

Crafted Prayers for Generational Breakthrough with Questions for Listening Prayer (Moving from Gen 1 to Gen 2 and Beyond)

Below are three categories with a few sub-categories each that are crucial to generational growth. Many of us may be aware of these on a theoretical level, but may never have truly allowed the Lord to examine our hearts to see where we may be out of alignment with his will regarding these areas. We invite you to pray into these things, ask these questions (and others that come to mind in prayer) of the Lord, and patiently wait for his answers and guidance. It may be helpful to journal or note on a white board what you hear, scriptures that come to mind, or situations that the Lord brings to mind. But don't let this exercise end there - take what you have heard, weigh it before the Lord and in the context of Christian Community, and act on it!

1. LEADERSHIP:

1. Relational Skills - People not Products \ Farm not Factory

Lord God, would you help us, and the first gen leaders with whom we are working, to remember that relationship is the basis for everything in the Kingdom of God. We are not working to produce identical products; we are working to grow and cultivate the life of God within people. Father, help us to leave behind our cultural attachments to efficiency and time-orientation for the sake of partnering with You to see the natural, organic growth that is only possible by the power of the Spirit. Help us see that only living things can reproduce exponentially. Pour out blessing on all the relationships in this work - bring greater depth, more genuine mutual concern, and grace to press into each other's lives.

- Lord, what do you want you want to speak to us about the depth of relationship in our team? With our local partners? Between local partners and leaders in Gen 1?

- Father, in what ways are we allowing our own cultural baggage or corporate mindsets to pollute what you want to do here? In what ways are we devaluing people in the pursuit of movement?

2. Ownership \ Power-Giving Partnership - 3 levels (outsider-local catalyst, local catalyst-movement leader (insider), movement leader (insider)-other leaders and disciples in movement)

Father, would you deliver us from our own belief that we can save the day! Teach us to truly submit whatever leadership gifts you may have given us to your Lordship and purposes. Weigh our hearts and help us to see areas where we need to repent: to change our hearts and lives to align with your purposes and your ways of interacting with others in your kingdom.

Lord God, please help us to genuinely understand the power that we hold in our relationships, to wield it humbly and wisely, and teach us to give power away to others! Help us learn that hierarchy kills movements and that we must learn to truly empower others by giving away our right to exercise power to others in genuine partnership.

- Lord, where are there areas of pride or stubbornness in our hearts related to relationships? How do we consciously or unconsciously act in patriarchal ways towards our local partners? In what ways are we fostering unhealthy dependency or hindering true partnership among equals?
- Father, how can we change our ways and come into alignment with your kingdom in how we serve our local partners and the leaders within the house churches? How can we better empower others to do the work that you have called them to do?
- Lord, in what ways have we kept ownership of the vision or the work, rather than giving ownership away to local partners and house church leaders?

3. Humility of Leadership \ Mutuality

Lord, would you teach us to model humility, and when it is lacking in us, to learn it from others! Help us to understand at a deep level how integral, how crucial, is mutuality in mission. Help us to see, to genuinely learn how important it is to truly *partner* with our local brothers and sisters.

- Lord, are there areas of pride evident in our lives? In how we interact with our spouses? Our children? Our teammates or co-workers? Our local partners or people in our target culture?
- Lord, what do you want to speak to us about humility in our lives and work?
- Father, where are the areas where we can grow in building true mutuality in our work and ministry? Where do we need to speak less and listen more? Where do we need to direct less and be directed more?
- Lord, how can we better submit to others out of reverence for you?

4. Definition of Success

Father, in cultures (like America's) where success is often defined by numbers: numbers of followers, amount of income, etc., break us and re-form us with a kingdom mindset about success. Remind us that success in your kingdom is about rightly discerning and radically obeying your voice. Help us to model for others who are still learning these things that we are only successful in your kingdom if our disciples are more fruitful than we are! Remind us that success in your kingdom is measured in how much we give away.

- Lord, how do our ideas of success diverge from yours? What is success for us in this season?
- Lord, in what ways are we making decision based off of wrong perceptions of success or leadership?
- Lord, in what ways are we trusting our own ideas and inclinations over the guidance of your Spirit?

5. Identifying Apostles Early

Lord, just as you prepared people to respond to the gospel and share the message with others, we know that you have prepared leaders of all kinds to continue to carry the message to others, and to open new areas and groups of people to your gospel. Father, by whatever means, whether by supernatural guidance or through simple tracking of house church growth, would you help us to identify apostolically-gifted leaders early? Help us to see where you are already at work in the lives of people who are eager to share the good news, and help us to know how to encourage, train, and empower them.

- Lord, where are you already at work? What are the places at the edge of the current work that you are moving in power?
- Lord, how can we more accurately and quickly identify apostolic leaders in our particular cultural context? How can we foster the growth of these leaders and train them in what kingdom leadership looks like?

6. Prepared for Persecution

Lord, we know that (especially in some of the places where the gospel is least known) anyone who wants to follow you will be persecuted. Lord, would you prepare our hearts for that inevitability, and grow our trust and faith in you to be able to not just stand, but advance, when the inevitable does happen. Father, grow our faith and remind us that when we, our local partners, or the people who have chosen to follow you from our target people experience persecution, we are walking in your way, just as the first disciples did. Remind us that in persecution we have fellowship with you, and that you so often use persecution to strengthen your people and spread the gospel to new places, just as you did in the early chapters of Acts.

- Father, in what ways are we trusting in other things besides you for security and safety as we seek to partner with you in this place? In what ways are we being too cautious, or allowing ourselves to be ruled by fear?
- Lord, what do you want to speak to us about persecution? About how to respond? About how to prepare our hearts?

- Father, what would you have us study from your word about this? What would you have us pray into as a team? With our local partners or with new disciples?

2. STRUCTURE:

1. Prayer

Father, we are so dependent on you, on your power and grace and guidance. Would you remind us of this simple fact in all that we do, all the we model, in every word we speak. Father, show us how we can inject prayer into every aspect of our work - not just at the start and finish of meetings, but as the undergirding, overwhelming life of everything that we do! Father, train us to begin in prayer, to walk in prayer, to end in prayer. Train us to pause, to be silent, to draw away to lonely places even in the midst of the busy seasons of life. Show us how to quiet our noisy minds and tumultuous souls so that we can rest in your presence, and hear your words of life, and receive the guidance and wisdom we need.

- Loving Father, where do we need to grow in prayer?
- Faithful Counselor, in what ways can we grow in seeking guidance from you in every area of life and ministry?
- Lord, in what ways are we too busy? Too busy to pause, to be quiet, to seek times of prolonged solitude? How can we slow down? What is on your heart for us in this regard?
- Father, how can we structure our lives and work and meetings for greater and deeper and more regular prayer? How can we model utter dependence on your voice for others? How can we learn greater dependence on your spirit from those local sisters and brothers around us who are perhaps more mature in this area than we are?

2. Simplicity \ Reproducibility

Father, how we need to learn to simplify! We are so fond of complexity that we perhaps we sometimes kill a work before it can start to grow. Lord, train us in simplicity - in life and in seeking you, but also in working and partnership, in sharing and discipling, in praying and coaching and worshipping. Remind us that living, growing things are almost messy and not completely under control; and we should expect nothing different in kingdom work!

- Lord, in what ways are our methods too complex? What needs to be simplified?
- Father, who could we ask for help in stripping away the unnecessary layers to get to the heart of what we need to communicate and train and reproduce? What wise people (both inside and outside our situation) could speak to this?

- Father, what are some simple ways that we could model simplicity in all things - not just in sharing and discipleship or house church formation - but in prayer, in worship, in leading our families?

- Lord, who in our context is capable, but weighed down by too much complexity? How can we work to lighten the loads that we may have put on teammates, local partners, or new disciples, so that they can run ahead with the vision you've put on their hearts?

3. Accountability

Lord, would you remind us that to see your kingdom come, to see your gospel thoroughly penetrate our context, we must seek generational growth. Would you help us learn how to communicate graciously and effectively to ourselves, our partners, and to any other believer who will listen that generational reproduction is a non-negotiable. There is simply no other way to reach the vision you've entrusted to us. Help us to turn away from tempting, but less effective methods; help us to keep ever before us the call to reproduce the life within us, the life that you have entrusted to us.

- Father, what do you want to say to us about how we walk in accountability toward generational growth goals? On our team, in relationships with local partners?

- Lord, how can we celebrate little victories and advances while still holding out the big vision of generational growth? What do you want to speak to us about perseverance in this regard?

- Lord, what questions do we need to ask ourselves and our partners on a regular basis? What are you highlighting about our efforts to work toward generational reproduction?

3. PERSONAL \ DEVOTIONAL:

1. Prayer

Lord, just as with structural prayer (above), we know that personal prayer in the lives of your people is essential to walking with you, staying in step with you, hearing your voice and obeying. Father, teach us to depend on you in prayer, to expose the depths of our hearts before you in prayer, to take the time needed to process our emotions, our hurts and happiness with you. Help us to set aside other things that distract us or take time away from seeking you and hearing your voice.

- Father, what are the hindrances to deeper prayer in our lives? In the lives of our partners? In the lives of new disciples?

- Father, what do you want to speak to us about our relationship? What do you want to say to us about your presence with us?

2. Obedience

Father, we tend to be wayward creatures. Train us to love you, and so obey you out of the love, so that we can grow in love for you. Train us in the cycle of loving and obeying, loving more and obeying more. Make our love for you and our quick obedience to your guidance the hallmark of our lives, clearly evident to others. Show us how we can model quick, loving obedience to others, and make it so natural to us that we can't think of any other alternative but to quickly obey you because of our great love for you.

- Father, in what ways do we tend to delay obedience or second-guess when we have heard you? What excuses do we give for delayed or partial obedience? How do you feel about these things?

- Lord, are there any ways in which we fail to model loving obedience to partners or new disciples? How can we grow in this area?

3. Vision & Visualization

Father, we ask that you would refresh our vision - the vision that first came from you. Then remind us, Lord, that the vision is from you and for you; it is not ours or theirs, but yours. You are the Lord of the harvest! Lord, we are weak and selfish. Help us, train us to grow in seeking your vision alongside other disciples in the context of community. Your vision is too big, too broad, to be held or contained by just one person; and your vision is too colorful and textured to be expressed by just one person. Lord, help us to bring our vision, and seek how it is to be interpreted alongside other disciples, and alongside the vision they've received from you! Help us to discover anew the vision in your heart for our community in our context in this season.

- Lord, in what ways are we imposing a vision on local partners or new disciples instead of seeking your vision for all of us together in this season? How can we grow in openness to not just give a vision, but to help others hear and see your vision for and through them and their lives and ministries?

- Father, how would you have us not just hold a vision, but let that vision overflow in and through our lives so that others can be empowered and envisioned to seek your vision for their lives too?

- Father, how do you want us to grow in building or expressing a kingdom vision together with our local sisters and brothers?

- Lord, how can we grow in visualizing this end vision together? What do you want to speak to our community about how you want to work, about how it could look as we work it out together?

4. Encounters with the Heart of God

Loving Father, we know that all our lives and work are intended to move to the rhythms of your love. We know that we were made to love you and be loved by you; that we are envisioned and empowered and moved when we encounter your love for us in new ways; so Lord we ask again - pour out on us and on our partners and the new disciples in our context - pour out a fresh revelation of your deep and abiding love for us. Help us to see how your love for us is based not on what we do but on who you are; and so that love is unchanging, unalterable; regardless of what may come, or what we may do, your love remains the same.

- Father, what do you want to speak to us about being with us, in this moment? How do you want to communicate your love to us now?

- Lord, how can we be not just canals of your love, quickly emptied onto others; but rather reservoirs of your love, always full but always overflowing onto others? What do you want to speak to us about how you want to fill us with your love?

- Father, in what ways can we make more space to meet with you? To experience your love together with our local partners and the new disciples?

- Lord, how do you want these experiences of your deep love for us to motivate or envision or change our work?

5. Experiences of the Power of God

Lord, we know that your kingdom is breaking into this world in new ways every day. We know that you are at work all around us, if only we had the eyes to see it. Father, would you pour out fresh expressions of your power in signs and wonders that confirm the word that we proclaim to those around us? Please make us willing and happy instruments of your power to set people free, to bring healing and restoration in miraculous ways. Impress upon us, our partners, the new disciples your vast and immeasurable power on behalf of us who believe, and bring many more people into your kingdom as they recognize you in your powerful acts.

- Lord God, how do you want to move in our context in this season? In what ways do you want to show your power?

- How can we be ready partners in showing your power, Lord? In what ways are we blocking or hindering the free flow of your power to open the eyes of unbelievers?

- Lord, are there any areas of unbelief in our lives, or the lives of our partners or community, that are hindering what you want to do in and through us to bring people into your kingdom?
- Lord, in what ways can we prepare ourselves for when you move in power? How can we prepare ourselves to be ready partners to speak the truth of your presence when your power is made manifest?

6. Boldness

Lord, we know that you have called us to be bold witnesses of your love and power. We also know that we are often bound up with fear or self-interest, or distracted by other things. Father, would you show us who you are again, that we might walk with a clear vision of your power and presence in our midst, even welling up from within us? Remove barriers and hindrances to the clear communication of your gospel, so that many would be gathering into your kingdom in this season!

- Father, what are the hindrances to boldness in our lives? In the lives of our partners or the new disciples in the house churches?
- Lord, how do you want to move in us to remove these hindrances? What in each of us needs to be touched, to be healed by you in order for us to genuinely trust you in deeper ways?

Each of the topics above (and there are likely many others!) are crucial to the generational reproduction of new disciples and house churches in movement work. Movement workers may often think about such topics from a strategic or tactical point of view, but rarely do we pause to pray into such specific strategic things, or better yet, to wait on the Lord to hear what he would speak to us about such things. We hope that this experience of praying, waiting on the Lord, and processing what you hear with God and others in your community will be a refreshing and revelatory experience for you, and that it will whet your appetite to return again and again to seek the Father's guidance on these and any other areas of challenge that you may face.