

For the voice of Christ to raise the dead

You probably know someone who has heard about Christ, but the message just doesn't seem to sink in. It's as if they are dead to the message. You can pray for that person to hear the voice of the Son of God and pass from death to life. It's a simple way to pray for a tremendous work of God's power. It's the kind of prayer you'll want to keep praying.

The words of Jesus in John 5:24-25 are very emphatic. Twice he uses the phrase, "I tell you the truth..." or in some translations, "Truly, truly, I say to you..." As you pray from this passage, you can be just as emphatic in your praying as Jesus was when He told us these words. You can be sure that you are praying truth back to God.

John 5:24-25

24 I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned.

He has crossed over from death to life.

25 I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

1. Hearing God's word (vs 24)

Pray that God will give another opportunity for him/her to be exposed to the truth of the Gospel. Pray for effective messengers to cross paths with the person you are praying for. Pray that the message will be conveyed with winsome beauty and compelling clarity. Pray that they would sense the hope of being freed from any condemnation or judgement.

2. Hearing Christ's voice (vs 25)

Words about God sometimes fall on deaf ears. That's because they fall on dead ears. Dare to imagine your friend as a corpse. And then imagine Jesus, risen from the dead, approaching your friend's still body. And then He speaks. It's not loud, but His words have utmost authority. And something stirs to life deep inside. Eyes pop open to behold Jesus. Hands move and the mouth opens. But everything really begins with Christ's voice penetrating deadened ears. Those who hear *will* live. Here's a statement you can declare as a prayer:

"A time is coming when (insert their name) will hear the voice of the Son of God."

3. Crossing over (vs 24)

When Jesus says, "A time is coming..." in verse 25, He is referring to the glories of the resurrection at the end of the age. But He wants us to be confident that He's already at work giving people spiritual life. That's what Jesus means by someone who has "crossed over from death to life" in verse 24. Pray for nothing less than a spiritual resurrection. Use the name of your friend to pray:

"Lord Jesus, You are risen from the dead.

Bring (insert their name) from death into Your life."

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This Leader's Guide is designed to help you facilitate a session of prayer focused on people who have yet to follow Christ. We're assuming that you will photocopy the participant's guide and distribute it to those who gather to pray. This particular prayer guide can be a perfect tool to use before or following the "Easter" season.

Focus the prayers upon those who have yet to follow Christ

This way of praying is different than the standard practice of calling for prayer requests about particular needs. Of course, there's nothing wrong with praying for urgent problems and requests about felt needs. Instead of being about particular situations that need God's touch, FreshPrayer sessions offer a component of praying that many people find difficult to do: praying for people who are not Christians. We prefer to describe these people as those "who have yet to follow Christ" instead of the term "non-Christians." The issue is really the reality of following Christ. Many millions of people consider themselves Christians who have yet to ever follow Christ. Remind participants of this focus. Ask them to focus their praying on one particular person.

Ground the prayers in God's word

You'll find that people will pray with more confidence if they have been given a chance to think about their prayers before praying them. Many people defer to those who are perceived to be prayer experts because they don't know what to say. Make it your goal to encourage everyone to pray. A simple way to do this is helping them recognize how the truth of God's word gives support and clarity to the kind of things they would like to ask God to do.

It can help to invite participants to gather in smaller groups of three to four. That size seems to be the best for easy-going informal discussion. Ask them to read the passage aloud and pick out the phrases or words that strike them as significant for prayer. Ask participants to not move into prayer until after they discuss John 5:24-25. One question to help get the discussion rolling might be to describe what difference there may be between hearing God's word and hearing the voice of Christ. Depending how one defines these two things, there may or may not be a difference. The point is to stimulate clarity about what God's word is really saying, and therefore, what powerful work of God we can be praying.

Pray in short, conversational style

In small groups, invite each participant to pray in the three ways described in the guide. It can be as simple as going around their small group in a circle three times. The "declare prayers" in the participant's guide offer a simple way for each person to get started.

Demonstrate how they might use that prayer. as a beginning point. By describing or modeling how participants can pray with simple paraphrasing of scripture, you are building their confidence and persistence in praying.