

## Chapter 3

### An Open DOOR

#### 1) Pray for an Open DOOR

“And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message,  
so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.”  
Colossians 4:3 NIV

#### 2) Look for an Open DOOR to a new location (neighborhood, community, town, region) or to a new people group for a Discipling OutPost. An Open DOOR is a relational entry point into the lives of others in whom God is at work accomplishing his purpose in the world. It is a measure by which a disciple maker can know where to apply his resources in the multiplicative process of disciple making for the impact of a community or people group and then the world!

“A great door for effective work has opened to me...” 1 Corinthians 16:9 NIV

“Found that the Lord had opened a door for me.” 2 Corinthians 2:12 NIV

“I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.” Revelation 3:8

#### a) What to Look for

- i) **Divine Initiative:** Cornelius had a vision; Jailer had earthquake, Lk 10 indicates a person thrown down (NIV, “send out”...by Lord of harvest) forcefully to join the harvest in answer to prayer
- ii) **Oikos Links:** Cornelius, Jailer, Lydia, and Person of Peace accounts all relate connectiveness to the oikos (household, or enlarged family --- a circle of influence)
- iii) **Open Heart:** Cornelius gathered his whole family to listen to what Peter had to say from God; Lydia was listening because God “opened her heart”; Jailer asked, “what must I do?” and the Luke 10 man of peace (Mt 10 calls him or her the “worthy person” or the “deserving” one) is expected to “welcome and listen” (Mt 10:14) to the words of the messenger
- iv) **Responsibility Accepted:** the instruction to the apostles beginning in Luke 10:1 was set in the context of a worker shortage. They were to pray for more workers and their going was, in fact, to find some who would work. The greeting of “peace” in the Luke 10 passage underscores the issue.
  - (1) A typical greeting (namely shalom, akin to our “how are you,” in which a passerby might ask the acquaintance, how is your uncle, your brother, your wife, your daughter, your son, etc, etc. was an exaggerated show without really caring about any of the people inquired about) along the way was fluff/not sincere/hollow/empty and was offered in the sense of wishing well without providing for it.
  - (2) Jesus said to make little, even avoid, such meaningless distractions enroute to the urgent matter he sent them to do. But, when an apostle encountered a genuine person of “peace/shalom” i.e., wholeness, (i.e., they were offered shalom/wholeness as demonstrated by an invitation into another’s home) that was to be a sit down place.
  - (3) Such a demonstration would imply real hospitality and care of the kind that could be built upon. E.g.,
    - (a) Lydia insisted that Paul come to her house
    - (b) The jailer washed the wounds of Paul and Silas and fed them a meal at his house. In other words, they accepted responsibility and performed the tasks which provide for hospitality and care (wholeness/shalom).

#### b) Where to Look

The DOOR will not always just swing open in a community or a family group. In the text of Matthew 10, the text makes it plain that there not always be an open door found in the places that you look.. Nevertheless, you are to “search” (11, NIV) in “whatever town the village you enter.”

- i) The best place to find a receptive and influential person is within the disciple maker’s *existing oikos relationships*. (Oikos is a Greek word for household) Every disciple maker has a sphere of influence including family, friends, coworkers, acquaintances, and strangers. Within that circle are people that he already knows and spends time around. Naturally existing relationships provide the preferred context for starting another Discipling OutPost. (Oscar Thomson’s Concentric Circles of Concern)
- ii) But if the disciple maker can’t find existing relationships through which to find a receptive and influential person for the start of a Discipling OutPost, he can also consider *catalytic events*. (**Catalytic Events**) A catalytic event is the initiative of the disciple maker to gather a large group of people for a non-threatening, often ministry oriented, sometimes just plain fun event. During such events, the disciple maker moves through the crowd to identify the receptive and influential persons in the larger group. Some will have “ears to hear;” some will not. Those that show interest are asked to consider participation in a small group that will seek to discover what the Bible teaches about following Jesus

Some Examples in Acts

<b>Text</b>	<b>DOOR</b>	<b>Divine Initiative</b>	<b>Oikos Links</b>	<b>Open Heart</b>	<b>Responsibility Accepted</b>
<b>Acts 10</b>	Cornelius	“Vision”	“large crowd had gathered”; “relatives and close friends”	“All here to listen”	“Called his friends and family together;” “Sent messengers to Peter; “
<b>Acts 16</b>	Lydia	“place of prayer”	“members of her household”	“opened her heart”	“invited us to her house”
<b>Acts 16</b>	Philippian Jailer	“Earthquake”	“he and his whole family”	“What must I do to be saved?”	“washed their wounds;” “brought them into his house;” “set a meal before them; “

Parallel ideas and references:

- Matthew 25:35 Blessed ... for I was a stranger and you invited me in
- Hebrews 13:2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.
- Galatians 4:13 It was because of illness that I first preached the gospel to you. Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Himself.
- Luke 2:7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. NIV
- Luke 10:38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. NIV
- Rom 16:23 Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings. NIV
- Romans 1:10 I pray that now at last by God’s will the way may be opened for me to come to you. (NIV: translation is pretty free here)
- Romans 1:13 I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you.
- Acts 16:7-10 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing

and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

- 1 Peter 4:9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. NIV

c) How to Look

Initiate and expand spiritual conversation in multiples of settings and methods. Sow much seed with view to finding a receptive heart that demonstrates the characteristics of an Open DOOR as described above. Below are some startup conversations for both catalytic and oikos setting. To name even the few below is dangerous. It is not intended to create a box into which you or the one with whom you share must be stuffed. Experiment. Find out what works for you at work, among friends, with strangers, at the convenience store, etc. Then sow seed abundantly.

i. Conversation one:

1. What are the biggest problems people face in the area?
2. How do most residents feel about these problems?
3. What do you think would help solve these problems?
4. Would you think there might be any ways in which God could make a difference? How?
5. Would you be personally interested in exploring what God has to say? Explain that a small group of neighbors could be organized to look at what the Bible has to say to these kinds of issues.
6. Would you be interested? If yes, would you be interested in opening your home so that some of your family or neighbors might explore with you?

ii. Conversation two:

1. Do you have a Bible?
2. How often do you read it? Or would you like to have one?
3. Would you like to discover with a small group of neighbors what it says?
4. Would you be willing to have some of your family or neighbors join you in your home to join you?

iii. Conversation three:

1. Share your testimony
2. Are you (actively) following Jesus?
3. Would you be interested in finding out what that means?
4. Can you join with a small neighborhood group to learn about following Jesus?
5. Would you be willing to have the group meet in your home?

iv. Conversation four:

1. I came across an interesting book, e.g., The Epic by John Eldridge (not heavy and very readable)
2. I am curious to see what you think about what it says
3. Can we get together and talk about it?
4. Do know some others that might be interested, too?

3) Enter the Open DOOR

Nurture a good hearted relationship by listening and caring; be credible, available, and reliable

“adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.” Titus 2:10 NAS

“When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you.

Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.' “

Luke 10:5-10 NIV

- 4) Invite and assist the one who is the open DOOR to gather as many as 10 lost of his lost friends and family members friends to an exploratory get together. Note: a fatal mistake is to deemphasize relationship and resort to the familiar patterns of mass publicity (e.g., mailings). Don't do it. It won't

work. The DOOR and the Disciple Maker must personally talk to each person about the Discipling OutPost.

- a) Let the friends get acquainted with the Disciple Maker
  - b) Avoid judgementalism and entrapment
  - c) Enjoy some refreshments
  - d) Remember you are working on the good will and favor of the open DOOR
  - e) Remember names.
  - f) Share briefly with the group a proposal for a few weeks of “discovering together what the Bible says.”
    - i) Describe the gathering in terms of relationship, discovery, and relevance
    - ii) Describe how long it will last and the term (weeks) of the initial Bible study
  - g) Give them an “out” and a “welcome.”
  - h) Set up the meeting time.
- 5) The DOOR becomes a kind of entry point for the participants in the Discipling OutPost by involving additional non-believers in the OutPost, especially by hosting the OutPost in his own home. The DOOR is essentially the sponsor. No longer is the Discipling OutPost the project of an outsider but it is the project of the insider. (Two observations: 1) Fill the group with non believers. This surfaces the importance of an unbelieving but seeking DOOR. He will have lost people in his circle. To build the group with Christians with traditions, especially dis-gruntled Christians, will likely prove ineffective. Go after the lost! 2) Don't do the OutPost at church! Locate the OutPost in a “safe” environment from the perspective of the participants --- comfortable and available. A home is great!
- 6) In addition to providing introductions for group formation, the DOOR will bridge over potential trouble spots, alert the Discipling OutPost leader to indigenous hazards, and provide a receptive atmosphere for the Discipling OutPost to gather.