

MESSENGERS

THE LESSON: 2 CORINTHIANS 5-6

The Apostle Paul wrote, “I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people” (1 Timothy 2:1). The Litany, at its heart, is an intercessory prayer, and one that responds to this mandate. With the words of the Litany, we pray for the Church, for ourselves, and for the world.

It may seem natural to pray for ourselves, for those we love, and for the Church to which we belong. But have you ever wondered why we bother to pray for the *world*? After all, haven’t we been called *out* from the world? Isn’t this the place that Jesus said hates him and hates those who belong to him? Aren’t we aliens and strangers here, longing for the day when we’ll go to our true home? Speaking of which, why doesn’t God just take us there *now*?

The prayer that Jesus prayed shortly before his arrest and crucifixion offers us some insight. He said:

“I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me... the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one... As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world... so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me” (John 17:9-23).

Did you catch that? There’s a reason why we’re still here, even though we don’t *belong* here. God didn’t give up on us: he sent Jesus to save us, and his Spirit remains with us. In the same way we have been sent to the world, to bring a message of hope to those who do not yet believe: that God our Saviour “desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). We’re here because the world is our mission field.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

During this unit, we’re going to focus our prayers on specific people in our world.

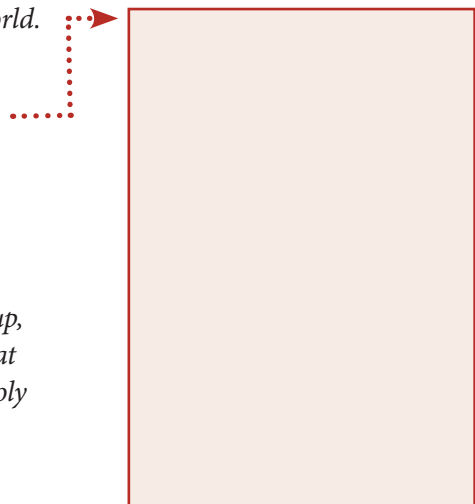
Each day this week, take time to pray for each of the unbelievers on your group’s list. Ask God to make their heart like “good soil” that is ready to receive his Gospel, and ask him to give courage and wisdom to you, your group, and other believers in sharing the good news with them.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

Blessed Saviour, who didst look with compassion upon the multitudes: Raise up, we beseech thee, faithful men to seek and find thy sheep dispersed and lost, that they may be saved for ever; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

(PRAYER FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE CHURCH (3), BCP PAGE 41)



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2 CORINTHIANS 5-6: **MESSENGERS OF RECONCILIATION**

5⁶... We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

¹¹Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience... ¹⁴For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6¹Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For he says, "In a favourable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favourable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. ³We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸through honour and dishonour, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.