

Prayer lays foundation for sharing the gospel, workshop leader says_12604

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RICHARDSONSharing the gospel begins long before meeting non-Christians, according to Debra Hochgraber, consultant for the Baptist General Convention of Texas Center for Strategic Evangelism.

Prayer lays the groundwork for non-Christians to be receptive to the gospel, she said during a breakout session at the Texas Evangelism and Missions Conference.

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Petitioning God can help Christians know who are the unbelievers around

them, Hochgraber said.

The action also helps eliminate spiritual blindness that prevents non-Christians from seeing or understanding the Christian message, she said.

The gospel can be presented to non-believers, but the efforts will not be received unless they have been empowered to recognize the truth. Prayer prepares a person to hear the word of God, she said.

God begins knocking down satanic strongholds in people's lives and opens them to Jesus' message, she added.

Christians still must share the gospel with unbelievers, Hochgraber said. The message of hope is the light that begins to overtake the spiritual darkness in the lives of non-Christians.

"We've got to be ready to share at any time, because you don't know when the Holy Spirit will be working."

Witnessing can take different forms, Hochgraber noted. In some cases it is a person giving a personal testimony. Other believers prefer to lead non-Christians through tracts or interactive web sites. Others yet prefer to lead people to faith by having spiritual discussions following movies or events.

Another way to share the gospel is asking questions such as, "Do you have any kind of spiritual belief?" and "To you, who is Jesus?"

Approaches such as these emerge naturally as people become friends, Hochgraber said. Friends want to get to know their friends better, including spiritual beliefs. Despite a casual flow, Satan causes Christians to be nervous about witnessing.

But whether or not someone comes to faith is between the non-Christian and God, Hockgraber said. Successful witnessing lies in the act, not the result.

“Success is being obedient,” she said.

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