

Week of Prayer

— DAY 8 —



Hat tricks and corner kicks were a part of Gabriel's journey to Jesus.

Gabriel and his friends were looking for a place to play soccer. A missionary serving in his hometown opened her yard and offered to sponsor their soccer team with one condition: every other week the team studied the Bible with her.

The boys excitedly agreed. Through the Bible studies, Gabriel learned about God's great love for him. He became a Christian through this community outreach and answered a clear calling to dedicate his life to ministry.

Now, Gabriel is a director of a local ministry for his country.

"The burdens of the people here resonated with me. I knew I wanted to be part of their journey toward hope and faith," Gabriel said.

International Mission Board missionary Matt Clay serves people groups in the Horn of Africa. Matt and Gabriel are close friends and work together to form strategies to extend the gospel and effectively make disciples. Matt shared training materials about moving from evangelism to discipleship and then forming healthy churches and leaders. Gabriel incorporated the training into his ministry ethos.

"My vision is to see a vibrant and growing church that not only transforms individual lives but also impacts communities," Gabriel said.

Pray the Lord continues to give Gabriel direction as he plans and dreams about how to invest in local leaders.

Matt and Gabriel spend intentional opportunities in the Word. They also spend time together in the community. They call it "With Me" time, taken from Mark 3:14, when Jesus appointed the 12 people He'd equip and send out.

When Gabriel and Matt meet, they sometimes talk through ministry strategies; other times they just hang out, enjoying one another's company. The time also applies when they go into communities for outreach. They always bring someone with them, so their ministry efforts multiply.

At the end of the year, Matt and Gabriel sit down to celebrate and record activities and accomplishments. People Gabriel invested in have been sent out to minister in other areas.

"I've witnessed incredible transformation in individuals and communities," Gabriel said. "People are coming to faith by hearing Bible stories, and there's a growing hunger for God's Word."

Ask God to empower more local believers and send more workers to the unreached in this region.

Gabriel said his partnership with Matt and the IMB has been invaluable.

"Their support has provided mentorship, prayer, resources, and training that have equipped me and my team for effective ministry," Gabriel said. "I deeply appreciate the collaborative spirit and the shared commitment to spreading the gospel, which has strengthened my work."

Gabriel and Matt's partnership goes both ways. Matt emphasized how invaluable Gabriel is — remarking on his wisdom and what a great asset his language and heritage is.

"We're all better together," Matt said.

Thank God for missionaries like Matt and Gretchen Clay who serve among the peoples of the Horn of Africa.

*Names changed for security reasons.