

Birth vision out of prayer
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Main Goal: Describe your vision for starting and multiplying churches.

Cultivate your heart

Ministry flows out of a life with God. It's possible to go through the motions of church planting, and leave a relationship with God behind. Reading the word of God changes the heart (Heb. 4:12). If your time spent in scripture and prayer is decreased, it's likely that your effectiveness will too.

A vibrant relationship with God sustains you in the challenges of church planting. We hear from God better, and see what he wants when we are connected to him. Our ministry is more fruitful when our intimacy with God is deep.

Involvement in church planting requires the proper motives. With a sensitivity to the Spirit, a heart of compassion and a willingness to do whatever God wants, your ministry can multiply.

You might want to reexamine the choice to plant churches if:

- You're reacting to a previously negative ministry experience
- No other ministry opportunity is available
- You can't get along with others
- You're bored

Questions for consideration:

- What steps can you take to cultivate your heart for ministry?
- What are the insecurities, doubts or sins that you need to confess before God, before planting a church?
- What are your motivations for planting a church?

Discern God's calling

Your ministry calling is the specific contribution that the Lord wants you to make at this time for his Kingdom in light of your motivational pattern, spiritual gifts, temperament, life situation and passion.

How to discover your calling:

- seek the Lord
- examine your heart
- get involved at the level of your availability, maturity and giftedness
- seek godly counsel and guidance
- develop a plan for personal and ministry growth
- seek mentoring and accountability relationships

- check your compass regularly
- explore all of the possibilities

Questions for consideration:

- What are the steps you've taken to discover your calling?
- Based on your life situation, gifts and passions, what is the calling that God has placed on your heart?
- What are you doing now to live out your calling?

Mobilize people to pray with you

The first step in birthing a church is birthing prayer. An intercessory team that will stick with you is a crucial part of raising up a body of believers.

Make a list of any people:

- Who have said they will pray for you
- Who call and ask for prayer requests
- Who ask if you have had answers to their prayers
- Who you know to be people of prayer
- Who have received ministry from you where you felt a "chemistry," that is, you liked them and they liked you

Establish mutual commitments with your intercessors. What are you asking them to do? What can you do for them (e.g. praying for them, communicating regularly with them, etc.)? Set up a two-way flow of communication and create a covenant with your prayer partners.

Questions for consideration:

- In what ways will you make prayer a high priority in your church plant?
- Who are the people that will pray consistently on your behalf?
- What communication commitments will you make with those who pray for you?
- What are the first things your intercessory team can pray for?
- What key issues do you want your intercessors to focus on?

Picture a multiplying movement

Vision is the WHAT of your ministry, the picture that God has painted across your heart. It allows leadership to say "yes" and "no" to ministry choices.

Where are you going? This is a question to ask yourself as a church planter, and this question is answered by vision. Vision is the preferable future God wants to create through you. It is the mental picture you carry in your mind of the future.



Start micro and think macro. See the end result of your ministry, and imagine it becoming a movement that spawns across generations.

A godly vision:

- Has a sense of being right for the times
- Promotes faith rather than fear
- Motivates people into action
- Requires risk-taking
- Glorifies God, not people

Questions for consideration:

- If God really had His way, what is the ultimate vision you would have?
- In what ways does this vision encourage and/or challenge your faith?
- In what ways does this vision motivate other people into action?
- How does your vision glorify God?

Dialogue with others about your vision

Confirm the vision with others. Before you nail down your vision, and set it in stone, check with others to confirm its authenticity, relevancy and Christ-centeredness. You'll need the encouragement, if you have a big enough vision.

Refine the vision with others. Dialogue with friends, relatives and co-workers, who can help you edit the vision, and simplify it.

Own the vision with others. If the vision is all yours, and nobody else shares it, you'll have a hard time planting a church. With others around you, sharing and contributing to the same convictions, you'll have your first ministry team.

Questions for consideration:

- What confirmations have you received from others about your vision?
- How has your vision been sharpened through dialogue with others?
- In what ways have others taken ownership of the vision?