
Touch Points for Evangel's Prayer Vigil team

For the week of December 21, 2014

This series is aimed to support our "Stepping Out in Faith—for the Sake of the Gospel" initiative. It is based on *The One Year Book of Praying Through the Bible* by Cheri Fuller (Tyndale House, 2003). We will focus on specific topics that relate to faith, witness, prayer and outreach. "The driving force behind this proposal is to increase our evangelistic witness and the impact on our neighborhood and community." (From the overview document, available at www.evbapt.org/docs/steppingOut.pdf)

Unreciprocated Love

In midautumn of the second year of King David's reign, the Lord gave this message to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah and grandson of Iddo. "I, the Lord, was very angry with your ancestors. Therefore, say to the people, 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord Almighty.'"

Zechariah 1:1-3

Prayer for the Week

Precious Father, you are the almighty Lord of the universe, and yet you are my friend. May I not grieve your Spirit but rather return the love that you have given me without reservation. I give you my heart, Lord. Thank you for walking with me during difficult times. I rejoice in the peace and shelter of your love that comes only from knowing you.

Notable Quote

It is but right that our hearts should be on God, when the heart of God is so much on us.

Richard Baxter

Reflection

Unreciprocated love normally fades. But the Lord endured a one-sided love relationship for generations. His love for his people continued to burn long after they had abandoned him. They ran after other gods, yet stood at a distance. No longer would he pour out his love and protection on a people who had forgotten his existence. It didn't take long for the people to see that without God they had nothing. Several years went by, and then one day through the prophet Zechariah, God sent a love letter to his children, which spelled out the terms of their new relationship. He wanted more than unreciprocated love. Affection is a two-way street, and God called for a reunion of the hearts—nothing less would do. You can offer service or loyalty or even sacrifice to God, but more than anything else he desired that you love him. He is faithful to you. He loved you so much that he gave you his Son and forgave all your sins. What he wants is for you to return that love. What he wants is your heart.

PRAYER PROMPTS

- As you celebrate the birth of Jesus this week—and face a new year—take time to reflect on how well you are doing to reciprocate God's love. Does it prompt a prayer of praise or one of repentance?
- Reflect on this week's worship service, the music, Scriptures, and Pastor Dave's Advent meditation, "As He Considered These Things"* (Matthew 1:18-25). Pray that the Lord will lead you to ways to apply the lessons learned in your own walk with Christ, as you connect with different people this week, and as you celebrate Christmas.
- Continue to remember one family from your circle of influence for intercession. They could be a neighbor, coworker or relative. Pray for their struggles to be resolved, their health improved and their relationships strengthened. Ask the Lord to bring them to a fuller, closer relationship with Himself in faith and obedience.
- Continue to pray for opportunities to invite people to our services. Ask the Lord to open doors of conversation, connection or compassion with others to enable an offer of attendance.
- Continue to pray for our "Stepping Out in Faith" initiative. Continue in prayer for the efforts of Mark Albrecht and Converge MidAmerica to secure the right person to lead a church plant from our facilities, aimed at increasing evangelism in our area.

* A podcast of the sermon and other materials are normally posted on the website by Monday.

Touch Points is e-mailed every Friday and normally posted on the website (www.evbapt.org) by Saturday.

Printed copies are available in the lobby on Sunday.