

MCN

Multiplying Church Network
Facilitator Manual



Unit 4

Prayer and Vision

“All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore, go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

—Matthew 28:18-20, NIV

Unit synopsis

Prayer, vision, and strategy development are familiar concepts to most Multiplying Church Network (MCN) members. If any of these three fundamental parts is lacking, implementation suffers. The successful MCN will have a prayer-birthing vision and a prayer-based strategy. This ensures that the process starts with Christ and faithfully follows His instructions. In this unit, participants will discover how to connect prayer with vision and strategy development.

Learning expectations

- Understand the role of prayer in developing a new work vision and strategy.
- Analyze the interdependent relationship between prayer, vision, and strategy development.
- Develop an appreciation for prayer as the primary means of vision and strategy development and commit to the prayer process.
- Be able to communicate the need for prayer in vision and strategy development.
- Prepare a written plan for involving others in praying for the process.

Lesson

It is difficult to disagree with the premise of Proverbs 29:18 (KJV), “Where there is no vision the people perish.” In fact, even if a ministry is based on a man-made vision, it is sure to falter. The vision that drives new work must be God-given. This is why prayer has such a critical role when developing a ministry.

Characteristics of vision

1. Vision is essential.

Vision is essential for keeping MCN a vital, vibrant ministry, rather than an ineffective and cumbersome program or committee. MCN joins individuals together to accomplish the uncommon, unprecedented work that God has prepared for His faithful servants. God desires to bless the people that live across the street and around the globe through His church. He does this through giving church leaders a vision for church planting.

2. Vision comes from God.

A God-given vision is necessarily creative because God is creative (see Gen.1). Thus, MCN is never meant to be a photocopy of what other groups have done in the past. The Holy Spirit continually enables believers to communicate the truths and commands of Scripture to the rapidly changing, post-modern culture. It is God who best designs the ministry that will reach those who are lost. Believers must seek His vision through prayer.

3. Prayer connects us to God.

Prayer is communication with the Lord, and begins with God's desire for believers to know Him and be known by Him. The Holy Spirit helps the believer to pray, and the Son intercedes to the Father on their behalf (see Rom. 8:26,34). This unimaginable privilege provides Christians with the opportunity of receiving God's vision. However, this privilege requires that believers listen to His voice rather than making requests, seek God's will above their own, and persist in seeking God as they wait for Him patiently.

Prayer ensures that the ministry's vision comes from the Lord, and inspires church members to pursue God's instructions regardless of the risk or cost. Prayer continually refines believers and helps them know God's heart. The vision is then accomplished through His servants—aided by the power of Christ and the counsel of the Holy Spirit.

Connecting prayer and vision

Prayer and vision should not be considered two distinct topics. Prayer and vision are interrelated and interdependent. Prayer is the communication of God's will to believers. Vision is God's way for believers to accomplish His will. Where there is a prayer-birthered vision, the people flourish.

The MCN is commonly built around both general and specific visions. The team obeys the general Great Commission vision, but also seeks God's specific vision for the team, the territory, and the time. Through prayer the following questions are answered:

Who—Who is called to serve on the team?

What—What are their unique gifts and passions?

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Where—Where does God want them to plant new churches?

When—When should they begin praying? Prospecting? Planning? Planting?

Why—Why has the Lord called this team together?

How—How does God intend for the team to accomplish His vision?

Prayer that receives answers to these questions is different than the typical mode of praying. The common default mode relegates prayer to a meeting opener, a quick mention of thankfulness at the dinner table, or a monologue informing God of a supplicant's needs. These prayers do little to connect us to God's vision or power. Prayer that produces and protects Jesus' vision for the MCN must be deliberate, corporate, intimate, and expectant.

Deliberate—Someone should facilitate intentional times for prayer.

Corporate—Everyone in the congregation should be involved as a participant.

Intimate—Prayers should be expressed as a conversation to God from the heart.

Expectant—Pray with the knowledge that God will fulfill His promises.

Because prayer is communion with God, more time devoted to prayer means less fear, pride, confusion, and division (see Col. 4:2). The Lord is eager to bless a prayer-birthed MCN vision.

If an MCN vision did not originally emerge from prayer, it is extremely important to reevaluate that vision in light of God's instruction. The MCN team should gather for a season of prayer and should praise God who is all-knowing, creative, and unwilling for any to perish. He is able to make all things work together for good, even if the process began on the wrong track. Repent of any unconfessed sin. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal God's vision for the new church and yield to Christ concerning the strategy. Obediently revise whatever is outside of God's will concerning the MCN process and incorporate prayer in every future meeting.

Unit 4: Prayer and Vision - Participant Worksheet

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Learning area	Expectations
Knowledge and understanding	Understand the role of prayer in developing a new work vision and strategy.
Thinking and inquiry	Analyze the interdependent relationship between prayer, vision, and strategy development.
Feeling and appreciation	Develop an appreciation for prayer as the primary means of vision and strategy development and commit to the prayer process.
Communication	Be able to communicate the need for prayer in vision and strategy development.
Application	Prepare a written plan for involving others in praying for the process.

1. List two characteristics of vision.

A. _____

B. _____

2. Discuss the following questions:

A. What is the role of prayer in developing new work strategy? Give examples.

Unit 4: Prayer and Vision - Participant Worksheet

B. How do prayer, vision, and strategy connect?

3. Using your own words, complete the following statement: “Where there is prayer-birtherd vision, the people _____.”

4. Based on the materials in this lesson, write a description of how you will involve others in the prayer, vision, and strategy process?