

## Praying Our Purpose in 2016

In **Luke 11:1**, Jesus's disciples asked, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples" (ESV). Implied in this request is the understanding that proper prayer doesn't happen on accident. Proper prayer takes purpose. This includes three ideas. First, we must purpose to pray. Second, we must pray on purpose. Third, we must pray our purpose. The first two are pretty obvious. The third could use a little explanation.

If you want to take your praying to the next level, pray your purpose. That is, figure out what your goals, mission, vision, and values are, and pray them. While I hope you will do that in your personal life, I'd like us to especially think about our congregation's purpose. Imagine what God could use the Livingston church to accomplish if we were all praying our purpose.

Remember God's purpose for us is to develop disciples (**Matthew 28:18-20**). Further, we recognize a disciple is someone who honors God (**John 15:8**), learns from God (**John 6:45**), loves like God (**John 13:34-35**), and points others to God (**John 20:30-31**) all while abiding in God's Word (**John 8:31**). We need to be praying this. We need to be praying for every step of this in our own personal lives and as a congregation. Please, make this part of your regular praying that God's hand will be with us to develop ourselves and others into these kinds of disciples.

As we strive to accomplish this purpose in 2016, our shepherds have guided us to establish some specific goals. To help guide the congregation to achieve this purpose, we would like to appoint additional shepherds. To serve the congregation as we work to accomplish this purpose, we would like to appoint additional deacons. To help equip us for the work of ministry and for evangelism, we want to seek out an additional full-time evangelist. To accomplish this goal not just in Lutz but as Jesus said, "in all nations," we want to increase our endeavors with the men we are supporting in other places, even sending out others just as Joe Rose was able to recently go to Bulgaria.

It is one thing to simply say we want to do these things. It is another to have the manpower, the resources, the financial ability to accomplish them. Of course, we know all things are possible with God. Therefore, we are walking by faith to pursue these God-glorifying goals. So, our shepherds are asking us to pray this purpose.

Pray the Lord of harvest will lift up and send out laborers among us: shepherds, deacons, and evangelists (**Matthew 9:38**). Pray the Holy Spirit will qualify overseers among us (**Acts 20:28**). Pray there will be men among us who can gain great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus as deacons (**I Timothy 3:13**). As God was able to provide Saul for Barnabas and Antioch (**Acts 11:25-26**), pray God will provide an additional man to work with us as a teacher and preacher. Pray our adversary will not be able to hinder us from accomplishing these goals (**I Peter 5:8**). Pray the brothers we support will be given words to boldly proclaim the gospel (**Ephesians 6:18-20**). Pray our hearts will be stirred and our spirits moved to contribute financially to the Lord's work like our Old Covenant counterparts (**Exodus 35:20-29; 36:5; I Chronicles 29:1-9**). And perhaps more than all, pray you, yourself, will be used as part of the answer to all these prayers for our purpose (cf. **James 2:14-16**).

If we want the Lord's hand to be with us as it was with our Antioch brethren (**Acts 11:21**), we need to ask. We need to pray our purpose. Then watch the Lord work through us.