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Outreach Concept Sheet Thirty Day Rule

Understanding the Thirty Day Rule:

It has been said, "Vision leaks." This is true. But, of all the vision in the life of the local church, the fastest leaking is the vision for evangelism. Sadly, a church can lose its evangelistic passion in about... thirty days! This means that a church that really wants to keep a healthy focus on reaching out with the love and grace of Jesus will need to do a spiritual infusion of evangelistic passion every single month. A yearly outreach emphasis won't do. An occasional pep talk is not enough. Congregations that want to keep the evangelistic fires burning will discover the need to fuel up every thirty days.

Biblical Foundation:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:10-12)

In this passage the apostle Paul raises our awareness that there is a raging battle taking place in the spiritual realm and it spills over into our lives every day. The forces of hell are marshaled against the Church. The attack of the enemy is directed against every believer who carries the Gospel of Jesus in their hearts and on their lips.

It should not surprise us that the vision for evangelism leaks so quickly. The rulers, authorities and spiritual powers of darkness are constantly shooting arrows, slashing with their swords, and puncturing the vision of the church. Even though most Christians and church leaders declare, with honest confidence, that they believe in evangelism, most churches

do very little to bear this out. The enemy attacks, the vision leaks, and we press on. But, our outreach passion, vision and action are often anemic at best.

Until we recognize the battle and learn to fight back, the enemy will continue to cut holes in our outreach vision and it will leak out faster than we realize.

Extended Description:

Since the forces of hell are thrown against the work of evangelism, we will need to levy an inordinately large percentage of our energies and resources toward outreach. The enemy will never stop. Like waves pounding on the shore, the attacks of our spiritual enemy will be relentless. Day after day, he will resist believers and the church every time we make an effort to press outward with the Gospel.

What is the answer? Despair? Discouragement? Wave the white flag and give up?

Never!

It is time for the church of God to stand up, put on our spiritual armor, pick up our sword, and fight back. We can't do this with an occasional "outreach emphasis" or "mission Sunday," as meaningful as these might be. We must adapt a year-round strategy that will lift up the outreach vision, fortify the church for battle, and mobilize God's people for the spiritual warfare we all face when we take the call of the Great Commission seriously.

Every thirty days, **every ministry of the church** needs to look closely at their plans for outreach. Each ministry leader and team should determine how they will stoke the evangelistic fires and rekindle the vision. Once a month the whole church, and each area of focused ministry, should commit to find a way to re-focus the outreach dream and commit to the work of evangelism in new and creative ways.

This is the Thirty Day Rule. Lift up the vision for outreach. Celebrate what God is doing. Plan the next steps. And, mobilize God's people to head back into the harvest fields with the Good News of Jesus. We must do this with relentless intentionality, every thirty days.

Application Suggestions (Some ways to apply the Thirty Day Rule):

Agendas– Most active ministries in the local church have a team of leaders that meet on a monthly basis. Here is a simple way to give a vision infusion. Put evangelism on every agenda of every church ministry. And, put it on the top of the agenda. Here are some questions you can ask during any ministry team meeting:

- What is your **personal** outreach temperature and what can you do to raise it by one degree? (Remember the One Degree Rule?)
- What is our **ministry** temperature for lost people and what can we do to raise the temperature another degree this month?
- What are we doing well in our ministry that we can vector out into our community? (Remember the two degree rule?)
- What do we have coming up in our ministry that could be a healthy entry point for spiritual seekers? How can we help those who are part of our church and ministry take advantage of this opportunity?

Testimonies and Celebrations– Commit to have a testimony of a life that has been changed by God’s grace at least once a month in a worship service. This can be on video, read by the person, or even read by another person. But, create times when people can hear what God is doing and be filled with a desire to see more people come to faith in Jesus.

Prayer– One of the best ways to infuse fresh vision is prayer...passionate, heartfelt prayer. Take time as a whole congregation, in leadership teams, in homes, and in private and personal moments to cry out for a mighty work of evangelistic power to be unleashed in your community.

Discussion and Reflection Questions (To be used with your ministry team):

- How might we adjust our agenda and meeting focus to make substantial time for discussion of how our ministry can reach out into the community?
- How can we help those who are in our area of ministry learn how to pray regularly for the people in their lives that are spiritually disconnected?
- How can we actively celebrate where there are conversions, where fruit is growing, and where our ministry is being effective in fulfilling God’s call to do the work of evangelism?