

Mission Team Plan - (Lifestyle Evangelism)

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(Mission Plan: Form a group of fellow Christians to build a mission team for the Lord's work.)

There has been a great danger over the years for the church to separate itself from the world. It is safer to live life with Christian friends and avoid a lot of conflicts or temptations. However, Jesus prayed, "...I have given them Your word and the world has hated them; for they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I am not asking that You take them out of the world, but that You protect them from the evil one." (John 17:14-15 NIV). We are called to be in the fight on the frontlines against the powers of darkness in this world. We are God's Seal Team.

First, we need to understand what evangelism is NOT. Evangelism is not shoving the Bible down throats, being obnoxious for Jesus, or acting like a high-pressure salesman. Evangelism does not mean you have to know all the answers. It is a lifestyle that God's people are supposed to live that draws others to Jesus. Unfortunately today, we seldom build new relationships. Most of us do not know our next door neighbors. We hit the garage door opener, drive in and close the door, safe from the outside world. We have become a very private society. Yet, the need for evangelism grows more urgent with each passing day because the time of Jesus' return is growing ever closer. We too often forget that Jesus told us that no one knows the day or hour of His return. It will happen instantly, like a flash of lightning.

Let's go back and look at Jesus' method of evangelism. He built an assault team of men with different personalities and talents, equipping and empowering them for the future. Ultimately, these few men would gather ideas and information to pass on to others who would pass it on. The Mission Team would be in a constant state of expansion.

Evangelism is far more than presenting the plan of salvation to people. That is the easy part. If someone is not comfortable with it, there are people who can help with that part. Evangelism is the sharing of life, ideas, beliefs and truths with people we meet on a daily basis and continually throughout our lives.

How do we get back to the basics? How do we begin to once again meet the world where it lives and bring it salt and light? How do we learn to be people who love to practice hospitality and build new relationships? We have to go back and rediscover the Mission principles that Jesus and the early church practiced. Let's begin by answering some questions using scriptural situations.

Biblical History:

***Mark 1:14-20 - How did Jesus begin His Mission Team?** (*He went out among common everyday people and found some willing to sacrifice and follow Him. He began to build a network that He would thoroughly equip. He would mentor them for three years. When they took over the responsibility they would be ready and able for the task. You will notice throughout this study that Jesus was looking for a vast variety of personalities and skills.*)

What application do you see for the individual Christian today? (*Either be the leader or a future leader or part of the Mission Team. Realize we always need to be in training and training the future Mission Team leaders.*)

***John 1:43-49 - What quality do you see in Philip that would add to the effectiveness of the Team?** (*Philip was quick to share the good news. He went looking for a friend to share it with immediately.*)

What do you see in Nathanael that would cause Jesus to choose him for the Team? (*Nathanael, or Bartholomew, questioned things. This analytical personality type would most likely be great with evidences and understanding with people who were not quick to believe.*)

***Mark 2:13-15 - Who was the next recruit in Jesus' assault team?** (*Levi, also called Matthew*)

What was unique about Levi? (*Matthew was a tax collector. This IRS influence would not make him the most popular man on the team.*)

What influence could Levi (Matthew) provide to greatly increase the effectiveness of this assault team that was forming? (*As a publican, a tax collector, he would have far reaching political and social connections that would prove invaluable to the Mission Team. Matthew could get a meeting with most anyone.*)

***Mark 3:13-19 - Simon, Cephas, was given the name “Petra, the Rock” by Jesus. What was unique about Him?** (*Peter was a bold leader. He would be the first to stand up with a fiery answer. He was a decisive, extroverted leader, who would be greatly needed to plant the first church in the Jewish world. A zealot would be especially needed when the great persecution came.*)

What was unique about the selection of James and John? (*They were both hot-headed, pushy zealots. They were called Boanerges, the Sons of Thunder. They were ready to call down fire from heaven on those who would not listen to Jesus. There was also Simon the Zealot. His name says it all. A zealot was ready to fight, hot-headed, impetuous.*)

***Matthew 28:16-20 - How far did Jesus intend the mission team He created to extend?** (*The Mission Team of Jesus Christ was to extend to all ethnic groups across the face of the earth. We are to keep building God’s kingdom on earth until the Lord returns. All God’s creation are equal in His eyes. God wants no one to perish, but all to come to repentance.*)

***2 Timothy 2:1-2 - What did Timothy have to do with expanding the team?** (*Timothy was trained so that he would be able to identify and train other trainers. He was a specialist in teaching and leading, training others and building the church. Paul informs us that everyone has unique talents given by the Holy Spirit for the building up of the church. Together we are an ever-growing Mission Team that uses its distinct personalities and talents to extend the Kingdom of God with power and decisiveness.*)

MISSION STEP 1 – DEVELOP A PASSION FOR THE UNCHURCHED

a) Pray for insight, wisdom and passion. (*Jesus looked out over Jerusalem and lamented how He longed to gather the children together like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd, harassed and helpless. Jesus showed us how to love the unlovable. Ask God to give you passion to care rather than judge, for insight on how and who to approach, and for wisdom to be gentle, yet effective and bold. Remember, evangelism does not happen from good intentions. It happens when we understand that 100% of the people we see around us will die without hope if we do not live with the passion of our Lord Jesus.*)

b) Pray for God to develop a powerful mission team. (*Involve God in building your Mission Team and plan. Ask Him to point you to the power, the synergy that will best build the kingdom. Ask Him to point you to the various gifts, personalities and talents that will best build His Mission Team among you.*)

c) Begin Scripture reading on the passion and mission of Jesus and pray to develop His sense of urgency. (*You could do this individually, then each person take turns sharing at the Mission Team meetings as a goal-oriented motivational devotion for the Mission Team.*)

STEP 2 - BUILD A MISSION TEAM

Begin where Jesus began. Build a Mission Team with a variety of personalities, skills, hobbies, talents, likes and dislikes. God doesn't need a clique; He needs a team with offense, defense, runners, blockers, kickers, strategists, etc. Think how it is the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines working together that make America great. Each branch has special skill sets that together are powerful. This cannot be a program, or it will fail. This needs to be a lifestyle that we develop together as a priesthood of believers. For this Mission Team to happen there must be organization, goals, vision, a long-term commitment, and a means of measuring effectiveness. Here are some ideas to facilitate that effectiveness.

a) Schedule regular meetings. (*Create a schedule that is as important a part of your Spiritual life as Sunday Worship. This holistic view of living faith, offering ourselves as living sacrifices, builds maturity in our faith.*)

b) Build a resource notebook. (*This notebook will be an integral part of your Mission Team's effectiveness. You may make a contact, yet find you have little common with them after you get to know them. However, in your network there may be someone who will have much in common with them and be far better at moving forward in this new relationship.*)

Have your class fill out the information on themselves, then add each Mission Team member's information. Create a page for each member

Name * type of people you enjoy * talents * hobbies * life experience

b) Actively seek out and build new relationships

1) Target 1 or 2 new friends (pray & look!). *(Prayer cannot be over-emphasized. Pray each morning that God would prepare the eyes and ears of each Mission Team member to be sensitive to those you will come in contact with who need Jesus. Without prayer our focus is less clear and we breeze through the day and then wonder why God has never pointed out anyone to us. God will provide if we develop the passion and discipline needed to be a worker in His field. People needing hope are all around us, but we must make the first move. Where can you look for them?)*

(Make a group list. Are they in your school, at work, gym, clubs, new neighbors, new member at church, lonely, recently divorced, etc.)

2) Plan a way to spend time with them. *(80-90% of all people who come to Christ are first introduced to Him by a friend. People are lonely and whether we believe it or not, they are waiting for us to lean over the fence and be neighborly. It is important to remember that advice on life from a stranger is seldom welcomed. We seek ideas from friends. There is little chance of sharing my faith successfully until I prove I genuinely care about them.)*

What are some situations you could create in order to make the first move? *(Make a list to share as a Team. Barbecue, get a coke/coffee, ballgame, movie, music concert, mall, car race, help them in their yard work, etc.)*

3) Gather information about them. Ask questions, and be an active listener.

What questions could you ask them at McDonalds or the Mall, or in their back yard that could begin to build our relationship? *(In the speech class I taught at Dallas Christian College, we had a debate on a hot topic. The rule was one person at a time could speak. Then before the next person could speak, they had to accurately state the last person's views and beliefs. This exercise was difficult for some because they had never listened empathetically (to relate and understand the other person's thoughts. We are usually thinking about what our next words will be if the other person ever takes a breath).)*

Why would that be an important part of having compassion and being able to make new friendships? *(The key to being a good listener is to learn to ask great exploratory questions and then be quiet and listen. I want to ask questions that touch areas of importance in their life, so we can begin to bond.)*

I was teaching a workshop on this at a Christ in Youth Conference. Before I started the workshop I picked out a boy on the back row in the crowd of about 100 kids. I asked him his name. Then I asked him what position he played on his soccer team. He was shocked and asked how I knew he played soccer. I told him, "It's on your shirt, the logo." I explained to them that we all advertise what we love. I have lots of T-shirts with musical instruments and logos on them. I can walk into someone's house who I don't know. Within seconds I can ask them a question about a child or grandchild. Or I can ask something about them. It is always displayed on the wall of their house.

Learn to search for questions to ask. They break the ice quickly. We all want to share what we love.

Another lesson happened to me in college. Dana and I had a weekend ministry 80 miles from Ozark Christian College. They had a program called Supper Six. People drew numbers and six people would get to know each other at someone's house that month. Our name was drawn by an elderly couple we barely knew in the church. They were very quiet and seldom spoke. We were dreading the event. We knew we had nothing in common and it was going to be a long night.

When we arrived, I started looking around. I saw lots of aircraft pictures. I asked, "Are you a pilot?" He said, "I used to be." I had my pilot's license and flew my dad's Cessna every chance I got. Suddenly, we were lost in sharing our adventures in the air. Dana looks and seeks a quilting rack. At the time she would quilt baby blankets for close friends having babies. They quickly began sharing stories of quilts and family members who were big into quilting. The following day we arrived at church and when we passed, it was like we were all best friends. We had a great life lesson that weekend.

Go home and write out a chart on what you have discovered about your new friend. This chart listing their profile will later be compared to the profile chart of each network member.

Name * type of people you enjoy * talents * hobbies * life experience

4) Invite them to your home. Try to arrange a visit in their home. (*How could you walk into a room and know the right questions to ask? Brainstorm as many questions as you can with your Mission Team. Movies, tapes, pictures, trophies, decorations, posters, musical instruments, etc., all declare a part of our heart. Go home and write out a chart on what you have discovered about your new friend when you visit their home.*)

5) Pray for your insight and this person's openness

c) Coordinating the Mission Team

1) Share the names for targeted daily prayer in a prayer journal. (*Be certain to make these names a matter of prayer at each Mission Team meeting. Pray for your relationship and their openness.*)

2) Network the information about your new friends. (*Have everyone record the information your Mission Team has gathered. As a team you will use this to discover matching lifestyles that make for great friendships. It is interesting because this type of evangelism blesses each person on the Mission Team as much as it does the new friend.*)

3) Match up best relationships. (*Network by finding the best match. For example, if they love to fish, hunt or golf, who in your group will connect with that hobby. Personalities often clash. If the person is an extrovert, match them up with someone who loves extroverts. If they moved from Minnesota, look for someone from the North or who loves to vacation in the*

North. Find a link where two common traits will attach. Watch for problems in personalities and adjust quickly.)

b) Plan for results

- 1) **Begin each Mission Team session with targeted prayer.** (*Discuss needs and pray for them. If it isn't connecting, then look at the information you have and see who else from your network could be brought into the picture.*)
- 2) **Share any new potential relationships.** (*Some relationships never get off the ground, some die, sometimes the opportunities suffer due to conflicting schedules. Always be looking for new potential relationships and share them for prayer and mission planning.*)
- 3) **Make a list of relationship events: fun events * low threat events semi- spiritual events**
 * **highly-spiritual events.** (*Brainstorm as a Mission Team. Many heads are better than one. Always be looking for the next opportunity to build the relationship, but also look to move it to a deeper spiritual level.*)
- 4) **Set target dates for future relationship building. Share the target dates for meetings**
 (*Share the target dates for meetings with each of the new friends. Add to the prayers by praying for the events you have selected and your openness to share from your faith.*)

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect"
 (1 Peter 3:15).

Our faith calls for us to be strong in our beliefs. We are also called to share our faith openly but gently. That gentleness must come from understanding the values and beliefs of other people who do not share your beliefs. These web sites are given to help you gain understanding and thereby be more effective in your witness.

Evangelism

<https://www.righnowmedia.org/Content/Speaker/1119>

www.christianity.com

www.gospelcom.net

Creation Science

<https://www.icr.org/>

www.drdino.com

<https://intelligentdesign.org/>

<https://www.discovery.org/>

Atheist and Freethinkers

www.infidels.org

www.secularhumanism.org

www.freethinkerpress.com

Skeptics

www.skepticfriends.org

Islam

www.islam-qa.com

Books

www.christianbook.com

www.bakerbooks.com