

The Church as God's Agent in Evangelism and Missions

By Dean Sieberhagen

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read John 20:21. The resurrected Jesus was with His disciples, and He was preparing them for the future. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: What were the two points Jesus emphasized in this verse?

Assignment Two

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–14. Paul said the church is like a body, meaning that each person has a special place in that body, both in who they are and what they do. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: Other than the pastor, what are three roles people have in the church?

Assignment Three

Read Romans 10:13–15. This passage presents some of the chronological steps that lead to people being saved. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: What are these steps?

Scripture to Memorize

And how are they to preach unless they are sent? . . . Romans 10:15

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand that evangelism and missions are done through the church.

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It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Two married couples sense a call to international missions. David and Amy attend Christian events but are not really connected to a church in their community. They decide on their own what country they want to go to. They use social media funding sites to raise money to live on. A few friends pray for them at the airport, but after that they are on their own.

Ralph and Jill actively serve in an evangelism ministry through their local church. Those they serve beside have joined them in months of prayer as they sought God's specific call. The pastor has helped Ralph and Jill connect with a mission board and other churches, so their funding won't be too much of a challenge. The church commissions them and prays over them when it is time to leave the U.S. Later, frequent communications between the couple and the congregation ensure continuing prayer.

Which couple seems to have a better opportunity to prosper across decades of international missions?

The last words of Jesus to His disciples are that we should go throughout the world and make disciples. Missions and evangelism to be at the core of a disciple's identity. This raises the question, What and how do we do this?

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week may now share answers to the following question: What were the two points Jesus emphasized in John 20:21?

We have a tendency to see missions and evangelism as being performed by professionally trained individuals while the rest of us sit back and watch. The Bible, however, speaks of Christians living together as a *body*, with each person having a role to play.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week may now share three or more roles people have in the church.

We can learn how to do missions and evangelism by looking at the church in Antioch in the passages below.

Read Acts 13:1–5 out loud.

Antioch was a city in northern Syria, a long journey from Jerusalem. Acts 13:1 tells us that there was a church there, with prophets and teachers. Where could this church have come from? (See Acts 11:19–26.)

This church in Antioch launched Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journey. The details of this launch have implications for the church today.

Studying the Passage

Verse 2. While they were worshiping. This verse shows that the Lord calls people to missions

while they are active in the church. In other words, Paul and Barnabas did not just sit around waiting for something “big” to happen. The most likely way to hear direction concerning the future is to be actively serving in the church today.

In Matthew 25:14–30, Jesus told His disciples the parable of the talents. The disciples learned that, as Christians, we are responsible to build His kingdom in accordance with how each of us has been gifted.

Discussion Questions

What do you think is needed for people to be involved in the church today? Would you say it is common in your church for teenagers to serve alongside adults in ministries? What are the places you could be involved in ministry in your local church? What could your church do to make it more likely that people serve side by side?

Verse 2. the Holy Spirit said. God is the one who calls, not a guilty conscience, a sense of adventure or even a well-meaning parent. We must hear *His* voice.

Verse 3. fasting and praying. Paul and Barnabas took the call seriously and spent time with the Lord. **laid their hands.** This phrase refers to a public acknowledgment and blessing. **sent them.** The church took the initiative and responsibility for sending out the missionaries.

Verses 4–5. they went down . . . they proclaimed the word of God. This was not just one gifted individual, but God’s people working together.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week may now share the chronological steps to salvation found in Romans 10:13–15.

On Your Own

The chronological process begins with the church *sending*. The launch for Paul and his companions going out on their missionary journey was the *sending* of the Antioch church.

In the space below, write answers to these questions.

How can you influence your church to be a missionary-sending congregation?

What is a new way you can be involved in the ministry and outreach of your church now, so you can be more prepared for future callings from the Holy Spirit?

Is your heart open to the possibility that Jesus might lead your church to send *you* out on a missions adventure, either short-term or as a career?

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

God's kingdom grows throughout the world through missions and evangelism. Disciples must understand the base from which global missions and evangelism takes place.

The example of the church in Antioch in Acts 13:1–5 is a good place to start.

- In verse 2 we see that God's call to Paul and Barnabas was *through the church*.
- This call came *while they were worshiping*, showing us that Christians in the church are to be actively involved in the life and ministry of the church.
- Verse 3 shows how the call to missions within the church was both spiritual, *fasting and praying*, and public, *laid hands on them*.
- In verses 4–5 we see that they fulfilled their ministry together as a team:
 - *They went down*.
 - *They sailed*.
 - *They arrived*.
 - *They preached*.

This example of the church in Antioch shows us that missions and evangelism are not done in isolation by individuals but in and through the church, with each member actively playing his part.

Follow up Question

What does the example of the church in Antioch teach about a call to missions and evangelism?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.