



What Next, Lord?

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One of the hardest parts of being a disciple who makes disciples is figuring out who exactly we are to be making disciples of. How do we naturally, in ways that don't freak people out or make *us* feel stupid, move into relationships where we are helping people walk in the ways of Jesus so that they will come to know the truth that sets them free?

Let me share a simple process with you that I've come to call, "*What Next, Lord?*" Not too long ago my wife, Tina, and I joined a few other friends who wanted to move beyond their weekly Bible study experience into living more like a family of missionaries.

We started out by having weekly barbecues together. One couple would host one week, and another the next. Back and forth this went, for several weeks. We handed out little homemade flyers inviting people to come for a casual meal to "get to know their neighbors." Over time, as is always the case, we noticed natural relationships starting to develop with some of these new friends that seemed to come every week.

My wife quickly hit it off with a gal who grew up in the same city she did. I was becoming fast friends with a guy who also played guitar and loved riding motorcycles—Harleys to be specific. We found that while we didn't all instantly become super close with everyone who came to our dinners, there were definitely those folks who were leaning into relationship.

One of the women coming also worked in the same field as Sarah, a leader in our missional community, and they hit it off. That's how it went. Each of us seemed to naturally build friendships with one or two others. It seemed that God was giving us specific relational favor with a few.

We began to pray for these relationships, asking God to show us, what next Lord? What do you want us to do next, *specifically* with each of these folks you have brought into our lives? We all felt that the Spirit spoke directly to our hearts the things we were to do next to develop these relationships and love our friends. It wasn't anything profound or crazy; it was stuff like,

"Give Christy a call this week to see how that job interview went that she was nervous about."

Or, "Call Mike and see if he can pick you up from the airport when you return later this week."

We shared what we believed we had heard from God and agreed to pray for one another that week—both for favor and that we would be obedient to our "*What next?*" opportunities.

We got together weekly to share how we had each followed through that previous week, then we would pray again, "What next, Lord?" God did amazing things over the next several weeks. It seemed as if we were being divinely guided into "perfect" conversations and situations with these neighbors. I think we were. Our hope, and what we had asked God to guide us into relationally, was the opportunity to take some of our neighbors through the Story of God (more about that in the next chapter). We ended up inviting seven of these people to join us as we went through the Story for the next ten weeks together. Six of them agreed. The one gal who wasn't ready to do that with us remained close to our circle of friends; it wasn't as if because she said no to joining us, we rejected her. She is still part of our community and we love her. We still hope and pray for her to begin to "lean in" to deeper relationship with us and with Jesus, but for now she is where she is.

We saw God do great things over the next weeks and months, and fell deeply in love with these new friends. God used his Story and our life together in community to help several come to faith in him as they began to walk in his ways together with us. And now we continue to pray for them, and for us,

What next, Lord?