

## SYNOPSIS: PURSUE THE COMMUNITY

**Compassionately and intentionally reaching people who need Jesus.**

*“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” 1 Peter 3:15*

**Pursuing the Community** means that Bent Tree reaches out to our community both corporately and individually with the desire to point them to Jesus as the source of Life. It is the privilege of every believer to tell others about the Good News – the Gospel of Jesus. As we “revere Christ as Lord” by opening our hands to every area of our lives, the desire to share the “hope that [we] have” naturally overflows from us. We do this in the context of friendship and intentionally seeking opportunities within those friendships for Spirit-led conversations.

### A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR PURSUING THE COMMUNITY

#### **God’s Desire** (*2 Peter 3:9*)

Peter tells us that while we desire God to return, execute justice, and take believers to our heavenly home, God desires for “everyone to come to repentance.” Thus, he waits patiently for those who are lost to find him.

#### **Jesus’s Heart** (*Luke 15*)

Jesus tells three parables – the lost coin, lost sheep, and lost son – to emphasize how God feels about those who are lost. The consistent theme in all three is that God prioritizes lost people experiencing his life and love through Jesus.

#### **The Great Commission** (*Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-47*)

Before ascending into heaven, Jesus made it clear to his followers the urgency and importance of taking the good news of Jesus’s death and resurrection to the world and to make disciples. The good news was always meant to be shared!

#### **Our Identity** (*Matthew 5:13-16; 2 Corinthians 5:20*)

Jesus says that we are “salt” and “light.” Paul tells us that we are “Christ’s ambassadors.” These passages don’t tell us to become these things; they tell us we *are* these things. Now, Jesus shares his life and love through those who believe to a world in desperate need of him.

### **The Gospel's Power** (*Romans 1:16*)

As much as practically improving the lives of others is a worthy endeavor, God's power is displayed through the good news of the gospel to transform lives both now and for eternity.

## **SOME INITIAL SUGGESTIONS**

### **Pray**

Jesus is our source of Life and our starting point. Pursuing our community is what Jesus is leading us to, but not for us to do for him - rather for him to do through us as we continue to learn to live from him. Ask him to show us how he sees those around us.

### **Pray For a Heart For Lost People**

Ask Jesus to put specific people on your heart who don't know Jesus yet and ask him to show you how to share his love for those people. As God brings people to mind, intentionally foster those relationships. Examples where you can cultivate friendships with non-believers are your neighborhood, work, school, the park, sports/hobby clubs, etc.

### **Be Prepared**

1 Peter 3:15 tells us to "be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." We can do this by writing down our own story of how we came to know Jesus. We can also practice a simple way to explain the gospel. Romans 6:23 is the gospel in a nutshell. You can practice sharing the gospel with this verse. For more info: <https://www.navigators.org/resource/one-verse-evangelism/>

### **Relax and Trust Jesus**

The pressure is off! Jesus isn't inviting us to perform for him, but rather to live from him in total dependence and in awareness of his desire that those who are lost are rescued and redeemed. He's inviting us to trust, and as we trust, we get to experience and share his love with those around us. This isn't a project, but it is recognizing that our relationship with Jesus leads us into relationships with others for their good and God's glory.