeGroup experience together, define what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Describe any differences or similarities from what you wrote 9 weeks ago.



## ☺ Discipleship (responsiveness)

### ☺ BEFORE:

Jesus said, "Go and make disciples." Write a definition of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.



### ☺ Evangelism / Witness

- **To spread the Gospel to those who have been hurt by other Christians (Allen, Q)**
- Help someone fall in love with Christ; teaching them of the great controversy soon ending and the amazing reward that follows. (Matt, Q)
- Sold out to Jesus and committed to encouraging others to do the same (Will, Q)

### ☺ Following Jesus

- To be truly in study of Jesus and want to copy him (Bill Q)
- ☺ To be a disciple of Jesus is to do what He did. (Matthew 28:19). (Dana, Q)
  - Know what He did through Bible Study
  - Prayerfully surrender one's own agenda, plans, and goals to pursue His agenda, plans, and goals instead.
- To follow the Bible and Jesus' example to best that you know how to. (Briana, Q)
- ☺ Live in Reflection of Jesus (Jordan, Q)
  - Overall, love always,
  - Be the fruits of the spirit which he calls upon me.
  - By doing so Christ will use me to lead others to Him.

- Disciples follow His tenets and continue the work which was charged to them through His Word, which is to love one another and continue to draw more peoples to this relational discipline. (John, Q)

## Friendship

### Jesus

#### Be a Friend of Jesus (Brenda, S)

- Spend Time w/ Jesus (Brenda, S)
- Get Filled Up (Brenda, S)
- Overflow to Others (Brenda, S)
- Hang with Jesus (Irene, Q)
- Disciples of Jesus have a relationship with the Father through the Son. (John, Q)

#### LOVE HIM

##### ● Love God (Matt, S)

##### ● Love Jesus (Briana, S)

- Keep His Commandments
- Follow His Lead

#### Partnership w/ Jesus

- Allow Others to Come and See (Briana, S)
- Letting Him spill out of my countenance onto others on this journey. (Brenda, Q)
- To allow the unity of the Holy Spirit to draw all who accept God's call into communion with Him. (John, Q)
- Letting Jesus take the Wheel (Will, S)

☺ **People**

☺ **Befriend the Broken (Allen, S)** b

- Find those who were hurt by Christians
- Learn their story
- Discuss their questions

● **Be a Friend to People (Brenda, S)** b

- Find others to hang with you and him (Irene, Q)

☺ **Love People (Matt, S)**

- Look for Opportunities
- Engage when You see One

☺ **Leadership**

☺ **Be a Leader (Allen, S)**

- Give guidance and direction
- Offer strength to be fortified

☺ **Be a Leader (Brenda, S)** b

- Learn as You Lead
- Feel what they Feel

☺ **AFTER:**

Jesus said, "Go and make disciples." In light of our LifeGroup experience together, define what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Describe any differences or similarities from what you wrote 9 weeks ago.

☺ **Friendship**

☺ **Following Step by Step**

- **Walk Next to Me, as I Walk Next to God (Allen, S)**

Originally, I felt *discipleship* meant going out and converting others to Christianity. Now I feel more as if it *is a way to engage others by listening and praying for them*, and having them walk beside you. (Allen, Q)

- **STORY: One Lesson for One Need (Irene, S)**

- ***To be a disciple means to draw others one-step closer on their walk with Jesus. (John Q)***

My answer from before this group was more about the tenets of Christianity and *now I can see discipleship on a more broad plane*. Discipleship is more accessible as a result. (John, Q)

- **Before: Get to Studies / Get them in the Tank (Matt, S)**  
**After: God's Agenda / Their Time / Step by Step (Matt, S)**

○ I had written: "Help someone fall in love with Christ; teaching them of the great controversy soon ending and the amazing reward that follows."

**However, I believe my perspective has changed somewhat. (Matt Q).**

- I want to listen more
- See where they are on their journey
- Let the Spirit prompt them and me each step.

○ **How would discipleship happening one step a time enhance the effectiveness in spreading the three angels messages... (Matt, I)**

- **The HELP Method allows me to piggy back on themes of the great controversy...**

- The drum beat of the three angels messages is that time is short... At the back of everything is not just I want you to be closer to the Lord... I still say to my clients that where we are is not sustainable... I try to pick out an area of life that would be relevant to them... especially if they have brought it up...
- Heed, Engage, Listen, Pray - is still appropriate in linking them to the three angels message... It's not enough to know that Christ loves them... There is an urgency to the time in which we live...
- There is something in their anxiety level as to where they are... Their immigration status is a constant source of anxiety...
- There is a new world coming... God wants to give you justice... there will be a time when there is no racism, no borders, no issues of hate... There open to a spiritual engagement with God... Right here on our borders... in my office... they are going through holocaust kinds of separation with their family... there open to spiritual help.
- **Jim's key learning...** "I need to contemplate more the idea of urgency..."
- Following where Jesus leads with a desire to seek his presence (Will, Q)

#### ☺ Partnership w/ Jesus

- A disciple goes where the Master goes, sees what He is doing, and does the same thing or works with Him. In this way, the disciple learns what he is to do. (Dana, Q)
- ***The difference I see*** between this definition and the one I gave earlier is that it seems to indicate ***more of a relationship with Jesus in that it is more action oriented rather than preparation oriented.*** (Dana, Q)
- Still allowing Jesus's love to spill out for others. His joy is contagious. (Brenda, Q)

#### ☺ People

- **Question: How has your vertical conversation with God been impacted as you're seeking to engage with others... (Matt, I)**

A more mature Matt can look back and say God new I was messing up... that there were still things for me to learn... It's a humbling experience... "Lord I didn't do my best with that interaction... you were patient with me back then and you still want me to move forward..."

It's a blessing to me to see how patient and good God is... that encourages me... God still wants me on his team.

**Jim's summary - as we disciple others God is discipling us...**

#### BE INTENTIONAL

##### Be A Little Bit Bold (John S)

- **Insight:** When your authentic, different is desirable (Jim)

- ***It is the atmosphere of grace which surrounds the soul of the believer, the Holy Spirit working upon mind and heart, that makes him a savor of life unto life, and enables God to bless his work. – God's Amazing Grace, p. 238***

- The increase has been to be more intentional about what I am doing. (Irene, Q)

##### Going and interacting intentionally with people. (Briana, Discipleship Question)

- In the interacting part of "getting to know someone I ought to ***ask questions to hear their story.***
- When I hear their story and understand them better, I can ***look for ways to bring Jesus/faith into our conversation.***
- I can always look to befriend someone if I can't find a way to bring Jesus into our first conversations.
- Jesus looked to get to know individuals and meet their needs, then He encouraged them to know His Father in Heaven. The Bible instructs us to do the same.



☺ **FEAR: Our Greatest Enemy** 📄

- What are the Fear Factors in Discipleship? (Jim)
- They'll Think You're Crazy (Irene)
- Can we be friends if they know about my faith? (Matt)

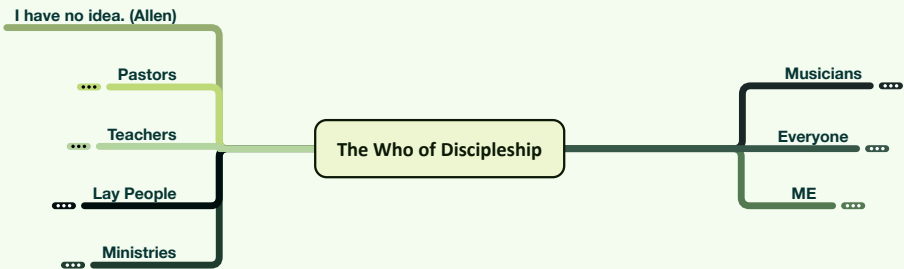
☺ **Handling the Haters (Dana)** 📄

- Her Catholic Friend calls the Bible Misogynistic
- Ask the Haters what happened (Allen) 📄
- Chatting w/ the Car Guys (Allen) 📄
- Navigating the Nonsense (Justin) 📄
- Phil, Can you tell me your story? (Brenda) 📄
- A Religion unto Itself (Matt) 📄
- A Resident Outcast (Allen) 📄

**THE EBENEZER MODEL OF MISSIONAL PRAYER**  
 Q4: The Who of Disciple Making  
 Responses from Before and After Evaluation Activities

**BEFORE:**  
 Who do you know that is responding to the mission of making disciples and how are they doing it?

**AFTER:**  
 Based on our missional prayer journey together, who would you say should respond to Jesus' disciple making co-mission, and what are some ways they could do it?



## ☺ The Who of Discipleship

### ☺ BEFORE:

Who do you know that is responding to the mission of making disciples and how are they doing it?

- I have no idea. (Allen)

### ☺ Pastors

- Pastors, setting up these groups and doing their job. (Bill)

#### ☺ UC Pastors

- Pastor Carole - she purposefully & sincerely ministers to the youngest members around her. (Briana)
- Pastor Jim (you) - purposefully and sincerely ministering to the students through music. (Briana)
- Pastor Nudd - again, he ministers purposefully and sincerely to a specific population of young ppl (Briana)

### ☺ Teachers

- Holly Greer - CAMS Choir Teacher (Irene, S)
- Coach Moore (Jordan, S)

### ☺ Lay People

- Irene, Cherie, Pastor Jim, just living their life in the adventure of sharing Jesus and doing His bidding. (Brenda)
- My Brother who is a Retired Policeman (Dana, S)
- My friend. He is always someone that is open to talk to about anything, never judges, humble, and full of compassion. He is doing it by being a friend to everyone, and being willing to counsel others to Christ. (Jordan, Q)

- Friends who are conducting bible studies and leading individuals to baptism (Matt, Q)
- Friends and family; by prayer, study, time spent together, fellowship, and showing love for each other (Will, Q)
- Brenda, one way she does it is by discipling young women, she meets with them, listens to their stories and encourages them. (Irene, Q)

#### ☺ Ministries

- It Is Written. Through the SALT program (Dana, Q)
- My friend. She has been fortunate to learn about discipleship through the ARISE program. Her life was so deeply impacted that she cannot help but pour out into this ministry of discipleship. Just one way that she is doing it is by reaching out to me personally and asking to study the Bible together. In doing so, she is enabling me with the tools to also "pay it forward" and make disciples of anyone I come across. (John, Q)

#### ☺ AFTER:

Based on our missional prayer journey together, who would you say should respond to Jesus' disciple making co-mission, and what are some ways they could do it?

#### ☺ Musicians

- My personal feeling is that Musicians should become more involved in the disciple making commission. (Allen)
- Musicians Should be Vocal (Allen, S)

#### ☺ Everyone

- Everyone. Discipling is much easier than simply waiting for a Bible study. Making the first step of teaching someone about Christ is gaining their trust. Therefore, my perspective of "Who is doing it" and "Who should be doing it" has changed radically. (Matt)

- After journeying with this group, I would say anybody who claims to love the Lord should respond to Jesus' commission. All it really means is to walk side by side with our brothers and sisters and step-by-step help them to advance towards the Kingdom. I think this might look like hearing each other's

The stories and lifting up each other in prayer. Following up on the prayer to track how God has been moving in their lives will help strengthen your own faith also. Making disciples also means being bold in the things that set us apart as Christians and answering any questions that may arise as a result. (John)

- I would say any follower of Christ. (Irene)
- Anyone who has "decided to follow Jesus" should be doing this. We are the salt and light, so we need to get out of the salt shaker and spread the light around. (Dana)
- Everyone who says they are friends of Jesus'. Listening to others stories and allowing Jesus' agenda to take over what they thought they need to do. Be ready to engage others where Jesus is working. (Brenda)
- We all ought to be responding. Get to know people for who they are - take the time to listen and understand them. Then introduce them to Jesus and our Heavenly Father. (Briana)

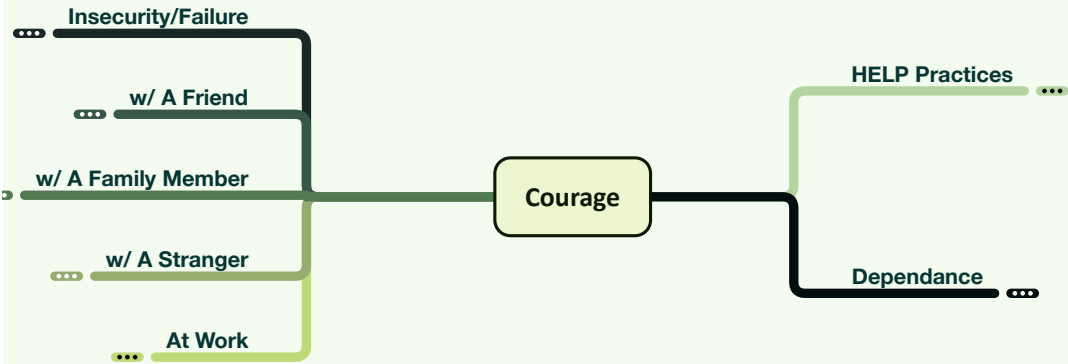
☺ **ME**

- Me for Starters, keeping my mind stayed upon him (Will)

**THE EBENEZER MODEL OF MISSIONAL PRAYER**  
Q5: Courage Responses from Before and After Evaluation Activities

**BEFORE:**  
Share a story of when you exercised interpersonal courage for Christ in a conversation with another person.

**AFTER:**  
How has your interpersonal courage for Christ been affected by this missional prayer journey? \*



## ☺ **Courage**

### ☺ **BEFORE:**

Share a story of when you exercised interpersonal courage for Christ in a conversation with another person.

### ☺ **Insecurity/Failure**

- I fail miserably in this area (Dana)

### ☺ **w/ A Friend**

- When my friend asked how to be saved and be confident in the decision (Will, Q)
- In hearing someone's justified indignation for an event that occurred, I was able to stand up for the perpetrator and say that Christ loves them as much as the victim so we cannot wish vengeance on them... It took courage to stare my friend in the face, who had been violated, but to say that in Christ, there are no grudges. (John, Q)
- Me and my friend were both struggling with a similar, yet different temptations or struggles. But we were able to reflect God's word on how to conquer and overcome those moments. Also, we were able to remind each other of God's grace and compassionate, knowing we are forgiven. (Jordan, Q)
- When God wanted me to send the verse to Cynthia, it was out of my comfort zone (Irene Q.)
- FitBit Story (I Fail in this Area)
- In a group of bad kids making fun of God I stood up for him and got made fun of as well. (Bill, Q)
- When I initially talked with Allen about Jesus at the beginning of our relationship. When I ministered to another neighbor of mine in Loma Linda who was also from another culture. (Briana, Q)
- My friend feels that Christians are too self righteous. I gave him a book called Disappointment with God to help him understand one perspective. (Allen, Q)

☺ **w/ A Family Member**

- My sister is suffering and questioning just an encourager to point her to Jesus. (Brenda, Q)

☺ **w/ A Stranger**

- STORY: Motorcycle Mama (Brenda, S)

☺ **At Work**

- Every time I have a new client in the office, I share Jesus through word and a Steps to Christ and/or Great Hope. It takes more courage when I know the other person is an atheist and I had several opportunities to do so over the summer at a college reunion and with some dear family friends (former practicing Jews) who are also atheists. (Matt, Q)
- **Baby Baptism (Allen, S)**

☺ **AFTER:**

How has your interpersonal courage for Christ been affected by this missional prayer journey? \*

☺ **HELP Practices**

☺ **A New Strategy**

- **COURAGE:** My interpersonal courage for intentional prayer has been significantly increased, because I feel like I've been given a methodology for praying for myself and for others. (Allen, Q)

I have been given a new method to communicate with individuals who may or may not believe in Christ. (Allen, Q)

And in doing so I feel that ***if I were to sit down and talk to someone about Christ, I would feel comfortable praying with them after our conversation.*** (Allen, Q)

My interpersonal courage for intentional prayer has been significantly increased, because I feel like I've been given a methodology for praying for myself and for others. (Allen, Q)



### **Allen Interview**

In the past my relationship with my friend didn't involve Christianity because I wasn't a Christian... He was my mentor getting through medical school... my current experience is to be kind, caring, and supportive to him... His family crisis is in the sense that his x-wife is a bear... medically his body is shutting down... trying to be supportive and caring is of the utmost importance...

The people who are being the most supportive and helpful are not the slightest bit Christian... They reject Christianity... yet they are wonderful people... they are taking him to his medical appointments...

***In that sense I'm not necessarily witnessing above and beyond what Atheist might give... what more do I have to offer... To be a friend at all times... to pray for his health... to pray that he might be emotionally free from the torment of his family problems... I pray that he recognizes his happiness doesn't come from material things...***

I don't know if he'd ever reach a point where he'd be willing to talk about Christianity... He has a hard time opening up about it...

**Work** - I feel more comfortable approaching my co-worker. He doesn't like the impression he gets from other Christians...

### ☺ **Heeding and Engaging**

#### ☺ **GREATER FREEDOM**

- Yes. I feel greater freedom to start making friends with the idea of mission without the guilt of instantly inviting folks to church or seeking a Bible study. (Matt, Q)

#### ☺ **RELAXED**

- I'M MORE COURAGEOUS / MORE RELAXED (Matt, S)



- **BRENDA INTERVIEW...** I could relate to Matt want to get everyone in Bible Studies... You're not the Holy Spirit... You can just relax. (Brenda, I)

- **CONFIDENCE IN CONVERSATION:**

*With my friends it has opened up more awareness of where the Lord is at work in our lives... It has given me more confidence in talking about everyday experiences... connecting it with the Lord's activity and will... God shows us parallels between God's word and daily life. (BRIANA INTERVIEW)*

- *Interpersonally it has been an add value to pre-existing friendships and given me a vision for how I might more effectively engage with seekers or skeptics... I have some tools for the future... (Briana Interview)*
- **Brenda in the Airport:** I was in the Atlanta Airport. Getting reading to go through Security. I saw the lady... She didn't look happy and we were zigzagging through the line. I saw her crying. I said to her... "I'm sorry." I hugged her and she just put her head on my shoulder. Then she started to get better. We didn't have time to talk (Brenda, I)
- It has strengthened my commitment to be fully engaged in what Jesus brings before me (Brenda, Q)
- I believe it has been strengthened and through the trials I have, I have become more aware (Briana, Q)

- **Listening and Prayer**

- *Spilling over into interactions with people: I realized that I want to listen to people's stories...* I want to know how to relate to them and pray for them (Brenda, I)
- Although I feel woefully inadequate, ***I am attempting to step up to the challenge to pray with and for people more, and I may have become a better listener.*** I am still very uncomfortable with it. (Dana, Q)

My mind wanders if I can't see the connections... I have an ideal of what prayer should be... I don't feel like I can exemplify that model of prayer because of my lack of knowledge and study... (Dana, I)

- **I learned the importance of PAUSING TO LISTEN TO PEOPLE. (Briana Interview)**

#### HELP CHECK-INS

- **Through the Weekly Check-up  
BE BRAVE - YOU CAN DO IT**

#### QUESTIONS

My courage for Christ has been strengthened by knowing that I have a group to hold me accountable. **Thinking ahead to our HELP check-ins gives me the courage to go forth in God's name.** I also think praying for courage has been a huge part of growing in missional work.

#### INTERVIEW

knowing other people were doing the same thing as me... In one instance I had a colleague... I had the colleague's daughter in class... the daughter was saying the grandma got a scrape. I went to the mom and it turns out that the grandma had a stroke... Come to find out that Grandma is doing better...

**The check-ins really encouraged me to be more aware and response... Something that prompted me to probe further...**

My intentionality combined with accountability has been a big factor... (John, QSI)

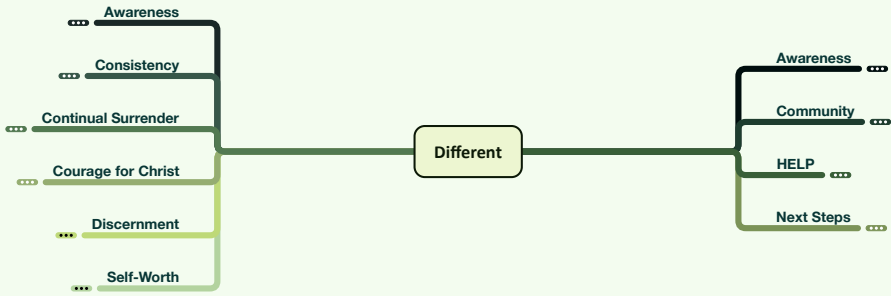
#### Dependance

- The desire to rely on his courage and not my own (Will, Q)

**THE EBENEZER MODEL OF MISSIONAL PRAYER**  
 Q6: "What Would You Like to be Different?"  
 Responses from Before and After Evaluation Activities

**BEFORE:**  
 What would you like to be different in your relationship with God at the end of this eight-week LifeGroup journey?

**AFTER:**  
 What has been the most significant change in your journey as a disciple of Christ as a result of this Missional Prayer LifeGroup, and how does this change compare to what you were hoping would happen?



## ☺ Different

### ☺ BEFORE:

What would you like to be different in your relationship with God at the end of this eight-week LifeGroup journey?

#### ☺ Awareness

- Feel his presence 24/7 (Bill, Q.)

#### ☺ Consistency

- My consistency with him increase. Truly choosing him daily, and have my lifestyle reflect it. (Jordan, Q)
- That I have a better, more consistent worship time daily with Jesus (Briana, Q)

#### ☺ Continual Surrender

- Continual surrender to Gods calling in my life for Him and others (Will, Q.)
- I want to be able to surrender more fully to Christ. This means in areas of my life that I may not even realize I seek control over. I also hope to gain some insight as to how others along the same journey are able to walk in faith, day-by-day. In other words, to hear each other's stories. (John, Q)

#### ☺ Courage for Christ

- Also, be more open to talk to anyone about Jesus. (Jordan, Q)
- I want to be intentional about the unchurched/unsaved (Irene, Q)
- I would like to have the courage to speak for Him even when I know the person listening is not a believer or even is hostile to Christianity (Dana, Q)
- Stronger in the friendship and bolder no fear (Brenda, Q).

#### ☺ Discernment

- More confidence in knowing what things God is specifically asking me to do and not to do in order to achieve His will in my life. Help with volunteering choices, spending time wisely, work decisions, social decisions, raising children etc. (Matt, Q)

#### Self-Worth

- My feeling of self-worth to improve (Allen, Q)

#### AFTER:

What has been the most significant change in your journey as a disciple of Christ as a result of this Missional Prayer LifeGroup, and how does this change compare to what you were hoping would happen?

#### Awareness

##### Intentionality

- **QUESTIONS:** I am realizing more that I need to stop trying to be my own strong tower and life director; that is usurping His position. I have realized how much I focus on worldly concerns rather than spiritual growth and going about His business and am working through that with Him. My focus in life and prayer has shifted away from self and personal desires and more toward intercession and journeying with others. I am more intentional in prayer and more willing to do what God may ask me to do more willing to surrender my resistance to doing whatever that is.

How it relates to what I said earlier: My resistance was due to fearing that He would ask me to witness to unbelievers, who in my experience can be hostile. Upon surrender, I learned that He has other ways that He may wish to work through me, other tasks to perform. (Dana, Q)

- I think it has been fulfilled, awareness is making me more intentional (Irene, Q)

#### Practice God's Presence

- I'm not sure that my self-worth has improved in this nine-week period, But I definitely feel like I can communicate with the Lord better and let him know of my feelings of self-worth. I feel that the Lord will be more instrumental in my life and helping me deal with the issues that surround me. (Allen, Q)
- The LifeGroup Journey has made me more aware of my suspicion of His influence in my life. Instead of "wondering" if God was there - I am more certain that He is/has been there every step. (Briana, Q)
- More aware and willing to listen. (Brenda, Q)
- I hope I would seek God's face and not his hand... I would do things out of love... I don't want the blessings for blessings sake... Freedom in the structure... (John, I)
- Most significant change would be my awareness for the need to be in tune continuously with my redeemer and the opportunities that may arise to be an encouragement or just listen to others. (Will Q)

#### Community

- This small group has really been a blessing. I have really enjoyed getting to know the other people's stories. (IRENE, COURAGE ANSWER)

#### HELP

- **Looking back, I have found a more disciplined approach to discipleship and also just a relationship with God.**

**The listening aspect of my relationship with God has been strengthened.**

**I am also trying to view myself through the lens of the Father as an equalizer - I am no better or worse than anybody else in God's Kingdom.**

This enables me to humble myself and serve Him out of sheer love. I hope this love is the catalyst for my disciple making. (John, Q)

- God answered my prayer for my time with my group very differently. I learned about listening to individual's felt needs, understanding their life experience, finding something that is interesting or pressing in their life and making connections with their experiences and God's word. I had a laundry list for the pre-launch wish list of what I wanted to be different. God provided something better. (Matt, Q)

#### Allen Help Reflections

##### Question to Allen:

**What would be helpful to you from church perspective when it comes to engaging interpersonally with folk?**

- Most of my interactions are in a medical environment... there is very little time to have interaction outside of patient connection.
- Outsiders get lost by our apparent motivation to "convert" and "correct" A big issue I notice with my friends who are atheist... is the Christian push to "correct"
- The moral behavior of some people... eyebrow raising...

##### Allen - A Key challenge for the HELP motif is working with those using it to apply the principles without seeking to be Evangelical FIXERS...

- We as Christians create moral prisons for others... Most people feel like Christians create moral prisons for others...
- WHAT is a moral prison? Verbiage which describes someone else's behavior as unredeemable.

#### Next Steps

- **INTERVIEW: The MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR ME WAS SAYING TO GOD...WHAT ELSE DO YOU WANT ME TO DO... HIS REPLY: SMALL GROUP WORK. (Dana, I)**



APPENDIX H  
IDENTITY CONSENT FORMS

This appendix contains signed consent forms from Alejandro (Alex / “Solo”) Carrillo, Don Kanen, Sue Kanen, Ingrid Moon, and Winema Van Iwaarden. I have sought written consent to use their real names in this dissertation because of their roles as friends, lay members, or family during my time of ministry in Colorado, Wyoming, and Tennessee.

I haven't sought written consent when mentioning the following list of individuals because they are referenced in relationship to their general ministry responsibilities as recognized church leaders within the Seventh-day Adventist Church: (a) Jim Bruaer, my former RMC Conference President, (b) Gary Burns, my former youth pastor, (c) Karen Martell, Pacific Union Prayer Coordinator, and (d) Glenn Russell, my former academy Bible teacher.

# Andrews University

Seek Knowledge. Affirm Faith. Change the World.

**Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary  
Informed Identity Consent Form**

**Principal Investigator:** James G. Moon, Sr. DMin Candidate  
5542 Ginkgo Road, Ooltewah, TN 37363  
Phone: 719-480-2230; Email: jimmoon@southern.edu

**Research Project Advisor:** James R. Wibberding, DMin  
Pacific Union College, One Angwin Avenue, Angwin, CA 94508  
Phone: 707-965-6513; Email: jwibberding@puc.edu


**Title of the Research Project:** Missional Prayer: The Ebenezer Model as a Relational Catalyst for Disciple Making Through the Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church

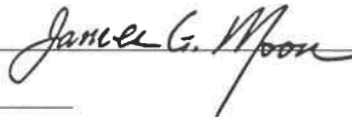
**Introduction:** I am James G. Moon, Sr., the Pastor of Worship for the Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church. During the last 20 years of pastoral ministry, the Lord took me on a ministry journey that led me to develop The Ebenezer Model of Missional Prayer and test it within a pilot Ebenezer LifeGroup for this doctoral project.


In telling the story of the project's development, I have mentioned you by name. The purpose of this form is to obtain written consent to use your real name within this project report.

### AUTHORIZATION

I have read and understand this consent form, and give my permission for my real name to be mentioned in this project report. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form. I voluntarily choose for my name to be mentioned in this project report, but I understand that my consent does not take away any legal rights in the case of negligence or other legal fault of anyone who is involved in this study. I further understand that nothing in this consent form is intended to replace any applicable Federal, state, or local laws.

Participant's Name (printed): Alejandro Carrillo  
Participant's Signature:   
Date: 4/2/2021

Principal Investigator's Signature:   
Date: March 29, 2021

Witness' Signature:   
Date: 4/2/21

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Participant's Name (printed): Donald KAREN

Participant's Signature: Donald Karen

Date: 3-29-2021

Principal Investigator's Signature: James G. Moon

Date: March 29, 2021

Witness' Signature: Susanne Karen

Date: 3-29-21

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Participant's Name (printed): Susanne Kanen

Participant's Signature: Susanne Kanen

Date: 3-29-21

Principal Investigator's Signature: James G. Moon

Date: March 29, 2021

Witness' Signature: Donna Kanen

Date: 3-29-2021

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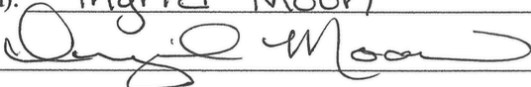
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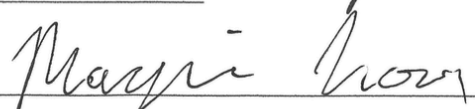
Participant's Name (printed): Ingrid Moon

Participant's Signature: 

Date: 4/5/21

Principal Investigator's Signature: 

Date: March 29, 2021

Witness' Signature: 

Date: 04-05-21

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Participant's Name (printed): Winema Van Lugaarden

Participant's Signature: 

Date: 3.29.2021

Principal Investigator's Signature: 

Date: March 29, 2021

Witness' Signature: 

Date: 3/29/2021

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## VITA

**Name:** James Gordon Moon, Sr.

**Background:** I was born on September 5, 1972, in Olney, MD. I was raised by my parents, Robert Moon, Jr. and Louise Moon in Berrien Springs, MI. I have an older brother Robert Moon III who went to sleep in Jesus in 2017 and an older sister Cami Cress. I was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist by my grandfather, Robert Moon, Sr. on my 9<sup>th</sup> birthday (September 5, 1981). I enjoy writing songs, spending time with my family, corporate prayer, listening to people's stories, walking, and hiking.

**Family:** I was married on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1997, to Ingrid Lynn Eklund. We have three children, James Gordon, Jr. (Born 2001), Maggie Lynn, (Born 2002), and Samuel Andrew (Born 2006).

### **Education:**

1995-1998      MDiv from Andrews University Theological Seminary  
1991-1995      BA in Religion from Andrews University  
1988-1991      High school diploma from Andrews Academy

### **Ordained:**

2001            Ordained by Rocky Mountain Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and currently hold ministerial credentials from the Georgia Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

### **Experience:**

2015-Present    Pastor of Worship, Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist Church, Tennessee  
2008-2015      Pastor of Alamosa & Monte Vista Seventh-day Adventist Churches, in the San Luis Valley of Colorado  
2003-2008      Pastor of The Adventure Seventh-day Adventist Church, Colorado  
1999-2003      Pastor of Cody, Greybull, Powell, Worland, & Ten Sleep Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Wyoming's Big Horn Basin  
1998-1999      Pastor of Woodland Park Seventh-day Adventist Church, Colorado  
Assistant Pastor, Colorado Springs Central Seventh-day Adventist Church  
1995-1998      Seminary Intern for Youth Ministry at Pioneer Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church in Berrien Springs, Michigan

