



## **Asking God Questions**

The questions we ask shape how we think about God, our congregation, each other, and our neighborhood. We want to learn to regularly ask “God Questions” of each other. *Examples:*

- What might God be up to?
- What might God be saying to us?
- How do we sense God’s presence in our daily lives (in our workplaces and in our neighborhoods)?
- What does God care about in our local communities?
- How might God be leading our congregation to join in something God is already doing?

## **Listening to One Another’s Stories**

Listening to each other is an essential practice for learning to ask different questions. As we learn to listen to each other well, we also increase our capacity to hear what God might be saying to us as well.

### EXERCISE:

Think of a story...of a time when you experienced a sense of God’s presence.

Now, pair up with someone and share your stories

- What was happening in your life during that time?
- What energized you most during this time?
- Did the church play a role in this experience in your life? If so, how?

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## **Naming God's Activity**

We assume that God is present with us in everything we are doing each and every day. Sometimes we are more aware of God's presence than others!

We want to engage in a practice of listening to our own lives and stories and wonder together where God might have been present in the midst of those experiences.

We want to get more comfortable naming what we think God might be up to in our midst. Being able to name God's activity in our midst gives us the chance to join with what God is presently inviting us into.

### **EXERCISE:**

Take a few moments quietly to reflect on the story you shared. What might God have been up to in that experience? Jot down a few notes. (5 minutes)

- What do you think God might have been doing in this time in your life?
- Was God teaching you something?
- Was God reassuring or encouraging you?
- Was God challenging you? Inviting you into something?

Pair back up and share what you think God might have been up to.

(5 minutes each)

Share some of what was most impactful for you in this conversation. If you are going to be sharing anything from your partner's story, check in with them to make sure they are ok with you sharing.

# Introduction to Listening Practices

We have three listening practices we'd like to invite you to participate in over the next several months.

- Listening to Scripture through Dwelling in the Word
- Listening to Your Neighborhood (God Sightings, Neighborhood Walk)

Examples of questions you can ask as you walk/drive:

- What do you notice?
- What are signs of wellness or hurt?
- Where is there movement or activity or energy?
- Where is there stillness?

- Listening to the Congregation (do what we just did with other people in your church)

Dwight Zscheile, discussing Samuel Wells' Four Modes of Mission  
(Working For – Working With – Being For – Being With)

*“Being with requires a very different posture than the others. It is grounded in relationships, presence, attentiveness, and abiding or dwelling. Wells invokes Augustine’s sense of enjoyment: what we enjoy is of value for its own sake, not a means to some other end. **To be with is to enjoy, not to see the neighbor as an object of fixing, attraction into our established thing, management, or other instrumental approach.**”*

*While there can be times and places for working for, working with, and being for, when we focus there primarily, we miss a deeper opportunity for participating in God’s life and mission with our neighbors. Taking the journey of being with requires unlearning speed, distance, and innocence (as Emmanuel Katongole and Chris Rice put it in Reconciling All Things).*

***It requires humility, and a posture of openness and vulnerability.  
It seeks the wonder and mystery of God’s presence and life in the presence and lives of others.”***

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# Listen to Others

Assignment: Ask people in your congregation about when they have felt most spiritually alive. Write down some notes you can share with your team.

Here is a possible introduction to your conversation—*“We are trying to learn about how people experience God in their everyday lives. So we’re asking some people in our congregation a few questions about their spiritual lives. Thanks for being willing to talk to me.”*

**Reflect on a time when you would say you grew spiritually in a significant way. Describe what was happening in that period of your life.**

**What was it about this time of your life that you think caused you to grow spiritually?**

**Was there something during this time of your life that you think God was trying to teach you or show you?**

**Where do you experience God’s presence most often now? (i.e. in worship, in nature, in conversation with friends/family, in prayer, in Bible study, at yoga, etc.)**

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