



# Pray for Them

Greg H. Parsons



Just the other day I had lunch with a good friend from church. “Joe” is one of those guys you really like to be with. He engages into my world, seeks my input into his and challenges me in areas of faith and action. It is refreshing, challenging and encouraging.

When we last met, about a month before, I had mentioned a friend of mine, Carl, who works with Muslims. When Carl meets a Muslim, he often asks them if he can pray for them. He has never had any Muslim refuse prayer. In fact, the vast majority of the time, they say something like, “I would be honored.” Often, they are touched in the process. Joe hadn’t thought of that before.

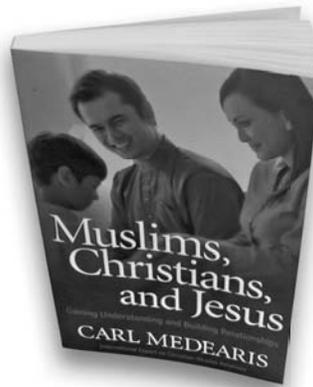
Joe has a coworker we’ll call “Farid.” They work at a large company here in Southern California. Farid is from a country in the Middle East but has been here in the U.S. since he was a teenager. He is from a Muslim background and is now in his 50s. He is very successful by the world’s standards—greatly respected for his work at the office. But, his personal life is a wreck. He was recently divorced and his children won’t talk with him (something that would be almost unimaginable in the Middle East).

As Farid told Joe what was happening in his life, Joe asked if he could pray for him. He was touched and welcomed the suggestion. They plan a follow up meeting in the next few weeks, and I plan to get Joe a NT in Farid’s heart language.

The pressure against those of faith in our society in the West causes us to think we are the underdogs. We feel we are in a minority. In reality, Evangelicals and Charismatics are more than 40% in the U.S. (according to *Operation World*). Yet, we are often afraid to bring up spiritual things.

Perhaps one reason is because we haven’t seen fruit from the way we’ve tried. Carl, whom I mentioned above, was encouraged to write a book that includes a number of stories describing situations where he and others engage with Muslims, most often in the Middle East. He focuses his sharing on Jesus and the Word,

not on a list of things Christians believe or what church he attends. His stories in the book are called things like, “Praying with a Hezbollah Leader” and, “The Saudi Princess” and “An Iraqi Muslim Sheikh and Jesus.” You can read them as well as information about what Muslims really think. (Carl had Muslims verify what he writes about what they believe!) The book is called: *Muslims, Christians, and Jesus* by Carl Medearis (2008, BethanyHouse). You can get it at [www.missionbooks.org](http://www.missionbooks.org).



Of course, prayer isn’t all we need to do. There is no Scripture I can think of that would teach us *only* to pray. We need to serve, love and point to the truth. We also need to proclaim truth. Paul, at times (such as Acts 17:16-34) used the local cultural patterns as a means to share truth. Other times, he draws heavily on the OT Scriptures in his teaching and writings. It depended on his audience.

But throughout Paul’s writing in the NT, he always pointed to Jesus.

Carl’s favorite verse on how believers should act when they share is from what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:2. In the context of coming to the Corinthians without eloquent or superior wisdom, Paul, “...resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

Sounds like the best foundation anyone could have. Yet, often, we try to know all the answers. Or, because we don’t, we are fearful and don’t say anything. As I have suggested before, perhaps we should focus on Jesus and let His words and actions speak. When we combine that with our own love and service, people will see Him more often through us and His power within us. 🌐



Rev. Greg Parsons is General Director of the U.S. Center for World Mission. He and his wife have been on staff at the USCWM since 1982.