

If At First You Don't Succeed, Pray

Working on campus in the Middle East of England, Kimberley was getting frustrated at the lack of students who wanted to learn more about Jesus. Then one morning, as she was working on her language studies in a cafe, her friend came in. He started talking about how God was opening up lots of opportunities for him to share his faith with specific students in their language class. Kimberley recalls their conversation:

“He said, “You know”, and whilst I was thinking, “No, not really”, he added, “All I do is pray.” That was the moment I realised that’s exactly what I hadn’t been doing. I hadn’t been praying for the things that I desired to see happening.”

“After that I began praying with the faith that God would hear and answer. The next afternoon of evangelism on campus, we prayed together that God would lead us to people who were searching for him, that he’d show us his power and surprise us. As we prayed I felt a strong desire to speak with a girl sitting nearby. We introduced ourselves, and when we mentioned that we were believers her face lit up! She asked if we were part of a congregation and shocked us by asking if could she come with us that coming weekend! As the conversation continued we discovered that she had committed her life to God several years ago, but had not been walking so closely with him for a while. We arranged to meet her two days later to do a Bible study and she’s currently visiting different congregations to find somewhere to settle.

“Another time we were in a café when a lady sat down next to us. We started chatting and God opened up amazing opportunities to talk about him. I was able to share my testimony and Hannah shared some bits from the Bible. Two weeks later, Hannah bumped into her again. She said she had been thinking about us for the whole two weeks since we’d met! Hannah excitedly arranged for us to meet her later that afternoon and we spent an hour beforehand praying.

“It was clear for us to see how God directed our entire conversation as he answered prayer after prayer before our eyes. As the small talk continued, I inwardly asked God, “Please let us move the conversation onto you” and five seconds later it did! Then I asked, “Please open up an opportunity for us to get out the Bible and talk about Jesus ” and then that’s exactly what happened! We were able to read the story of the Prodigal Son with her, in answer to a specific prayer that Hannah had prayed too. We told her just how much God loved her, and how it was never too late to turn back to him.

“Whilst we’ve had many encouragements it still doesn’t make approaching strangers and talking with them any easier! Last week, Kaitlin and I confessed that we really weren’t in the mood for meeting new people. We hung around outside for a while but we seemed to have lost all courage for speaking to people. We gave our feelings to God in prayer and I asked, “Please be gracious to us Lord and bring someone to us.” In my heart, I didn’t believe he would, I thought I was “cheating”. However, a few minutes later a girl came over and randomly started talking with us. We only spoke briefly but she asked if we could exchange numbers and invited us to her house tea! We don’t know where she is spiritually or if she’ll be open to talking about Jesus but God showed me in that moment just what he is capable of. As the Agapé director for the Middle East wisely says, “When we work, we work, but when we pray, God works”. That’s much better.