

WHERE WOULD JESUS BE?

by

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## INTRODUCTION

The life of Jesus has been a subject covered by a vast amount of scholarship. Yet, in all the studies and coverage of His life, the study of “Where was Jesus?” has not been studied in detail, nor its implications pursued for the modern day church leader. If a pastor wished to research the miracles of Jesus he or she could easily find such a list and study it effectively. The same is true if they wanted to study the teachings of Jesus, there have been a vast amount of books written to aid their research. However, if they wanted to find a study on the whereabouts of Jesus in regards to His specific ministerial locations there are not many resources available, if any.<sup>1</sup>

Now granted there are studies that note and make mention to where Jesus was in regards to general vicinities- i.e., “cities, towns, and villages.” For example, there are maps of Jesus’ three-year ministry journey that show His travels to and from different cities. Also, most reputable commentaries take time out in each phase of Jesus’ life to insure the reader understands where He was in relationship to known cities and towns, along with noting His general whereabouts- i.e., “someone’s house, in a synagogue, etc.” However, in these commentaries and maps, no one has really taken the time to survey the kind of places Jesus was and label them for further detail and comparison.

The detailed study of Jesus’ whereabouts certainly have the potential to offer many great insights to the Body of Christ, especially for those in the ministry. As the popular

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<sup>1</sup> Though the author does not possess an absolute knowledge of all the books written about Jesus in the past or present, a thorough online research revealed that what is studied in this paper either is non-existent or not easily found and thus still remains unknown to the vast amount of Christians, especially pastors.

phrase, “WWJD?” inspired many people to think and act like Jesus, the same could be done with, “WWJB?” (“Where Would Jesus Be?”). Likewise, there are many valid reasons and applications one can gather from studying Jesus’ specific whereabouts, here are the top three covered in this paper; *Reason One*: To discover trends in Jesus’ ministerial locations. *Application*: So that pastors could serve the modern church by setting forth a pattern for contemporary ministry locations.

*Reason Two*: To better understand the Father’s heart for people by studying His leading in Jesus’ earthly ministry to visit specific places. *Application*: Pastors then can be better tuned in to hear the Father’s voice leading them to do effective ministry today in specific places. *Reason Three*: To examine Jesus’ spiritual and emotional health in regards to where He did His ministry. *Application*: Pastors can follow Jesus’ example by going and ministering like He did and thus have significant emotional and spiritual benefits.

In summary, it is for these three reasons that this study should be done, (1) Finding and following Jesus’ pattern, (2) Understanding the Father’s heart and hearing His voice better, and (3) Ministers, along with all Christians, living whole and healthy lives.

### THE THREE LOCATIONS SPECIFIED & DEFINED

The three locations that were specified for the research were as follows: (1) *Religious Locations*: Jewish synagogues and the temple in Jerusalem, (2) *Private Locations*: Houses or rented rooms, and (3) *Public Locations*: Mountainsides, seashores, and market places. The author was tempted to simply make the study with only two categories, (1) religious and (2) everywhere else. The category of “everywhere else” would provide an easy contrast between Jesus ministering in a religious system or where the “lost” were. This kind of contrast would

serve well to clearly show how much time Jesus spent outside of what we would call the, “church building.” However, for the desire to offer more relevant applications and insight the three categories were chosen.

Consequently, often times when Jesus was not in a “religious location” he was still with His disciples. Therefore, when Jesus was in public places He was not necessarily ministering to the “lost.” Also, it is good to note that since some of Jesus’ most intense persecution was either in the temple or local Jewish synagogues, it can be safely assumed this is why He wasn’t there more often. In the takeaway section of this paper the differences between Jesus’ experiences in the religious setting and the modern Western church, which is primarily a safe place for pastors to preach and teach, will be contrasted.

#### SETTING UP THE RESEARCH & PARAMETERS OF JESUS’ LIFE

Before setting up the research, it is good to know one’s personal stance in regards to the doctrines of Scripture. It is the educated and well-founded belief of the author that the Bible is inerrant (free from all error in its teachings), infallible (trustworthy), and preserved (accurately handed down in the original languages). Therefore, in setting up the research the author simply followed the general consensus among modern biblical scholars for the harmony of Jesus’ life found chronologically in all four gospels. The scholarly work of Thomas and Gundry in their book, *A Harmony of the Gospels*, served well as a detailed outline of Jesus’ life. Also, Baker Publishing Group made easy work of Jesus’ life in their book, *The Life of Jesus: A Chronological Account from God’s Word*. Thus, the research data was based on the outlines shared in these books.

Concerning the actual parameters of Jesus' ministry, the study started with Jesus calling His first disciples and ended at His arrest. This is also the major consensus of what is known as, "Jesus' Three Year Earthly Ministry." As a result, the study was concerned with answering the question, "Where Would Jesus Be?" by looking at Jesus' ministry and answering the historical question, "Where Was Jesus?"

### LIMITATIONS & OBSTACLES

As with any historical study there are inevitably limitations and obstacles, the same is true with this study. Here are just a few of the limitations and obstacles the author encountered; (1) Since the authors of the gospels were not trying to write a modern novel or reality TV show script, basically one third (34%) of Jesus' overall locations are not specifically mentioned. Therefore, the study could only interact with the times in which the gospel writers actually named Jesus' specific locations, which was roughly 66% of their accounts. More will be said of the "unknown locations" further on.

(2) Though the art and science of putting Jesus' life in chronological order is something that goes all the way back to the early church with Tatian's *Diatessaron* written in A.D. 170, the author believes that was not the intent of the Holy Spirit in inspiration. In other words, if it were the intent of the Holy Spirit to harmonize the life of Jesus with all the four gospels He would have led the authors to write in a identical linear timeline. When in reality only the Gospel of John follows the linear timeline of the Jesus' chronological events. Yet, John's gospel has more differences with the synoptics (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) than it has in common with them- in both the sayings of Jesus and its chronology (*A Harmony of the*

*Gospels* 1978, 296). As a result, this study could have simply went through each gospel individually and then added up the percentages to find their overall average.

This option was considered and put aside for this study mainly because non-Christian scholars like Bart Ehrman try to make use of the supposed chronological errors via contradictions in the accounts. Hence, the author thought it would be good for the reader to put confidence in all the inspired accounts of Jesus' life, whether they were originally meant to be harmonized or not.<sup>2</sup>

(3) Some of the accounts such as those found in the, "Sermon on the Mount," in Matthew 5-7 may have been compilations that happened in different places, but were joined together to form one passage or set of teachings. At the same time, it seems that even if they were compilations that doesn't mean they weren't done in the same place or at one time. For example, Jesus is recorded as speaking roughly 39,197 words in all four gospels; however, the average man speaks about 7,000 a day (not to mention how many more a teacher would speak). Thus, we only have about 5-6 days worth, if even that, of Jesus' Words.<sup>3</sup>

As a result, if Jesus was speaking an average of 7,000 words a day for three years he might have spoke 7,665,000 words (7,000 words x 1,095 days). If every word of Jesus was written down, the book (i.e., "gospel") would be the size of over nine complete Bibles combined! (Note: There are 807,361 words in the entire 66 books of the Bible.)

No wonder John said at the end of his gospel, "Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have

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<sup>2</sup> These kind of attacks by Ehrman can be read all throughout his famous book, *Misquoting Jesus*, especially in his introduction.

<sup>3</sup> The website that counted Jesus' words in the gospels via the King James Version can be found at, <http://scourby.com/chronicles-of-jesus.php>. And the website that gives the average for men's words a day can be found at, <http://www.wusa9.com/news/article/244668/158/Women-Say-Nearly-Three-Times-as-Many-Words-Per-Day>, both were accessed on September 9, 2015.

room for the books that would be written” (John 22:25 NIV). Therefore, to overcome this obstacle the author simply made the best work of the chronological outline and tried to place Jesus in the same location for as much of His teachings that were noted to happen at that time.

## RESEARCH

Below is the study in summarized form so that it will fit neatly into the format of this paper. For the more detailed study see, Appendix A. As the reader looks at the various accounts of Jesus’ life it is good to take note of the following: (1) How many unknown locations are discovered. (2) How often Jesus is in the public sector. (3) How there are some instances in which different events happen in the same place and thus are noted with “”. This happened especially at the end of Jesus’ ministry when He was teaching more regularly. (4) Lastly, notice how little of time is spent in religious settings, but the times Jesus is there the event and or teaching was of the utmost importance, i.e., “The Feast Days.”

	Passage(s)	Religious	Private	Public	Unknown
1	John 1:35-39			1	
2	John 1:39-42		1		
3	John 1:43-51				1
4	John 2:1-10		2		
5	John 2:11			2	
6	John 2:12				2
7	John 2:13-22	1			
8	John 2:23-24				3
9	John 3:1-21				4
10	John 3:22-36			3	
11	John 4:1-42			4	
12	Matthew 4:12-17				5
13	Matt. 8:5-13, Luke 7:1-10, John 4:43-54			5	
14	Matt. 13:54-58, Mark 6:1-6, & Luke 4:14-30	2			
15	Mark 1:14-15				6



16	Matt. 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20, & Luke 5:1-11			6	
17	Mark 1:21-28 & Luke 4:31-37	3			
18	Matt. 4:14-18, Mark 1:29-34, & Luke 4:38-41		3		
19	Matt. 4:23-25, Mark 1:35-39, & Luke 4:42-44	4			
20	Matt. 8:1-4, Mark 1:40-44, & Luke 5:12-16			7	
21	Matt. 9:1-8, Mark 2:1-12, & Luke 5:17-26		4		
22	Matt. 9:9, Mark 2:14, & Luke 5:27-28			8	
23	Matt. 9:10-13, Mark 2:15-17, & Luke 5:29-32		5		
24	Matt. 9:14-17, Mark 2:18-22, & Luke 5:33-39				7
25	John 5:1-14			9	
26	John 5:15	5			
27	John 5:16-47				8
28	Matt. 12:1-8, Mark 2:23-28, & Luke 6:1-5			10	
29	Matt. 12:9-14, Mark 3:1-6, & Luke 6:6-11	6			
30	Mark 3:7-12 & Luke 6:17-19			11	
31	Matt. 10:1-4, Mark 3:13-19, & Luke 6:13-16			12	
32	Matt. 5:7, Mark 4:21-23, & Luke 6:20-49,11:1-33,12:22-34			13	
33	Matt. 8:5-13 & Luke 7:1-10			14	
34	Luke 7:11-17			15	
35	Matthew 11:2-19 & Luke 7:18-35				9
36	Matthew 11:20-24				10
37	Matt. 11:25-30 & Luke 10:21-22				11
38	Luke 7:36-50		6		
39	Luke 8:1-3				12
40	Matt. 12:22-50, Mark 3:20-35, & Luke 11:14-32,8:19-21		7		
41	Matt. 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, & Luke 8:4-15			16	
42	Mark 4:21-25				13
43	Mark 4:26-29				14
44	Matt. 13:24-35, Mark 4:30-34, & Luke 13:18-21			17	
45	Matt. 13:36-53		8		
46	Matt. 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, & Luke 8:22-25			18	
47	Matt. 8:28-34, Mark 5:1-20, & Luke 8:26-39			19	
48	Matt. 9:18, Mark 5:21-23, & Luke 8:40-41			20	
49	Matt. 9:20-22, Mark 5:24-34, & Luke 8:43-48			21	
50	Matt. 9:23-26, Mark 5:35-43, & Luke 8:49-56		9		
51	Matthew 9:27			22	
52	Matthew 9:28-31		10		
53	Matthew 9:32-34			23	
54	Matthew 9:35-38	7			
55	Matt. 13:54-58, Mark 6:1-5, & Luke 4:14-30	8			
56	Mark 6:6				15

57	Matt. 10:5-11:1, Mark 6:7-13, & Luke 9:1-6				16
58	Matt. 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, & Luke 9:10-17			24	
59	Matt. 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52, & John 6:16-21			25	
60	Matt. 14:34-36 & Mark 6:53-56			26	
61	John 6:22-71				17
62	Matt. 15:1-20 & Mark 7:1-23				18
63	Matt. 15:21-28 & Mark 7:24-30		11		
64	Matthew 15:29-31			27	
65	Matt. 15:32-39 & Mark 8:1-10			28	
66	Matt. 16:1-4 & Mark 8:11-13				19
67	Matt. 16:5-12 & Mark 13b-21			29	
68	Mark 8:22-26			30	
69	Matt. 16:13-20, Mark 8:27-30, & Luke 9:18-21				20
70	Matt. 16:21-28, Mark 8:31-9:1, & Luke 9:23-27				21
71	Matt. 17:1-13, Mark 9:2-13, & Luke 9:28-36			31	
72	Matt. 17:14-20, Mark 9:14-29, & Luke 9:37-43			32	
73	Matt. 17:22-23, Mark 9:30-32, & Luke 9:43-45				22
74	Matthew 17:24-27				23
75	Matt. 18:1-5, Mark 9:33-41, & Luke 9:46-50		12		
76	Matthew 18:15-20				24
77	Matthew 18:21-35				25
78	John 7:1-10				26
79	Luke 9:51-56				27
80	Matt. 8:19-22 & Luke 9:57-62			33	
81	John 7:11-53	9			
82	John 8:1-11	10			
83	John 8:12-59				28
84	Luke 10:1-24				29
85	Luke 10:25-37				30
86	Luke 10:38-42		13		
87	Matt. 7:7-11 & Luke 11:5-13				31
88	Luke 11:33-36				32
89	Luke 11:37-54		14		
90	Luke 12:1-13:9			34	
91	Luke 13:10-17	11			
92	John 9:1-41			35	
93	John 10:1-21				33
94	John 10:22-42	12			
95	Luke 13:22-35				34
96	Luke 14:1-24		15		
97	Luke 14:25-35			36	

98	Matt. 18:12-14 & Luke 15:1-32				35
""	Luke 16:1-18				""
""	Luke 16:19-31				""
""	Luke 17:1-10				""
99	John 11:1-4			37	
100	Luke 17:11-19			38	
101	Luke 17:20-37				36
102	Luke 18:1-14				37
103	Matt. 19:1-12 & Mark 10:1-12				38
104	Matt. 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16, & Luke 18:15-17				39
105	Matt. 19:16-30, Mark 10:17-31, & Luke 18:18-30			39	
106	Matthew 20:1-16				40
107	Matt. 20:17-19, Mark 10:32-34, & Luke 18:31-34			40	
""	Matt. 20:20-28 & Mark 10:35-45			""	
108	Matt. 20:29-34, Mark 10:46-52, & Luke 18:35-43			41	
109	Luke 19:1-3			42	
110	Luke 19:4-10		16		
111	Luke 19:11-27			43	
112	Matt. 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, & John 12:1-11		17		
113	Matt. 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:29-44, & John 12:12-19			44	
114	Matt. 21:12-17, Mark 11:15-19, & Luke 19:45-48	13			
115	John 12:20-50				41
116	Matt. 21:18-22 & Mark 11:12-14,20-25			45	
117	Matt. 21:23-46, Mark 11:27-12:12, & Luke 20:1-19	14			
118	Matthew 22:1-14	15			
119	Matt. 22:15-46, Mark 12:13-37, & Luke 20:20-44	16			
""	Matt. 22:34-40 & Mark 12:28-34	""			
""	Matt. 23:1-39, Mark 12:37-40, & Luke 20:45-47	""			
""	Mark 12:41-44 & Luke 21:1-4	""			
120	Matt. 24:1-25:46, Mark 13:1-31, & Luke 21:5-33			46	
"	Matt. 26:1-5, Mark 14:1-2, & Luke 22:1-6			""	
121	Matt. 26:17-20,26-30, Mark 14:12-17,22-26, & Luke 22:7-20		18		
""	John 13:1-20		""		
""	Matt. 26:21-25, Mark 14:18-21, Luke 22:21-23, & John 13:21-32		""		
""	Matt. 26:31-35, Mark 14:27-31, Luke 22:31-34, & John 13:33-38		""		
122	John 14:1-17:26				42
123	Matt. 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, & Luke 22:39-46			47	

TOTAL FROM 81 KNOWN EVENTS	16/20%	18/22%	47/58%	42/34% <sup>4</sup>
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### THREE KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE RESEARCH

There are three key things to gain from the study of, “Where Would Jesus Be?” First, as one can clearly see from the total 81 known locations of Jesus’ ministry He spent over half of His time (58%) in the public with the people. This boldly shows that Jesus was led by the Father to “seek and save that which was lost,” Luke 19:10. Jesus did not wait for people to come to Him to be found, He went out looking for them. Popular stories such as the “Woman at the Well,” “The Lame Man at the Pool of Bethesda,” and “Blind Bartimaeus” all come together to show the “modus operandi” (Latin, “mode of operation”) of the Master.

Jesus was not “waiting” for divine appointments; He was a man on the move “expecting” divine appointments. Certainly, this movement was not guesswork or brought about by “customer market research,” but rather it was the very heart of God the Father. Jesus said in John 5:19, “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.” One can only imagine how the voice of the might Father have spoken to the Son daily in His prayer times, “Get ready Son, today I am sending you to the highways and bi-ways. You will go to the forgotten, the lonely, the outcast, the oppressed, and the sick. I am sending you to claim the inheritance I have predestined for you!”

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<sup>4</sup> The 34% represents the percentage of events that are “unknown” in regards to the total 123 events. Interestingly, the author assumes that most likely these events were either in public or private settings, thus they probably wouldn’t change the overall percentages found in the 81 known events. This assumption is made because when Jesus is in religious settings the location is mostly named due to feast days or strong Jewish opposition. As a result, there seems to be no need for the gospel writers to continually name the specific locations when Jesus is in either a house or public place because that was His normal setting for preaching.

Second, one should be able to see that the next most popular place (22%) for Jesus to be was in people's private homes and rented rooms. Interestingly, it would seem that the only time Jesus was not in a house, but was in a rented/borrowed room, was in fact at the Last Supper. Even the wedding He attended in John 2:1-10 was most likely at a large house.

As a result, the stories of, "Matthew and Zacchaeus," "Mary and Martha," and "Peter's Mother-in-law" all begin to show a pattern as well. Mainly, that the people who Jesus met in public places soon invited Him into their homes for fellowship and Jesus loved to oblige. As a matter of fact, this was the very reputation Jesus had which caused Him to say in Luke 7:34, "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'" Also, for this reason Jesus' Jewish opponents asked His disciples in Matthew 9:11, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" To which Jesus courageously replied, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matthew 9:12-13).

Lastly, what can be gained from this study is that Jesus spent one fifth (20%) of his time in religious settings (local synagogues and the temple in Jerusalem). This showed that Jesus was not only concerned about those outside of the Jewish religious community, but also those inside it, especially the religious leaders. Though many times they rejected Him and expelled Him from their midst, Jesus was willing to gather them to Himself. Despite being rejected by His own people Jesus said in Matthew 23:37, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing."

Therefore, it wasn't the Father's intent to reject the vast majority of the Jewish leadership, but rather it was their own choice to harden their hearts and reject His Son. Despite what Calvinist have tried to say Jesus meant in John 6:44 in regards to the Father only drawing a limited amount of people to Jesus and rejecting the rest. Jesus compassionately said in John 5:39-40, "39 You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life." Likewise, it was the Jewish leaders rejection of God's Word that led to the hardening of their heart and God's judgment. Thankfully, not all rejected Jesus; some like Nicodemus (John 3:1) and Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50) humbly opened their heart to hear God's Word spoken by Him.

#### INSIGHTS FROM THE UNKNOWN LOCATIONS

Though it is impossible to really know where Jesus was at 42 different times, the best educated guess would be to either place Him in the public or private locations already mentioned in the study. It is the opinion of the author that if these events happened in religious locations the details would have be shared for the following reasons; first, when Jesus was at the temple in Jerusalem it is noted that He caused a great uproar and commotion (John 2:13-25 & Matthew 21:23). It would seem strange that either the gospel authors would leave out these reactions brought about by Jesus' teachings and or that the Jewish leaders momentarily stopped harassing Him. Second, if Jesus was in the local synagogues there would also seem to be various questions and opposing reactions to either His healings and/or teachings (Mark 3:1-6 & Luke 4:28).

When considering the two above points which can be summed up as, “Almost every time Jesus came around the Jewish leader’s home turf, trouble was stirred up and written about,” it is then safe to assume that the majority of “unknown places” were not in religious locations. Therefore, if the 42 locations are added to the combined total of both the public and private locations the results would be as follows: (1) 123 total events, (2) 107 events in the combined public/private locations, basically “anywhere but in the religious setting,” and (3) thus, 87% of the time Jesus is not in a religious place and only 13% of the time was Jesus in the temple or Jewish synagogues.

Once again, it is beyond our grasp to know for sure where Jesus was during those 42 unknown events, but either way the knowledge gained from the 81 known events (which is a combined 80% non-religious and 20% religious locations) gives the reader a great sense of Jesus whereabouts for the sake of application. Furthermore, if the author is correct about the “best guess” for these unknown locations the previously mentioned insights are all the more valid, not less.

### THREE APPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The research into Jesus’ whereabouts certainly gives much to consider when it comes to the life of the Christian, especially in regards to ministerial leadership. The following are the top three applications for pastors and those in church leadership; (1) Public street evangelism and outreaches need to become a normal part of the pastor’s schedule. (2) Home visitations, fellowship meals, and home Bible studies must be prioritized. (3) The time spent in the church building needs to be strategic and minimal to encourage the disciples to be effective in both the public and private places of ministry.

*(I) Street Witnessing & Outreaches:* According to Thom Rainer in, *The Unchurched Next Door*, the amount of Christians who actually invite their unchurched friends to church in a year is about 2%. However, according to the Barna Group they estimate 52% of Christians share their faith with non-Christians a minimum of once a year.<sup>5</sup> There has also been a stat floating around the Internet from “Street Level Evangelism, Where is the Space for the Local Evangelist,” by Michael Parrott, that states 95% of Christians have never won a soul to Christ.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, whether these stats are true, false, or somewhat true is unimportant to this paper. The bottom line is, the church needs to be consistently on the streets and witness to strangers and do outreaches in public locations.

The kind of public ministry Jesus did was simple. He would walk around the places where the people were, like at the watering wells or where they laid the sick, and He would offer them His message and divine power. There were no gimmicks or grand promotions; Jesus relied upon His message and the Holy Spirit’s power to draw people.

*Applications:* Here are some things the modern church can do to imitate Jesus in His method of public evangelism: (i) Regularly send out people to witness and share the gospel of Jesus Christ two by two, just like Jesus did in Mark 6:7. During this time they should also pray for the sick, cast out demons, and offer assistance to those who are poor.

In regards to helping the poor, the local church could gather together a list of Christian charities in their community that meet the various needs of the unprivileged and help connect the people to them.

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<sup>5</sup> “*Is Evangelism Going Out of Style?*” Barna Group. <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/faith-spirituality/648-is-evangelism-going-out-of-style#.VfHvLrQkF76>, accessed Sept. 10, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> This book and author cannot be verified but the research has appeared on such reputable websites as [www.Bible.org](http://www.Bible.org), found here, <https://bible.org/illustration/evangelism-statistics>, accessed Sept. 10, 2015.



(ii) The church could do gospel-centered outreaches in local parks, schools, main streets, and college campuses. For example, a church could do a “Back to School Outreach” at a local park in the low-income neighborhood of their city. At the outreach they could either have a gospel service where prayer and counsel is offered at the end or they could train the volunteers to do one-on-one evangelism and prayer with the people as they come to participate in the event.

*(II) Home Visitations, Fellowship Meals, and Home Bible Studies:* The kind of activities Jesus did in people’s homes wasn’t based on “random door-to-door salesmanship” like the Jehovah Witnesses but rather it was based on “relational invitations.” In other words, Jesus didn’t knock on stranger’s doors and ask if He could come over, He was invited into their homes because they wanted Him to come and eat with them. Even when Jesus invited Himself over to eat at Zacchaeus’ house, there was a great excitement for him to have Jesus over because he went through so much effort just to see Him. Thus, it wasn’t a “cold call or unexpected visit” from a stranger.

At the same time, this is not to say that door-to-door evangelism is “bad,” but rather it is a different method than the one Jesus used. His involvement in people’s homes was based on their willingness to invite Him over and host Him. This kind of “invitation based” home ministry can be seen in His instructions to the seventy-two when He sent them out in Matthew 10:11-15,

11 Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. 12 As you enter the home, give it your greeting. 13 If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. 14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet.

The main idea is that Jesus wanted His disciples to be “welcomed” into the homes of those they were ministering too as a result of their public witness. As a result, many wonderful things happened when people welcomed Jesus and His disciples in their homes.

*Applications:* (i) The modern pastor can arrange small groups in the church that meet regularly in people’s homes. These home groups can serve the purpose of studying the Bible, praying for each other’s needs, inviting neighbors over, and fellowship times. Some churches focus on just one aspect of small group ministry, such as; “fellowship groups.” Others choose to combine all the aspects. It is the opinion of the author that combining them all together is best and most effective.

(ii) The pastor can make his or her home available throughout the month for staff meetings, prayer meetings, or the like. Since Jesus was a traveling teacher He did not have one central home, however, in the list of Paul’s requirements for eldership he states that the elder must be, “hospitable” (1 Timothy 3:2). This does not mean they have to own a big house, but simply the leaders in the church must be willing to use their dwelling place for the sake of making disciples and meeting the needs of their people. Also, this may be exactly what Jesus did in Capernaum at Peter’s house because the gospels record consistent activity in that area (Matthew 8:14-16).

*(III) Strategic and Minimal Time in the Church for Training and Sending:* When one looks at the time Jesus spent in the synagogues and Jewish temple it was for a specific purpose. Often times Jesus was there to reveal certain aspect of His calling. For example, when He came to the synagogue in Galilee and read from the prophet Isaiah it was to reveal that He was the Messiah (Luke 4:14-30). Also, when he went to the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles and called out in John 7:37-38 on the last and greatest day, “Let anyone who

is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them,” it was to reveal to the people that He had come from heaven to tabernacle with mankind to quench their spiritual thirst.

Since Jesus was generally not accepted in the Jewish temple or synagogues His messages were short and strategic for His purposes. On one hand, today’s disciples can use the church building for God’s specific purposes- i.e., “worshipping God, teaching the Bible, hosting community programs, etc.” On the other hand, that doesn’t mean disciples should camp out in the church. Rather, they should be mindful that world is their harvest field and they should be making disciples equipped to go out and advance the Kingdom of God.

*Applications:* (i) The pastor can utilize the traditional Sunday church service primarily for encouraging and training of the believer and secondly, for reaching the lost. Nothing in Jesus’ life takes away from the modern strategies of making Sunday services open and relevant to the lost. Interestingly, in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians he gave practical steps to ensure the spiritual gifts were used to build up the believer, while still making opportunities for the unbeliever to get saved (1 Corinthians 14:22-25). This could practically look like a church service being organized with inspiring testimonies, powerful worship, operation of spiritual gifts, relevant preaching for all in attendance (both saved and lost), and guided prayer by leaders at the altars, along with accountability time at the end.

(ii) Though it is not a new idea to use the church building for making disciples the leadership could make sure that all they do is consistent with the discipleship strategy they have in place. For example, a church that has too many services, programs, classes, and activities in the building may actually distract the Christian from going out more into their neighborhood sharing their faith at the park. Therefore, the leadership should make sure to

set up an ideal church attendance for the average member that affords them plenty of time and energy to serve outside the church.

This practically could look like the leadership recommending members to keep the following schedule: (1) Come to church on Sunday with the family once a week, (2) Join a weekly life group relevant to your life that goes evangelizing before the meeting in the local park, and (3) Meet weekly with an accountability partner of the same gender that serves as a coach bringing the believer through various disciples materials. As a result, the average member would only be in the church building once a week, but would spend the other two times gathering with the church either in homes or in public.

(iii) Lastly, the church leadership could make use of the church building for outreach. Many things could be done within the four walls of the church that draw the lost inside. For example, offering free day care services in the children's center for working moms. Also, the gym and sanctuary could be used to have outreach events like, "Game Night" and "Harvest Fests."

#### WHERE CUTTING EDGE PASTORS SPEND THEIR TIME

The author briefly interviewed Pastors Anthony Freeman and Troy Bohn, both are the founding pastors of exciting churches in New Orleans. While Pastor Freeman is with the Assembly of God and Pastor Bohn is non-denominational they have much in common with their core doctrines. They both planted and pastor Spirit-filled outreach and discipleship focused churches that are less than ten years old. They also both have a training center alongside their church and regularly do large outreaches into the community. All Nations Fellowship Church, pastored by Rev. Anthony is located on the East Bank of New Orleans,

and Crosslife Church and R.A.V.E.N Ministries (Restoring A Vision Evangelizing Nations) is led by Rev. Troy on the West Bank.

Pastor Freeman shared that he does about 20hrs of ministry a week.<sup>7</sup> His break down was 10hrs in the church/religious setting (50% / +30%), 6hrs in public places (30% / -28%), and 4hrs in private places/homes (20% / -2%). The differences between Pastor Freeman's whereabouts and Jesus' are basically because due to the fact that he utilizes his church for various programs and outreaches. His actual "service time" is only around 1/3 of his ministry time in the church. For example, every Wednesday he brings in the homeless and downcast to join his church for a free meal before the Bible study.

Also, they do six major outreaches to the surrounding low income neighborhood around the church- ex., "Christmas and back-to-school giveaways." The church has weekly streets teams that preach the gospel to the French Quarter and housing projects. Plus, All Nations Fellowship has been a key church in community restoration for the last ten years since Katrina. Rev Anthony personally teaches and preaches at the Bible school located in his training center. Lastly, he makes great use of hosting dinners at his house for both the church and community, along with taking out his members to local restaurants for fellowship.

Pastor Troy shared that he does about 34hrs of ministry each week. His break down was 14hrs in the public (40% / -18%), 10hrs in the church (30% / +10%), and 10hrs in private/homes (30% / + 8%). Once again his differences to Jesus' whereabouts are mainly due to the fact that he offers so much in his training center. Surprisingly, he spends the majority of his time ministering in the French Quarter preaching on Bourbon Street. Most

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<sup>7</sup> For the interview process the author was intentional to separate the administration and study time of each pastor from the questions. The research was limited to Jesus' public ministry, not His prayer life and prep time.

churches and pastors would be intimidated to do such ministries there but Pastor Troy has seen great fruit from this location. He just recently married a young woman in his church that used to be a stripper on Bourbon!

Like All Nations Fellowship, Crosslife Church uses their church and training center for Bible College and outreaches. Crosslife has a free café that is open regularly throughout the week for the locals to come and fellowship with free WIFI. They also do various cookouts and evangelistic style services around the buildings. Therefore, maybe just 1/3 of the time in the building is actually preaching and the other 2/3 is ministering to the lost. Also, Pastor Troy, actually lives in the training center with his wife, thus they love to have people over for dinner, and make time during the week to do home Bible studies.

When the averages of these two awesome pastors are tallied, the break down is 40% in a religious setting (+20%), 35% in public (-23%), and 25% in private locations (+3%). The greatest difference is in regards to religious versus public locations. This is primarily due to the fact that U.S. churches, like those mentioned in the interviews, can own their own religious properties. In contrast, Jesus was not welcomed in the Jewish religious settings because they were controlled and occupied by the elders and high priest who opposed His teachings. As a result, the knowledge gained from these averages is important because it shows that modern pastors can be where Jesus was and still effectively utilize the benefits of having a church building.

Also worth noting is that the greatest similarity was in the time spent in private settings, “local homes.” The author believes this is because those who are faithful to go out and serve God’s people will be gladly welcomed into private homes and personal spaces just

like Jesus said in Matthew 10:11-15.

## CONCLUSION

There are three important things to consider from this research project, first, the study set out to document the whereabouts of Jesus and derive practical applications from them. It was clear from the research that Jesus spent the majority of His time out in the midst of the people. He was truly a public figure that was assessable to the public. Much could be written just on this aspect of Jesus' life alone.

Might this pattern of being led by the Father to the lost and hurting open the floodgates of new ideas and strategies for the modern pastor? And might this pattern contain the secret to emotional health and stability in the pastor's lives? With alarmingly high rates of depression, dropout, and fatigue in many of today's minister's lives- this one insight might be life changing for all who apply it.

Imagine if the soon-to-be-burned-out pastor spent 6-12hrs every week in public locations sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. He would most likely be less focused on his or her internal struggles and would be given over by the Holy Spirit to the Father's heart. Imagine the sense of self-worth and satisfaction pastors would feel as they won a soul to the Lord and then spent the next year discipling them. Or consider the great encouragement they would receive from connecting a needy person on the streets to effective charities and tracking their progress for many coming years. Truly, the new sense of God's life and power flowing through the Holy Spirit would not only cause them to experience personal revival, but it would have the potential to change the very nature of the church they pastor.

Second, the study showed in the interview process that the church building is important for both outreach and the encouragement of the believer. However, much has already been written in regards to programs, classes, and attractional models. Therefore, it would be good for the church's leadership to remember that its building can be transformed into a outreach center all throughout the week. How many churches invite the lost on a weekly basis to use their gym? Or offer free daycare in their children's center during the week so parents can work or in the evenings so they can have a date night? Often times the church building remains vacant, other than the main service times and limited office use. What if pastors offered their buildings to the community for the sake of the gospel?

Third, the similarities of time spent in the homes of individuals was comforting to see in both Jesus' life and those interviewed. Though it might be these pastors are an exception, it still served as a reminder that God can use simple means to accomplish great goals. All modern pastors and church leaders should see if they can spend 1/5 (20%) of their time fellowshiping and sharing life together with people in private settings. It is one thing to preach in the pulpit, it is another thing to preach on your neighbor's couch.

In closing, according to Pastor Troy Bohn, "Preaching in the pulpit is like hitting balls in the batting cage, preaching in your everyday life and with strangers is like batting in a major league game- it's much more difficult, but the rewards are great!" Let the church go out and find the places to hit home runs with Jesus!



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