

# How to Start and Sustain a *Light-House*



## Introduction

More and more believers are forming *Light-Houses of Prayer* and praying for their neighbors. And the results are beginning to show!

Neighborhoods and entire cities are beginning to feel the impact of neighbors' praying. Are you ready to join this movement of God and make your home a *Light-House*?

First of all, you may be asking, "What is a *Light-House*?" **It's a cluster of two or more believers banded together to pray for, care about, and share the blessings of Christ with those who live or work nearby.** The clusters may be individual households, groups of believers on a block, or even networks.

Should you read this small book? You should if . . .

- you're thinking of starting a *Light-House of Prayer* and you're wondering how to do it.
- you've started a *Light-House* and you're wondering how to sustain it over the long haul.
- you've had a *Light-House* for quite a while and you want to help other believers start *Light-Houses* too.

I want to be clear about some matters at the outset. Keep these things in mind as you read the rest of this booklet.

**1. Light-Houses are very adaptable.** They can be made to fit almost any situation. You can tailor your *Light-House* to fit your style—praying with those you invite, praying for as many as you choose, targeting whom you wish, and proceeding at your own pace. There is no step-by-step formula that you must follow. The key to a successful *Light-House* is earnest prayer and availability to God.

**2. *Light-Houses of Prayer* is not a program.** It is a process by which believers are able to impact their neighbors and their communities through ministries of praying, caring, and sharing. It results not in a “been there, done that” attitude but with a “prayer, care, share” lifestyle that emphasizes relationships.

**3. Basic *Light-House* principles that are important to know.** Some *Light-House* strategies work better than others. You may do some things that will help; you may try other things that will hinder. It’s good to know what these are at the outset. We’ll give you some workable strategies, state some basic principles, establish some guidelines, and try to clarify the issues for you. We’ll even suggest a developmental path intended to help you grow a strong and radiant *Light-House*.

**4. Many *Light-Houses* are needed in order to saturate our communities and transform our society.** Mission America, a coalition of 67 denominations and 300 para-church organizations, is calling for the establishment of 3 million *Light-Houses* in America. You can help reach this goal by spreading the word and encouraging friends, neighbors, work associates, and church leaders to start *Light-Houses of Prayer*. You have our permission to reproduce the *Five Blessings* start-up brochure for this purpose.

**5. Houses of Prayer Everywhere (HOPE) has many helpful resources.** We exist in order to provide training, resources, and ongoing support to individuals and churches that are planting *Light-Houses*. Please call us at 1-800-217-5200 for information or to order any of the materials we refer to in this booklet. We’re especially eager to have you register your *Light-House of Prayer* and to begin receiving our *PowerHouse* newsletter. Call us!

## First Five Weeks

### As You Begin the First Five Weeks

- In your first five-week period you will find the *Five Blessings* brochure to be most helpful. A decal to identify your home as a *Light-House* and a *Pocket Prayer Journal* will also facilitate your ministry.
- Tell God that you are committed to being a praying neighbor. The *Five Blessings* brochure suggests the following commitment prayer:

“God, I know that my neighbors matter very much to you and that you have commanded me to make ‘requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving’ for them. So, out of obedience to you and out of love for my neighbors, I commit myself to ask for your blessings for them for five minutes a day, five days a week, for the next five weeks. I’ll do this, with your help, to the best of my ability. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

- Decide whom you will pray for and whom you will pray with.

Persons I will pray for:

Persons I will pray with:

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- Note when your first five-week period will end: \_\_\_\_\_

### During the First Five Weeks

- Start by simply praying five blessings for five neighbors, five minutes a day, five days a week, for five weeks. The *Five Blessings* brochure recommends using the word

“bless” to suggest five important ways to pray for your neighbors:

**B** *Body—health, protection, strength*

**L** *Labor—work, income, security*

**E** *Emotional—joy, peace, hope*

**S** *Social—love, marriage, family, friends*

**S** *Spiritual—salvation, faith, grace*

- Pray for your neighbors as a whole group or pray for them individually if you know some of their specific needs. Begin to assume responsibility for the spiritual well-being of those around you.
- Identify your home or workplace as a *Light-House* by putting up a decal, poster, or flag (all available from HOPE). These send a message that your neighborhood is being prayed for.
- Do some research. Learn the names of adults and children. Find out what is going on in the neighborhood. Is there marital strife? Abuse? Emotional difficulty? Financial trouble? Animosity? Family breakdown? Converse with neighbors regularly to keep in touch with their lives and with the needs on your street.
- Record specific prayer requests and answers in the *Pocket Prayer Journal* (available from HOPE) and/or keep your own personal journal.

*Note:* Remember to order the devotional book *Developing a Prayer-Care-Share Lifestyle*, during this five-week period so that you will have them when you start the next five weeks.

### **At the End of the First Five Weeks**

- Be aware of how your own heart is being affected. Many *Light-House* “pray-ers” have experienced a growing sense of compassion,

hopefulness, guilt, love, burden, gratitude, desire to contact, anticipation, learning, excitement, frustration, joy, sadness, or awareness of others' needs during the first five weeks. What did you experience as you prayed?

- Take note of any changes in your neighborhood or in the lives of the people you prayed for. Prayers report seeing results such as increased friendliness, openness, divine encounters, increased interest in spiritual things, and a change in climate among their neighbors. They also find more opportunities to care.
- Trust that God has heard your prayers and is committed to acting in response to them. The Bible tells us that “the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective” (James 5:16). Our prayers direct God’s power to situations; they have an impact even if we don’t see it. Something happens when we pray that wouldn’t have happened if we had not prayed. Believe that—even if you see no change!

Let your pastor know about your *Light-House*. Share a *Five Blessings* brochure with him.

## Second Five Weeks

### As You Begin the Second Five Weeks

- In this second five-week period you’ll find the devotional book *Developing a Prayer-Care-Share Lifestyle* most helpful. Along with inspiration and ideas for prayer, it also suggests how and when to use doorhangers, contact cards, and how to get prayer requests from neighbors.

- Renew your commitment before God for this five-week period. Note the ending date:
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- Be ready to expand the number of people you are praying for. Seek the Lord's guidance on this.
- Be ready to expand the number of people you are praying with. You may be able to find other Christians on your block or in your building who are ready to join in prayer. Look for other homes in your neighborhood with a *Light-House* decal. The objective is to mobilize an army of prayer warriors.

### **During the Second Five Weeks**

- Continue to pray for your neighbors, using the *Five Blessings* approach. Ask God to help the unsaved become more aware of him and to begin to acknowledge his power.
- Deepen and strengthen your prayer life by using the devotional book *Developing a Prayer-Care-Share Lifestyle*.
- Prayerwalking—a ministry activity suggested at the end of devotional week number two—will help you pray with greater insight. Look for opportunities to tell your neighbors you are praying for them.
- Doorhangers—the ministry activity suggested after devotional week number three—will provide a non-threatening, arm's-length way to connect with neighbors.
- Make a personal contact to ask for prayer requests. The *Contact Card* and *Calling Card*—for the ministry activity suggested after devotional week number four—may help you take this step. Most people recognize the value of prayer and will welcome your offer. Be sure to record their requests.

- Watch for neighbors who need special attention and keep an eye out for practical ways to demonstrate God's love.

### **At the End of the Second Five Weeks**

- Praise God for any progress in deepening and strengthening your prayer life. *Light-House* members find that the BLESS pattern for prayer expands into other areas of their prayer life. Has this been your experience?
- Review what has happened as you prayed. Have there been answers to prayer? If so, record them so you don't forget the details. Share them with others. How about sharing them with your pastor?
- Don't be discouraged if you see few results. One of the devil's strategies is to make you feel ineffective and fruitless. Be encouraged in the assurance that God never forgets a prayer. All that you have prayed for your neighbors or co-workers up till this point is still "on file" in the throne room of God. God has committed himself to act on your prayers.

Consider explaining *Light-Houses* to five other people and encouraging them to start their own *Light-House*. Give them a *Five Blessings* brochure, *Make Your Home a Power House*, or the video *Becoming a Praying Neighbor*. For more help they can check out our website at [www.hopeministries.org](http://www.hopeministries.org).

## **Third Five Weeks**

### **As You Begin the Third Five Weeks**

- In this five-week period you will find part two of the devotional book *Developing a Prayer-Care-Share Lifestyle* especially helpful.

- Make a fresh five-week commitment to pray, this time assuring God that you are ready to let his love flow through you to your neighbors. Jesus regularly modeled God's love by meeting the needs of unbelievers.
- Be ready to initiate new *Light-Houses* at locations such as workplaces, schools, churches, or recreation clubs.

### **During the Third Five Weeks**

- As you pray for neighbors during this period, ask God to make you aware of their needs and concerns. Look for opportunities to show kindness and concern.
- Continue to prayerwalk on a weekly basis. Put out more doorhangers. Make a second contact with those who initially gave prayer requests.
- Review the ministry activity sections of part two in *Developing a Prayer-Care-Share Lifestyle* for ideas on how to show that you care.
- Watch for neighbors who may be ready to respond to the gospel. Ask God to soften their hearts and reveal himself to them.

### **At the End of the Third Five Weeks**

- *Light-House* members often report an increased awareness of their neighbors' lives and a growing concern for their needs. What was your experience? Praise God for progress you have made.
- Review what happened as you tried to reach out. How did people respond?
- Remember that whatever you did will not be lost, for "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of [Christ], you did for [him]" (Matthew 25:40).

Consider introducing the *Light-House* concept to your church. Speak to your pastor about it first. Offer to share your testimony with the congregation. Give out copies of the *Five Blessings* brochure. Offer to show the video *Becoming a Praying Neighbor* to groups in the church. Every believer in your church should be a praying neighbor.

## Fourth Five Weeks

### As You Begin the Fourth Five Weeks

- In this five-week period you'll find part three of the devotional book *Developing a Prayer-Care-Share Lifestyle* most helpful. It explores specific Bible passages that help you talk about your faith and shows you how to share the gospel.
- Renew your commitment to keep praying and caring. In addition, commit yourself to sharing your faith with neighbors as God gives you opportunity. Expect God to work supernaturally.
- Review the four faith-sharing models in part three of *Developing a Prayer-Care-Share Lifestyle* and decide which one fits you best. Prepare to use it when you have the opportunity.

### During the Fourth Five Weeks

- Deepen and strengthen your commitment to evangelism by using the devotional book *Developing a Prayer-Care-Share Lifestyle*
- Be especially alert during this time for opportunities to share your faith. Ask the Holy Spirit to prepare hearts. Try to develop a unique relationship with each person.
- Invite neighbors to events like worship services, crusades, Promise Keepers meetings, and Women's Club luncheons, where they will hear the gospel.

- Plan to give the booklet *How to Talk to God* (available from HOPE) or the *JESUS* video (see information at back of this booklet) to those you have been praying for.
- Send your neighbors a prayer greeting card (available from HOPE).

### **At the End of the Fourth Five Weeks**

- *Light-House* members often find themselves growing more and more concerned for their neighbors' spiritual well-being. They report heightened awareness of their neighbors' spiritual condition, deeper compassion, greater boldness in witness, and diminished fear of witnessing. What was your experience? Thank God if you made progress.
- Review your efforts to share the blessings of Christ. Were neighbors responsive? What could you have done differently?
- Remember that—according to one survey—the average person typically hears the gospel in some form or other at least seven times before becoming a Christian. Even if you have not seen someone come to Christ, you probably contributed to bringing that person closer to accepting Christ.

### **Now What?**

By now it's probably become second nature for you to pray for, care about, and share with your neighbors. If so, congratulations! You've developed a "prayer-care-share" lifestyle—something that is yours to keep. If only all God's people had such a lifestyle!

Continue to ask your neighbors for prayer requests. Faithfully pray for them, search out and meet their needs, and pray for opportunities to tell them about Jesus. Do this not only where you live but also where you work, where you play, or wherever you spend time. Be alert

for daily opportunities to pray for, to care for, and to share Jesus with the people God puts in your life: a hairdresser, barber, mail delivery person, clerk, salesperson, seat partner on a bus or airplane, ticket agent, attendant, service station attendant—anyone!

What has happened as a result of your praying, caring, and sharing? God has been doing things—we can be sure of that! In 1 Timothy 2:1-4 we read God's command to make "requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving . . . for everyone." The result of our prayers? "Peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness," and many people's being saved and coming "to a knowledge of the truth." Our part is to pray; God's part is to answer prayer and to secure the intended results. If you and I do our part, God will surely do his. That is our confidence!

## Other Prayer-Evangelism Ministries

Canning Hunger  
Norman W. Whan  
131 E. Grove Avenue  
Orange, CA 92865  
714-279-6570

Evelyn Christian Ministries  
4265 Brigadoon Drive  
St. Paul, MN 55126  
651-483-2075

Jesus Video  
Campus Crusade for Christ  
24600 Arrowhead Springs Road  
San Bernardino, CA 92414  
1-888-JESUS-36 (1-888-537-8736)

Harvest Evangelism  
6155 Almaden Expressway, #400  
San Jose, CA 95120  
408-927-9216

Love Your Neighbor  
Mary Lance Sisk  
5526 Five Knolks Drive  
Charlotte, NC 28226  
704-541-1023  
Fax: 704-543-8077

Mapping Center  
Chris Cooper  
8615 Rosehill Road, Suite 101  
Lenexa, KS 66215  
1-888-MAP-7997 (1-888-627-7997)

PrayerWalking  
Steve Hawthorne  
PO Box 203131  
Austin, TX 78720  
512-419-7729



Houses of Prayer Everywhere is an effort by life-giving churches to pray for every house in North America. Our mission is to help communities experience the hope found in Jesus Christ.

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