

LIFE GROUP STUDY
FROM THE MESSAGE SERIES PRAY THE LORD OF THE HARVEST

Video: Part 1 of Pray the Lord of the Harvest

Week 1 – Seeing What Jesus Sees

Focus: Before we can pray and go, we have to see people the way Jesus does.

- Expose the reality: sin wearies, harasses, and scatters lives.
- Show the heart of Jesus: He is moved with compassion, not disgust.
- Call people to ask: “Does what moves Jesus move me?”

Main Text: Matthew 9:35–38

Supporting Texts: Ezekiel 34:1–6, 11–12; John 10:11

1. The Context of Matthew 9

- Broken Jews, broken Gentiles, corrupt leadership, oppressive empire.
- Jesus is not repelled by darkness; He runs toward it with healing, deliverance, resurrection power.
- Emphasize: the same Jesus, same world, same darkness → same mission.

2. The Condition of the Crowd (Matt. 9:36)

- “Weary” = exhausted, harassed.
- “Scattered” = thrown down with force.
- Tie in the modern experience: mental, emotional exhaustion; relational brokenness; spiritual confusion.
- Repeat the phrase: “Sin wearies, harasses, and scatters lives.”

3. The Failed Shepherds and the Good Shepherd (Ezek. 34 & John 10:11)

- Contrast corrupt shepherds (Ezekiel 34) with the Lord who says, “I Myself will search for my sheep.”
- Jesus in John 10:11: “I am the good shepherd...”
- Make the connection explicit: Matthew 9 is Jesus “being” Ezekiel 34 fulfilled.

4. The Compassion of Jesus

- Compassion is not denial of sin; it is love that runs toward sinners to rescue.
- Use the cross image again: “For the joy set before Him...”
- Key idea: His compassion moved Him all the way to the cross.

5. Application & Response

Personal:

- Ask: “When I see darkness, am I moved more to comment on it or contend for it in prayer?”
- Call people to a new daily prayer: “Lord, form Yourself in me. Help me see people like You see them.”

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Corporate:

- **Challenge:** This week, ask God to open your eyes to “weary and scattered” people around you (home, work, school, store).
- **Very practical:** One person this week, notice, listen, and pray for them (even silently if that’s all they can handle).

Assignment for Week 1:

- Pray each morning: “Jesus, help me see people the way You see them.”
- Write down (or note in your phone) 1–3 people you noticed this week who fit “weary and scattered.”

Week 2 – Praying What Jesus Prays

Once we see what Jesus sees, He invites us to pray what He prays: “Lord of the harvest, send out laborers.”

- Move people from general concern to specific intercession.
- Emphasize Jesus’ invitation to be friends who partner with Him in prayer.
- Build conviction that **one intercessor can shift a family, a city, even a nation.**

Main Text: Matthew 9:37–38

Supporting Texts: John 15:14–15; Genesis 18; Daniel 9; 1 Timothy 2:1–4

1. Review Week 1 Briefly

- Sin scatters; Jesus sees; Jesus is moved.
- Question: “So what does Jesus do with what He sees?” → leads right into Matthew 9:37–38.

2. The Harvest Is Plentiful, But...

- Reframe “harvest” as opportunity, not threat.
- Explain “harvest” in Matthew as an end-times, eternal reality: people Jesus died to receive.
- Emphasize: Jesus is confident about the harvest; He is NOT pessimistic about human hardness.

3. Jesus’ Surprising Instruction

- He doesn’t say: “The harvest is plentiful, so go.”
- First, He says: “The harvest is plentiful... so PRAY.”
- Stress the command: “Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers.”

Key idea:

God has intentionally attached the sending of laborers to the prayers of His people.

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4. Friends of God Who Intercede (John 15:14–15)

- Jesus calls us friends when we care about what He cares about.
- Walk through one or two OT examples:
 - Abraham interceding for Sodom (Gen 18). Result: God pulls out a family and eventually gives Ruth, part of Messiah's line.
 - Daniel interceding for a nation in exile (Dan 9).

“One friend partnering with Jesus in prayer can shift a nation.” (Ps Chris Rue)

Apply it downward: if a nation, then certainly a family, a workplace, a campus.

5. Shaping Our Prayer Life Around the Harvest

- Instead of only “Lord, bless my day,” begin to include: “Lord of the harvest, send laborers into my family.” ...into my workplace / school / neighborhood / city / church.” ...into the nations (name a few we're connected with).”
- Call people to recognize: You might be praying for others to be sent, but Jesus may tap you in answer to your own prayers.

6. Practical Prayer Structure

A simple framework we can use this week:

- Daily “Lord of the Harvest” Prayer (5–10 minutes):
 1. **Look up (worship):** “Jesus, thank You that You're Lord of the harvest and You will have Your reward.”
 2. **Look in (surrender):** “Form Yourself in me. Make me a willing laborer.”
 3. **Look out (intercession):** Pray for your family, your church (kids, youth, groups, weekend services etc.), your city, the nations

7. Application & Response

- Challenge the church: become “friends of God” who take Jesus' one specific prayer request seriously.
- Invite them to commit to: Pray Matthew 9:38 every day this week.
- Choose one sphere (family, workplace, school, neighborhood) and pray specifically for laborers there.

Assignment for Week 2:

- Pray Matthew 9:37–38 daily.
- Pick one person from last week's “weary and scattered” list and pray for God to send a laborer into their life (and be open to it being you).

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Week 3 – Becoming the Laborers, He Sends
Moving from Praying to Going

Focus: When we see what Jesus sees and pray what Jesus prays, He often answers by sending us into the harvest.

- Show that Matthew 10 flows directly from Matthew 9: Jesus answers the prayer by sending the very ones He told to pray.
- Call people to offer themselves: “Here am I, send me.”
- Give very concrete ways they can step into being laborers.

Main Texts: Matthew 9:37–10:1; John 20:21; Revelation 12:11

Supporting Texts: Isaiah 6:8; Romans 10:13–15

1. Review & Connect

- Week 1: Jesus sees and is moved with compassion.
- Week 2: Jesus shares His burden and tells us, “Pray the Lord of the harvest.”
- Question: “What happens next?” → Lead into Matthew 10:1.

2. From Prayer Meeting to Mission Field (Matt. 10:1)

- Show the flow: Matthew 9:38 → Matthew 10:1–2.
- The very disciples He told to pray become the first answer to that prayer.
- Principle: God often answers “Send laborers” by saying, “I’m sending you.”

3. Sent Like Jesus (John 20:21)

- “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”
- Connect back to compassion and the cross:
 - Not sent as social media warriors
 - Sent as lambs in the spirit of the Lamb who was slain.
- Tie in Revelation 12:11:
 - Blood of the Lamb (what Jesus has done)
 - Word of our testimony (what we say and do)
 - Loving not our lives unto death (self-sacrificial, not self-protective).

4. What Does a Laborer Look Like?

(Make it concrete and accessible):

- Not just full-time missionaries or pastors.
- A laborer is anyone who:
 - Carries Jesus’ compassion into dark places.
 - Is available and obedient for simple nudges.
 - Prays, listens, speaks when prompted, serves sacrificially.

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Give 3 simple roles:

1. Praying Laborers – those who labor primarily in hidden intercession.
2. Speaking Laborers – those who share the Gospel, tell their story, invite, encourage.
3. Serving Laborers – those who create environments and relationships where the Gospel can land (children’s ministry, youth, hospitality, helps, outreach etc.)

5. Connecting to the Local Church Harvest

- **Examples:**
 - Kids ministry: not babysitting—stewarding future evangelists, leaders, moms, dads, influencer.
 - Youth / young adults: a critical field ripe for harvest.
 - Life groups: house-to-house shepherding so people aren’t “sheep without a shepherd.”
- **Ask pointed but pastoral questions:**
 - “If every disciple in this house obeyed Matthew 9:38 and then said, ‘Here I am, send me,’ would there be any lack of laborers in children’s classes, youth ministry, hospitality, prayer teams?”
 - Talk about the nations we’re linked to: “Lord, send laborers to Rwanda, Southeast Asia, Israel, Ukraine, and... if You’re asking... send me.”

6. Barriers & Encouragement

- **Briefly address:**
 - Fear / inadequacy:
 - Jesus delights to use weak vessels; the apostles were ordinary men.
 - “Lord, form Yourself in me” is how we grow into the assignment.
 - Busyness / distraction:
 - Reorient: “I get one lifetime to pray and serve in the dark before the age to come.”
 - “I don’t know what to do”:
 - Start with: see, pray, obey simple nudges, and plug in somewhere specific in the church.

7. Application & Call to Commitment

- Personal Surrender:
- Lead them to pray: “Lord of the harvest, here I am. Send me—wherever, however You choose.”
- **Specific Next Steps:**
 - Sign up / talk to leaders about serving in one ministry area (kids, youth, greeting, prayer, groups, outreach, missions, etc.).
 - Identify one person they prayed for over the last two weeks and take one step toward them (a conversation, an invite, an act of service, offering prayer).
 - Encourage testimonies: you’ll be sharing some stories in coming weeks of people who said “send me” and what God did.

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Assignment for Week 3:

- Pray daily: “Lord of the harvest, send laborers—and let me be one of them.”
- Take one concrete action:
- Step into a serving role or intentionally reach out to someone you’ve been praying for.

Video: Part 2 of Pray the Lord of the Harvest

WEEK 4 – The Compassion of Jesus & Our Call to Pray

Focus: Jesus sees the multitudes as weary, harassed, and scattered. His response is deep compassion that moves Him to the cross and compels us to pray urgently for laborers in His harvest.

Key Passages

- Matthew 9:35–38
- John 10:11–15
- Luke 22:31–32

Question

When you look at the brokenness in people around you (locally or globally), what emotion tends to rise up first in you—frustration, apathy, fear, compassion, something else?

Read Matthew 9:35–38 aloud.

Highlight:

- Jesus saw people as “weary” and “scattered” like sheep without a shepherd.
- “Weary” = exhausted, at the point of quitting.
- “Scattered” = thrown down with force. Sin does this to people.
- His compassion wasn’t vague sentimentality; it was tethered to truth:
- Sin steals, kills, and destroys.
- Jesus came to give life, raise people from the ground, and shepherd them.
- Jesus’ first instruction in response to the massive need: “Pray earnestly (beg, plead) the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”
- Luke 22:31–32 shows Jesus Himself praying earnestly for Peter, “I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail”, even though Peter would fall.

Goal for this week:

To let Jesus recalibrate how we see people and move us into earnest, faith-filled prayer for them.

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1. Seeing as Jesus Sees

- In Matthew 9:36, what did Jesus see when He looked at the crowds?
- How is that different from how our culture typically explains human brokenness (e.g., politics, psychology, economics)?
- Where do you personally see “weary” and “scattered” people right now (family, workplace, city, social media, world events)?

2. What Compassion Looks Like

- Jesus’ compassion led Him to “embrace the cross”.
- How does that challenge the way we sometimes define “compassion” (as just feelings or words)?
- What might compassion tethered to truth look like in day-to-day life?

3. Falling vs. Failing

- Read Luke 22:31–32. What’s the difference between Peter “falling” and “failing”?
- The sermon declared: “You may have fallen, but you have not failed.”
- Where does that land for you personally?
- Are there areas where you’ve confused falling with failing and slipped into condemnation?

4. Partnering with Jesus in Prayer

- “Pray earnestly” in Matthew 9:38 means to beg, to plead with a sense of urgency.
- Why do you think Jesus uses such strong language about prayer?
- Daniel’s example of 21 days of prayer (Daniel 10) and how one person’s prayer affected the spiritual realm.
- How does that shape your view of whether your prayers “matter”?

5. Laborers in the Harvest

- When you hear “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few,” what do you instinctively think the solution is (better programs, more pastors, etc.)?
- In the sermon, we heard: One friend partnering with Jesus in prayer could open a nation.

- What would it look like for you to become that “one friend” in your sphere?

Practice for the Week

Daily “Harvest Prayer” (5–10 minutes)

Each day this week:

1. Read Matthew 9:36–38 slowly.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit: “Show me the people you see as weary and scattered today.”
3. Pray earnestly:
 - For compassion to move your own heart.

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- For the Lord of the harvest to send laborers, to your workplace, neighborhood, nation, and the nations.
- If you sense it, offer yourself: “Lord, here I am. Send me where you will.”

Encourage group members to jot down any people/places they feel burdened for.

Closing Prayer (in group)

Take 5 minutes to:

- Thank Jesus for His compassion toward your own “weary and scattered” life.
- Pray together: “Lord of the harvest, send out laborers into Your harvest, here, near, and far.”
- Pray briefly for anyone who feels they’ve “fallen” and needs to hear: “You have not failed—get up in His grace.”

WEEK 5 – Praying & Going in a Controversial Time

Jesus’ call to pray and send isn’t generic. Matthew 9–10 shows a specific end-time context involving Israel, intense opposition, and a final mission field. We are invited to pray for mercy over judgment—for the nations and for Israel—and to let Jesus, not culture, disciple our responses.

Key Passages

- Matthew 9:35–38 (review)
- Matthew 10:5–7, 16–23
- Matthew 24:9–14, 30
- Romans 9:1–5 (optional)
- Luke 9:51–56

Question

When you think about global conflict, especially in the Middle East and around Israel, what reactions have you seen among Christians? What have you noticed in your own heart?

Highlight

Context: Matthew 9:35–38 flows straight into Matthew 10. Jesus is ministering in Israel—synagogues, cities, villages.

- In Matthew 10 He sends the 12 first to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”
- The language in Matthew 10 (delivered up, hated, family betrayal, “until the Son of Man comes”) parallels Matthew 24–25—Jesus’ teaching on the end times.
- So Matthew 10 isn’t just about that immediate trip; it previews the conditions before His return, with Israel as a central mission field.
- “Pray earnestly” and “send out” (ekballo—thrust out, drive out) suggest that:
 - The field will be dangerous and controversial.

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- Many will be reluctant; God will have to “dislodge” and send people into it.
- Calls for genocide or elimination of any people group, Jews or anyone else, are demonic, not biblical. Our posture must be to pray for mercy, salvation, and revival for Israel and all nations.
- Examples: Moses (Exodus 32) and Paul (Romans 9) both carried radical intercession for Israel, even when Israel was in sin or unbelief.

Goal for this week:

To let Jesus disciple how we think about Israel, the nations, and increasing controversy, and to respond with prayer, mercy, and willingness to be sent.

Discussion

1. The Context of “Pray the Lord of the Harvest”

- What did you notice as you compared Matthew 9 and 10?
- How does it change your perspective to realize that “pray the Lord of the harvest” is set in the context of Israel and end-time mission, not just generic outreach?

2. Why Such Strong Sending Language?

- The Greek word for “send out” in Matthew 9:38 is *ekballo* = to throw out, drive out, expel.
- Why might Jesus choose such an intense word when He’s talking about sending laborers?
- Can you think of areas (geographical, cultural, political) where Christians today might say, “I don’t want to go there, get involved there, or pray about that”?

3. Jesus’ Posture Toward Hostile People

- Read Luke 9:51–56 (James and John want to call down fire on the rejecting Samaritans).
- What was the disciples’ instinctive response to rejection and offense?
- How did Jesus correct them? “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of...”
- How does this speak into our current moment of outrage, “cancel culture,” and quick calls for judgment?

4. Israel, the Nations, and God’s Heart

- There’s a unique call on Israel and a call to bless all the nations.
- Anti-Jewish hatred or calls for genocide are unbiblical and from the pit of hell.
- Without debating politics, what do the Scriptures clearly call us to in relation to Israel and the Jewish people (see Romans 9:1–5; Matthew 24:30; Genesis 12:1–3 if helpful)?
- How can we hold together:
 - Grieve over injustice and suffering on all sides
 - Love for all peoples in the region (Jews, Palestinians, Arabs, etc.)
 - Biblical honor for God’s purposes in Israel.

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5. Intercessors Like Moses and Paul

- What strikes you about Moses in Exodus 32 (pleading for a calf-worshiping Israel) and Paul in Romans 9 (willing to be cut off for his people)?
- In his sermon, “Pray the Lord of The Harvest Pt 2”, Pastor Chris said: “If Moses did it and Paul did it, and we refuse to do it, we’ve missed something in the revelation of Jesus.” What might that “something” be?
- What would it look like for the church today to carry that kind of intercession for Israel and for the nations?

6. Letting Jesus Disciple Us (Not Media)

- Pastor Chris: “When you leave this place, reels and posts will try to disciple you into rage and self-righteous judgment.”
- Practically, how can we make sure we’re being disciplined by Jesus and the Scriptures rather than by news, social media, and partisan narratives, especially around controversial issues?

7. Personal Response

Where do you sense the Lord nudging you:

- To repent of hardness, indifference, or self-righteousness?
- To begin praying in a new way—for Israel, for the nations, for your own city?
- To be “ekballo-ed” (dislodged) from comfort into some form of mission, service, or boldness?

Practice for the Week

- Guided Intercession for Israel and the Nations (10–15 minutes, 3x this week)

On three different days this week, set aside a short block to pray through this pattern:

1. Read

- Matthew 9:36–38
- Matthew 24:9–14, 30
- (Optional) Romans 9:1–5

2. Respond

- Thank Jesus for His compassion for you.
- Ask Him to give you His heart for:
 - Israel and the Jewish people.
 - Neighboring peoples (Palestinians, Arabs, etc.).
 - Our own nation and city.

3. Pray Specifically

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- For mercy to triumph over judgment.
- For the gospel to run swiftly through:
 - Israel (north to south, east to west).
 - Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and beyond.
 - Your own community.
 - For laborers to be thrust out (ekballo) into these places, and ask: “Lord, if You want to send me in any way: prayer, giving, going, speaking, here I am.”

Encourage group members to notice any increased burden, insight, or specific direction they sense as they pray.

Closing Prayer (in group)

Take 5–10 minutes to pray together:

- Thank God for His mercy in your own lives.
- Pray:
 - For Israel and the Jewish people to see Jesus, the true Passover Lamb and Cornerstone.
 - For surrounding nations and peoples to encounter the same Jesus.
 - For the church (including your group) to be free from self-righteous “fire-calling” and full of cross-shaped compassion.
 - For God to raise up and “thrust out” laborers—locally and globally—and to start with you if He desires.

You can close with a simple corporate prayer, for example:

“Lord Jesus, we want to be Your friends who pray with You for the harvest. Give us Your compassion for weary, scattered people. Teach us to pray earnestly and to bless, not curse. Use us in Your mission, here, near, and to the ends of the earth, until You come. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.”

WEEK 6 – From Prayer to Participation: Living as Laborers

Jesus doesn’t just ask us to feel compassion or pray earnestly; He calls us to step into the harvest as laborers. That includes our everyday relationships, our city, the nations, and even in a unique way His purposes for Israel.

Key Passages

- Matthew 9:35–38 (review)
- Matthew 10:16–22
- Romans 10:1–4, 13–15
- 1 Peter 2:9–12

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Question

- Over the last few weeks, has anything shifted in how you see people, the nations, or Israel? Any specific moments where you felt a new burden or prompting?

Life Group Recap. We looked at:

- Jesus seeing the crowds as weary, harassed, and scattered
- His deep compassion
- His command to “pray earnestly” for laborers.
- How Matthew 9–10 connects to the end-time mission context, especially involving Israel
- That God will ekballo (“thrust out”) laborers into difficult, controversial fields
- The call to intercede like Moses and Paul, with mercy for Israel and all nations.

This week:

- We focus on our personal participation.
- Not everyone moves to a foreign nation, but every believer is a laborer somewhere: home, workplace, school, city, and in prayer for the nations.

Goal for this week:

- To discern specific, practical ways each person/your group can move from prayer into Spirit-led action as laborers in the harvest.

Discussion Questions

1. What Have You Heard from God?

- Looking back over the past two weeks, what has stayed with you most from the sermon and studies?
- Have you sensed any specific nudges from the Lord—about prayer, about people, about Israel, or about your own life?

2. Realities of the Harvest Field

- Read Matthew 10:16–22.
- What kind of environment does Jesus describe for His messengers (sheep among wolves, being hated, etc.)?
- How do these warnings prepare us for following Jesus in a culture that may increasingly resist or misunderstand biblical faith?
- Where do you feel pressure or fear in living out your faith openly?

3. What Does a “Laborer” Look Like Today?

- Read 1 Peter 2:9–12.
- -According to Peter, what is our identity and purpose as God’s people?

Think practically:

- How might a “laborer” live in the workplace?

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- In their family?
- Online?
- In conversations about hot-button issues (faith, politics, Israel, justice, etc.)?
- We spoke about being disciplined by Jesus vs. being disciplined by social media outrage. What are specific signs that you're being disciplined by the wrong voices?

4. Praying and Going for the Nations & Israel

- Read Romans 10:1–4, 13–15.
- What is Paul's heart for his people, and what does he say is needed for them to be saved?
- Where might you fit into that chain (sending, going, praying, supporting, sharing)?

Think in three circles:

- **Here:** your immediate context (family, coworkers, neighbors)
- **Near:** your city/region and people unlike you but within reach
- **Far:** other nations and specifically Israel and the Jewish people

For each circle, what might "being a laborer" look like for you?

5. Barriers and Breakthroughs

- What are your biggest barriers to living as an active laborer (fear, time, feeling unqualified, apathy, confusion about where to start)?
- How does the truth that Jesus Himself prays for us (like He did for Peter) help you face those barriers?
- Where do you need the Lord to "ekballo" (dislodge) you from comfort or passivity?

6. Designing a Simple Group Response

- Brainstorm together some concrete steps your group can take over the next 1–3 months. For example:
 - Prayer: Set aside one meeting per month to intercede for the nations and Israel.
 - Create a simple list of names (friends, coworkers, neighbors, Jewish people you may know) to pray for regularly.
 - Local Mission: Serve together once a month (local outreach, food pantry, refugee ministry, etc.).
 - Practice intentional hospitality: Invite neighbors or coworkers for a meal.
 - Global / Israel-focused: Adopt a missionary or ministry focused on the Middle East/Israel to pray for and possibly support.
 - Set a reminder (weekly or monthly) to pray specifically for God's purposes in Israel and surrounding nations.

(Have someone capture what you decide so you can revisit it.)

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Practice for the Week

- **Personal “Laborer Plan” (with Accountability)**

This week, each group member creates a simple, realistic plan in three parts:

1. One person “here”

- Choose one person in your immediate sphere (family, friend, coworker, neighbor) to intentionally Pray for by name every day this week, and Look for one opportunity to encourage, serve, or share something of Jesus with them.

2. One act “near”

- Choose one tangible act that blesses someone beyond your normal circle (e.g., visit someone lonely, serve at a local ministry, invite someone different from you for coffee, etc.).

3. One commitment “far”

- Choose one small but concrete way to engage with God’s global heart:
 - 1) Regular prayer time for Israel/the Middle East
 - 2) Giving a small gift to missions (Kingdom Builder Fund)
 - 3) Learning about and praying for believers in a specific nation

Ask everyone to:

- Write theirs down.
- Share briefly with the group (if comfortable).
- Encourage the group to follow up with you and share by email or text even when the group closes. Or schedule a follow-up meeting withing the next few months.

Closing Prayer (in group)

Spend 5–10 minutes praying this way:

1. Thanksgiving

- Thank God for His compassion toward you and for inviting you into His mission.

2. Surrender & Sending

Pray something like:

“Lord of the harvest, we offer ourselves to You. Dislodge us from comfort and fear. Make us laborers in Your harvest field—here, near, and far.”

3. Specific Requests

Pray for:

- The specific people each member named as their “one person here.”
- Boldness and wisdom for each “near” step.

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- Lasting faithfulness for each “far” commitment (especially ongoing prayer for Israel and the nations).

You can close with this kind of corporate prayer:

“Jesus, You are the Lord of the harvest and the Shepherd of weary, scattered people. Thank You for Your compassion for us. Fill us with Your Spirit, teach us to pray earnestly, and send us as Your laborers in this generation, until You return. Amen.”