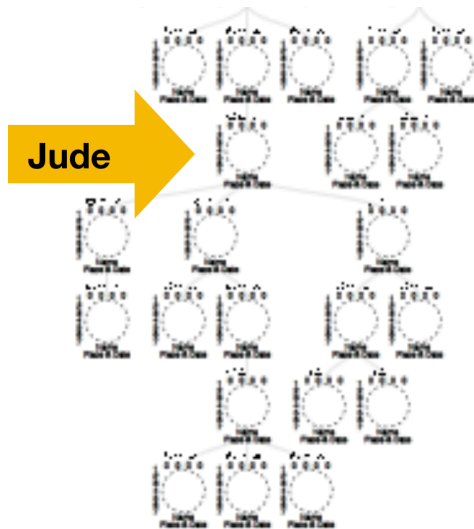


Praying for Emerging Apostles in a Movement

The nature of apostles in movements

In the early stages of a movement, emerging apostles may often be mistaken for evangelists, as almost all apostolically-gifted people have a large evangelistic gift as well - but apostles often also a strong teachers and strategic thinkers. You can often identify apostolically-gifted leaders by drawing out a gen map of their groups - you may see something like this, for instance:



At the time this gen map was drawn out, "Jude" was not yet recognized as an apostolic leader - but after drawing out the map and seeing not just multiple groups, but multiple generations under him, the movement leaders realized that he had more than an evangelistic gifting, and brought him into more frequent equipping meetings.

Of course, one of our key prayers for apostles in the early stages of a movement is simply that God would raise them up, and that we would have the eyes to see them and encourage them. The typical generalizations about apostolic people are mostly correct - they do tend to be hard-headed, hard to get along with, they may drive some people away, but more people will be drawn to them than are pushed away. They often have uncharacteristically large vision, are easily bored, and are often off starting new things before whatever they may've already started is truly established. Further, they will often attract other apostolic leaders, who they must train, encourage, empower, and send out.

Apostles are typically good at starting new things, but often have trouble staying with newly established groups or networks long enough for those groups or networks to be truly self-sustaining. In ideal conditions, the apostle should be equipped and empowered to quickly identify, train, and empower \ appoint teaching elders to continue the work in a newly established network with only intermittent contact \ input from the apostolic leader. However, conditions are often not ideal, and while the

apostle needs to be free to move on and establish new works, they must also be willing to come back and strengthen networks that are still weak.

The above is just a quick, off-the-cuff description of some things we have experienced from different apostolic leaders in the Hadiyah movement in SEA. Given the above, here are some key ways to pray for apostolic leaders, over and above the typical biblical prayers we can be praying for all new believers.

Sabbath Rhythm (Work \ Life Balance): Apostolic leaders are often driven by their vision and by the limitless opportunities they see - they also tend to be driven by "the next thing", and so are constantly starting \ trying new things, both of which mean that many apostolic leaders need help in maintaining a healthy sabbath rhythm to ensure long-term health and fruitfulness, on personal, marital, and ministry levels.

Lord of the Sabbath, thank You that You care for us, and that You have made provision for our rest. We gratefully acknowledge that You are more than able to continue working while we rest, and so our choosing to rest is also an act of faith and trust in You. Father, please speak these truths to the hearts of the apostles to which you have connected us. Help them to see the need for a healthy, balance rhythm of work and rest. Teach them to work and serve out of a place of deep rest and refreshing in You. Train them to keep a biblical sabbath rest unto You, a regular time when they can cease working, delight in Your goodness, seek out refreshing and recreation so that they can return to service with full hearts and healthy bodies. Train these visionary, passionate, apostolic leaders to model leading out of rest as a testimony to Your omnipotent ability to keep working even while Your children rest.

Compassion \ Soft-heartedness: Apostolically-gifted leaders may also come across as abrasive and heedless of those who can't "keep up" with their vision or drive. They may also be quick to sever ties with others who they see as weak, uncommitted, or unreliable. These can all be strengths, but often also come out as significant weakness or blind spots that can cripple apostolic leaders. Lastly, apostolic leaders often don't get along well with other apostolic leaders if they're in too close a proximity to one another for too long.

Tender Father, we give You glory for the ways in which You have gifted and molded these apostolic leaders. Father, we come to You now asking that You would continue to mold and shape them according to Your image. Father, pierce their singleminded focus with consistent reminders that they cannot run alone for long. Show them how to raise up and cultivate other leaders to share their burdens, and grow a fatherly patience in them. Help them see beyond the immediate needs to the long-term vision of what You are working through them. Help them to persevere in the midst of difficult situations, help them to call on You, to rest in You, to depend on You. Father, soften their hearts to

see others like You see them - not to abandon others too quickly, but fill them with a vision of the potential in the heart of every believer, and with a hunger to see that potential realized.

Grace to Build Strong Relationships with Emerging Teaching Elders: Apostolic leaders are planters, but not often builders. While they may have strong teaching gifts, they often do not have the desire to apply those gifts in a long-term, ongoing teaching ministry in one place. Therefore, any apostle's planting work is only as strong as the teaching elders he leaves behind to continue the work of building up the church in his absence. If an apostolic workers fails to identify, train, and release teachers and teaching elders before moving on, his work will most likely falter and fail after his departure. And if he releases these teachers, but fails to maintain a healthy relationship with them by regular contact and visits, encouragement and vision-casting, he may also lose touch with the work he planted.

Lord God, You are the Master Builder, and You see the end from the beginning - would You please pour out that grace on these apostolic leaders? Father, they need grace to identify, call out, and build up teaching elders who can be entrusted with the ongoing growth of the churches, and they need grace to carefully build relationships of trust and genuine mutual love and friendship with these elders. Father, help them to see that an investment in teaching elders will multiply the fruit of every house church long beyond when they move on to the next location or need. Help them to see that their fruit will only last and reproduce if they can leave responsible, wise, loving leaders to father and mother the house churches in their absence. Grant them grace to happily release authority to emerging leaders, and to maintain healthy relationship with them for many years to come. Help them to see how to best use the apostolic authority with which You have entrusted them, and grant them grace to leave behind them in every place an aroma of Your presence through healthy, established churches who worship You.

Vision that Sees Beyond the Present: Many apostolic leaders are hindered to some degree by their difficulty in seeing beyond the near-term, so they need to identify and learn to trust the input of those who think strategically, see the big picture, and have the patience to invest now for a later return. Even with this in mind, apostolic leaders must not be hobbled by the plans of the long-term thinker... they must be freed to run and start new works, because that is their calling and strength!

Father, please raise up strategic thinkers from the churches who can help apostolic leaders see the long-term implications of their current path, who can coach and

process decisions with these leaders, and help them to choose wisely from among the options before them. Build deep trust between the apostolic leaders and those who You are calling to serve them, and the bigger vision that You have entrusted to their network as a whole. Help them to see that long term success means building a thriving, healthy house church network that reproduces itself into more and more unreached places, and help them (and others) to work together to see Your vision made a reality, Your Kingdom come in their homes and families and communities.

Wisdom that Implements in the Present: Most of all, apostolic leaders need the support of others who can help them translate their big vision in practical, day-by-day decisions and actions. A apostolic leader without trusted companions to balance him will end up starting lots of things, some of which thrive, some of which go off the rails spectacularly, and most of which just survive or plateau. To see the work of the apostolic leader really explode, he must learn to trust and depend on the other giftings in the Body.

Lord God, we ask that You gently remind these apostolic leaders of their weaknesses. Help them to accurately assess and know their strengths as well as their weaknesses, and to seek solutions to cover the deficits in their own ability or gifting. Father, we also ask that You would enable "come-alongside" strategic thinkers to also be doers - so that along with the teaching elders in every house church network, they can take some of the leadership load from the shoulders of the apostolic agents who You have called them to walk alongside. Help each apostolic leader to rightly see their weaknesses, so that they can find suitable companions to buoy them up and carry the work forward in ways that they cannot, both for the health of the churches they leave behind, and so that they can focus on their calling, which is to start new works.