

D-Cycle 4: Sharing God's Heart for South Asians

The idea of reaching other South Asians with the hope of the gospel might feel like an intimidating cross-cultural act. We may be eager to connect with other South Asian students but need vision for what God might want to do in and through this community.

Hear the Word

DISCUSS

What have been your family's experiences with South Asians of other religious, cultural, or ethnic backgrounds? What positive or negative impressions do you think exist between South Asian communities of differing religious or ethnic backgrounds?

PASSAGE BACKGROUND

This letter from Paul to Timothy, who was supporting the church in Ephesus, was written during the reign of Emperor Nero when Christians were experiencing extreme persecution at the hands of the Romans. Timothy was the leader of the church at Ephesus, which was under the jurisdiction of the Roman Empire.

"Ephesus was not an easy place to minister for it was a center for the worship of the goddess Artemis. Her devotees had rioted against Paul's preaching while he was there. Thus this church was in the public eye, making it all the more important that it be held to high standards. Moreover, because it was operating in a multi-religious centre, it would be very easy for it to be infiltrated by the beliefs of other religions, resulting in its distinctive beliefs being watered down and its standards of conduct compromised."

South Asia Bible Commentary, pg 1682

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-7

Take 5 mins individually to carefully read this passage then discuss the questions below together.

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. 7 And for this purpose I was

appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles.

DISCUSS

1. What are God's desires and Jesus' actions in the text?
2. What significance does that have to how Timothy should live in the midst of rejection and persecution?
3. How might the statement "God wants all people to be saved" (v 4) have been received by Timothy and the church in Ephesus, given the negative associations with being a follower of Jesus?

REFLECT

Take a moment and think about the South Asian students on your campus. Consider the different student cultural and religious groups (e.g. Indian Student Association, Muslim Student Association, South Asian dance teams, etc...). We might feel like Timothy, who is surrounded by people that God wants to reach but who aren't interested in or have negative perceptions of Jesus.

Imagine Paul's exhortation for this South Asian community on your campus: God wants all South Asians to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth....

SHARE

1. What do you notice in yourself?
2. What hopes or desires come to mind?
3. What areas of unbelief emerge?
4. What is God's encouragement or invitation to you?

Respond Actively

Identify a place where South Asian students are gathering this week. Set aside one hour this week to visit this place with a friend. It may be:

- A place where they hangout
- A South Asian studies class
- A South Asian club/org meeting or event (Indian Student Association, Muslim Student Association, Pakistani Student Association, Hindu Student Association)
- A friend's room or apartment

Before you go pray and ask God to expand your heart and increase your compassion for his people.

While you are there, get to know people! Pray for God's heart and God's eyes as you spend time in that space.

- Here is a simple prayer to pray for the South Asians you see: "Thank you God that you see them and love them. Would you help them to come to know you and experience the good news of Jesus for themselves. Show me how you want to use me to love and reach them."
- Have some conversations, just for the purpose of building friendships.

Debrief & Interpret

SHARE

- What was it like to be in this space and interact with these students?
- What did you notice about them, perhaps something you haven't noticed before?
- What did you notice about yourself while you were there?
- What do you sense God saying to you through this experience?

Spend some time praying by name for the students that you met.

Expand the Influence

Follow-up with someone that you met from your visit this week. Invite them to hangout or grab a meal with them. If you visited a student org meeting, consider how you might serve that group with the resources that you have.

Start a regular prayer meeting in your chapter to pray for South Asian students on campus.