



PRAYER AT  
THE HEART

A MOVEMENT OF HOPE

# The Prayer at the Heart Rooftop Encounter Facilitator's Guide



*The* **ROOFTOP**

Joining Jesus in His Mission

# WHAT IS 'THE ROOFTOP'?

The Rooftop Movement began in a Virginia hotel room. Dennis Pethers, the founder and International Pioneer, was praying and listening to a colleague read aloud the story of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10–11.

As the story was being read, Dennis was deeply impressed with what took place during Peter's encounter with God on the rooftop. This encounter was a pivotal moment in the history of the church.

Like Peter, we stand at another pivotal moment in church history. And the question remains: ***"What are we going to do at this moment in our history?"***

## **A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The Rooftop has its scriptural foundation in Acts 10 and 11. It is the story of Peter and Cornelius.

This story has three key aspects:

1. Peter's Rooftop 'Encounter'. As Peter was praying on the rooftop, he had a transformational encounter with God that revolutionized his understanding of the mission that Jesus had called Peter to join Him in.
2. As a result of the rooftop encounter, Peter went to the house of Cornelius to 'Engage' with people outside the walls. Having encountered God and realized that he 'should not call unclean anything that God has called clean', Peter went to the house of a gentile and preached the gospel. He stepped outside of all that he had ever known to join Jesus in His Mission outside the walls.
3. As a result, the Kingdom could 'Expand'. The gospel was set free from the constraints of Judaism and was now able to spread across the whole world—the good news of Jesus is for those beyond the walls.

## **Jesus' Mission is for all the people of the world!**

Peter's encounter on the rooftop was a pivotal moment for the church. Had he not been on the rooftop (praying) where he received a fresh vision from God, he may never have joined Jesus in His mission outside the walls. He needed a fresh vision of God's passion for the lost to take him beyond what he had always known and to face a new reality.

Here was his new reality: He saw, for the first time, that God loves people who do not conform to all of the customs and traditions that he had always been familiar with.

## **For Peter, the rooftop encounter was a pivotal moment resulting in a shift of focus to those outside.**

The church today is at a similar moment. Previous generations have been raised within church contexts and have understood and were familiar with our customs and broadly accepted the truth of the gospel. Now, across generations there are increasing numbers of people who never attend church and know little or nothing about Jesus. It is a pivotal moment and we, like Peter, need to grasp a fresh vision of God's heart for the lost outside the walls.

We are living at a time of unprecedented change. The familiar ways and customs of the church are meaningless to the vast majority of people who are living in a world of global communication and connectivity. To reach those outside the walls today we cannot impose our customs and habits on them. We need to go to them, where they are 'outside of what is familiar'.

The Rooftop Encounter that you are participating in is part of the Prayer at the Heart gatherings that will be taking place throughout 2022. Our prayer is that God will use these Rooftop Encounters to align our hearts with His heart for our state and the cities we live in as we seek Him for revival and spiritual awakening in our lives and across our state.

## **The Rooftop Encounter**

The Rooftop Encounter is a simple yet powerful moment in prayer designed to awaken us to God's heart for the lost and God's heart for us, His people, to return to Him. It is a time of being still before the Lord and listening as we ask Him to give us a fresh vision of His heart for the people we see daily and the city/state in which we live.

It is not a time to intercede, asking God to come and do a great work in our cities/states or bless our cities/states. The reality is God is already at work in our cities/states and He is already blessing in numerous ways.

The reason we are not experiencing revival and spiritual awakening is because our hearts are not aligned with His. For too long, we have been inviting God to join us in our mission instead of asking God how we can join Him in His mission.

Through The Rooftop Encounter, we ask God three pivotal questions:

- 1) What do You see when you look across our communities, cities, and state?
- 2) Where are You at work in our city/state? We can't join Him if we don't know where He is at work.
- 3) What in my life is standing in the way of fully joining You in Your mission to transform lives and the places where we live? In other words, what is keeping me from engaging the lost, making disciples, stepping outside my comfort zone, being salt and light in our culture?

The Rooftop Encounter Personal Journal gives you a guide for leading The Rooftop Encounter. Reading the story of Peter and Cornelius is critical to the Encounter. Do not pass over it or read through the story quickly. Prior to reading the Scripture, we encourage you to give the background to this passage using the Biblical Perspective section in this guide.

If you have a large group (40+), we recommend that you divide people into groups of 6-8 to read the Scripture together.

## **Ways You Can Incorporate The Rooftop Encounter**

There are several ways you can incorporate The Rooftop Encounter as you prepare for your Prayer at the Heart rally. Here are a few suggestions:

- 1) If you are having teams travel across the state on various prayer routes, have a Rooftop Encounter in the city where they are beginning their journey. Let The Rooftop Encounter be the prayer event that launches the beginning of their journey.
- 2) As prayer route teams travels across the state, they could lead a Rooftop Encounter in specific cities on the way.
- 3) Have Rooftop Encounters in the compass point cities of your state. Identify the 4 to 8 cities that are the compass point cities (North, South, East, West, NE, SE, NW, and SW) and have a pastor or prayer leader in each city lead a Rooftop Encounter prior to your Prayer at the Heart event.
- 4) Have a Rooftop Encounter the evening before the Prayer at the Heart event either on the property or in the city where the Prayer at the Heart rally is taking place.
- 5) Have The Rooftop Encounter take place the day of as part of your Prayer at the Heart Rally.
- 6) Have Rooftop Encounters throughout your state following the Prayer at the Heart event to continue having people pray together for revival and spiritual awakening.
- 7) The Rooftop Encounter is a great way to bring pastors together across a city or state to pray together for God to give them a fresh vision of His heart for the lost and give them a fresh fire for engaging the lost as they make disciples. One of our prayers at The Rooftop is to see the church unite behind the mission of Jesus. The Rooftop Encounter is a catalyst for seeing that become a reality.

These are only a few ways you can incorporate The Rooftop Encounter as part of your Prayer at the Heart strategy. Our desire is that every Rooftop Encounter is a moment that leads to a movement of evangelism and disciple-making in a church or city. On our website, [therooftop.org](http://therooftop.org), you will discover our Joining Jesus resources which helps Christians further align their hearts with God's heart for engaging a lost world and making disciples who make disciples.

**If you have any questions, please contact John Whaley, the Lead Pioneer for The Rooftop North America. Email: [johnwhaley@therooftop.org](mailto:johnwhaley@therooftop.org) Phone: 828.638.5655**

# **The Prayer at the Heart Rooftop Encounter Personal Journal**

## **A FRESH VISION OF GOD'S HEART**

As we prepare for the Prayer at the Heart event in your state, we want to begin asking God to give us a fresh vision of His heart for the lost, the cities in which we live, our state, and our own hearts. We want to align our hearts with His heart as we prepare to meet with Him.

Therefore, we want to allow time and space for listening both to God and to one another during this Encounter. We have discovered that periods of silence may be a very good thing as you open your heart and mind to God's presence among you and seek His heart.

### **THE ENCOUNTER**

Begin your time on the 'rooftop' by asking God to meet with and guide you. To awaken you to His heart for the lost (Acts 10:28). To awaken you to your heart attitudes that may be standing in the way of His plans and purposes. (Acts 11:17).

Read the story of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10:1 – 11:18 to gain a fresh perspective on what God did in Peter's and Cornelius' life as a result of Peter's rooftop encounter in Joppa.

Having read the Scripture, take some time to quietly look across your city/community. Ask God to help you see what He sees. Take time to listen. As He speaks to you, **write down what He is impressing on you in the 'WHILE YOU ARE ON THE ROOFTOP' space.**

**Through The Rooftop Encounter, we ask God three pivotal questions:**

What do You see when You look across our communities, cities, and state?

Where are You at work in our city/state?

What in my life is standing in the way of fully joining You in Your mission to transform lives and the places where we live? In other words, what is keeping me from engaging the lost, making disciples, stepping outside my comfort zone, being salt and light in our culture?

**After everyone has had 15-20 minutes to listen and reflect on what God has impressed on them, bring everyone together to share what God revealed to them.**

## WHILE YOU ARE ON THE ROOFTOP

Use the space below to write down some things that you feel God has impressed upon you as you have been on the 'rooftop'.

## AFTER YOU HAVE LEFT THE ROOFTOP

As you have spent time seeking a fresh vision of God's heart for the lost, He may have spoken to you in a very personal and specific way or He may have deepened your passion for lost people. It often takes a little time for us to 'hear' what God has been saying to us.

In the days ahead, write down anything that you may feel God has impressed upon you as a result of having been on the 'rooftop'.

