

All times are not equal. As we walk through our days, there are choice moments when we can make decisions, move closer in relationships and take steps that will shape our futures. The next few days or weeks could be just such a crucial time in the life of someone you know who has yet to become a follower of Christ. Pray that they will have ready minds and open hearts to God. Ask God to bring about such a window of opportunity for them to encounter Christ.

Isaiah 55:6

Seek the LORD while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near.

1. For a God-granted window of opportunity.

Pray that God will open a window of opportunity for a friend to turn toward Him. God knows that there are times when minds are opened and hearts are softened toward Him. In those times God makes Himself easy to find. Ask God for just such a time. Get your prayers rolling by reading the prayers below—or prayers like them—inserting your friend’s name.

- **Thank God for seeking them:** “You’ve been watching _____ carefully throughout all the moments of their life, aware of every inclination in their heart. You’ve always been powerful, good and patient. Although they haven’t yet turned to You, I praise You for Your steadfast love toward them.”
- **Open and prolong a time of encounter:** “Bring a moment of truth for _____. Open a window of opportunity, a time of turning to You. Prolong the time, and show them the urgency of the present hour.”
- **For God’s nearness:** “Disclose Your presence to _____. Make Yourself easy to find. Make them hungry for You and surprise them with how near, good and passionate You are for them.”

Isaiah 55:7

Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

2. For God’s ways and thoughts.

Pray in hope! If your friend is breathing, they can still have a moment of turning to God. When they do turn to God, they will be turning from their own ways and thoughts. Pray for them to turn to God:

- **Turning from their ways:** Ask God to give them freedom from binding habits and blinding patterns. Pray for the forgiving, empowering, merciful God to be revealed in all His eagerness and desire to bring them into a new life. Call them home in your prayers. Speak out this summons to them as a prayer:
“Return to the Lord, _____. He will have compassion on you.”
- **Turning from their thoughts:** Ask God to expose the deceptions which may be keeping them self-reliant or even defiant toward God. Ask God to reveal how trustworthy He is to fulfill His word and to bring about a freedom and a fruitfulness in their life. Declare aloud as a prayer: “Trust in God, _____. He intends great joy and peace in your life. Now is the time to turn toward Him in faith.” (See Isaiah 55, verses 8-13 for more!)

Consider God's timing and our turning.

Read Isaiah 55:6 and then ask the group to discuss their own conversion stories. Was critical timing a part in anyone's story? (Recounting actual stories can help groups avoid diving into complicated theological issues.)

Remind your fellow pray-ers that you want to pray with patient persistence, but as well with urgency. It could be that some of the people known to us are coming to a crucial juncture at which they will either choose to follow Christ, or turn away from Him. Our best prayers often disclose to God our heart that He hurry and act. Encourage people to pray for God to do what only He can: open a window of opportunity, or prolong the ones that are presently open, so that people find God near and easy to meet.

Of course, it's not that God is distant. The reality is that people turn so far from Him that it seems that He can't be found or encountered. We are actually praying that people themselves turn toward God.

Guide your group through two sessions of prayer.

It helps to break larger groups into smaller groups of three or four each. The participant's guide has a few prayers which have a blank space. Instruct those praying to insert the name of someone they are praying for.

Session One. Open the window. Pray for God to come near, open a time, bring a season, or allow more time. However it is expressed, plead with God to be merciful by ordaining a soon-coming time when particular people known to those praying will eagerly seek Christ.

Session Two: Turning to God. According to Isaiah 55:7-9, God has altogether higher and different ways and thoughts. It's helpful to pray for what really needs to change in a person's life. Ask for God to reveal His ways and thoughts. This kind of praying can help give specifics in the following two ways:

- Regarding binding habits or binding life patterns, verse seven states as a hope-imparting reality for those who are praying: God really does help people forsake their ways and follow Him. Why would God say such a thing if it weren't possible? At certain times of their lives, people find themselves suddenly pliable and able to break away from life-long habits of heart. That's exactly what we are praying for in this session.
- Regarding thoughts of independence from God, verse seven states that people can actually find times when their thinking changes. Ask God that they would be able to regard Christ as trustworthy, and that they would allow room for hope that they will experience joy and peace by God saving them (as verses 10-13 of the same chapter declare!).

Pray on.

The remainder of Isaiah 55 is a powerful expression of what salvation is all about. You might want to close by reading and discussing what it could mean in the lives of the people you are praying for. You certainly will find God worth praising concerning His ways and His thoughts toward your friends.

You might lead your comrades in prayer in one additional statement of faith in which names are inserted in Isaiah 55 verse 12:

“ _____ will go out with joy!”

“And _____ will be led forth with peace!”