

# Ripe Fruit



Esther Lee and Darlene Duncan lead morning worship

If you've picked fruit of any kind, you know that there is a moment just ripe for picking. If you attempt to pick it too soon, there can be a struggle in taking the unready fruit from the vine. However, if you wait too long to pick the fruit, it may get overly ripe and will also go to waste.

Here on the Medical Strategic Network (MSN) Health Student Summer Project, we have been learning about ripe fruit. (Spiritual fruit, that is.) During the first week of the project, we attended a Medical Evangelism Training Strategies (METS)

conference. In one of his conference sessions, Dr. Harvey Elder addressed the issue of ripe fruit. He spoke about people being spiritually ripe—at a point in their lives where God has been working and has brought them to where they are ready to put their faith in Christ. Using an illustration of a peach, Dr. Elder held his hand out and said that all that is needed to pick ripe fruit is to give it a slight shake, and it falls into your hand.

On this summer project 30 medical, nursing, and dental students have been learning how to ethically and relevantly address spiritual issues in patient care and look for ripe fruit in hospitals and clinics in Southern California. During a patient encounter, God led two medical students, Lloyd Runser and Ces Loh, to a man named Gary\*. After talking with Gary about his hospital stay and addressing spiritual issues in his life, Gary openly welcomed further conversations about Christ. Through the Holy Spirit's work, the students were able to share with him the Truth of the gospel. Gary was extremely responsive to the message and seemed overjoyed to pray to receive God's love and forgiveness. "He had an amazing level of openness and hunger for the gospel," Lloyd shares about the experience. "God is truly at work in people's hearts."

We have all had encounters with the spiritually ripe and unripe. Whatever the situation, we trust that God is using us in the ripening process. Whether we are planting the first seeds of Christ in someone's life or are picking the ripe fruit the Holy Spirit has prepared, we know that God is in control and working in people's hearts. As students, we have learned about the tremendous importance of meeting the spiritual needs of our patients—whether it be through conversations, prayers, or sharing with them the incredible love relationship that we have with Christ.

God tells us that "the harvest is plentiful and the workers are few." We leave the project with the charge of addressing patients' spiritual issues as well as looking for and picking the fruit that our Creator has ripened. • *Laurel Eck, Nursing Student*



Morning devotions on the lawn