

the Quiet Storm

How slaves, women, martyrs, merchants, and innovators quietly changed the Roman Empire.

a quiet storm manifesto

The early church's conquering of the pagan Roman Empire is more than a dusty history lesson. The movement of the Holy Spirit in this quiet storm reveals principles and strategies that cross time and culture. For the storm to blow today, we must make a public declaration to practice the strategies of the early church.

- **Think relationships.** The quiet storm moved through the natural networks of believers in the Roman Empire. Without the advantage of public meetings or evangelistic crusades, everyday people shared the gospel where they lived, worked, or played. We must create simple sustainable, relational strategies for evangelizing our communities.
- **Move into the neighborhood.** The early church was an urban movement, rooted in the busy streets and neighborhoods of Roman cities. In the marketplaces of commerce and ideas, the quiet storm flourished. Today's church must not fear the density of the city but embrace its potential for the gospel.
- **Employ the power of conversation.** The quiet storm was one where people "gossiped the gospel." Announcing the good news happened through conversations. We must turn our private devotion into a public conversation about our faith with our friends, neighbors, family, or coworkers.
- **Start with the home.** Before the legitimacy of church buildings, believers met in homes. Amidst dinner, hospitality, and discussion, faith conversations and worship happened. Homes can be networked into communities to advance the gospel.
- **Make generosity our reputation.** The power of the early church was found in its generosity and sacrificial caring for people both inside and outside the church. Caring for our communities can become part of each church's strategy.
- **Engage the culture.** The quiet storm spawned reputable apologists who engaged their culture with skill and fervor. We must release people to study the Scriptures and culture to create spokespersons for the faith.
- **Release the imagination.** The early church had to imaginatively invent ways to communicate its message. Recruiting artists, writers, and poets to create fresh forms to advance the gospel should be a priority for today's church.
- **Don't fear life on the margins.** The quiet storm began from a powerless people on the margins of culture. Our movement must be in the quality of our lives and fellowship not in the positions of influence in the community.
- **Expect persecution.** Persecution and martyrdom followed the growth of the church. They embraced adversity, turning it into an opportunity for witness. We must not be surprised when robbed of our rights, freedoms, or prestige. Trials must be seized to build character.
- **Go deep.** The early church developed Christ-followers — disciples— men and women of hardened character who could stand against persecution and culture's corrupting influence. The early church understood that disciples are handcrafted not mass produced.
- **Unleash the Holy Spirit.** The quiet storm was populated with people of conviction, men and women with lives so full of the Holy Spirit that when they were bumped into, God's gracious life spilled out (1 Thessalonians 1:5).