

For God's hand to move many at once

Most of the people who have ever followed Christ have done so along with others that they know and respect. While it's good to pray for one person, it can be even more strategic to pray for a group of people to follow Jesus together. This prayer session will help you pray for groups of people to begin following Jesus, and to continue faithfully.

Acts 11:20-21

20 Some of them...went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.

21 The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

1. Pray for the gospel message to be conveyed clearly to a group (vs 20)

Some people focused their efforts to communicate the gospel on a group of people known as "Greeks." They used language that the group could understand. Pray that God would send people who will wisely and sensitively communicate the gospel about Jesus to a group of people.

2. Pray for the hand of God to move upon a whole group (vs 21)

Sometimes God works dramatically in several people's lives at the same time. One of the ways to describe this kind of move is to speak as if God had hands and used them to turn many people to Himself. Use your imagination as you pray for God's hand to reach down from heaven in such a way that several people are turned toward Him. Pray that God's hand would open their eyes and ears to grasp the message of the gospel. How big are God's hands? With holy imagination, pray that God would use two hands to form a large group and to bring them nearer to Himself.

Acts 11:22-24

22 News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

23 When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.

24 He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

3. Pray for encouragers to establish new believers (vss 22-24)

When people begin to follow Jesus, it's important for them to learn how to live the new life by observing and learning from others. This is even more crucial when groups of people decide to follow Jesus together. It's not too early to pray now that God will send such people to the group you are praying for.

- **Pray for mature mentors to exemplify faith and a life full of God's Spirit (vs 24).**

Ask God to place people like Barnabas with the group you are praying for. Pray that such encouragers will provide a good model and practical instruction about how to follow Christ.

- **Pray for authentic life transformation, giving evidence to God's invisible work of grace (vs 23).**

When God's grace is at work on the inside, life change becomes evident on the outside. What did Barnabas see that showed him God's grace was at work? Pray for that kind of transformed life.

- **Pray for vibrant loyalty to God which comes from a heart relationship with God (vs 23).**

Pray that new followers will be challenged to give their lives to God with all their heart. Pray for long-lived faithfulness and a loyalty that springs from love.

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Sometimes the best way to pray for a person to follow Jesus is to pray for the circle of friends and family that surround that person. Since most of the people who have ever followed Christ in history have done so with trusted friends and family, it's not far-fetched at all to pray that the entire group would become devoted followers of Christ.

Focus on a particular group

If you are leading a prayer gathering have every participant identify a particular person that has yet to follow Christ. Have them describe the group of people who are trusted as family or friends. The group could be a small handful, or it could be an entire extended family.

Understand God's ways of drawing many at once

Read the entire passage aloud. Ask participants to describe what factors may have contributed to this movement of evangelism and discipleship. Anything that they may observe from the text is abundantly possible in today's world. God deeply desires to draw many people to Himself. He's fully capable of drawing many together. Let's ask Him to do just that.

Round One: Pray for communicators

It's common to think of "come-to-us" strategies in which we think of ways to welcome people to come to our worship gatherings. Help participants to articulate prayers which fit in a "go-to-them" strategy in which we see God working in their lives of people before they ever come to an official church gathering. Pray for people who will wisely and powerfully communicate the gospel.

Round Two: Pray for the hand of God

Of course, God doesn't really have hands, in the way that people have hands. But a very common expression in the Bible is "the hand of the Lord." Imagine God answering your prayer with two hands, gathering and turning people to Himself.

Round Three: Pray for mentors and encouragers

Pray that God will send people who will establish people in their faith. Take note of how the efforts to pastor, coach, counsel and encourage new followers focuses on their heart relationship with God.