

## ***Living with the Questions – A Missional Practice***

*Missional Practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.*

“I beg you . . .  
to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart  
and try to love the questions themselves  
as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language.  
Don't search right now for the answers,  
which could not be given you, because you would not be able to live them.  
And the point is to live everything.  
Live the questions now.  
Perhaps then, someday far in the Future,  
you will gradually without ever noticing it,  
live your way to the answer.”

–Rainer Maria Rilke

**Purpose:** Practice identifying and living with prophetic questions (essential questions) that help people see and live God's future as individuals and signal communities of justice and peace.

### **Steps:**

1. Choose a scripture passage for prayerful reflection as part of your daily devotion. Consider focusing, initially, in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts and Doctrine and Covenants sections 161 through 164 and the Words of Counsel presented at the 2013 World Conference.
2. Prayerfully reflect on the selected passage and then consider how the passage could be phrased as a prophetic question. Remember, a prophetic question, over time, leads to new insights and unsettledness about the present reality and God's alternative future. For example, in the first chapter of The Gospel of Mark Jesus proclaims, “The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe in the good news.” This pronouncement, posed as a question could be: “What would it look like if the kingdom of God was to come a little closer to this place?”

Jesus shared many sayings and stories, intentionally, to disrupt the status quo with new insights and ways of being disciples. For example, in the fifth chapter of The Gospel of Luke Jesus is inviting the disciples to cast their nets into the deep water after fishing all night long. This invitation, phrased as a question could be: “How is Jesus calling me to let go of some control and follow his movement into the depth of other people's lives?” Or, “How am I being called to slow down and be more attentive to the promptings of the Spirit leading me into relationship with others?”

3. After identifying your question, consider it several times throughout the day. Consider writing down in a journal your thoughts or insights during your times of reflection.
4. Repeat these steps daily with a new scripture text or spend several days, even weeks, on the same text and the prophetic question you posed.

Over time, while identifying and living with prophetic questions, the scripture texts will challenge you to see situations and relationships with new eyes. You may find a question that really speaks to you and disrupts you with new understanding. Live with, pray over, discuss with a friend, and seek continued guidance as you live with your prophetic question(s) on a daily basis.

#### **Tips for the Process:**

Keep a journal to make notes.

Society teaches us to focus more on quick answers than questions. Be patient and seek the Spirit's guidance to identify important prophetic questions that will begin to shape your discipleship or the missional focus of your group or congregation.

Keep a record of the questions that emerge and ask God's Spirit to cause you to go deeper into your questions for new insights to discern the Spirit's leadings.

Share in this practice as a small group or with a partner. Each time you meet a member of the group could bring a passage for prayerful reflection and to identify a question (adapt Dwelling in the Word for this purpose). Challenge and prayerfully support one another to live with the question over the next week. Begin your following time together by sharing insights from living with the question that emerged in the previous meeting.