

Movement Insights

TWO FOUR EIGHT

# Movement Insights Project Phase 2

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# TWO FOUR EIGHT

MOVEMENT INSIGHTS

OCTOBER 2025

**PROJECT PURPOSE**
To identify patterns in how God is multiplying disciples in global cities so we can better align strategy with His activity.

**TWO FOUR EIGHT'S PURPOSE STATEMENT**
We develop leaders who multiply Jesus movements in the cities of the world



"People are flooding to the cities... and so we better have models for the cities."

Since releasing our initial research report, the world has not slowed down. Cities have only grown more complex, more polarised, and more spiritually fragmented. The forces shaping urban life now move faster than most mission strategies can cope with. Our first report was a necessary beginning: a wake up call, a mirror to our assumptions, and an early attempt to listen more carefully to global teams working in the tension of the modern city.

Phase Two is another step forward. It reflects a broader base of input, deeper on the ground experience, and a wider spectrum of cities and affinities. We have listened to leaders from multiple regions, ecosystems, and traditions. We have compared patterns, interrogated our blind spots, and taken seriously the questions raised by the first report. This round is a deeper commitment to facing the realities of a rapidly changing urban world with honesty, humility, and courage.

The urgency is greater than ever. Urbanisation continues to outpace the church's ability to adapt. The spiritual landscape of cities around the world is shifting beneath our feet. Many forms of church are struggling to connect with post Christian, post religious, and hyper diverse populations. Rapid migration is reshaping many cities and exposing the fragility of systems that were not built to handle this level of movement and diversity. Wars and rumours of wars are increasing. AI is beginning to disrupt systems that have not been challenged since the Industrial Era. Amid this tension and uncertainty, new sparks of urban movement are appearing. Some of these are small, decentralised, affinity based expressions of faith that have become micro movements. Others are expanding to become larger expressions of movement that engage the complexity of the city. The question we are asking remains the same: "How do we adapt to multiply faster than the complexity around us?" This second research cycle represents our ongoing commitment to learn from grounded reality, not nostalgia. To honour what God is doing at the edges, not simply what we are comfortable with at the centre. To challenge our own assumptions and allow global voices, especially those from difficult and overlooked contexts, to recalibrate our understanding of movement dynamics in cities.

You will find that this report goes further. It identifies emerging trends, clarifies barriers, and highlights new opportunities. It exposes gaps in our current strategies and suggests areas where we must shift, simplify, or accelerate. It is not the final word, but a tool to help your team become more focused and more effective. Use what is useful. Discard what distracts. Our only desire is that this research empowers leaders to build healthier, more resilient movements in the cities and affinities God has entrusted to them.

May God use this second round of research to deepen your discernment, strengthen your strategy, and align your work even more closely with His heart for the nations and the cities of our world.

**DAVID BROODRYK**
Executive Director / Two Four Eight's Founder

# Executive Summary

(Updated for October 2025)

## This Report:

At Two Four Eight, we've seen disciple-making movements take root and multiply in rural and semi-rural settings, especially among more culturally homogeneous populations. Cities are different. In urban contexts, marked by complexity and constant flux, multi-generational disciple-making fruit has been harder to start and sustain. While earlier research helped us identify transferable principles from non-urban contexts, we lacked clarity on what makes disciple-making thrive in cities.

To pivot toward greater fruitfulness in urban spaces, our team believed it was essential to pay close attention to how God is already at work. One trusted advisor challenged us with this insight:

> "For you to study movements in cities, you must listen to its stories."
> Dr. Liza van der Merwe

## What we did:

We took that challenge seriously. Over the past four years, we have listened deeply to the lived experiences of urban disciple-making practitioners, men and women laboring faithfully across diverse city contexts. In this second round of interviews, we added 15 additional conversations, bringing our total to 40. These new interviews included many cities/regions marked by heightened persecution, political instability, economic challenges, and even active conflict. We sought voices from practitioners working in some of the world's more difficult urban environments, trusting their insights would help further reveal what faithfulness and fruitfulness look like.

Interviewees were selected based on both relationship and reputation, either as direct connections or confirmed by multiple trusted voices. All were engaged in urban disciple-making where there was evidence of generational and multiplicative growth. Some are more burgeoning movements, others more established disciple-making movements.

While many use the language of "Disciple-Making Movements" (DMM), "Church Planting Movements" (CPM), "Training for Trainers" (T4T), or Four Fields, others do not. Our focus was on the reality of multiplying disciples in city contexts regardless of the terminology used.

Our process included 40 in-depth interviews, across more than 32 countries and around 50 unique urban centers, followed by careful transcription, basic pattern recognition coding, interviewee feedback, and cross-analysis. All of the original 25 interviews from Phase 1 remain part of the dataset. Together, Phase 1 and Phase 2 interviews produced 798 distinct observations. From these, we identified 74 common urban observations: insights or practices that surfaced repeatedly across cities.

Of these, we present a list of the 15 most repeated and emphasized in this report. These are not formulas, but patterns of observation that point to the emerging contours of what God seems to be doing in cities.

## Brief Research Approach Overview

This report follows a qualitative field research approach. We conducted semi-structured interviews, coded themes inductively, and reviewed patterns across phases. The aim is not statistical proof but grounded insight drawn from practitioners' lived realities. This process emphasises careful listening, cross checking, and reflection across a diverse set of urban contexts. This research was developed with the support and guidance of All Nations Family International, whose experience in research and disciple-making provided helpful context during the research process.

## Changes in Phase 2

In this Phase 2 report, you'll notice more direct quotations woven throughout. We wanted readers to hear practitioners' voices more fully. The result is a longer and more comprehensive report, one that seeks to preserve the texture and depth of their lived experience.

**We've also introduced two new sections:**
Common challenges faced by urban disciple-makers
Emergent practice examples from the interviews

We hope both additions will offer encouragement and practical insight to those navigating similar realities.

In addition, we placed stricter limits on the influence of individual emphases in determining the order of observations. Observations mentioned by many interviewees are more likely to appear than those heavily emphasized by fewer.*

If you engaged with the earlier Movement Insights Report v1.2, you will notice some observational changes. Four observations from the original top fifteen have rotated out and have been replaced by four more repeated and emphasised ones. This shift is an expected result of expanding the data pool and intentionally seeking perspectives from a wider range of urban contexts. Their absence from this round's top list does not diminish their value. Practices such as partnering with the existing church in the city remain significant, though they were mentioned less frequently in Phase 2 interviews. Almost all of these former top fifteen observations still rank within the top twenty, and all fall within the top thirty.

## Why It Matters

We offer these insights to disciple-makers around the world, especially to those contending for the Kingdom in the heart of our cities. May these common observations, challenges, and emerging practices serve as companions in your own journey of discovery, obedience, and abiding fruitfulness.

** This structure adjustment would not have changed the top fifteen observations in this report, though it would have slightly changed the order.*

## Limitations of This Study

We do not present this report as a definitive guide or final word on urban disciple-making. With just 40 interviews, we recognize the limits of our sample, but we also recognize the depth of insight gained by listening carefully to practitioners living and laboring in some of the most complex cities on earth. Rather than aiming for statistical representation or causal proof, our goal has been to listen well, surface potential patterns, challenges and emergent practices through amateur field-level qualitative analysis.

Our interview pool was intentionally curated, not random or exhaustively representative. We sought practitioners with observable evidence of generational growth or active movement dynamics. This strengthens relevance but introduces selection bias, meaning the findings lean toward practitioners already demonstrating traction.

Our analysis is also limited by our own learning process. This research project has been a grassroots effort shaped in real time, in the midst of ministry demands. While we sought advice from experienced missiologists and researchers, this project's process and data analysis are imperfect, likely partial, systematically inconsistent and contextual.

These findings are therefore primarily field level insights to be tested, refined and expanded through further learning and are not meant to be exhaustive or universally prescriptive.

## How Can This Document Be Used?

We invite you to approach this report as a conversation starter. The observations, challenges, and emergent practices are offered as tools for reflection and adaptation in your own context. They are best engaged as prompts for group reflection and prayer, meaningful conversation, and context specific experimentation.

As an organisation, we are actively using these learnings to refine our city focused training curriculum, shape our coaching posture, and adjust strategy in light of what we are hearing. We are also building intentional learning feedback loops to adapt our work in real time, recognising that learning in complex systems often happens in retrospect, through reflection and iteration.

Our approach aligns with a critical realist posture: we recognize that truth can be discovered, but always through partial, contextual, and imperfect lenses. We are not testing fixed hypotheses but exploring grounded insights from lived experience. This report seeks to surface possible patterns, practices, and principles that seem to contribute to fruitfulness in city contexts, always with the understanding that further learning is needed.

Each observation includes three reflection prompts. These can be used in team meetings, learning communities, coaching contexts, or personal retreats. As you read each observation, consider these overarching questions as well:

- Where do you sense clarity? Where do you feel tension or confusion?
- How do these observations align or contrast with your own experience in urban disciple-making?
- Are there course corrections to consider? Are they biblically grounded?
- What might the Spirit be surfacing in you or your team?

Please don't use this report to judge yourself or others. And please don't turn these observations into a new checklist to movement. God is sovereign, and lasting fruitfulness flows not from cleverness or effort alone, but from abiding in Christ and following the Spirit's lead in each unique context.

## What's Next

This report represents the second phase of an ongoing learning journey. While we initially envisioned interviewing 125 practitioners across 75 cities, we've had to pivot toward fewer, deeper conversations.

Looking ahead, we are considering the launch of a broader, online survey based Urban Disciple-Making Patterns Survey. This next step will allow us to engage a much larger number of practitioners globally, inviting them to reflect on and respond to some of the patterns surfaced in this report. The survey will not replace the research or its stories. Instead, it will extend them, helping us discern how widely these practices resonate, where they differ, and what additional insights might emerge from wider participation.

We remain committed to listening, learning, and offering back what we hear in service to the global Body of Christ. If you would like to journey with us, or help us listen even better, please reach out.

Feel free to contact us at info@twofoureight.org with any feedback, comments, suggestions, questions, etc.

**MICHAEL SHERWIN**
Two Four Eight Project Lead



# Project Statistics

| 32+ | 50+ | 40 | 798 | 74 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COUNTRIES/ REGIONS | URBAN CENTERS | PRACTITIONERS INTERVIEWED | URBAN OBSERVATIONS | COMMON URBAN OBSERVATIONS |

These numbers are approximate, as some leaders represent movements or emerging movements across multiple locations, regions, or countries.

**15** Highlighted in **Report Phase 2**

Observations that stayed In the top fifteen - 11
Observations that left the top fifteen - 4
Observations that entered the top fifteen - 4

# Interviewee Locations




1. Western Cape, South Africa
2. Eastern Cape, South Africa
3. Gauteng, South Africa
4. Zambia
5. Uganda
6. West Africa
7. Spain
8. Republic of Ireland
9. Western Europe
10. Finland
11. Singapore
12. Philippines
13. Taiwan
14. Russia
15. Ukraine
16. India
17. Thailand
18. Papua New Guinea
19. Indonesia
20. United States of America
21. Middle East



# Observation List and Quick Reference

## #1

**Foster Obedient Lifestyles through Discovery Learning**
Urban disciple-making grows when Scripture Engagement emphasizes obedience and practical application over information, resulting in communities that multiply.

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-makers should seek to create discovery-based environments where people regularly hear from God through Scripture and respond with simple, active steps of obedience.

## #2

**Invest in Intentional, High-Cost, High Commitment Disciple-Making Relationships**
Deep, high-investment relationships remain a core pathway for generational fruit, even when they demand sacrifices in time and energy.

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-makers should seek to walk closely with faithful people, investing deeply in relationships that form character, foster trust, and multiply long-term fruit.

## #3

**Emphasize Affinity Group Engagement**
Because cities are made up of layered subcultures and social networks, focusing disciple-making within natural affinity groups allows the Gospel to spread through shared identity and existing relational networks.

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-makers should identify and engage population segments and natural social networks: communities of shared identity, experience, or interest, rather than trying to broadly reach the city as a whole.

## #4

**Develop Servant-Hearted Leaders Who Replicate**
Teams, groups and disciple-making communities thrive when leadership is marked by humility, service, and shared life rather than position or performance, enabling leaders to multiply their influence across diverse contexts.

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-makers should invest in raising leaders who live and lead like Jesus.

## #5

**Ground Disciple-Making in Biblical Principles with Agile, Adaptive Practice**
**Sub-observations:**

- Learning Through Trial and Error
- Joy-Filled Belonging
- Strategic Use of Neutral / Secular / Third Spaces
- Strategic Adaptations to Specifically Respond to Unique Urban Challenges
- Obedience Principle as an Anchor

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-makers should root their practices in clear biblical principles and precedent, modeling personal adaptability while equipping their teams to respond faithfully to their local cultures, rhythms, and complexities.



## #6

**Prioritize and Pursue a Clear Vision for Disciple-Making Multiplication in the City**
A God-given vision for generational multiplication provides focus and resilience, sustaining disciple-makers through complexity and aligning diverse teams toward a shared future.

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-makers should seek to cultivate and consistently reinforce a clear, God-given vision centered on generational multiplication of disciples, using it as both a compass and filter for decisions, partnerships, and practices.

## #7

**Prioritize Local and Indigenous Leaders**
Urban impact expands when disciple-makers elevate leaders already embedded in local communities, who carry cultural insight, influence and trust that outsiders cannot replicate.

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-makers should intentionally identify, empower, and walk alongside local or indigenous leaders prioritizing their development and leadership.



## #8

**Focus on a Few to Reach the Many**
Investing deeply in a small number of key leaders creates multiplying ripples, as those few carry vision, practices, and DNA into their wider networks and generations.

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-makers should give a significantly larger portion of their available time toward a few key disciples and leaders, potentially between 3 and 12.

## #9

**Cultivate Structures that are both Clear and Contextually Flexible**
In cities, resilient disciple-making relies on and is sustained by structures that offer stability through shared rhythms and commitments, while remaining simple, adaptable, and decentralized enough to thrive within diverse and rapidly changing environments.

**Sub-observations:**

1. Decentralized Leadership Structures
2. Ordinary People Drive Fruitfulness
3. Backbone and Flexible Group and Meeting Structures
4. Regular Rhythms Anchor Flexible Structures

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-makers should cultivate decentralized structures and sustainable rhythms that are simple, flexible, and contextually grounded.

## #10

**Coach Disciple-Makers to Pursue their God-given Goals**
Coaching functions as ongoing relational training that equips disciple-makers to set goals, persevere through challenges, and multiply others, offering a modern, relevant complement to traditional training.

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-makers should embed coaching as a regular community rhythm that equips committed disciple-makers to grow in spiritual and emotional health, multiply disciple-making, and stay aligned with Jesus and His ways.

## #11

**Start among the Marginalized and Overlooked**
Urban breakthrough often begins among the poor, refugees, and the broken, who demonstrate openness to the Gospel and frequently become some of the most passionate and effective leaders.

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-makers should engage the broken and marginalized with honor, serving and partnering with them as co-laborers in the Gospel.

## #12

**Invest in One-on-One Discipleship Relationships that Multiply**
Personal discipleship, often in one-on-one or micro-group form, creates space for vulnerability, accountability, and formation that sustains long-term obedience and leadership development, especially when used alongside other group formats.

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-makers should invest in one-on-one relationships that deepen trust, model obedience, and serve group-based and generational disciple-making.

## #13

**Remain in the Harvest and Discern Receptive People and Networks**
Fruitful practitioners maintain an active, ongoing presence in the harvest, seeking out persons or households of peace whose openness becomes a relational bridge for the Gospel into new, urban networks.

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-makers should prioritize presence among the least reached, pursue meaningful conversations, and stay with those who respond with openness and obedience.

## #14

**Root Strategy and Vision in Listening to and Following God**
Prayer, listening, and obedience to God's leading ground strategy in dependence, rather than human planning, enabling teams to discern where He is at work and align accordingly.

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-makers should practice regular rhythms of prayer, listening, and obedience, trusting that clarity flows from remaining in God's presence, not from human plans alone.

## #15

**Team Feedback Loops and Rhythms Sustain Healthy Urban Growth**
Regular reflection, evaluation, and feedback, particularly in team settings rather than in isolation, provide alignment, accountability, and resilience that sustain growth across generations.

**Potential Strategy:**
Urban disciple-making teams should practice simple, consistent rhythms of reflection and feedback that track growth, reinforce obedience, and guard against mission drift.



# #1

## Foster Obedient Lifestyles through Discovery Learning

"I can tell you about hundreds and thousands of homes. By 5:30 / 6:00, you will hear songs. They are all gathering as families to do Discovery Bible Studies."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

"When we start to read the Scriptures and apply it to our lives, we're going to grow."
INTERVIEWEE IN EUROPE

"People were working and had to do their Discovery Bible Studies at midnight."
INTERVIEWEE IN ASIA

"We're working daily: small things, small obedience, step-by-step, and expect that God will show us."
INTERVIEWEE IN EURASIA

### Potential Strategy:

Urban disciple-makers should seek to create discovery-based environments where people regularly hear from God through Scripture and respond with simple, active steps of obedience.



In Phase One, we identified discovery-based learning as a significant observation for urban disciple-making practitioners. In this second phase of research, the pattern became clearer. Across diverse urban contexts, fruitful disciple-makers are shaping cultures where discovery and obedience are a way of life. This observation centered on the creation of learning environments where together, people engaged Scripture directly, listened for God's voice and responded in practical steps of obedience. Interviewees consistently described discovery as a 'value' or 'principle' and not as a tool. Scripture discovery and application happens 'at every level.'

The expression varied. Some followed the traditional Discovery Bible Study (DBS) framework, while others simplified or reshaped the questions to fit their context. In oral settings, Scripture was shared verbally; in others, sessions stretched across weeks to allow deeper reflection. One team gathered at midnight because it was the only available time, while others used digital tools like Waha, WordGo etc. to sustain reproducibility. Despite the differences, the non-negotiables held steady: opening Scripture together, making space for God to speak, and responding in obedience and sharing.

Repetition and accountability gave these practices their weight. Groups returned again and again to simple questions such as, "What did you do with last week's passage?" or "Who did you share this with?" These rhythms created feedback loops that normalized obedience and set multiplication in motion. One leader explained the simple pattern used in gatherings: sharing the Scripture, asking meaningful open-ended questions, identifying personal applications, 'I will' statements, and reports of who they will share the Scripture with. This repetition formed what the leader called a way to 'pass on the culture.'

Interviewees highlighted that these discovery environments were highly active and participatory. Instead of depending on a single teacher, everyone was expected to contribute, reflect and share. This created space for new leaders to emerge quickly, with ordinary participants, including children and new believers, leading their own groups. A few interviewees described how children as young as 10 or 11 were leading their own groups. One common refrain was that "keeping it simple means anyone can learn, anyone can lead."

Through these steady cycles of reflection, obedience, and sharing, participants feel empowered to disciple others beyond the group.

As one leader reflected, "By doing Discovery week in and week out, we are training each other. We are equipping, we are empowering." Another emphasized the value of asking, "But what does God require you to do?" Such questions move people from hearing toward applying, embedding obedience as a natural expression of love and trust for God.

**Discovery was also used as a training paradigm.** Instead of lecture-style teaching, leaders shaped training environments around the same participatory, obedience-oriented process they wanted reproduced in the field. New disciples were invited to engage Scripture, respond, and pass it on, sometimes in a single day. As one leader explained, "It's simple enough for him to train together with me. That very same day we went into the harvest." In many cities, training was kept simple and modular: short cycles, weekly conversational sessions, or oral storytelling adapted to culture. Another noted, "All the training we do, I pick a Bible passage or reading… and then I do it discovery-based because that's what's clicking in that culture." By emphasizing practice over theory, practitioners gave people immediate confidence to lead and embed reproducible DNA across discipleship, leadership development, and training.

## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

Modern cities are complex, pluralistic, and often marked by both busyness and fragmentation. Many urban residents have limited time, carry competing priorities, and may view institutional religion with skepticism. Discovery-based environments provide a relational and participatory alternative to traditional, centralized models. They invite people to engage directly with Scripture, reflect on what it means for their lives, and commit to concrete steps of obedience within their own relational networks.

Because the process is reproducible and adaptable, it can be integrated into diverse schedules, cultural backgrounds, and social settings. As mentioned, interviewees held midnight gatherings due to time constraints and shared the story without a Bible for oral cultures. These examples illustrate the ability of discovery-based learning to embed in the lived realities of urban life without requiring much in the way of expertise, extensive resources, or rigid formats. These rhythms also prove resilient in the face of disruption. When participants relocate for work or study, the pattern often travels with them, seeding new discovery groups in new neighborhoods or even cities.

In urban contexts, institutional trust is often low. Discovery-based environments shift the center of authority away from the facilitator and toward the shared encounter with the Scripture and the Holy Spirit. This posture fosters personal and community ownership of the spiritual journey. One interviewee explained, "There is no such thing as success or failure. There's only faithfulness," capturing a value system that measures health simply by consistent obedience to what God reveals.

This approach also addresses one of the persistent challenges of urban disciple-making: leadership development. Because the process is relatively simple and participatory, leadership

can naturally emerge from within the group. Such early empowerment helps decentralize leadership and creates multiple entry points for multiplication. Several interviewees also noted that discovery became their primary method of training leaders. By practicing discovery around Scripture, evangelism, and even conflict resolution, disciples were equipped to think and act missionally in every area of life.

Importantly, discovery-based learning cultivates an obedience-centered culture. Questions such as, "What does God require you to do?" or "Who will you share this with?" move participants from abstract discussion to personal action. Over time, this repeated pattern normalizes the expectation that following Jesus involves both hearing and obeying. Particularly in cities where individualism and personal faith are common, these communities counter isolation by linking obedience to shared accountability.

Discovery environments shift the discipleship process from consumption to participation, from programs to relational networks, from knowledge acquisition to lived obedience. In this way, they provide a scalable, contextually responsive framework for making disciples in the city. And they can begin anywhere: in homes, at work, in a park, or in a church building, and yet carry the DNA for multiplication wherever life happens.

**A Caution:** While Discovery Groups and Discovery Bible Study (DBS) are helpful tools/structures, there is a risk of relying too heavily on a single format. When the tool becomes the focus rather than the atmosphere of discovery, flexibility and contextual responsiveness can be lost. What matters most is cultivating a posture of listening to God and obeying together, whatever form that takes in a given community.

**Some Strategic Implications beyond DBS:**

- Shape your training and disciple-making environments around discovery principles, peer learning and direct application.
- Create disciple-making team rhythms of accountability and sharing that reinforce obedience to what God is saying.
- Train facilitators to lead teams and meetings with good questions, not answers. Focus on listening to God and one another.



## Questions for discussion and reflection

In your context, how might you re-orient disciple-making around obeying God rather than learning new information?

Where and how are you creating space for people to discover God's Word together?

What habits of obedience and accountability are being modeled and reproduced in your teams?

# #2

## Invest in Intentional, High-Cost, High Commitment Disciple-Making Relationships

"One of the things that spoke to them the most was that we came, and when they committed to Christ, we didn't leave them."
INTERVIEWEE IN EUROPE

"In the early days, discipleship for us was more about the knowledge: the Word of God... and of course that's important. But now we also focus on community and then you connect with them more, even in everyday life."
INTERVIEWEE IN ASIA

"The goal is not just to plant churches, but to see transformed lives and deep discipleship."
INTERVIEWEE IN EURASIA

"If you start being faithful to this, it's not going to feel like it's working. It doesn't feel like that for any of us. That feeling that it's not working or 'Am I not doing it right?' It is a feeling that has been shared by all of us on this road. And that's a reason to get started as soon as possible."
INTERVIEWEE IN NORTH AMERICA

### Potential Strategy

Urban disciple-makers should seek to walk closely with faithful people, investing deeply in relationships that form character, foster trust, and multiply long-term fruit.

Across both phases of research, one of the most consistent patterns to emerge is this: disciple-making in cities is most fruitful when it is deeply personal, highly intentional, and often costly. Urban disciple-makers invest significant time, emotional presence, and energy into relationships. As one leader put it, "In discipleship, it is relational. It has to be relational, because the Gospel flies best on the wings of relationship."

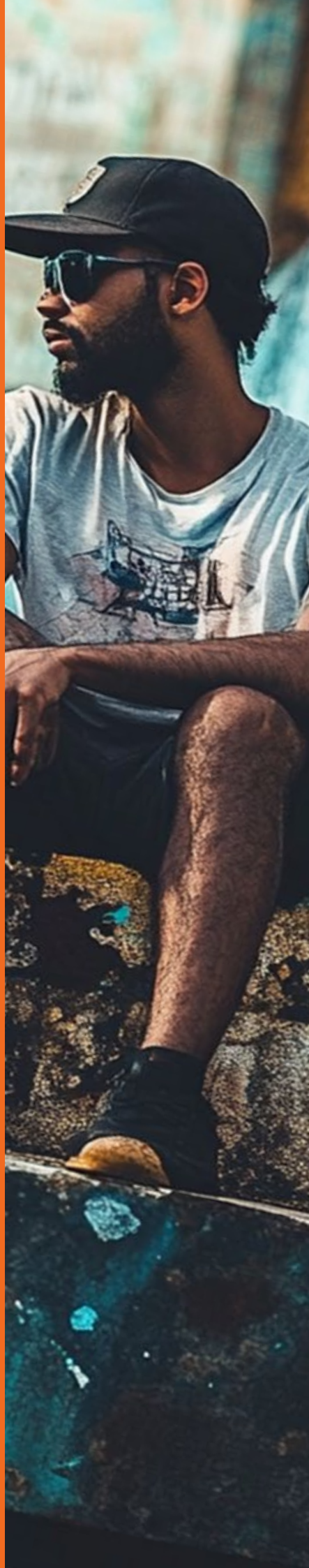
These relationships are anchored in active presence (a shared life), built trust and timely correction. Many city leaders intentionally seek out individuals who are faithful, available, and teachable, then walk closely with them. This is something beyond casual mentorship or occasional training: it is deliberate, relationship-driven discipleship that requires sacrifice, sufficient time and energy, and sustained intentionality.

Interviewees described what this looks like in practice: shared meals, regular one-on-ones, small group meetings, messages back and forth, and late-night phone calls. Hospitality plays a central role. "There's always extra plates... on the table there is always extra food," one shared. "So they really become part of the family and part of our home. I think this is the level of commitment that they really thrive on."

The cost is real. These relationships demand emotional bandwidth and spiritual resilience. But they also build trust, and that trust becomes the soil where transformation takes root. "One of the things that spoke to them the most was that we came, and when they committed to Christ, we didn't leave them."

Relational investment can appear slow, stretching across months or even years. "Let's take it one step at a time," one said. "It takes much more time, but the quality seems to be better." Leaders repeatedly emphasized that while the fruit is gradual, it is also deep and lasting. One interviewee explained, "Ultimately, we want to see lives change. We want to see the Gospel impacting and transforming people's lives." Another echoed that the real sign of fruit is when disciples begin influencing others toward Jesus: "If they are, then I will give them all my time."

When setbacks come: betrayals, failures, losses etc., as they inevitably do, it is this relational trust that allows communities to heal and endure. "There were areas where we failed completely, but because we had strong relational trust, we could walk through that and keep going together."



As individuals experience being known, loved, and discipled through real-life relationships, they are coached to do the same for others. This high-cost, deep investment appears to replicate. Replication flows, not from programs, but from modeling life-on-life obedience. As one described, "I'm raising this one. I'm also encouraging him to raise another one. And that one is raising another one… At one point, I met this generation. I brought this one. That one brought that one."

## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

Urban life is often fast-paced and isolating, leaving many without the stable, trusted relationships necessary for deep spiritual formation. When disciple-makers choose to invest deeply in relationships (whether with individuals, families, or small clusters), it creates relational credibility that teaching alone cannot achieve. These intentional, high-commitment relationships root disciple-making in availability and trust.

Such a long-term investment can be profoundly countercultural in cities, where relationships are frequently shallow, rushed, or transactional. Yet it is precisely this kind of consistency and presence that allows people to feel known, accepted, and loved: sometimes in an unfamiliar but impactful manner. In contexts where family systems are fragmented and individualism is the norm, this steady, self-giving presence can become transformational. As one leader observed, "In the cities, everything about family breaks down… So when someone walks with you through hardship, it's life changing. That's discipleship."

This practice also pushes against the efficiency-driven logic of the city. Urban practitioners often feel pressured to produce visible results quickly, but costly relational investment embraces a slower, less measurable path that, nonetheless, produces deeper roots. Though it may appear inefficient, it enables trust to grow, spiritual maturity to take root, and leadership to emerge in ways that endure the volatility of city life. Communities built on such tested trust are far more resilient when facing conflict, disappointment, or persecution, because bonds of loyalty and shared life hold them together.

Moreover, high-commitment discipleship resists the consumerist patterns of urban Christianity, where spiritual engagement is often reduced to programs, content, or events. Instead, it embodies a "belong before believe" dynamic: disciples experience the Gospel as life shared over time, rather than abstract teaching lessons. This relational credibility creates fertile ground for multiplication, because those who are discipled in this way often reproduce what they have experienced, offering the same depth of commitment to others.

Far from being optional, this posture of presence may be foundational for sustainable disciple-making in urban contexts. It forms a counter-narrative to the anonymity, fragmentation, and busyness of the city, replacing them with consistency, trust, and shared life that allow disciple-makers to grow with depth as well as breadth.

## Questions for discussion and reflection

In your context, who are the individuals or groups that merit sustained, high-investment discipleship, and what criteria help you discern them?

What relational practices (hospitality, shared rhythms, accountability, etc.) most effectively build trust and reproducibility in your disciple-making relationships?

What are the greatest challenges or barriers to high-cost, high-commitment discipleship in your context? What are some practical ways to address these challenges?

# #3

## Emphasize Affinity Group Engagement

"If someone asked me how I should reach a city, what I would tell them to do is start with social research…ethnographic research for different segments of the population."
INTERVIEWEE IN ASIA

"What does it look like in our context? The lost: tribes, villages, cities, nations. That is the harvest. Or within cities, segments of the population."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

"They just want to meet people who do what they want to do."
INTERVIEWEE IN ASIA

### Potential Strategy

Urban disciple-makers should identify and engage population segments and natural social networks: communities of shared identity, experience, or interest, rather than trying to broadly reach the city as a whole.



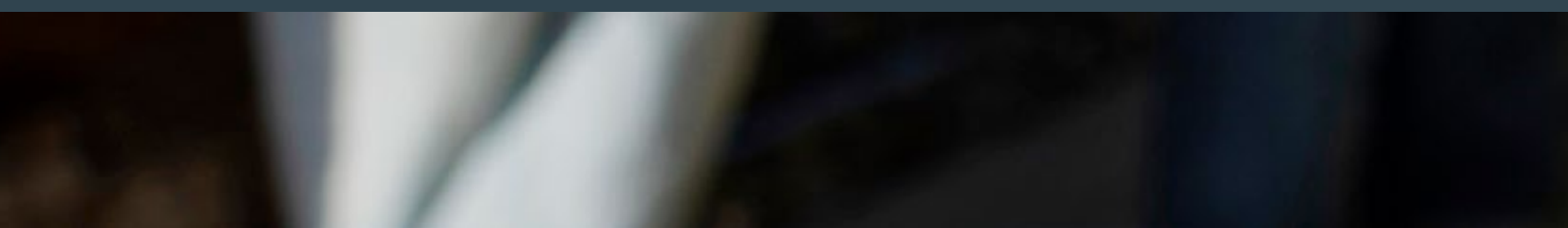
This observation, strongly present in the first phase, continues to emerge as a dominant pattern in Phase 2. In urban disciple-making, practitioners are increasingly focusing on specific affinity groups such as students, artists, immigrants, business leaders, or marginalized populations, rather than traditional people groups. As one leader summarized it simply, "We just have to go and bring Jesus into these natural communities that are already there."

In this report, an affinity group or population segment refers to people who share a common identity, interest, background, or life circumstance. In complex urban environments, these points of cohesion, many interviewees mentioned, may offer more stable relational pathways than family or neighborhood (geographic ties). "There's more social bonding with affinity than there is with extended family," one explained, highlighting how trust and belonging flow along lines of common experience, not necessarily proximity. For this reason, many practitioners begin with informal social research, mapping population segments and listening for "what local residents are talking about." One practitioner goes even further, stressing the importance of careful contextual research: "Start with social research, ethnographic research for different segments of the population." This helps leaders identify where shared identity already provides natural entry points.

Affinity engagement was described both as recognizing what already exists and, in some cases, creating spaces where belonging can emerge. Leaders spoke of helping people realize "there are spaces where they have reasons to exist," pointing to gyms, workplaces, university dorms, refugee housing, or taxi stands as natural gathering points. In highly individualized contexts, where relational bonds are thinner, some practitioners intentionally formed new affinity spaces so that discipleship could grow through shared purpose or interest.

Multiple leaders emphasized that in-group leaders, within these networks, are the most effective disciple-makers. As one put it, "Every person in that group is a key to a closed door… no one is going to be able to reach his or her friends or family better than him or her." Others noted how credibility often depended on shared status or profession: "He was invited to their home because he is a lawyer. The superintendent of police will not invite a common person into their home. The disciple-maker has to be one among them."

Leaders described how this approach took different forms depending on cultural context. In collectivist cities, social networks generally remained more intact, and disciple-making spread quickly along these ties. In more individualized Western settings, multiplication was often slower in the beginning, with many groups beginning as first-generation communities. Yet even in these contexts, once discipleship was grounded in affinity-level bonds, it proved resilient: enduring transience and uncertainty better than generic outreach.





Examples spanned a wide spectrum: university students reaching fellow students, immigrants discipling across language groups, youth movements spreading among peers, professionals influencing colleagues, and affinity-based churches multiplying through networks like fitness groups or single mothers' clubs. One leader explained, "A majority of the people in our network need to just have a regular job, because that's where you meet people. That's where life happens. And then out of that, you can find people of peace."

Interviewees described cities themselves as a sort of accelerant, where the Gospel can more easily jump from one social segment to another in ways that ripple across urban systems. Generational disciple-making, they noted, often emerged when leaders recognized those already gathered, connected, and positioned for influence, and then honored the relational bonds that held them together.

## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

Affinity focused disciple-making may be particularly fruitful in urban contexts, because it aligns with how people naturally form identity and seek belonging. Urban residents often organize around shared interests, needs, vocations, language, or values. These affinity groups create natural points of cohesion that offer relational bridges which might otherwise take years to establish. Affinity networks may provide some of the few remaining 'villages' of belonging in urban spaces, making them particularly significant.

By engaging these communities, movement catalysts gain access to established trust networks, allowing them to listen more attentively, contextualize with more wisdom, and build credibility more quickly. Rather than planting something entirely new, they nurture what is already growing: allowing disciple-making communities and leaders to emerge from within, shaped by their own culture and context. This reduces dependence on external leadership and ensures that the expression of faith feels indigenous, rather than imported. This in-group (local leader, see Observation 7) dynamic reduces dependence on external leadership and ensures expressions of faith feel authentic and indigenous.

Affinity engagement also holds significant potential for multiplication. When spiritual growth is embedded within existing natural relational circles, the Gospel tends to move organically from one trusted voice to another. One interviewee noted that "the Gospel flows fastest through common need, common interest, and common purpose," since people already seek community in the absence of extended family. By contrast, in more individualistic contexts, replication may be slower and often starts with first-generation groups. As one practitioner explained,... "multiplication is more complicated than in places where people are already deeply interconnected." In both cases, affinity-based approaches accelerate access and sustain depth, creating generational impact across segments of the city. Because affinities cut across geography, they allow the Gospel to flow through workplaces, neighborhoods and social spaces in ways geographic churches may struggle.

While many urban disciple-makers engage affinity groups that already exist, others recognize the need to create them. In contexts marked by isolation or fragmentation, shared identity may be hard to identify or entirely absent. In these cases, disciple-makers intentionally form spaces where authentic shared needs and interests can surface, creating new networks where discipleship can take root. These created communities often meet deep longings for belonging, functioning both as spiritual entry points and as countercultural spaces of care in an otherwise disconnected city.

## Questions for discussion and reflection

Where in your city do natural communities already exist: places where people gather around shared identity, interest, or need? How might you begin to listen, learn, and engage there?

Who within those affinity groups might already carry relational credibility and spiritual openness? How could you come alongside them rather than starting something new?

In what ways might your current strategies be shaped more by geography or general outreach than by relational networks? What would shift if you reoriented your approach around affinity and trust?

# #4

## Develop Servant-Hearted Leaders Who Replicate

"When we trust others with responsibility, we see them grow in ways they wouldn't otherwise."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

"Seeing someone who was just a normal Bible study attendee become an apostolic, passionate person who reaches their community."
INTERVIEWEE IN EUROPE

"The biggest need among urban (workers) is learning how to balance work, ministry, and emotional health. Burnout is a real risk."
INTERVIEWEE IN ASIA

### Potential Strategy

Urban disciple-makers should invest in raising leaders who live and lead like Jesus.



This observation, strongly present in Phase 1, continues to emerge powerfully through to Phase 2. These burgeoning leaders are mostly not professional, employed ministry leaders, but ordinary people who have been trusted, empowered, and shaped over time. They model lives of obedience, humility, and relational investment. As one interviewee put it bluntly, "God is sick and tired of the big names. Sick and tired. Now God is using ordinary people." This was not presented as a critique of giftedness, but a reflection of the kind of leadership that seems to multiply: low-control, high-trust, and anchored in the example of Christ.

Practitioners described leadership as something formed by experience in the 'harvest field.' One noted, "When we trust others with responsibility, we see them grow in ways they wouldn't otherwise." Another shared the joy of seeing "someone who was just a normal Bible study attendee become an apostolic, passionate person who reaches their community." Leaders often described this process as "be with me, then do with me," showing that servant-hearted leadership is shaped primarily through modeling and shared life rather than classroom style instruction.

These shifts seem to happen through high proximity and a willingness to release others early. As one interviewee explained, "The thing is that I release early. I pass on the values quite quickly." This early empowerment, entrusting real responsibility to disciples before they are fully ready, was repeatedly cited as a catalyst for growth and multiplication. Servant leaders give away authority rather than holding tightly to it, creating space for ordinary people to rise.

These leaders often emerge from within their own communities: people who already carry relational trust and cultural fluency. When leadership comes from the inside-group, interviewees suggested that it may be more sustainable and more easily multiplied. Because they share the same work place or life patterns, neighborhood or social background, they can lead with credibility that outsiders often lack. This insider emergence reinforces the theory that multiplication may flow most naturally when leaders rise from among the people, rather than from outside.

Interviewees also stressed the importance of humility and service as a countercultural witness in cities. Urban environments often reward credentials, productivity, and image, yet they explained that leaders who multiplied most consistently were those who served quietly, carried burdens with others, and led from weakness rather than status.

At the same time, sustainability emerged as a critical issue. Several noted that burnout is a constant risk in high-pressure urban contexts. Servant-hearted leadership must therefore model healthy rhythms of prayer, obedience, and shared responsibility, so that both leaders and communities endure.

Ultimately, leaders shared, this kind of leadership multiplies because it is observable, accessible, and grounded in life with God. As one interviewee described, "It's the joy that you can see in the disciples' eyes when they are returning to Jesus and (they) say, 'We are doing the same stuff that you're doing, Jesus, and it's working!'" Joy surfaced repeatedly as both a fruit and a sign of servant leadership: joy when disciples step into new responsibility, joy when leaders see others surpass them, and joy when movements spread through shared life rather than control. Rather than building followers, these disciple-makers multiply more leaders: men and women who love, serve, listen, and lead with the same Spirit and values.

## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

Urban societies often prize charisma and position, yet servant-hearted leaders stand out by offering a striking counter-narrative. A leader's authority (credibility) does not rest on position but on being available, trustworthy, and deeply shaped by the way of Jesus: qualities that can be seen and tested in everyday life. People follow what they can verify up close, and in cities marked by skepticism, this kind of grounded trust becomes indispensable.

Servant leadership also bridges diversity. Cities bring together cultures, languages, and classes in ways that often resist top-down authority. In these settings, leaders who listen and empower others create the conditions for local leadership to emerge from within the community itself. This posture allows the Gospel to move through local leaders rather than depend on external authority, giving it cultural relevance and resilience.

Because this approach is low-control and high-trust, it spreads without requiring a public performance. Leaders entrust responsibility early, offering room to learn through practice, failure, and growth. This produces many practitioners instead of a few performers, mirroring the distributed nature of the city itself: multiple nodes, micro-communities, and short windows of attention. Multiplication becomes more natural when leadership is decentralized.

Servant-hearted leaders also strengthen resilience. When ownership is shared, and no single figure becomes indispensable, communities are less fragile. The departure of one leader does not cause collapse, because others have already been trusted, shaped, and equipped. This creates disciple-making momentum that can endure the volatility and mobility of cities.

And in environments where burnout and moral failure are real risks, this posture celebrates character and shared load. Leaders grow from who they are becoming in Christ, not from constant output. This orientation sustains longevity and provides a living example of discipleship. Joy and resilience become the marks of this kind of leadership. Because authority is shared rather than hoarded, communities remain resilient, even in the face of transition or mobility.

Finally, servant leadership opens the door for broader participation. It lowers barriers so that those without credentials can step into leadership and disciple others in their own circles. It also normalizes disciple-making in everyday spaces: homes, workplaces, gyms, and neighborhoods, integrating faith with the realities of urban life.

Over time, this posture cultivates trust, depth, and spiritual maturity that sustains generational multiplication of disciples making disciples.

## Questions for discussion and reflection

Reflect on a leader who impacted your life by modeling the way of Jesus. What about their posture or practice made them worth imitating?

In your current context, what might it look like to trust and release others earlier, even before they feel fully ready? What fears or barriers might need to be addressed?

What kind of leadership are you modeling and is it something others can actively follow and reproduce?

# #5

## Ground Disciple-Making in Biblical Principles with Agile, Adaptive Practice

"You could see the passion to check: Where are we not doing well? Are we missing something in the DNA or are we in line? It's so amazing, the urban (opportunity), with proper planning and focus."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

"So we're just trying to be aligned to a backbone - values and covenants but allow for contextualization around method and strategy. This lets every sister movement around the world have a lot of room to let the thing come to life in that city the way Jesus wants it to, in a way that might be different from all the others."
INTERVIEWEE IN NORTH AMERICA

"This is the journey. It's a learning journey...I like to experiment, and this is what I do in ministry. I think it's more or less safe to experiment with God. If you speak to the team they will tell you that I would rather die experimenting than die regretting."
INTERVIEWEE IN MIDDLE EAST

"You have to be ready to change your schedule, because people are not ready to change their schedule. They're busy, crazy busy in the city. And you, as a disciple-maker have to be like Jesus: stop and serve when the moment presents itself. So be attentive to that."
INTERVIEWEE IN MIDDLE EAST

### Potential Strategy

Urban disciple-makers should root their practices in clear biblical principles and precedent, modeling personal adaptability while equipping their teams to respond faithfully to their local cultures, rhythms, and complexities.

Across cities, interviewees continued to emphasize a principle-based posture of disciple-making, rather than a method-driven model. This observation, present in both phases, is not about organizational design, but about the underlying DNA: biblical convictions such as obedience to God's Word, multiplication, and spiritual family, that guide adaptive practice across diverse urban contexts. Rather than importing rigid strategies or fixed programs, practitioners focused on distilling and applying core Kingdom values in ways that could be faithfully expressed within their own city realities. One interviewee advised disciple-makers to "choose a strategy that is biblical, reproducible, and simple."

This shift was often driven by the unique demands of urban life. Cities introduce complex variables: fragmented relationships, competing ideologies, demanding schedules, and constant change. As one interviewee put it, "People are flooding to the cities… and so we better have models for the cities." Several interviewees described having to rethink their overall strategy to engage effectively, not just modify tools or techniques. Rather than force-fitting established models into urban realities, they learned to let Scripture and Spirit-led discernment guide fresh responses that honored both biblical conviction and contextual integrity. One interviewee reflected that they were encouraged not to "copy and paste," but were given "roadmaps and some tensions to think about and some principles to wrestle with together" as they contextualized in their own setting.

This values-first approach does not mean everything is negotiable. Interviewees repeatedly affirmed that while forms should remain flexible and responsive, principles like engaging with and obedience to Scripture and making disciples must remain central. As one put it, "Any church should have a base value set that would lead them to want to multiply disciples and churches, because it's baked into the DNA." The Discovery Bible Study model, for example, was used widely, but adapted frequently: some groups shortened the passages, used oral story telling or simplified the questions to accommodate participants.

Because urban environments are unpredictable and diverse, interviewees noted that this approach allowed for fruitful trial and error and contextualization without compromising faithfulness. One leader summarized their posture this way: "This is the journey. It's a learning journey. I like to poke. I like to experiment. And this is what I do in ministry. And I think it's more or less safe to experiment with God… I would rather die experimenting than die regretting."

These observations seem to indicate that in urban contexts, fruitfulness comes from holding fast to biblical DNA (i.e. abiding, prayerfulness, obedience to Jesus, reproduction etc.) while encouraging practices to adapt through experimentation and discernment. This values-first approach provides stability amid complexity and ensures that flexibility does not drift into compromise but remains anchored in the Word of God.



## Stand out sub-themes further underscore this observation:

The following sub-themes highlight how this principle-based, adaptive approach takes shape across diverse urban environments. They illustrate both the convictions that anchor disciple-makers and the creative expressions that emerge as teams respond to real world complexity.

## 1. Learning Through Trial and Error

Urban complexity necessitates experimentation and perseverance.

Disciple-making in cities may not follow a predictable path. Fruitful practitioners embrace a learning posture, willing to try, fail, reflect, and adjust. Rather than clinging to what worked elsewhere, they allow Scripture and Spirit-led discernment to shape the next step. In places of high complexity and low predictability, agility becomes essential.

One interviewee described how they tried various movement tools and realized they needed to "eat the fish and spit out the bones," adjusting based on what actually worked in their context. Another similarly shared how they failed "99 times" to find what worked, emphasizing the need to keep trying and adjusting through failure. Another summarized this posture, noting that "there is no such thing as success or failure. There's only faithfulness."

## 2. Joy-Filled Belonging

Joy-filled communities emerged as a consistent catalyst for disciple-making. Interviewees described how meals, laughter, sports, and shared rhythms transformed fragmented individuals into spiritual families. These environments create real friendships, fostered belonging, opened space for spiritual conversation, and sustained long-term commitment.

Several leaders emphasized that discipleship must move beyond information transfer to become an identity found in family-like communities. As one put it, "… people are not looking for instruction alone, but for 'a spiritual family.'" Others drew on Acts 2 to describe movement communities that reflect the relational culture Jesus built with his disciples, where believers "live in unity, share life, and support one another."





Joy was described as a theological marker of God's Kingdom breaking into the city, sustaining communities with hope amid hardship.

- **Meals and shared tables** proved particularly powerful. One interviewee noted that meals created space for connection in otherwise busy lives, turning ordinary rhythms into opportunities for discipleship: "Most of my disciples, I got them through food… Especially when you live in this century where people don't have time to cook." An interviewee described eating together as "the main thing" that bonds groups, while another recalled how "Communion tastes better when dipped in peppered sauce," expressing how fellowship around a table softens hearts.
- **Sports and play** also featured prominently as entry points. One interviewee explained how weekly sports gatherings created deep bonds and opened doors for the Gospel: "People feel it's a family. But it started through sports." Another similarly highlighted laughter as an important practice in welcoming new people: joy itself broke down barriers and made belonging possible.

- **Hospitality and creative integration** further reinforced this dynamic. One shared that "teenagers like to eat… that's the attraction" in youth ministry, while another interviewee experimented with combining a one-minute exercise and one minute prayer challenge to integrate spiritual and physical well-being. One described population-specific retreats like a family camp for 70 of a common ethnic minority group, where participants experienced joy, community, and renewal: "We just invited them for a night of prayer… and they experienced the Holy Spirit."

Taken together, these examples reveal that joy-filled communities may be integral to multiplication in cities. Shared meals, laughter, play, and creative hospitality transform gatherings into places of safety and delight.



## 3. Strategic Use of Neutral / Secular / Third Spaces

Interviewees emphasized that disciple-making thrives when it happens in natural gathering spaces rather than church buildings. Formal religious settings can sometimes carry suspicion or cultural distance, especially among the unchurched or religiously disillusioned. In response, practitioners often hosted groups in homes, coffee shops, gyms, offices, train/bus stations, and even bars: places where urban residents already live, work, and connect. These neutral environments lowered resistance and made spiritual conversations feel natural.

Urban strategies often began with simple questions: "Where do people gather? How many? How often?" One interviewee explained that groups met in everyday places like "the mall or a sidewalk coffee shop" because that's where people already spent time. Another described discovery groups taking place "inside of bars," while others led sessions in government offices or civic spaces. An interviewee noted that because many city residents are reluctant to open their homes to strangers, public spaces, like coffee shops and gyms became essential alternatives, creating "non-threatening environments" for engagement.

Others highlighted how discipleship flowed out of ordinary interactions in markets, schools, workplaces, or sports contexts. As one put it, "… people are already found in the places where they already have 'reasons to exist.'" Another summarized this posture simply: "We have to roll up our sleeves, go down into the valley, because the biggest difference is in the harvest, not inside church buildings."

These accounts reveal a potential pattern: disciple-making flourishes when it is woven into the fabric of everyday urban life. Neutral and familiar spaces reduce barriers and embody a "church without walls," making faith accessible.

## 4. Strategic Adaptations to Specifically Respond to Unique Urban Challenges

Many disciple-making teams shared that they began by applying rural or generalized disciple-making strategies in cities, only to discover that these models don't automatically translate. Urban environments introduce a different set of challenges: time poverty, transience, professional pressures, religious pluralism, social fragmentation, and strong ideological resistance. Scheduling alone posed significant challenges. "We kept on (having to) change times so that it would accommodate everyone. Time, as people say, is money." Another shared, "You have to be ready to change your schedule. Because people are not ready to change their schedule. They're busy: crazy busy in the city… So be attentive."

Practitioners noted that thriving in these spaces requires a strategic posture of contextual discernment and adaptation. These findings highlight that urban disciple-making requires more than minor adjustments to existing tools. Practitioners emphasized the need for smaller and more flexible groups, often six to seven people meeting locally to avoid travel barriers. Others stressed that thriving in cities depends on adapting to the rhythms of specific segments: expatriates, women, youth, or business professionals etc. because "different dynamics, different sections" require distinct approaches.



Others adapted by researching their city and entering at points of real-world relevance. One advised starting with social and ethnographic research to identify natural gathering places and population segments: “If someone asked me how I should reach a city, what I would tell them to do is start with social research in the city, ethnographic research for different segments of the population.” Another reflected, “What are the local people talking about? What are their topics? And what does that tell us about how we could enter into Biblical dialogue with them about their topics?” This indicates that effective engagement begins by entering the city’s internal narrative rather than importing external agendas.

Adaptation also extended to the structure of disciple-making practices. For some, Discovery Bible Study was reshaped into briefer, late-night sessions for workers with little free time, or into modular, conversational formats stretched over weeks rather than intensive weekends. One leader described the shift from programmatic training to coaching and relational empowerment, recognizing that linear training models “didn’t hold up” in contexts of constant complexity. This shift in posture, from “deploying a model” to “learning the city and responding in real time” marked a turning point in their effectiveness.

Another summarized their adaptive posture simply: “Number one: nurture your relationships. Number two: understand the challenges of the people around you. And number three: adapt to those challenges to start doing ministry.”

## 5. Obedience Principle as an Anchor

Faithfulness to God's Word stabilizes innovation and ensures spiritual depth.
While forms do evolve, obedience to Jesus remains constant. Interviewees consistently stressed that multiplication flows by consistent obedience to Scripture, rather than strategy alone. Discovery-based learning, 'I will' statements, and accountability to the Word were highlighted as practices that keep disciple-making grounded in application rather than method.

Several interviewees echoed this conviction. One explained that the core of their strategy was "loving obedience to the Word of God", rejecting the idea that innovation alone could produce fruit. Another described how groups regularly asked how Scripture was changing behavior in homes and communities, reinforcing that the measure of health is faithfulness lived out.

These observations suggest that obedience provides the backbone for urban disciple-making growth. It allows for innovation and contextual adaptation without drifting into heresy or superficiality, ensuring that discipleship remains both reproducible and transformative. Obedience seems to anchor leaders and communities in practices that are simple, transferable, and sustainable across diverse urban contexts.



## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

Urban environments are diverse, complex, and always changing. Strategies that work in one neighborhood may fail in another. Interviewees indicated that beginning with clear biblical principles such as obedience to Scripture, spiritual family, joy, and multiplication provides a stable foundation that can travel across cultures. These convictions then find local expression through practices that adapt well to their unique communal challenges and opportunities: including meeting in convenient everyday spaces and shaping rhythms that fit city life.

This principled starting point generates healthy cohesion without forcing uniformity. Obedience functions as an anchor, while simplicity and reproducibility emerge as practical outcomes.

An interviewee described their role as "overseeing just to give guidance... in terms of keeping the DNA," which suggests that ownership can remain local even as core values remain intact. A learning posture is essential. Rather than expecting immediate results, leaders test, reflect, and adjust in iterative cycles of practice.
Urban challenges such as time pressure, fragmented relationships, and cultural diversity require this flexibility. *(see common challenges). One interviewee summarized the reality: "Different dynamics, different sections. That's the big title." These findings highlight the value of smaller and more flexible groups, modular or conversational training, and consistent use of neutral third spaces like gyms, offices, community centers and transit hubs. Joy-filled community expressed through meals, hospitality, sports, and shared life further lowers barriers and sustains participation over time.

Taken together, this pattern suggests a pathway to sustainable growth. Grounded in biblical DNA yet responsive in method, teams develop and iterate practices that are both reproducible and contextually relevant without drifting from core faithfulness.

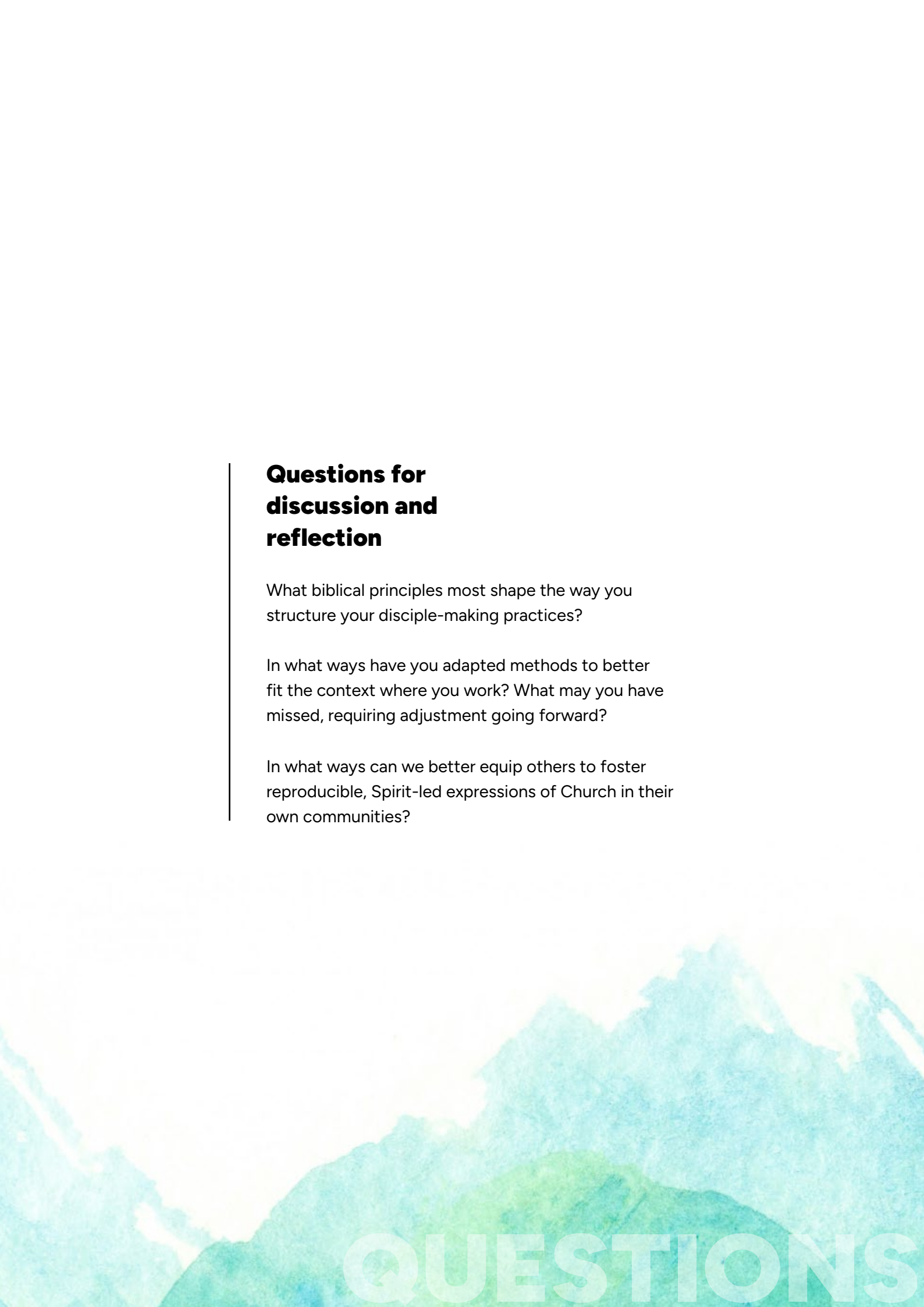
Over time, this posture of faithful experimentation gives rise to fruitful **emergent practices,** meaning new expressions of disciple-making that remain anchored in Scripture while shaped by real-world learning in that specific neighborhood's context. *(see emergent practices section)

## Questions for discussion and reflection

What biblical principles most shape the way you structure your disciple-making practices?

In what ways have you adapted methods to better fit the context where you work? What may you have missed, requiring adjustment going forward?

In what ways can we better equip others to foster reproducible, Spirit-led expressions of Church in their own communities?



# #6

## Prioritize and Pursue a Clear Vision for Disciple-Making Multiplication in the City

"If you open your eyes in the city, what does Jesus want to do? So I live with this open mind."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

"I was totally shocked when God said, 'Go to the city. You're losing a whole tribe of young people, the lost tribe of the younger generation.'"
INTERVIEWEE IN ASIA

"That is about as far as we could stretch our imagination or our vision. Little did we know that God was starting something that would start to impact all of Europe."
INTERVIEWEE IN EUROPE

### Potential Strategy

Urban disciple-makers should seek to cultivate and consistently reinforce a clear, God-given vision centered on generational multiplication of disciples, using it as both a compass and filter for decisions, partnerships, and practices.



While this theme sat just outside the top fifteen most emphasized observations in Phase 1, it rose in importance during Phase 2. Practitioners repeatedly described how a clear and compelling vision focused on generational multiplication and city-wide transformation provided both "directional energy" and sustained momentum. This was not a vague hope, but a well-defined narrative rooted in prayer, obedience, and spiritual discernment. One interviewee recalled being "totally shocked when God said, 'go to the city,'" sensing a call to reach "the lost tribe of the younger generation." Another said, "It's just two guys asking the Lord, what do you want us to do?" This posture eventually grew into a vision "to impact all of Europe."

For many, vision emerged through prayerful listening and responsive obedience, not just through careful planning. Interviewees emphasized that ministry began with seeking God's direction, "going to the mountain, seeking God's face," as one put it, and then responding with faithful next steps. "We're working daily (through) small things, small obedience, step-by-step, and expect that God will show us," said another. This clarity of vision did not always come immediately but, "came over time through lots of prayer." Others added that they learned to chase where God was already working, rather than forcing outcomes: "Go where God goes and avoid going where God doesn't want us to go."

Such clarity helped leaders resist mission drift and maintain focus on fruitfulness. One interviewee said plainly, "My focus is to see the multiplication of disciples," showing that the vision is more than spiritual leading, but a God-given orientation toward healthy growth. In some cases, this meant prioritizing younger leaders and generational succession. One leader explained, "Each catalyst needs at least three leaders who are about 20 years younger... schooling them to be a replacement or expansion catalyst if needed."

Others emphasized the unique nature of their call: "God told us, 'You guys do what others cannot do or will not do.'" For some, this meant leaving traditional structures behind in order to join God in unexpected places. "Change your sword to the plow and work, make disciples. Go outside (the church)," one recalled hearing.



Another added that their "church doesn't want to let me go… but I heard something different from God." The common factor was a sense of clear leading toward generational fruitfulness in urban places.

This vision also shaped collaboration. Interviewees cautioned against partnering indiscriminately. "Don't collaborate with everyone in a city," one explained. "For city collaborations to work, it needs a shared vision and shared metrics of success." Others applied the "person of peace" principle to partnerships, choosing to invest in Christian leaders only if they were willing and/or ready to multiply: "We work with Christian leaders and networks (if) they want to disciple and catalyze others."

The goal of movement was clear across many responses. As one interviewee said, "The Gospel is for all, but not all can go to all people. We believe according to Scripture, even God gives us a specific focus." Another added, "The goal of every (church) is expansion… to pursue Kingdom expansion, but they get to decide how that should look for them and for their community."



## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

As many urban contexts are shaped by complexity, pace, and competing demands, a clear vision for generational multiplication provides a God-centering narrative. It helps leaders remain grounded in purpose through the constant pull toward programs, activity, or visible success. Rather than reacting to the noise of the city, this vision invites intentionality. This clear vision shapes what is pursued, how and why.

This clarity shapes both strategy and structure. It orients teams to prioritize reproduction of disciples over mere reach, and long-term fruitfulness over short-term results.

The vision also serves as a necessary filter, enabling leaders to say yes to opportunities that align with disciple-making and no to those that may be good, but ultimately distracting.

Perhaps most significantly, it creates shared meaning (focus) across diverse teams and collaborators. Cities are theologically, culturally, and methodologically diverse. In this environment, a clear Spirit-led vision offers common ground. It does not impose uniform methods, but invites shared expectations for what faithful, multiplying discipleship could look like in the city over time.

This vision also reshapes how collaboration with the broader church is approached. Rather than pursuing partnerships indiscriminately, many practitioners spoke of discerning where shared vision and mutual commitment to multiplication already exist. When vision is shared, collaboration becomes catalytic, as like-minded leaders co-labor around common goals.



## Questions for discussion and reflection

What vision currently guides your team or network? Is it compelling and clear enough to shape decisions and practices at every level?

In what ways are you intentionally cultivating generational multiplication, seen as not just growth, but reproduction across multiple generations?

How do you evaluate and choose partnerships or opportunities in the city? Do they align with your core vision and disciple-making DNA?

# #7

## Prioritize Local and Indigenous Leaders

"God raises up leaders in the most unlikely of places and makes them change agents. They are the ones that have credibility in their communities, not us."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

"God prepared me to connect with people from low to high, from slums to top-ranking professionals."
INTERVIEWEE IN ASIA

"Everyone has their own oikos, their own niche where they thrive. When they are in those spaces, they don't need to reinvent how to communicate. They already have the language, the relationships, and what it takes."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

### Potential Strategy

Urban disciple-makers should intentionally identify, empower, and walk alongside local or indigenous leaders, prioritizing their development and leadership.

This observation remained firmly in the top fifteen through both phases of research. Practitioners consistently shared and emphasized that leadership arising from the city's own relational and cultural networks is central to long-term movement health. Others may "help catalyze or coach," but lasting momentum is driven by those from the harvest itself. As one interviewee reflected, "God raises up leaders in the most unlikely of places and makes them change agents. They are the ones that have credibility in their communities, not us."

In many cases, these leaders were described as people with existing influence or relational capital: business owners, group organizers or community leaders who could naturally open networks to the Gospel. One interviewee explained, "We go where the leaders are," describing a focus on those who could unlock population-segments and relational pathways. These leaders often emerge through common interests or affinities, and their embeddedness allows them to navigate cultural complexity more effectively than external teams. Some leaders were identified through cycling clubs, business groups, or neighborhood programs, while others rose from within ethnic or linguistic communities. In these spaces, leaders already possess the trust and language to speak meaningfully. As one interviewee put it, "Everyone has their own oikos, their own niche where they thrive. They already have the language, the relationships, and what it takes."

External leaders, interviewees observed, were most fruitful when they shifted to the background after an initial phase of identifying and supporting local leaders. One reflected, "God prepared me to connect with people from low to high, from slums to top-ranking professionals." Many described a deliberate handover process marked by patience and trust: "I'm stepping back gradually; he's stepping in gradually." Coaching and mentoring were seen as vital, but always in service of local vision. Some emphasized that external leaders must "submit to the guidance of local leaders for a better ministry context." This posture fostered true ownership, moving the work from "someone else's mission" to "our movement."

Rather than relying on charismatic central figures, movement practitioners often prioritize decentralized replication through these embedded leaders. "Local leaders primarily form and multiply groups… it's that person who knows that person," one explained. Teams organized around key affinity groups or population segments such as taxi owners or religious background communities and were frequently led by leaders from those very backgrounds, offering cultural and contextual credibility. In many cases, a local leader functioned as both a person of peace (See Observation 13) and a catalytic disciple-maker, opening new relational pathways for the Gospel.

Many teams mentioned that they helped build supportive infrastructure around local leaders. In one context, daily online prayer meetings provided relational connection across language and geography. In another, peer support groups brought together leaders from the same segment to encourage growth and accountability.

Interviewees also emphasized the value of cross-pollination among local leaders. Exposure to others practicing similar rhythms in other neighborhoods or cities gave leaders fresh vision and confidence. Simple exchanges like visiting another group, joining a citywide prayer gathering, or hearing stories from peers in other parts of the world reinforced that the work was reproducible and not fully dependent on outside expertise. These encounters helped local leaders persevere, adapt, and see themselves as part of a broader movement.

Urban disciple-making spreads most naturally through relationships rather than structures. As one leader noted, “People follow a leader, people follow relationships.” When local leaders are empowered to disciple within their own communities and are supported, but not controlled by external leaders, disciple-making tends to multiply with greater credibility, contextual relevance, and long-term sustainability.



## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

Cities are beautifully layered with cultures, languages and affinities, and local leaders bring the credibility and understanding needed to navigate them. Practitioners emphasized the importance of elevating leaders who already live within these networks, because they carry insight into the spiritual, social, and historical dynamics of their communities. As one interviewee explained, "Their own people need to reach them because then they can really understand."

Local leaders bring credibility that outsiders cannot easily match. They already hold trust, speak the heart language, and know how to navigate the pressures of their environment. "They don't need to reinvent how to communicate," one practitioner noted. Their presence often creates natural pathways for the Gospel to move within their circles, as well as to nearby groups.

Movements shaped by local leadership carry a stronger sense of identity and ownership. Instead of being viewed as someone else's mission, they become "our movement," sustained by those who share life and vision together. This shift expands responsibility and allows momentum to continue, even when visibility is limited or when outside resources are uncertain.

External leaders can still play a large part, but the most fruitful posture may be supportive rather than directive, especially as a movement progresses. Outsiders often serve best by coaching, encouraging and supporting leaders and emerging leaders behind the scenes. One leader described the process this way: "I'm stepping back gradually; he's stepping in gradually." These relational handovers ensure that leadership carries the community's voice and vision.

Equally important, peer learning among local leaders strengthens resilience. When leaders see others in other neighborhoods or cities practicing similar rhythms, they gain confidence that the work is reproducible and not dependent on outsiders. Shared stories, prayer gatherings, and simple exchanges reinforce that they are part of something larger than their immediate context.

Developing local leaders requires patience and trust. Some local leaders begin with limited experience and feel the weight of responsibility as they grow, yet practitioners noted that investing early often reveals unexpected, hidden potential. One reflected that the real breakthrough comes when leaders are given space to try, even if they fail, because "you'll often see more than you expected." Over time, this steady investment produces leaders who can bear the local load of multiplicative disciple-making in ways no external leader ever could.

In cities, external leaders will always struggle to fully grasp the layered languages, histories, and informal networks that shape community life. Local (in-group) leaders carry real credibility and history that cannot be imported, giving them the ability to ground disciple-making in difficult urban spaces. Prioritizing these leaders ensures that disciple-making will not always be dependent on external leaders but will be sustained from within the community itself.

## Questions for discussion and reflection

Who are the trusted, relationally connected people already embedded in your context and how might you walk with them as potential movement leaders?

What might it look like to shift from leading at the center to coaching from the margins, entrusting leadership to those within the harvest?

What structures, habits, or attitudes might need to change in order to genuinely center local leadership and ensure the work is not dependent on outsiders?

# #8

## Focus on a Few to Reach the Many

"So you have to have a ring 1 of a limited number of people. So we always say don't do more than Jesus did...Ring one has to be 12 or less." but then underneath ring 1 are many leaders' teams over each broad region... This structure ensures that each ring has a limit and keeps leaders from over-extending."
"INTERVIEWEE IN ASIA

"And how can we make ourselves not so heavily burdened by the pressure of having to be everywhere and do everything? And that's when we started to really train our guys and have our core group of leaders."
INTERVIEWEE IN EUROPE

"I don't have all the time, so I must really quantify my time and know these are the amount of people I'm supposed to spend time with."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

### Potential Strategy

Urban disciple-makers should give a significantly larger portion of their available time toward a few key disciples and leaders, potentially between 3 and 12.

This observation remained in the top fifteen through both phases of research. Across cities, interviewees consistently described investing deeply in a few key individuals leading toward broader and more sustainable multiplication. Rather than spreading their energy thin, interviewees tended to focus their time and relational investment on a small number of responsive individuals and/or leaders. As one explained, "I must really quantify my time and know these are the amount of people I'm supposed to spend time with." Another reflected on the relief this brought, "How can we make ourselves not so heavily burdened by the pressure of having to be everywhere and do everything? That's when we started to really train our guys and have our core group of leaders."

This approach reflects a relational model of leadership development grounded in coaching *(See Observation 10), mentoring, and shared life (See Observation 2). One interviewee described it as "giving your life to somebody else," while another emphasized the importance of "walking alongside people, not just teaching them from a distance." Some leaders drew directly from the example of Jesus in structuring their teams. As one put it, "You have to have a Ring 1 of a limited number of people. So we always say don't do more than Jesus did… Ring 1 has to be twelve or less." Beneath that first ring, they organized additional layers of leaders across different regions, ensuring that each circle remained small enough for genuine relationships and preventing leaders from being overextended. Each leader was expected to reproduce the same pattern by training and coaching their own few significant disciples and leaders, creating concentric circles of investment. This layered structure embedded reproducibility from the beginning.

The few are often selected for evidence of spiritual responsiveness and influence as opposed to their credentials. As one put it, "For me, the number one first sign of fruit is that they are influencing other people's lives towards Jesus… and if they are, then I will give them all my time."

Though this strategy is designed for long-term generational impact, many acknowledged it often feels slow and ineffective at first. "If you start being faithful to this, it's not going to feel like it's working… That feeling that it's not working or 'Am I not doing it right?' has been shared by all of us on this road," one leader admitted. In urban life, this patient investment was described as countercultural, yet it provided needed depth and relational stability.

Over time, the outcomes may become more evident: one practitioner reported that a disciple they mentored now leads several churches while another shared that their entire network grew out of just two initial disciples. Many noted that narrowing their scope ultimately produced exponential growth, with "groups multiplying groups… not just third, fourth generation people, but groups." **This repeated pattern: slow beginnings, patient layering, then sustained multiplication, was affirmed across many cities.**

At the same time, several leaders warned of the danger of investing deeply in people who are not faithful or multiplying. Pouring too much into those who consume attention without applying or making other disciples can slow the whole work. Discernment is needed to recognize signs of obedience and influence over time, so that focus remains on those who will carry the vision forward.

## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

Focusing on a few creates relational depth that is especially needed in fragmented and transient urban environments. Many disciple-makers noted that true multiplication doesn't begin with broad exposure or large events, but with intentional investment in a handful of faithful people who then go on to influence others. Concentrating on a small circle allows disciple-makers to cultivate credibility and resilience, which then extend outward through the natural networks of those few.

This practice also reflects the pattern of Jesus, who deliberately discipled twelve imperfect, often slow-to-understand individuals and entrusted them with the future of the movement. It reflects a biblically grounded model that provides both clarity and protection against overextension. The example of Jesus investing in twelve ordinary followers reassures practitioners that multiplication does not depend on mass engagement. In fast-paced urban settings where time is scarce, this pattern legitimizes limiting scope and focusing on depth, without guilt or pressure to be everywhere at once.

Finally, this approach creates the conditions for generational multiplication. By shaping disciples into disciple-makers, responsibility spreads organically across diverse affinity groups and communities. In urban life, one influential individual may have access to multiple networks: whether professional, communal/geographical, or recreational.

This focus on a few can feel slow or even discouraging, yet over time it can yield exponential fruit: whole networks emerging from just a few faithful disciples. Because each disciple is expected to pass on what they receive, the pattern becomes self-replicating, ensuring that growth extends across generations and contexts.

In cities, this focus on the few also serves as a counterbalance to the overwhelming challenges: change, pace etc. of urban life. Leaders admitted they cannot meet every need or reach every circle, but they can walk closely with a few who carry both stability and credibility in their own networks. Because of transience, those few often become carriers of the vision into new neighborhoods, jobs, or even other cities. And in diverse environments, a handful of embedded disciples often open relational doors far wider than an outsider could, allowing multiplication to spread naturally through networks of relationships.

## Questions for discussion and reflection

Who are the few people in your context who are showing faithfulness, responsiveness, and influence toward others, and what evidence suggests they may be worth deeper investment?

Where are you or your team becoming overextended by trying to be everywhere or respond to everyone, and what would need to change for you to invest more deeply in a smaller circle?

How are you helping those few become disciple-makers who invest in their own few, so that relational depth leads to wider multiplication rather than dependency on you?

# #9

## Cultivate Structures that are Both Clear and Contextually Flexible

"There has to be a decentralization of power… the creation of more regional teams that become new centers in the movement."
INTERVIEWEE IN ASIA

"The groups are often smaller" due to "travel time, space limitations, and competing priorities."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

"For me, church… it can be very flexible, depending on the circumstances."
INTERVIEWEE IN EURASIA

"There is some organization, but amid the organization, there's a lack of being able to draw very clear lines and say 'this is my guy and that is your guy. It is actually, both."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

"So we want discipleship happening that is not done by (just) the leader, but it's done by all the believers."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

"Keeping it simple means anyone can learn, anyone can lead, and it doesn't rely on us having all the answers."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

### Potential Strategy

Urban disciple-makers should cultivate decentralized structures and sustainable rhythms that are simple, flexible, and contextually grounded.

This observation first appeared in Phase 1 as “Build Simple and Agile Structures and Tools.” In Phase 2, it has broadened into an insight on how disciple-making teams navigate cities through a mixture of “structure and flexibility.” This observation builds upon but is distinct from Observation 5 (Ground Disciple-Making in Biblical Principles with Agile, Adaptive Practice).

While Observation 5 emphasized the biblical values and principles that must remain non-negotiable, this observation focuses on the structural and rhythmic implications of those principles. Practitioners noted that values must be paired with frameworks: groups, teams, leadership pathways, and regular rhythms of discipleship and gathering that are clear enough to reproduce, yet flexible enough to adapt.

One interviewees described this balance as “chaordic,” a healthy tension between organization (order) and Spirit-led creativity. They further clarified, “We’re not necessarily mandating people’s strategies or their vision statements or their methods, But (we) allow for contextualization around method and strategy, that lets every sister movement around the world have a lot of room to let the thing come to life in that city the way Jesus wants it to.”

Urban environments demand such adaptability. As one practitioner put it, “There is some organization, but amid the organization, there’s a lack of being able to draw very clear lines.” Another described the movement itself as “invisible, but it has life, it has legs, and it moves everywhere” - Interviewee in Africa, noting the organic and unpredictable nature of city disciple-making. The emphasis was not on rigid systems, but on frameworks that empower all believers to participate. “We want discipleship happening that is not done by just the leader, but it’s done by all the believers,” said one interviewee. Another added, “Keeping it simple means anyone can learn, anyone can lead, and it doesn’t rely on us having all the answers.”

Consistent rhythms functioned as a hidden backbone within these flexible structures. Leaders described high-intensity circles of discipleship that met daily or weekly, with outer circles gathering less frequently. Coaching meetings with key leaders often happened



weekly, biweekly or monthly, while larger celebratory events created shared identity at monthly, quarterly or annual intervals. One practitioner said simply, “Groups meet every day or every other day… once a week, that’s not community.” Another described weekly coffee with leaders to read Scripture together, while others emphasized city-wide rhythms of prayer or participatory large gatherings that always began with “how did you obey last week?” These rhythms provide coherence without rigidity, ensuring these structures did not break easily but adapted based on the need.

This observation also connects with the earlier emphasis on secular and neutral spaces, which serve not only as a good strategy but also as tangible expressions of flexible structure. In urban environments where traditional church venues may be inaccessible or culturally irrelevant, homes, coffee shops, gyms, offices, etc., allow disciple-making to remain agile and context-responsive. “We started with small group Bible studies in cafes and public spaces because people in the city are less likely to come to a church building,” one practitioner explained. Another reflected, “The Lord has given us these non-traditional spaces to share the Gospel… it’s different (from) conventional church spaces but has its own impact.” As one leader put it, “For me, church… it can be very flexible, depending on the circumstances.” Such practices demonstrate that flexibility in structure extends to both organizational design and to the physical spaces where movements gather.

The following sub-observations highlight how urban disciple-makers organize themselves through flexible structures. They illustrate the different ways leaders described balancing backbone and adaptability.



## Significant Supporting Sub-Observations

**1. Decentralized Leadership Structures**
We observed that disciple-making often advanced most fruitfully where leadership was decentralized, redundant, and interdependent. One leader emphasized the importance of "a decentralization of power… the creation of more regional teams that become new centers in the movement." Others described networks that functioned like multiple nodes or "campfires" scattered across the city, with resilience reinforced through redundancy: leaders were encouraged to disciple and coach new leaders, "at least three young Timothys," to ensure continuity.

Decentralization took various forms. Some teams shifted from a single core group to multiple regional hubs that served as catalytic centers across the city. Others developed affinity-based hubs, such as those centered on ethnic minority communities, business networks, or youth groups, where leadership emerged from within cultural or social segments. Some leaders also described dual operating systems where grassroots church life was complemented by a lightweight nonprofit platform. Peer learning, mentoring, and contextual research, such as ethnographic mapping, were noted as practices that reinforced these distributed patterns of leadership.

**2. Ordinary People Drive Fruitfulness Forward**
Interviewees consistently emphasized that urban movements were not primarily led by professional church staff or clergy, but by ordinary people: students, business owners, laborers, and families who carried responsibility for disciple-making in their everyday contexts. Leaders described these volunteers as the backbone of multiplication, often unpaid and bi-vocational, but empowered to lead groups, baptize others, and pass on what they were learning. One practitioner remarked that "everyone can do everything," underscoring that baptism, Bible discovery, and coaching were not reserved for a select few.

This flattening of hierarchy created wide participation. Movements drew in people from every walk of life: from former addicts and mechanics to taxi drivers and judges, reflecting a conviction that no level or lack of education or social standing disqualified someone from multiplying disciples. Ordinary people often began as participants in interest or discovery groups or accountability groups and, over time, took responsibility for leading their own. Interviewees also noted that sustainability was supported by this broad participation, since leadership was grounded in calling and relational trust rather than power or position.

**3. Backbone and Flexible Group and Meeting Structures**
Interviewees emphasized that movements held together through a clear "backbone" of covenants, accountability, and shared practices, while leaving freedom for each context to develop its own expression. Some groups formalized this through simple community based "rules of life" that set rhythms of community, accountability, and mission, providing just enough parameters to maintain coherence without stifling innovation. Discovery Bible Study models were also frequently adapted: sometimes shortened, sometimes expanded, while discovery based Scripture engagement, application and multiplication remained essential.

This backbone was carried primarily through distributed groups that met frequently in homes, coffee shops, or other neutral spaces (See Observation 5), sometimes rotating locations to navigate challenges of travel and limited space. Interviewees did observe that impact in cities often "happens in pockets," reinforcing the value of many small, reproducible communities rather than a single centralized gathering. However, many interviews did speak about hybrid church models, meeting regularly in both small groups and in larger gatherings. Generally, larger celebrations also took place but remained highly participatory, beginning with accountability questions such as "how did you obey last week?" Interviewees described these patterns as clear expectations at the center and flexible forms at the edges.

**4. Regular Rhythms Anchor Flexible Structures**
Interviewees stressed that in fast-changing urban environments, consistency in rhythms was as important as flexibility in form. Discipleship and coaching meetings happened with remarkable regularity, though at different frequencies depending on relational depth. Leaders described inner circles of high-commitment disciples who gathered daily or weekly, surrounded by broader groups that met less often. Others spoke of regular one-on-one coaching rhythms, weekly coffee meetups with leaders, or monthly collective gatherings that reinforced vision and accountability across the movement.

These rhythms acted as the backbone of reproducibility: predictable, intentional, and scalable, yet never fully uniform. Some gatherings took the form of three person groups called "three-third groups", others of accountability circles, discovery groups, or participatory celebrations that opened with the question, "how did you obey last week?" Even occasional city-wide worship events were framed as extensions of these rhythms.

One leader noted how a simple “rule of life” created within the group served as an anchor, providing “just enough parameters to actually unlock the imaginary.” In this way, rhythms of meeting and reflection gave coherence and identity to otherwise decentralized networks, ensuring that flexibility did not slip into fragmentation.



## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

Together, these practices show how urban disciple-making may thrive when clear rhythms and frameworks provide coherence, without stifling the creativity and adaptability required in complex city contexts
Urban contexts are dense, diverse, and constantly changing. Large, centralized systems often struggle to adapt to such complexity. We observed that movements in cities flourished when their structures were lightweight, decentralized, and relational, offering just enough consistency to sustain momentum while remaining flexible enough to adjust to shifting conditions.

Urban disciple-making movements were most resilient when their structures were simple enough (but not overly simplistic), reproducible, and aligned with shared values. In ever-changing environments, rigid programs faltered, while "chaordic" frameworks, structured enough to preserve DNA, yet open to local adaptation, proved more sustainable. As one interviewee explained, "we're just trying to be aligned to a backbone, values and covenants," while allowing each movement "to come to life in that city the way Jesus wants it to."

Such structures also enabled ministry to flow into everyday urban spaces. Neutral spaces like workplaces, coffee shops, gyms, and public squares lowered barriers in contexts where religious buildings often carried suspicion or cultural distance. One leader described starting small group Bible studies in coffee shops because "people in the city are less likely to come to a church building." These flexible meeting points made disciple-making feel natural within daily life.

Movements consistently relied on ordinary people rather than professional leaders to drive multiplication. In cities too vast and varied for a handful of clergy to reach, unpaid and bi-vocational believers carried responsibility for leading groups, baptizing others, and passing on what they learned. This flattened hierarchy, widened participation, and made movements less dependent on finances or centralized oversight, giving them the capacity to spread broadly across social networks and cultural segments.

Decentralization further strengthened resilience. Teams often shifted from single core groups to multiple hubs, each rooted in a neighborhood or affinity network. Leaders described city impact as happening "in pockets" rather than through sweeping city-wide programs, and lightweight systems enabled those pockets to multiply. Even mobility worked in favor of the movement; when participants relocated, they often carried vision and practice with them into new contexts.

Finally, in the absence of strong hierarchies, trust and long-term relationships provided cohesion. Shared language, reproducible practices, and peer accountability created alignment without uniformity. As one practitioner noted, "We want discipleship happening that is not done by just the leader, but it's done by all the believers." These relational cores allowed movements to endure instability while remaining both participatory and adaptable.

Urban disciple-makers also stressed that consistency itself became a form of structure. In cities where schedules often shift, people

relocate, and priorities compete, discipleship flourished when disciple-makers maintained regular rhythms of meeting, coaching, and gathering. These rhythms varied in frequency: some daily, others weekly or monthly. But their predictability gave stability to otherwise decentralized networks.
One leader put it bluntly: "once a week… that's not community." Another described how regular coffee with leaders around Scripture sustained alignment across church gatherings. Such rhythms carried the movement's DNA forward, ensuring that flexibility did not cause mission drift. Though they required discipline and major time commitments, especially in pressured urban contexts, these consistent patterns provided a backbone that allowed creativity and adaptation to thrive.

In short, disciple-making structures that are clear but flexible, decentralized but connected, and carried forward by ordinary people, appear particularly well suited to urban environments. Regular rhythms of discipleship and gathering provide the consistency needed for movements to endure the instability of city life. Together, these qualities produce agility and resilience.

## Questions for discussion and reflection

Where might your current team, leadership, or group structures be too rigid (too highly structured or inflexible) or too loose (unstructured, unclear or inconsistent) for your urban context? What shifts are needed to sustain both clarity and adaptability?

What regular rhythms of discipleship, coaching, or gathering might be helpful for you to add that would provide stability for you or your team in your context?

Are you relying too heavily on a central leader or a few key people? How might spreading responsibility out across neighborhoods and networks strengthen the whole?

# #10

## Coach Disciple-Makers to Pursue their God-given Goals

"We exist to equip, empower, coach and come alongside anyone who is crazy enough to try disciple-making."
INTERVIEWEE IN NORTH AMERICA

"Coaching has become a lifestyle and not just a one-hour thing. If any conversation comes up, we are coaching one another."
INTERVIEWEE IN ASIA

"They have their jobs, they have their income, but they lead at least one or two DBSs every week... and they coach other."
INTERVIEWEE IN MIDDLE EAST

### Potential Strategy

Urban disciple-makers should embed coaching as a regular community rhythm that equips committed disciple-makers to grow in spiritual and emotional health, multiply disciple-making, and stay aligned with Jesus and His ways.

This observation first appeared in Phase 1 as “Coaching Disciple-Makers” and has been carried forward in Phase 2 with even greater emphasis. While the earlier report noted coaching as distinct from training, Phase 2 interviews emphasized its central role in sustaining urban disciple-making. Practitioners consistently described coaching as a relational, long-term process that strengthens implementation and reinforces disciple-making DNA.

Given the broad and varied use of the term “coaching” across leadership and professional fields, this report does not attempt to define coaching exhaustively or prescribe a formal model. Rather, it reflects the shared language interviewees used to describe relational, ongoing support that sustained disciple-making practice and multiplication in urban contexts.

Across many urban contexts, coaching has emerged as a potentially critical structure for both personal growth and strategic multiplication. Interviewees repeatedly distinguished coaching from formal training. While training often initiates vision and introduces knowledge, coaching sustains practice through ongoing relational investment. As one leader put it, “Training just sows the seed, but it’s the constant mentoring and constant coaching that brings fruit.”

Coaching was further illustrated by interviewees as an ongoing rhythm of goal-setting, reflection, and feedback that reinforces vision, addresses gaps in understanding, and strengthens disciple-being and making practice. These rhythms typically occurred one-on-one or in small groups, often with a coach-to-coachee ratio of ten or fewer. Leaders spoke of regular check-ins marked by encouragement, prayer, troubleshooting, and accountability. Some models combined group coaching rhythms with individual follow-up, while others emphasized multi-generational patterns in which catalytic leaders coached a few who then coached others. In each case, coaching helped disciple-makers remain aligned with core DNA while staying responsive to diverse city contexts. (See Emergent Practices section for two examples of coaching practices.)

Interviewees also highlighted coaching as vital for personal and spiritual health. City catalysts spoke of the need to build resilience, establish healthy work-life rhythms, and receive holistic support. One observed, “The biggest need among urban catalysts is learning how to balance work, ministry, and emotional health.” Another framed coaching through a whole-person lens: “How can they as a whole person be maximally used by the Lord?” In this way, coaching supported long-term wellbeing alongside external ministry fruitfulness.

Finally, coaching was consistently described as an accelerant for multiplication. By equipping ordinary believers through sustained relational support, coaching created a multiplying effect, as “those who are coached begin to coach others.” This dynamic functioned both as a leadership development pathway and as an expression of disciple-making itself. As one leader summarized, “It’s a lifestyle, not just a one-hour coaching thing.”



## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

In urban disciple-making, coaching functions as a distinct role and responsibility "hat" alongside mentoring, modeling, and facilitated peer learning. While mentors often share from personal experience and model leadership by example, coaching creates space for intentional dialogue: asking questions, clarifying goals, identifying action steps unique to the city's complex context, and following up. It also helps fill gaps in knowledge that surface as leaders put new learning into practice.

This coaching rhythm is especially vital in agile urban settings. Whereas training often happens in scheduled events, coaching offers ongoing, real-time, contextually relevant support. Whether through one-on-one sessions, small groups, or peer learning environments, it provides a steadying influence that helps leaders process challenges, test new approaches, and stay aligned with their calling, despite common challenges of busyness and transience.

Another key factor is that coaching is highly adaptable. It can happen in person, over a voice note, on Zoom, or even through messages or voice notes on WhatsApp. It is asynchronous when needed and flexible enough to work with busy schedules. Coaching is also relatively low-cost and scalable due to its non-programmatic nature. It travels well across time zones, cultures, and organizational boundaries, making it especially effective in urban environments where practitioners are often geographically scattered, bi-vocational, or on the move.

Coaching also offers a more sustainable and empowering model of development compared to traditional training alone. While formal training can catalyze vision and provide helpful tools, its impact often fades without follow-up. Coaching fills this gap by accompanying leaders as they implement what they have learned. When done well, It invites ongoing reflection, encourages contextual innovation, and strengthens personal accountability over time. As a result, coaching equips leaders to stay the course and helps them multiply others who can do the same.

Coaching is also uniquely effective in cities because it addresses the challenges of urban individualism, isolation, and complexity. Formal training may feel distant or unsustainable for busy people. Coaching, rather, provides a modern, relational form of training: agile, personalized, and iterative. Leaders and burgeoning leaders need consistent relationships to guide them in processing their unique contexts. Coaching supplies this consistency, and it multiplies.

Finally, coaching (in this way) reinforces the relational DNA of disciple-making movements. It keeps the focus on developing people and helps ensure that leaders are not only fruitful but also faithful and healthy. Coaching reflects the very nature of discipleship: walking with others toward obedience to Jesus in every area of life.

## Questions for discussion and reflection

How might coaching, as an intentional practical expression of disciple-making, strengthen fruitfulness and personal faithfulness in your context?

Who are the few leaders you are walking with right now, and how could you deepen your rhythm of coaching with them (e.g. prayer, encouragement, goal setting, problem solving, accountability)?

What shifts might be needed in your team or church culture to treat coaching not as an event, but as “a lifestyle”… a normal part of how leaders grow, multiply, and stay healthy?









# #11

## Start among the Marginalized and Overlooked

"All these huge social urban problems… are opportunities for the Gospel."
INTERVIEWEE IN OCEANIA

"When we started to roll this out in some of these communities that had been no-go areas, we began to see the most unlikely people get saved."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

"There are particular Kingdom values or Kingdom treasures that impoverished communities hold, that are a gift to the middle class and to the rich, where we're in deficit."
INTERVIEWEE IN NORTH AMERICA

"We're leaning on each other, and we're participating together in some piece of the mission of God in the world, to proclaim and demonstrate the Kingdom of God to the lost and the poor."
INTERVIEWEE IN NORTH AMERICA

"And this is where we as a church have realized that we are salt and light. Why does the world teach the church how to live? Instead of the church teaching the world?
INTERVIEWEE IN EURASIA

### Potential Strategy

Urban disciple-makers should engage the broken and marginalized with honor, serving and partnering with them as co-laborers in the Gospel.

Urban disciple-making teams often find initial traction among those most overlooked by society: the poor, refugees, immigrants, youth on the margins, and others navigating trauma, injustice or other systemic issues. This observation was also identified in Phase 1, and Phase 2 interviews again emphasized its importance. Interviewees repeatedly described how Gospel responsiveness is often highest among the hurting, those who carry deep spiritual hunger because of their lived realities. One practitioner noted, "In communities that are as broken as some of the ones that we engage with, change is going to happen from the bottom up." City teams noted that momentum is found in vulnerable spaces like townships, refugee settlements, immigrant enclaves, and inner-city neighborhoods. These locations are often high density, have shared language, and have strong informal networks.

In these contexts, those who have known hardship are drawn to Jesus and frequently emerge as the first leaders. One team described how "urban breakthrough began with 12 boys off the street who became the first church." Another shared, "we had a (church) devoted to working with single mothers, and it was led by single mothers," illustrating the dignity and capacity of the marginalized to respond and lead. Leaders also noted that underemployed youth, former addicts, and foreign-born immigrants frequently became some of the most passionate disciple-makers, carrying transformation back into overlooked communities. As one interviewee put it, "In the city, the nations are your neighbors," highlighting how urban life provides rare access to under engaged people groups who may be difficult to reach elsewhere.

Many interviewees described meeting tangible needs as a core expression of their ministry. Teams step into the realities of trauma, addiction, hunger, and displacement as the very place where disciple-making begins: not as an afterthought or a side project, but as a faithful response to the brokenness around them. Ministries like trauma care, anti-trafficking, job training and feeding programs were seen as "answers to the pain in the community." These acts of practical love are often paired with discovery spaces grounded in the Word, creating environments where those being served begin to disciple others from their own history of brokenness. This pairing is thought to create trust and cultivate transformation.

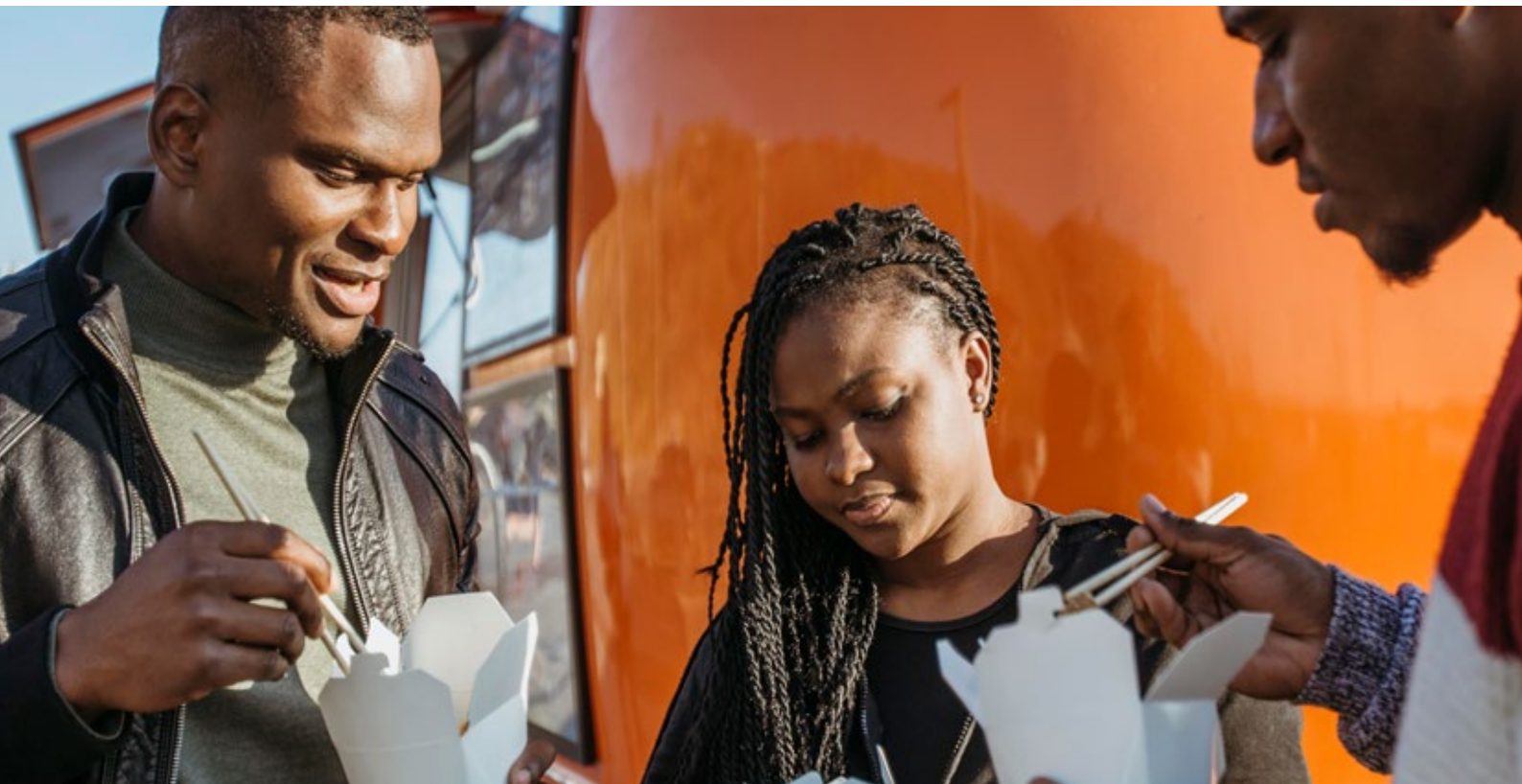
Rather than viewing brokenness as a barrier, urban disciple-makers increasingly recognize it as a gateway. As one leader put it, "All these huge social urban problems… are opportunities for the Gospel." Another interviewee shared, "It's sort of like you take the red pill, and you wake up to just how much the poor are in the Scriptures… you can't unsee it anymore." Interviewees also noted that the impact is often mutual. The poor and hurting bring treasures of faith and insight that challenge the assumptions of the middle and upper socioeconomic class and reshape the priorities of the church. As one leader observed, "There are particular kingdom treasures that impoverished communities hold that are a gift to the middle class and the rich.

## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

The decision to begin among the broken is both Christological and strategic: It echoes the way of Jesus and fits the contours of urban life. Cities concentrate pain: poverty, displacement, addiction, marginalization and confusion at a scale that makes it both visible and immediate. Yet this density also creates unusual openness and access. From the outset, Jesus consistently oriented His ministry toward the overlooked and hurting, those most aware of their need. One leader noted, "In cities, the nations are your neighbors," highlighting how urban proximity offers rare access to unreached or under engaged peoples without needing to cross borders.

Crisis may loosen the grip of self-sufficiency and individualism, two major barriers to disciple-making in cities. Practitioners noted that disruptions caused by unemployment, migration, systemic injustice, or personal loss frequently create a deeper hunger for hope. These struggles are often shared realities woven into entire communities, particularly in urban environments where inequality and injustice are more visible and acutely felt. When teams engage these spaces through both word and deed, the Gospel is experienced as credible and transformative, inviting not only outreach but mutual transformation.

Beginning among the broken also aligns with the logic of multiplication through existing social networks. Vulnerable communities often have tightly knit relational networks: shared housing, mutual aid and common needs that accelerate the spread of trust-based discipleship. Once the Gospel takes root, these networks can multiply rapidly, carried by those who are themselves transformed. One interviewee recalled, "When we started to roll this out in some of these communities that had been no-go areas, we began to see the most unlikely people get saved." What might appear fragile from the outside often proves remarkably resilient.



## Questions for discussion and reflection

In your city, where do you see signs of spiritual hunger among marginalized or hurting populations?

How are we addressing real needs: trauma, poverty, addiction, displacement, injustice, not only as access points, but as essential to disciple-making?

What barriers (practical, cultural, or internal) might prevent you or your team from beginning with the marginalized or unlikely?

# #12

## Invest in One-on-One Discipleship Relationships that Multiply

"We do encourage one-on-one discipleship on every level in any culture… So there's the big contrast that I like to get people over and I feel it is a threat. It is a threat, because it looks slow."
INTERVIEWEE IN EUROPE

"It is a prerequisite for a coach to connect personally at least once a week."
INTERVIEWEE IN ASIA

"…my co-worker, I personally disciple him every week, and to just see him on fire for the Lord, praying for his own people in his own language."
INTERVIEWEE IN EUROPE

### Potential Strategy

Urban disciple-makers should invest in one-on-one relationships that deepen trust, model obedience, and serve group-based and generational disciple-making.

This observation, first identified in Phase 1 remains significant in Phase 2. While high-cost, long-term relationships (See Observation 2) highlight the perseverance required for disciple-making, interviewees repeatedly stressed that one-on-one discipleship plays a distinct and indispensable role. Interviewees were equally clear, however, that these relationships were never intended to function in isolation from communal and group-based disciple-making.

While group and team-based rhythms are essential for generational disciple-making, interviewees emphasized that one-on-one discipleship is a key setting for deep and lasting transformation in cities. These relationships create space for vulnerability and spiritual honesty rarely found in larger groups. Interviewees described them as "intentional," "high investment," "long-term," and "deeply personal." One leader reflected, "Discipleship is actually slow, high investment, even if movements look fast."

Interviewees shared that these bonds often emerge in ordinary settings like coffee shops, workplaces, third spaces or home visits and are sustained through practices of listening, coaching (Observation 10), prayer, and shared life (Observation 2). Leaders described rhythms such as meeting weekly or bi-weekly, one at a time with a few key disciples: "One is a barber, the other is a coach." Others compared them to "parent-like" relationships marked by steady presence and modeling. Importantly, these one-on-one rhythms were not practiced with every contact or relationship, but with a few key disciples identified by traits like availability, perseverance, and obedience. The expectation was that those invested in would then disciple others in turn. Over time, such investment cultivated trust and obedience while equipping disciples to do the same with others. As one interviewee put it, "While we are coaching them, they also learn how to coach their own leaders."

One-on-one discipleship relationships carry particular weight in urban environments. Amid the anonymity, fragmentation, and busyness, these relationships provided continuity and depth. Leaders noted that when group meetings fail, due to conflicting schedules, traffic, etc., one-on-one rhythms often endure. WhatsApp messages, voice notes, or Zoom calls help sustain regular connection and accountability. In this way, one-on-one discipleship may ensure that relational depth is not lost even when larger gatherings are regularly disrupted, while still remaining oriented toward restoring shared communal rhythms whenever possible.

Interviewees also highlighted the multiplying effect of these investments. Personal discipleship equipped ordinary believers to disciple others, creating a chain of relationships that spread through networks and communities. This shows that one-on-one meetings are about both individual growth and reproducibility. Each disciple becomes a disciple-maker.

At the same time, practitioners cautioned against relying on one-on-one engagements alone. Without group settings, multiplication will likely slow and discipleship risks becoming individualized and additional rather than multiplicative. As one leader concluded, "We do encourage one-on-one discipleship on every level, in any culture," but always alongside communal spaces such as discovery groups and team gatherings. Sustainable urban disciple-making may require both: the depth of one-on-one investment and the breadth of group rhythms that enable multiplication.



## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

This practice appears most fruitful in cities when one-on-one investment functions as a catalytic layer within broader communal and multiplying rhythms, rather than as a standalone strategy.

The decision to invest in one-on-one relationships appears fruitful in cities because it reflects both biblical patterns and urban realities. Jesus walked closely with a few, while ministering to many, and Paul's mentoring of Timothy and others shows the generational impact of life-on-life discipleship. At first glance, such a slow and personal approach may seem out of step with the demands of the city. Yet, in practice, it complements broader group strategies, ensuring that the disciples making disciples multiplicative approach also has depth and perseveres. Interviewees noted that these relationships were usually practiced with a select few identified as faithful and available, with the expectation that they would then disciple others. This focus helped depth remain realistic in the city while still multiplying outward.

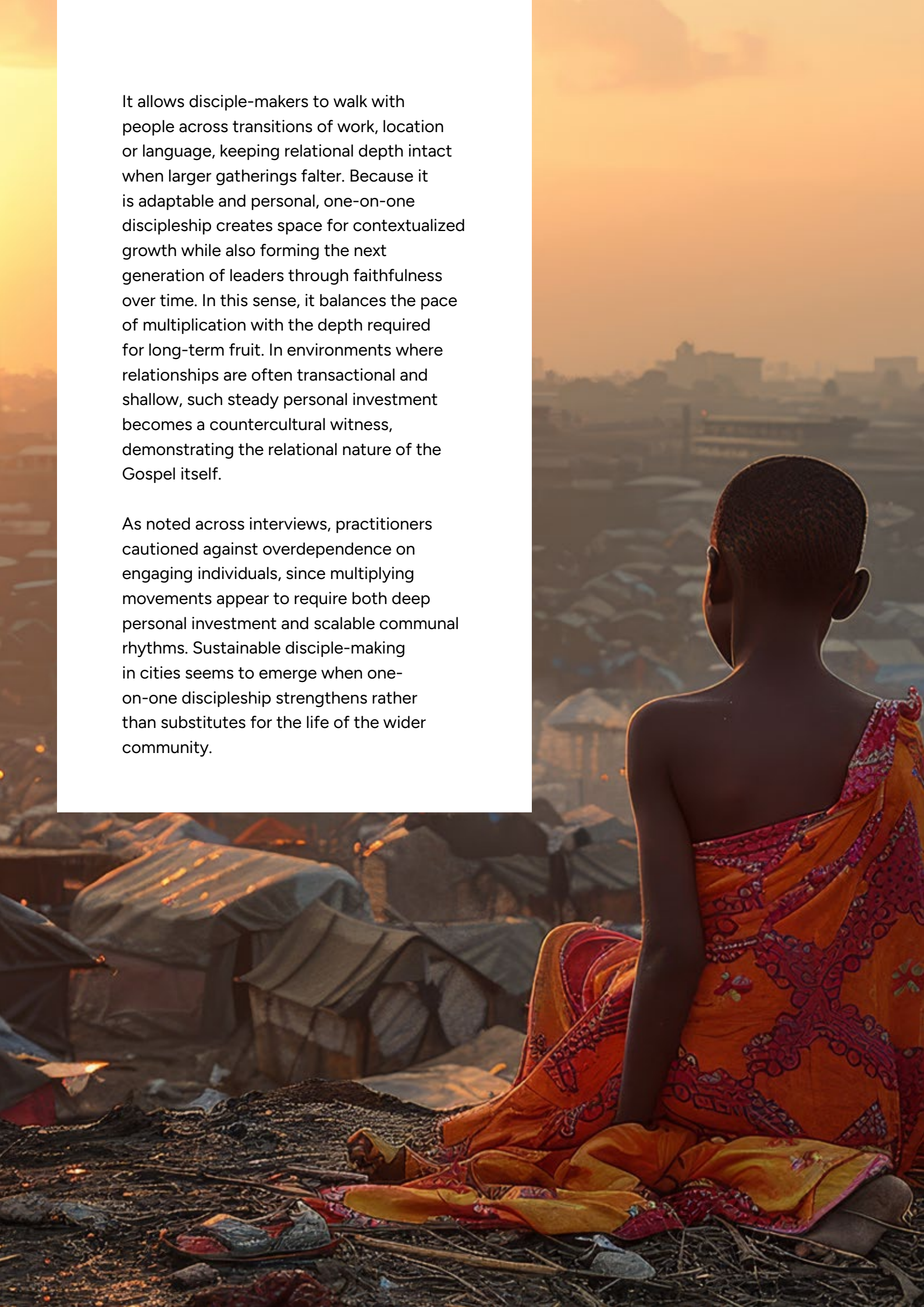
One-on-one or very small group meetings (often two or three people) offer a countercultural space for trust-building, spiritual depth, and personal transformation. Cities are often marked by anonymity, busyness, and surface-level interactions, making it difficult to form authentic relationships where genuine growth can happen. In this environment, relational discipleship becomes a powerful tool. It gives people the rare experience of being truly known in a city that often overlooks them. Micro (2-3 people) group discipleship creates space for people to be known and invested in, which cultivates obedience and spiritual resilience that group settings alone may not be able to sustain. In many cases, these relationships were formed in everyday places such as barbershops, workplaces, or homes, allowing discipleship to move naturally through relational and vocational networks.

Such relationships also help disciple-makers walk closely with others through complexity: addressing uniquely personal questions, modeling obedience, and identifying future leaders, through faithfulness over time, rather than charisma or position. They also create space for honest accountability, where personal struggles, obedience steps, and leadership challenges can be addressed directly in ways that larger group settings rarely allow. These are not fallback methods. They may even become the most formative spaces in urban movements. Over time, these quiet investments form the backbone of leadership pipelines, equipping people who would otherwise remain unseen to become catalytic multiplying leaders.

One-on-one discipleship further shows resilience in diverse and transient urban contexts. It provides a way to bridge cultural or linguistic divides, especially among immigrants and refugees. It is also reproducible, as those being discipled often learn and are taught to do the same with others, forming generational chains of obedience and influence.

It allows disciple-makers to walk with people across transitions of work, location or language, keeping relational depth intact when larger gatherings falter. Because it is adaptable and personal, one-on-one discipleship creates space for contextualized growth while also forming the next generation of leaders through faithfulness over time. In this sense, it balances the pace of multiplication with the depth required for long-term fruit. In environments where relationships are often transactional and shallow, such steady personal investment becomes a countercultural witness, demonstrating the relational nature of the Gospel itself.

As noted across interviews, practitioners cautioned against overdependence on engaging individuals, since multiplying movements appear to require both deep personal investment and scalable communal rhythms. Sustainable disciple-making in cities seems to emerge when one-on-one discipleship strengthens rather than substitutes for the life of the wider community.



## Questions for discussion and reflection

Where in your current disciple-making rhythms do you have consistent space for deep, one-on-one or small-group connection and accountability.  And if not, where might such a space need to be created?

What kinds of transformation or breakthrough might you see happen specifically in these smaller settings that might not surface in larger groups?

How might you make more intentional space (time, energy, and focus) for personal discipleship environments without sidelining group or team dynamics?

# #13

## Remain in the Harvest and Discern Receptive People and Networks

"A majority of the people in our network need to just have a regular job because that's where you meet people...that's where life happens. And then out of that, you can find people of peace."
INTERVIEWEE IN EUROPE

"And when he had introduced us to like 300 or 400 people, I mean, we were praying for persons of peace and new networks of people, so we should expect this."
INTERVIEWEE IN EUROPE

"You know, you can say, 'I love you', but how do you show it practically?... we need to be present in the harvest. Making disciples requires going to the harvest. That's always been the challenge."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

### Potential Strategy

Urban disciple-makers should prioritize presence among the least reached, pursue meaningful conversations, and stay with those who respond with openness and obedience.

This is a new addition to the top fifteen, related to, but broader than the previous report's focus on disciple-making leaders intentionally going with their teams into the harvest (Lead By Example Into the Harvest). The updated finding widens the lens to include both starting and remaining in the harvest, discerning where God is at work, and applying the Persons of Peace principle in ways that fit complex urban contexts. In cities, interviewees emphasized ongoing presence and discernment rather than event-centered engagement.

While some urban disciple-makers continue to use elements of traditional event-based evangelism, such as street preaching, many interviewees observed that these approaches often produce limited or short-lived fruit in complex urban contexts. As one interviewee explained, "It's effect (is less) in my experience for the city… city people need to know who you are."

Public proclamation can still play a role, but interviewees noted that it often lacks the relational follow-through necessary for sustained impact. Several observed that these older models tend toward one-way communication. In fragmented and often anonymous urban settings, breakthrough more frequently comes through authentic dialogue and sustained relationships.

Rather than relying on brief encounters with strangers, interviewees seek out persons of peace: individuals or households open to spiritual conversation, through natural or intentional points of connection in everyday life. The focus shifts to boldly walking with people toward faith, creating opportunities for the Gospel to take root and multiply through trusted relationship.

In practice, leaders described beginning with intentional presence and relational sowing of the Gospel among urban populations. Interviewees emphasized prioritizing meaningful and spiritual conversations in everyday contexts, and seeking out those who are open, or "persons of peace," as a strategic first step. Whether through regular prayer walks, community events, or ordinary moments in gyms, coffee shops, and schools, disciple-makers are actively seeking to discover where God is already at work.

As one interviewee put it, "we…jumped to the spiritual topic…and I asked him, 'How was your relationship with God?'" Others shared how healing prayer, shared laughter, or practical care opened doors to spiritual hunger. This is very much not limited to early engagement. High-level leaders still actively "spend time among the lost," remain "actively looking for Persons of Peace," and avoid being "consumed by the inward focused Christian community."

Interviewees described that credibility was reinforced when top leaders themselves modeled presence in the harvest, sometimes referring to "sunburned hands" as proof that a leader was directly engaged in the field.

Leaders noted the difference between drawing in Christians and intentionally seeking the lost, observing that fresh openness often emerges when they step outside familiar church routines and return to the harvest.

Interviewees mention that this posture draws from the instructions of Jesus to a group of ~72 disciples in Luke 10, where He sends His disciples to look for those who welcome them, listen to their message, and demonstrate spiritual openness through application. These persons, or "houses of peace," become relational bridges into new communities and networks. As one interviewee described, "Whenever I find someone obedient, I focus on them." Many encounters were described as divinely orchestrated: one leader met a man who had prayed for help the night before, another was introduced by a single person to hundreds of others.

**Disciple-makers are trained to discern, through prayer and presence, who is spiritually responsive and willing to share what they receive.** In urban disciple-making, the search for persons of peace is about aligning with God's work already underway in the city.

## Adapting the "House of Peace" Practice in Urban Settings

In cities, the search for houses of peace will likely take different forms than in rural contexts. Rather than beginning in villages or extended families, disciple-makers describe finding responsive individuals within fragmented networks: coworkers, neighbors, immigrants, or affinity groups formed around work, hobbies, or shared struggles. Because trust can be difficult to establish in urban life, existing relationships often carry unusual weight, providing credibility that opens doors. Persons of peace also function as cultural interpreters, bridging divides of language, ethnicity, or class. In some cases, they are business owners, community organizers, or educators whose openness gives access to networks beyond the reach of organized religious efforts. Amid the mobility and fast pace of city life, these relationships provide relational anchors, making it possible for disciple-making to take root and spread in otherwise unstable environments.



**Fragmented Networks instead of Villages**
In rural contexts, influence usually flows through common family, clan, or geography. Rather than beginning in villages or extended families, disciple-makers describe finding responsive individuals within fragmented networks: coworkers, neighbors, immigrants, or affinity groups formed around work, interests, or shared struggles.

**Trust Carries Unusual Weight**
Rural areas are typically high-trust environments where everyone knows each other. Amid urban loneliness and high suspicion, responsive inside-leaders will provide stability. Disciple-makers may have to rely more on relational presence and shared trust-building

**Wide Cultural and Class Diversity**
Rural settings are often more culturally homogenous. Persons of Peace might need to be able to bridge divides of language, ethnicity, or class, enabling discipleship across diverse groups.

**Influence in Secular or Professional Spheres**
Unlike villages, no single family or leader shapes the whole community. In cities, disciple-makers will need to identify access points in a wide variety of sectors and affinities: they may be business owners, educators, or community leaders whose openness gives access to wide networks.

**Anchors in Mobility and Pace**
Rural life tends to be more stable, with families and communities rooted in one place. People in cities move frequently and schedules change constantly. In cities, this challenge may become a strength, since fast moving persons of peace can carry the vision to new areas.

In rural contexts, the Persons of Peace “model” often works through households or village leaders where influence is centralized and stable. In cities, the dynamics of fragmentation, anonymity, diversity, decentralized influence, and mobility would weaken that traditional approach if they were present in rural areas. Urban disciple-makers therefore adapt the principle by looking for multiple relational bridges across networks, treating persons of peace as connectors rather than single household gateways.



## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

Seeking out persons of peace helps disciple-makers focus their energy where God is already at work. These individuals or households function as relational signal boosters, enabling practitioners to discern openness more quickly and avoid investing disproportionate time in unresponsive contexts. Because persons of peace are often embedded within multiple social circles such as family, workplaces, neighborhoods, or shared affinities, they can open access to relational networks that would otherwise remain closed. In many of the cities we interviewed, suspicion and distrust are common challenges. These relational bridges carry credibility that outsiders cannot easily generate on their own.

The density and diversity of cities can then become an advantage. A single relational bridge may lead into several affinity groups at once, allowing the Gospel to cross boundaries of culture, socioeconomic status, or language with unusual ease. Interviewees noted that openness often emerged in unexpected places: taxi driving groups, gyms, nightclubs, or recovery programs. As one reflected, "you never know… sometimes I didn't expect that the person was so open." Because city life fragments people across multiple networks, persons of peace provide a connecting point through which discipleship can flow into overlapping communities at the same time. In many of these contexts, visible pain or need often created space for authentic spiritual connection.

This practice also counters the established church's constant gravitational pull toward inward focus. In these growing movements, leaders at every level remain "in the harvest," therefore modeling obedience and keeping the culture outward-facing and responsive to God's leading.

When leaders themselves are actively engaging the lost, this posture shapes how they train, discern, and lead. They train from lived reality rather than theory, identify future leaders in the context of mission, and maintain a posture of humility and dependence on God. This prevents drift toward institutional maintenance and reinforces the movement's original vision. Interviewees noted that credibility is often strengthened when persons of peace include local influencers (such as business owners, educators, or community organizers) who can open relational gateways otherwise inaccessible.

In urban contexts, the Persons of Peace principle functions best as a flexible guide rather than a step-by-step method. This principled approach allows disciple-makers to navigate the diversity and complexity of city life while remaining grounded in clear biblical truth.

This practice also adapts well to the realities of modern, transient cities. Mobility, in particular, can serve the Gospel: when a person of peace relocates, the vision often travels with them, sometimes expanding into new neighborhoods or even new cities. Light but intentional coaching relationships can turn transience into multiplication rather than loss. Furthermore, In cities where space is often limited, persons of peace can host gatherings in their own homes or spaces, making the approach scalable.

Engaging the harvest in this way also creates momentum that fuels perseverance. Spirit-led encounters generate stories of breakthrough that encourage teams and remind them why the work matters. At the same time, the practice builds fast feedback loops. Each week in the field brings fresh learning about what resonates, what opens doors, and what needs adjusting.

## Questions for discussion and reflection

Where are you personally maintaining presence among those that don't yet know Jesus? How does that shape the culture and focus of your team?

In your context, what helps you recognize a 'person of peace,' and how might the principle need to be applied differently in your setting compared to others?

What simple, realistic practices could help you or your team stay relationally present among those that don't yet know Jesus?

# #14

## Root Strategy and Vision in Listening to and Following God

"That was probably the first and the most important key, the way we started working in the city. We started meeting on Mondays and praying, looking for the key to the city."
INTERVIEWEE IN EURASIA

"With time, I learned: when He says go, I go, and when He says don't, I won't. We just chase God."
INTERVIEWEE IN MIDDLE EAST

"From my perspective, I can say that part of the ten-year journey was a recognition that if we didn't get the prayer thing right, we were doomed."
INTERVIEWEE IN AFRICA

### Potential Strategy

Urban disciple-makers should practice regular rhythms of prayer, listening, and obedience, trusting that clarity flows from remaining in God's presence rather than from human plans alone.

Although this theme did not appear among the original top fifteen observations, it surfaced as an undercurrent in Phase 1 and has become prominent in Phase 2. Leaders expressed a growing conviction that a city's complexity, "eats our strategy for breakfast." Listening prayer is essential for finding clarity and direction.

Many interviewees described vision, strategy, and breakthrough as the outcome of sustained prayer and listening to God rather than the byproduct of effective planning. One leader summarized this conviction: "Everything starts with prayer, is sustained in prayer, and ends in prayer," capturing a shared belief that disciple-making begins with encountering God's heart. Teams described praying before going, while going, and after going. Momentum often emerged from sustained, corporate prayer rhythms in homes, coffee shops, parks and online prayer rooms that connected leaders across languages and geographies.

Interviewees described diverse prayer rhythms that actively shaped vision and strategy, including daily online prayer gatherings, weekly prayer walks that often led to persons of peace, population-specific retreats marked by renewal, and national prayer events mobilizing intercession for cities. In some contexts, these rhythms fueled wider spiritual renewal, such as in East Asia where prayer and worship were described as "rising up amongst the youth." Others pointed to prayer mapping that guided engagement across neighborhoods, or to vision that began as simply as "two guys asking the Lord, what do You want us to do?" and grew into a call to reach a continent.

Prayer was also seen to strengthen teams by sharpening focus and discernment.

Practitioners often framed city entry as an act of discernment, seeking God for wisdom about the city, identifying spiritual dynamics, and watching for signs of where He was already at work. Several described "divine appointments," such as meeting someone who had prayed for help the night before or encountering unexpected partners who opened entire networks. Leaders repeatedly warned that without prayerful dependence, strategy could easily run ahead of God. As one put it bluntly, "If we didn't get the prayer thing right, we were doomed." Others emphasized the humility of God's timing: "When He says go, I go, and when He says don't, I won't."

Interviewees affirmed that in fast-moving, spiritually contested urban environments, prayer is not simply preparation for the real work, but an essential part of the work itself.

## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

In cities, the pace and complexity often push disciple-makers toward control, planning and visible productivity. But the fruitfulness of disciple-making rarely comes from pushing harder, but from slowing down to listen and obey. Prayer and listening create space to notice where God is already working and to align with His direction.

This practice grounds the work in dependence rather than self-reliance. Urban ministry often demands quick results, but leaders repeatedly testified that "chasing God" produced more lasting fruit than chasing outcomes. As one interviewee put it, "You can't do it without the Holy Spirit." When teams prioritized hearing God together, they described greater courage to say 'yes,' discernment to say 'no,' and a deeper sense of calling that sustained them through difficulty. In the city, these rhythms also provide spiritual renewal, guarding against burnout, and re-centering identity in God rather than visible results.

When urban disciple-makers prioritize seeking God's voice, they avoid wasting energy on good ideas that are not initiated by Him. Instead, they join Him in His redemptive work, often in unexpected people or places. Teams that began and sustained prayer rhythms were more likely to identify key people, spiritual strongholds, and strategic entry points that they might have otherwise overlooked. This posture allows teams to respond swiftly when doors of opportunity open or close, keeping momentum from being lost.

In urban settings, corporate prayer provides a shared space that bridges cultural and linguistic divides. It anchors diverse teams in a common dependence on God. Leaders described how prayer confronted spiritual strongholds, protected them from exhaustion, and gave agility in the face of rapid change. In pluralistic environments, visible rhythms of prayer in public places, homes, or online also demonstrated to others that the work was led by God rather than human effort.

This approach also builds unity across diverse teams. In cities where disciple-makers often come from different cultures, languages, and backgrounds, praying together sustains humility, shared conviction, and relational trust that bridges differences. It also builds a culture of obedience above knowledge. This dependence on God takes on unique weight in urban environments, where the incredible complexity of competing worldviews, contested spaces, and rapid change quickly outpaces our best plans. Teams that build strategy in prayer are better positioned to navigate uncertainty with humility and courage.

Disciple-making that starts in prayer carries a DNA of responsiveness to God's leading. Several teams described how their framework emerged from simply asking, "What do you want us to do, Lord?" a question that allowed God's vision to precede their own and sparked creative, locally fitting approaches that no one could have planned in advance.

## Questions for discussion and reflection

Where in your current strategy might you be relying more on strategy than prayer? What might it look like to seek God's voice afresh together?

What rhythms of prayer (listening etc.) help your team discern where God is already at work in the city? Are there any you need to strengthen or reintroduce?

How can you grow a culture where obedience to God's direction takes priority over visible outcomes or performance? What would that shift require of you?

# #15

## Team Feedback Loops and Rhythms Sustain Healthy Urban Growth

"We track groups at every level, from core teams to new believers."
INTERVIEWEE IN MIDDLE EAST

"Every quarter we receive reports from local partners."
INTERVIEWEE IN ASIA

"We set goals, we started to reach those goals."
INTERVIEWEE IN EURASIA

"How do we measure our success and adapt toward fruitfulness?"
INTERVIEWEE IN NORTH AMERICA

"Only 8 percent of our fruit is in the first three generations; 92 percent is after that."
INTERVIEWEE IN ASIA

### Potential Strategy

Urban disciple-making teams should practice simple, consistent rhythms of reflection and feedback that track growth, reinforce obedience, and guard against mission drift.

The previous report highlighted the importance of "creating intentional and consistent rhythms of connection at every level." In this phase, leaders described a related but broader pattern. In high-density urban environments, where complexity and scale can quickly lead to fragmentation or mission drift, disciple-making teams that practiced regular reflection and feedback were more likely to remain coherent over time and sustain multiplication beyond the early stages.

Interviewees consistently described these rhythms as shared practices rather than individual disciplines. They spoke less about systems and more about the need for collective attentiveness. Regular points of reflection helped teams stay grounded in reality rather than in assumptions or isolated success stories. Without such rhythms, interviewees noted that it becomes easy to overestimate visible progress, overlook quieter breakthroughs, or lose clarity as the work grows.

When these rhythms are held at the team level, they change how discernment happens. Instead of resting on one person, reflection becomes a shared responsibility. As one leader put it, "You could see the passion to check: Where are we not doing well? Are we missing something in the DNA or are we in line?" Interviewees described how this reduced isolation, eased pressure on leaders, and created space for insight to emerge from newer leaders or groups at the edges. Several noted that newer leaders and groups at the edges often noticed patterns first, whether signs of fruit, early drift, or emergent practices, and regular feedback rhythms gave those observations a place to be voiced and tested.

Interviewees described a wide range of simple and reproducible practices that supported these rhythms. Some teams used brief weekly or monthly reports, while others relied on quarterly reviews or seasonal gatherings. Many emphasized visual practices, such as sharing photos from group gatherings during coaching conversations or team updates. These images prompted reflective questions like, "What is happening in this picture?" and helped ground evaluation in lived experience rather than abstract reporting. Generational maps, peer assessments, "egg charts" and simple scorecards were also used to keep multiplication visible without heavy central control.

Across contexts, leaders emphasized that evaluation needed to attend to both outcomes and underlying health. Tracking included numerical indicators such as baptisms and generational growth, but also qualitative reflection on prayer rhythms, obedience steps, resilience, and relational health. One leader noted that "only 8 percent of our fruit is in the first three generations; 92 percent is after that," underscoring the importance of monitoring long-term impact rather than relying on early indicators alone. Generational maps and simple visuals helped teams remain patient when early progress appeared slow and persevere with faithfulness.

These rhythms were closely tied to action. Several teams described assigning ownership and timelines so that reflection led naturally to next steps. Quarterly reviews helped maintain focus, celebrate fruit, and encourage continued obedience without micromanaging. In this way, feedback loops functioned as relational checkpoints rather than performance audits, keeping teams aligned while allowing for course correction.

Interviewees repeatedly noted that these practices were most effective when practiced together. Peer learning communities, coaching circles, and regular round-table conversations created space to process challenges, exchange learning, and reaffirm shared commitments. In some contexts, manifestos or covenants were revisited as moments of realignment. Leaders also highlighted

celebration as essential. Photos of progress, short testimonies, and periodic gatherings helped people feel valued and reminded teams why the work mattered, renewing courage to persevere.

Finally, leaders emphasized that keeping tools light and reproducible made scaling possible. Short written updates, voice notes, photos, brief calls, or one-page field stories created visibility without heavy bureaucracy. These practices worked across languages and time zones and gave ordinary leaders confidence to contribute meaningfully. Over time, these shared habits shaped the culture of the movement itself, building mutual accountability and resilience in environments where no single leader could see or carry the whole work.



## This appears to be a fruitful city practice for the following **potential reasons**:

In high-density disciple-making, the primary challenge is not activity but focus and faithfulness over time. As new disciples form and new groups emerge across neighborhoods and networks, clarity cannot depend on proximity to a central leader. Shared rhythms of reflection and tracking help preserve disciple-making DNA across distance and scale. They allow teams to revisit core commitments, surface mission drift early, and ensure that what is spreading is not merely activity but healthy, reproducible disciple-making. As one leader expressed it, "You could see the passion to check: Where are we not doing well? Are we missing something in the DNA or are we in line?" Evaluation, in this sense, guards the integrity of disciple-making rather than just measuring success.

High density environments accelerate both opportunity and distortion. As disciple-making expands across fragmented networks, weak habits or unclear convictions can spread quietly alongside healthy ones. Regular feedback rhythms create intentional space to ask whether disciples are truly obeying, passing on what they receive, and forming others in the same way. This shared attentiveness protects the integrity of disciple-making as it spreads and prevents drift from compounding across generations.

Leaders noted that early generations often appear slow, yet most fruit emerges later. One interviewee reflected that "only 8 percent of our fruit is in the first three generations; 92 percent is after that," underscoring the need to attend to long-term faithfulness rather than short-term indicators. Tracking generational patterns cultivates patience and endurance within the culture of the movement, reinforcing confidence that depth often precedes visible breadth. It also helps teams distinguish between isolated activity and patterns that are truly reproducing across generations. By mapping where disciple-making continues and where it stalls, leaders can identify bottlenecks, clarify expectations, and strengthen weak links in the transmission of disciple-making DNA. This guards against false positives, moments when visible activity or early enthusiasm might be mistaken for sustainable growth. Tracking, then, becomes both pastoral and apostolic, protecting integrity while encouraging faithful reproduction.

These practices also support reproducibility without centralization. Leaders are often bi-vocational and highly mobile. Simple and visible tools, such as generational maps, egg charts, and peer coaching reviews make disciple-making patterns tangible and transferable. When newer leaders can see how progress is reflected upon and how alignment is discussed, they are better equipped to carry forward both the practice and the posture. Evaluation was described as both quantitative, such as reports on growth and generational development, and qualitative, including reflection on spiritual health, resilience, and faithfulness.

Sustained disciple-making requires grit. Leaders in cities often carry hidden fatigue, particularly when fruit feels delayed. One leader observed, "Many have a heart for disciple-making, fewer have the stomach for it." Regular, honest reflection creates space to process setbacks without blame, recalibrate when needed, and renew commitment. Celebration, whether through quarterly gatherings, shared testimonies, or visible reminders of progress, strengthens courage and reminds teams that God is at work even when outcomes feel thin.

Finally, these rhythms widen corporate discernment. By including voices from newer leaders and emerging groups, feedback practices allow patterns from the edges to inform the whole. This distributed attentiveness strengthens adaptability and humility, qualities essential for disciple-making movements in rapidly changing environments. Over time, these shared habits form communities marked by mutual accountability, resilience, and steady obedience, sustaining disciple-making beyond any one season or leader.

## Questions for discussion and reflection

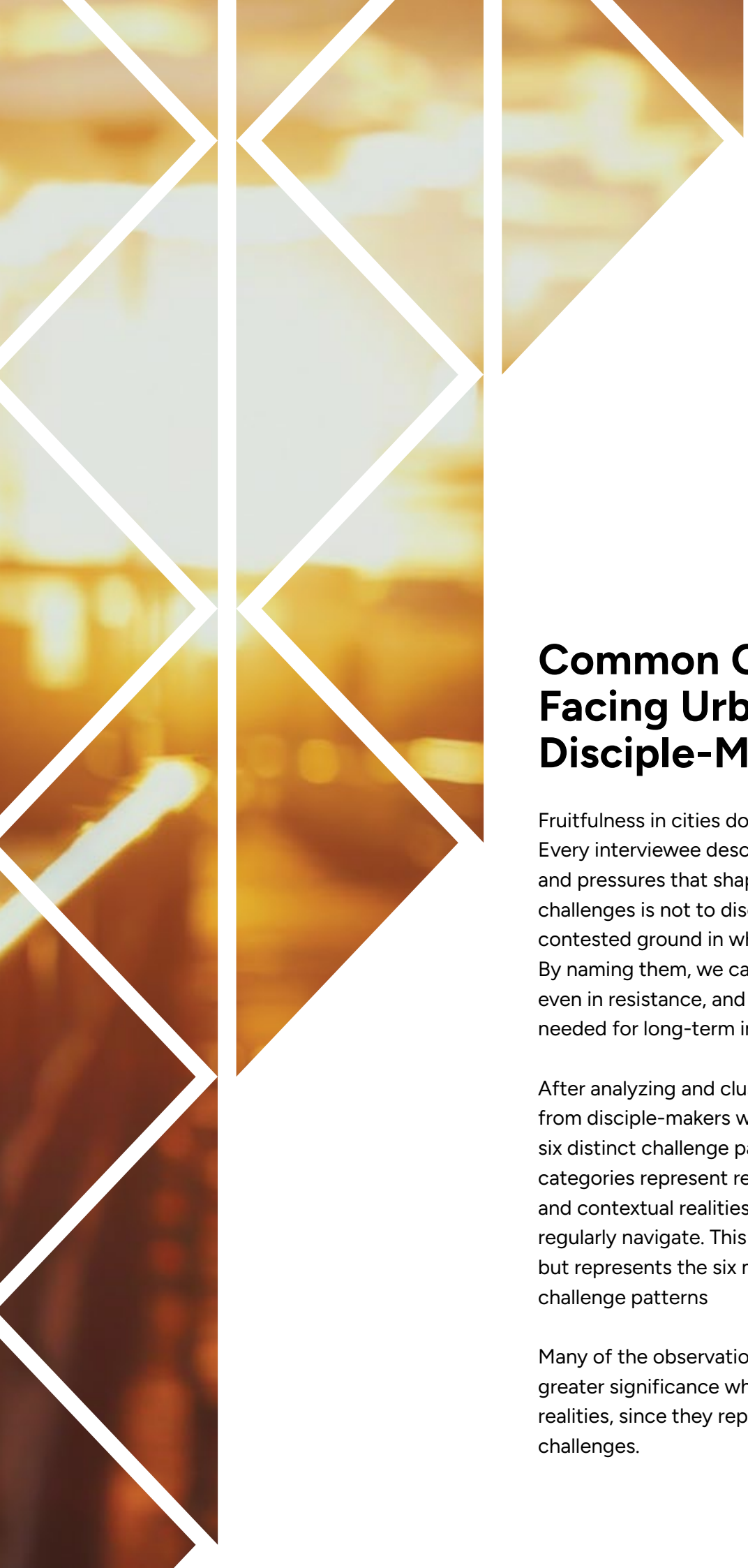
What rhythms of feedback, reflection or connection are helping us grow and where might we need to create or simplify one?

How are we currently tracking both visible fruit (groups, generations) and invisible fruit (DNA, obedience, spiritual health)?

How might we celebrate small wins more regularly to reinforce obedience and encourage one another in the work?

While these fifteen observations highlight where urban disciple-making appears most fruitful, interviewees also named recurring challenges that make working in cities difficult. These barriers do not cancel out the observations; they show the contested ground on which they must be lived.

In the next section, we outline six common challenges that surfaced across city contexts.



# Common Challenges Facing Urban Disciple-Makers

Fruitfulness in cities does not emerge in a vacuum. Every interviewee described barriers, tensions, and pressures that shape the work. Naming these challenges is not to discourage, but to recognize the contested ground in which disciple-making happens. By naming them, we can see where God is at work, even in resistance, and where adaptation is most needed for long-term impact.

After analyzing and clustering 100 unique challenges from disciple-makers working in cities worldwide, six distinct challenge patterns emerged. These categories represent recurring barriers, tensions, and contextual realities that urban disciple-makers regularly navigate. This is not an exhaustive list, but represents the six most commonly identified challenge patterns

Many of the observations in this report gain greater significance when viewed against these realities, since they represent real responses to real challenges.

CHALLENGE 1:

## Overwhelming Busyness and Time Scarcity as Barriers to Effective Discipleship:

Urban disciple-makers consistently cite busyness as a major barrier to deep, sustained engagement. Many residents live in "survival mode," juggling long work hours and other time constraints, economic stress, and constant distractions. Even those who are spiritually open struggle to make space for the relational rhythms needed to be a disciple of Jesus. Unlike slower-paced rural contexts, where community life naturally creates margin, city life often erodes the time and attention necessary for spiritual growth.

**Possible Adaptations:** Some teams adjusted by using shorter, more frequent gatherings (e.g., 40-minute check-ins every day or two) rather than relying on long weekly meetings. Others leaned into one-on-one rhythms during daily life (coffee breaks, work commutes) where time was already available.

Interviewees noted this reality when describing the need for **flexible structures (See Observation 9), clear rhythms of coaching (See Observation 10),** and **one-on-one discipleship (See Observation 12)** that could fit into crowded schedules.

CHALLENGE 2:

## Sustaining Fruitfulness Despite Constant Change, Disruption and Drift

Disciple-makers in cities face ongoing difficulty maintaining momentum in environments marked by high mobility and fragmentation. Whether voluntary, forced, or economic, transience (the movement of people in and out of the city) disrupts relationships, interrupts growth, and makes it difficult to build the consistency needed for long-term discipleship. Leaders noted that this volatility makes long-term consistency difficult, yet essential, in order to see generational fruit.

**Possible Adaptations:** Simple handoff practices ensured that when participants relocated, they carried vision and DNA into new neighborhoods or cities. In several locations, leadership responsibility was distributed to small teams rather than a single leader, which allowed continuity through disruption. Leaders also simplified and shortened training in recognition of high turnover, knowing it was only a matter of time before someone moved on.

Interviewees highlighted this challenge while emphasizing **the development of decentralized teams (See Observation 9), clarifying vision for multiplication (See Observation 6), and maintaining feedback rhythms (See Observation 15)** that allowed continuity despite disruption.

CHALLENGE 3:

## Navigating Contextual Complexity and the Limitations of Rural Disciple-making Models in the City

Many stated that disciple-making strategies, particularly those developed in rural or monocultural contexts can struggle in urban environments. Cities are typically more socially fragmented, culturally diverse, and structurally stratified, all factors that require careful contextual adaptations. Engaging indigenous locals is often more difficult than connecting with immigrants or refugees, while sociocultural realities such as class, caste, or family breakdown further shape receptivity and longevity. Leaders observed that urban movements tend to have shorter life cycles, requiring new ways of thinking beyond traditional rural approaches.

**Possible Adaptations:** Practitioners shifted toward affinity-based hubs such as youth, business or immigrant networks, as this is where trust and belonging already existed. Rural DBS models were modified or shortened to fit urban attention spans while retaining non-negotiables like obedience and multiplication. Leaders also invested heavily in developing indigenous locals, even when it proved slower, so movements would not depend only on expatriates or migrants.

Practitioners pointed to this when stressing the importance of **local leadership (See Observation 7), affinity group engagement (See Observation 3),** and **principle-based adaptability (See Observation 5)** that fit city life

CHALLENGE 4:

## Engaging Urban Worldviews and Spiritual Resistance

Cities carry layered resistance to the Gospel. On one level, materialism, relativism and secularism dominate cultural narratives, often leading to confusion, apathy or outright rejection of Scripture's authority. On another level, many practitioners discern strong spiritual opposition, describing cities as contested spaces. One leader noted that a "post-Christian context requires rethinking," while another simply observed, "spiritual opposition is expected in urban contexts." These two dimensions, intellectual and spiritual, combine to make it difficult to cultivate openness to disciple-making and sustained obedience to Jesus.

**Possible Adaptations:** Prayer walking and responding to felt needs often created unexpected relational gateways in otherwise resistant contexts. Many emphasized listening carefully before speaking, allowing spiritual conversations to arise naturally instead of relying on one-way proclamation. Some also reframed evangelism around natural, everyday interactions: gyms, schools, markets, where people were already open.

This reality shaped the emphasis on **starting and remaining in the harvest (See Observation 13), fostering obedient lifestyles through discovery learning (See Observation 1), and rooting practice in prayer** and **dependence on God (See Observation 14).**

CHALLENGE 5:

## Tensions with Traditional Church Structures in Urban Contexts

Urban disciple-makers often encounter structural resistance from existing church models. Centralized, attractional approaches can feel poorly suited to the decentralized, relational, and rapidly changing dynamics of city life. Some practitioners described these inherited forms as ineffective or inefficient, especially for multiplicative disciple-making toward disciple-making movements. The tension is felt by both practitioners and congregants, many of whom experience frustration when a local church's expectations clash with a team's movement vision. In cities, the gap between traditional structures and movement vision can become magnified.

**Possible Adaptations:** Teams often created lightweight dual structures: decentralized groups in homes, coffee shops, and offices alongside nonprofit platforms or limited partnerships with traditional churches. This allowed them to remain outward facing while still keeping authentic relational bridges with existing congregations. Some city-based churches also deliberately "released apostolic people from the center" so they could engage the harvest without being consumed by church maintenance.

Interviewees spoke about this when describing **servant-hearted leadership (See Observation 4), ordinary believers leading and multiplying (See Observation 8),** and **flexible, lightweight structures (See Observation 9) that differ from centralized models.**

CHALLENGE 6:

## Persevering Through Emotional, Relational, and Spiritual Strain

Disciple-makers in cities often feel the emotional weight of slow progress, overwhelming scale, and minimal visible results. Internally, they wrestle with discouragement and the temptation to give up. Relationally, conflict within teams or leadership structures can sap energy and vision. Spiritually, apathy within the wider church can leave practitioners feeling unsupported or misunderstood. Leaders emphasized that in this climate, perseverance itself becomes both the challenge and the call.

**Possible Adaptations:** Working in healthy intentional teams rather than as individuals was emphasized. Coaching and peer learning communities provided support systems where discouragement could be voiced and shared. Teams leaned on rhythms of prayer, feedback, and regular celebration to guard against burnout, and to keep identity anchored in God rather than outcomes. Leaders also emphasized honesty in evaluation: naming both fruit and failure and responding with grace and celebration. This surfaced in the call for **high-cost relational investment (See Observation 2), coaching (See Observation 10), starting with the marginalized (See Observation 11),** and **intentional corporate prayer (See Observation 14).**

**Urban Challenge Reflection and Discussion Questions:**

1. Of the six challenges, which two are most prevalent in your city context? How have you previously tried to adapt to them, and what could you do differently moving forward?
2. If your current response to a particular challenge is not bearing fruit, what other approach could you try that might fit your context more faithfully?
3. Cities are complex, fragmented, and fast-moving. What simple practice could help you and your team stay focused and effective in the midst of that complexity?
4. In your experience, what challenge/s are missing here? Describe in as few words as possible.

# Potential Emergent Practices

If challenges describe the weight urban disciple-makers carry, emergent practices point to how they are beginning to respond.

In complex and adaptive systems like cities, new practices often emerge as disciple-making practitioners experiment, learn and adapt in real time. These practices are living responses shaped by the dynamics of urban environments and the leading of the Spirit.

In this report, we highlight five emergent practices that surfaced in our interviews. They are included as examples of how disciple-makers are innovating in response to the challenges of their contexts. For reasons of confidentiality, we do not name specific locations or details, but we describe each practice in a way that allows others to imagine how it might be adapted in their own setting.

## Community-Designed Rules of Life

1

A shared set of practices that shapes how a community follows Jesus together

It is not a doctrinal statement or a weekly programme. It is a practice-based agreement that names how a community will live as worshippers, family, and disciple-makers. Rules of Life often emerge at a transition point, after a season of experimentation has revealed which rhythms are consistently bearing fruit in intimacy with Jesus, shared life, and mission to the lost.

**How it functions**

- It focuses on four to six concrete practices rather than trying to address everything at once.
- It is discerned collectively rather than imposed by a single leader.
- It is usually embraced for a defined period, often one year.
- It is reviewed and adapted regularly as the community matures.

**Example: The 5-4-3-2-1 Rule of Life**

In one community, members work toward five regular commitments: five days a week of personal Scripture reading; four hours per week of shared life within the community; three hours per week of intentional presence among the unreached; two meetings a month in a same-gender accountability group; and one collective outreach per month.

These practices were not imposed from above. They emerged from what the community saw consistently bearing fruit. Participation remained open, with some engaging fully and others joining selected rhythms.

**Potential impact in the city**

- It clarifies identity and belonging by defining commitment through shared practices rather than attendance at an event.
- It replaces event-dependency with a distributed pattern of worship, family life, and mission across the week and month.
- It catalyzes mission because concrete commitments require members to prioritize incarnational presence and outreach.
- It promotes sustainable formation by concentrating on a manageable set of habits that can become regular and normal over time.
- It encourages ongoing discernment through annual rhythms of prayer, reflection, and adaptation.

**Key considerations**

- The practice works best when it is locally formed rather than imported. In urban settings, this keeps the Rule rooted in the actual people, pressures, and possibilities of the city.
- A shared covenant or manifesto can provide helpful guardrails. Common values reduce the need for heavy control while still preserving alignment across communities.
- There are real vulnerabilities. A Rule of Life can create in-group and out-group dynamics, drift toward self-righteousness, or become rigid if disconnected from grace. Pastoral framing and open-handed inclusion matter.

**Overview**

A community Rule of Life is a shared, agreed-upon set of commitments that defines what it means to belong to a specific church community. It is discerned and designed collectively, often reviewed and adapted over time, and shaped by the calling, context, and needs of that community.

**REFLECTION QUESTION**

What four to six shared practices could your community discern

and commit to for the next year that would meaningfully integrate worship, family, and mission in your city?

# Integrated Group and Individual Coaching for Disciple-Making Leaders

A rhythm of shared learning and personal follow-up that helps leaders grow and take action.

2

**Overview**

This practice combines regular group coaching with individual follow-up, creating an environment that blends shared learning with personalised support. Leaders benefit from hearing diverse perspectives in a group setting while also receiving coaching that speaks directly to their own context and next steps.

**How it functions**

- Leaders gather at a regular rhythm, often monthly, for facilitated group coaching that reinforces core disciple-making principles, encourages peer learning, and strengthens relational bonds.
- Each leader receives one-on-one follow-up after the group session so that specific challenges, strategy adjustments, and next steps can be explored in more depth.
- Attendees leave both group and individual conversations with clear actions, which are revisited and evaluated in the next coaching cycle.
- The combination of group and personal coaching keeps leaders aligned with movement DNA while helping them contextualise those principles in their own setting.

**Example: A monthly group coaching cycle**

On the first Saturday of each month, ten disciple-making leaders gather for a two-hour coaching session in a living room. The facilitator leads reflective exercises on core principles, and participants share stories of breakthroughs and challenges from their neighbourhoods.

Within the next two weeks, each leader meets one-on-one with a coach for about forty-five minutes, in person or online. These sessions help clarify action steps, ask probing questions, and translate shared learning into concrete next moves. At the next group gathering, leaders report back on what they tried and what they learned.

**Potential impact in the city**

- It maximises diverse learning by exposing leaders to a wide range of real challenges and creative responses from other practitioners.
- It provides targeted support because one-on-one follow-up helps translate ideas into actionable, context-relevant strategies.
- It increases retention and momentum through regular cycles of encouragement, accountability, and measurable follow-through.

- It builds relational trust between leaders and coaches, which is especially important in complex, trust-dependent urban ministry environments.

**Key considerations**

- The strength of this approach lies in the integration of both formats. Group coaching alone can inspire but remain general, while individual coaching alone can become isolated. The combination allows leaders to learn broadly and apply personally.
- The regular rhythm matters. Without a predictable cycle, reflection and accountability can weaken.

**REFLECTION QUESTION**

What regular rhythm of group coaching and individual follow-up could you establish to help leaders reflect, act, and remain accountable in their context?

## Multi-Generational Coaching Models

3

Developing leaders who not only lead, but coach others across generations.

**Overview**

Multi-generational coaching is a relational and intentional approach to developing catalytic leaders so they can multiply themselves across generations. It prioritises deep investment in leaders who already demonstrate initiative and fruit in disciple-making, equipping them not only to lead but also to coach others who will do the same (2 Timothy 2:2).

The goal from the outset is generational reproduction rather than the growth of a single community. The emphasis falls on passing on core principles rather than rigid methods, allowing each new generation to adapt those principles in its own urban context.

**How it functions**

- Catalytic leaders are identified early based on fruitfulness, relational capacity, and willingness to invest in others.
- Coaching is personal and ongoing, often woven into normal rhythms of life through reflective questioning, encouragement, and shared problem-solving.
- A multiplication vision is made explicit from the start so that leaders expect to pass on what they receive.
- Success is measured in the reproduction of coaches and leader-generations, not only in the formation of new groups.
- Lightweight evaluation tools, occasional gatherings, and peer learning spaces help maintain network health and relational alignment.

**Example: The 20:7:3 model**

One practical expression is a 20:7:3 pattern. Twenty leaders receive regular, lighter-touch coaching through a broader peer environment. Seven emerging leaders are invested in more deeply through smaller, more focused conversations. These seven meet approximately twice a month for smaller coaching conversations. Three leaders receive the most intensive coaching and relational access, with the expectation that they will coach others in the same way.

In practice, the wider circle of ~20 may gather monthly for peer learning and shared problem-solving. The mid-tier of ~7 group may meet twice a month for more focused development. The closest circle of ~3 may meet weekly for heart-level accountability, spiritual formation, and coaching development.

**Potential impact in the city**

- It decentralises leadership and reduces dependence on a single leader.
- It strengthens resilience because coached leaders carry movement DNA into new neighbourhoods even when communities dissolve or relocate.
- It expands coaching capacity across the network as leaders begin coaching others in successive generations.
- It keeps multiplication at the centre by treating every disciple-maker as a potential coach.

**Key considerations**

- This practice works best when coaching is embedded in the culture rather than reserved for a select few. The expectation that every disciple-maker can both receive and give investment helps prevent bottlenecks.
- Peer learning remains important within this model because it helps leaders adapt principles creatively across different urban contexts.

**REFLECTION QUESTION**

Which leaders could you begin investing in more intentionally so that they are equipped not only to lead, but to coach others across generations?

## Peer Learning Environments

Spaces where leaders learn together in real time.

4

**Overview**

Alongside one-on-one coaching, leaders can be brought into peer learning spaces where they share stories, exchange insights, and troubleshoot challenges with others at a similar stage. These environments provide perspective, mutual encouragement, and a flow of ideas that help leaders adapt core principles to diverse urban contexts.

Unlike classrooms or one-way coaching sessions, peer learning environments are flexible, interactive, and participant-driven. They build a culture of collaboration and mutual sharpening within the movement.

**How it functions**

- Leaders bring real challenges from their current context rather than abstract questions.
- Conversations often revolve around a few simple prompts such as: Where are you now? Where are you going? What challenges are you facing? What do you need to get there?
- Shared tools may include ecosystem mapping, storytelling and measurement, and affinity or regional clustering so that participants can learn with others facing similar realities.
- Meetings usually happen at a regular rhythm, often monthly, with limited pre-work and high participation.

**Example: A monthly peer learning gathering**

A group of leaders working in similar contexts but different geographic parts of a region meet online for a focused two-hour session. Each person shares current realities, challenges, and signs of movement in their context. Together, the group identifies patterns, offers counsel, and surfaces adaptive responses that might not emerge in isolation.

Over time, the repeated rhythm strengthens relationships, exposes participants to practices others are testing, and helps local leaders discern how to respond to complexity in their own setting.

**Potential impact in the city**

- It matches urban diversity by helping leaders adapt principles rather than copy fixed methods.
- It builds resilience in transient environments because leaders carry shared DNA and learning even when communities change.
- It avoids leadership bottlenecks by allowing growth and problem-solving to happen at multiple points in the network.
- It accelerates collaborative learning, skill transfer, and creative adaptation across the city.
- It helps cultivate a coaching culture in which leaders learn from one another, not only from a central figure.

**Key considerations**

- These spaces are most effective when they stay focused on producing fruit on the ground and grounded in lived experience rather than becoming overly theoretical.
- Good facilitation matters. The environment should remain open and participatory while still moving toward clarity, accountability, and practical next steps.

**REFLECTION QUESTION**

What consistent space could you create for leaders to share challenges, learn from one another, and adapt their practices in real time?

## Affinity-Specific Short-Term Groups as On-Ramps for Participation and Leadership

5

Short-term, interest-based groups that create accessible entry points and develop new leaders.

**Overview**

This practice combines two design choices: short-term, time-bound groups with a clear beginning and ending, and affinity-specific focus built around a shared interest, life stage, or felt need. Together, these features create accessible on-ramps for newcomers and natural, lower-risk opportunities for emerging leaders to develop.

In urban settings where time is scarce and relational entry points matter, these groups can offer both a compelling invitation and a practical training ground for leadership.

**How it functions**

- Time limits lower the barrier to entry by making participation feel achievable.
- Shared interests or life stages create relational warmth and help participants connect more quickly.
- The short-term format creates a manageable setting in which emerging leaders can experiment and grow with support.
- Each cycle ends with reflection, evaluation, and celebration, which keeps learning and adaptation built into the culture.
- Participants and apprentice leaders who thrive can move into longer-term disciple-making communities or broader leadership responsibility.

**Example: An eight-week cycle of affinity groups**

A movement team launches three eight-week groups for young professionals, new parents, and photography enthusiasts. One group meets in a co-working space for dinner and discussion on faith and vocation. Another gathers at a park for coffee, children's playtime, and conversation. A third meets for city photo walks that integrate relational connection, faith conversations, and Discovery Bible Study.

Each group is co-facilitated by a seasoned leader and an apprentice leader. At the end of the cycle, the groups celebrate what God has done, evaluate what worked, and identify participants or apprentices who are ready for deeper engagement or new leadership opportunities.

**Potential impact in the city**

- It fits busy city life because the time-bound structure feels manageable and realistic.
- It accelerates trust and conversation by building on common interests and shared affinities.
- It creates safe environments for new leaders to practise leadership without the pressure of indefinite commitment.
- It remains highly adaptable because each cycle can target new interests, audiences, or neighbourhoods.
- It sustains momentum by embedding regular rhythms of ending, reflection, adaptation, and celebration.

**Key considerations**

- This practice is strongest when it is treated as an on-ramp rather than an end in itself. Teams should think carefully about how participants and apprentice leaders will be invited into deeper pathways afterward.
- The affinity focus should remain genuinely connected to people's real interests and rhythms rather than feeling artificially constructed.

## REFLECTION QUESTION

What short-term, interest-based group could you start that would create a natural and accessible entry point for new people in your context?





# Supporting Materials

## Appendix A:
## Interview Process

### Overview of Process (Phase 2)

- **Pre-selection** – Participants were identified and invited through relational networks, trusted peer recommendations, and targeted outreach.
- **Interview** – 60–90 minute semi-structured conversations (in person or via Zoom), recorded with permission.
- **Transcription and Editing** – Automated transcription (Descript) with manual corrections for accuracy, especially for contextual or theological terms.
- **Thematic Coding** – Interviews coded for themes using basic pattern recognition and cross-comparison.
- **Pattern Recognition** – Overlapping observations merged into Common Urban Observations; inclusion required multiple-source confirmation and thematic alignment.
- **Validation** – Individual summaries and quotations sent to participants for review and confirmation.
- **Report Assembly** – Patterns organized with supporting quotes, rationale for urban significance, and potential strategies.

### Detailed Narrative

1. **Participant Identification and Invitation**
   Participants were selected through existing relational networks, trusted peer recommendations, and targeted outreach. The goal was to engage active urban disciple-making practitioners representing a wide diversity of regions, city sizes, cultural contexts, and models. Selection was relational and intentional rather than random, but this ensured voices came from contexts of high complexity, including cities marked by political instability, persecution, economic strain, and conflict.

2. **Consent and Framing**
   Before each interview, participants were informed of the project's purpose, how data would be used, and the voluntary nature of participation. Consent (verbal or written) was obtained for recording and the use of direct quotations, with anonymity provided when requested.

3. **Interview Design and Flow**
   Interviews followed a semi-structured format that balanced consistency across conversations with space for participants to guide the discussion. Core questions explored theological convictions, disciple-making practices, challenges, and stories of fruitfulness. This flexible design allowed unanticipated insights to surface.

4. **Recording, Duration, and Medium**
   Most interviews were conducted via Zoom, with a small number held in person. Sessions generally lasted 60–90 minutes and were audio-recorded with participant consent.

5. **Language and Translation**
   Most interviews were in English, though pacing and phrasing were adjusted for those using English as a second language. In select cases, translators assisted so participants could communicate in their preferred language.

6. **Transcription and Editing**
   Recordings were transcribed using Descript software. Transcripts were then reviewed and edited for accuracy, with corrections made for names, locations and contextual phrasing.

7. **Post-Interview Summaries and Member Checking**
   After transcription, concise thematic summaries were created for each interview. This summary, along with key quotations were sent back to participants for review and confirmation ("member checking") to ensure

accuracy and faithful representation of intent.

8. **Analytical Follow-Up**
   All interviews were coded for recurring themes using a pattern recognition approach. Observations were identified where multiple participants described similar practices, experiences and principles. These were cross analyzed to refine categories and merged into broader Common Urban Observations. Evidence from Phase 1 was revisited to identify continuity and new developments.

# Appendix B

## Research Approach and Posture

### Guiding Framework

This project was shaped by a **critical realist posture**: we affirm that truth can be discovered, but always through partial, contextual, and imperfect lenses. We are not testing fixed hypotheses but exploring grounded insights from lived experience.

The findings in this report should be read not as prescriptive formulas but as emerging patterns that may help practitioners discern God's leading in their unique contexts.

### Nature of the Research

The research was grassroots and field-based, carried out in the midst of active ministry. While we consulted experienced missiologists and researchers, the effort remained intentionally practitioner driven. Our process has evolved over four years of learning by doing, refining methods of interviewing, coding, and cross-analysis along the way.

This research was conducted with the relational support of All Nations Family International, whose practitioner networks provided additional context for participant identification and participation.

**Scope and Limitations**

- **Sample Size** - This report is based on 40 semi-structured interviews across 32 countries representing 50+ urban centers. While diverse, this sample does not capture every global city reality.

- **Representativeness** - Participants were intentionally selected based on relational trust and reputation for generational fruitfulness in urban disciple-making. As such, the findings represent the perspectives of those already seeing some degree of movement traction, not a random or statistically representative cross-section.

- **Partial and Contextual** - Insights are inevitably partial. They reflect a slice of global urban disciple-making practice at this time in history, influenced by contexts of persecution, conflict, political instability, and mobility.

- **Non-Exhaustive** - While 798 unique observations were catalogued, this report highlights only the most repeated themes, common challenges, and a few emergent practices. Many valuable insights lie beyond the scope of this document.

### Ethical Considerations

**Informed Consent** - All participants gave informed consent for their interviews to be recorded, transcribed and analyzed. Data was stored securely and only accessed by the research team. Identifying details that could compromise the safety or privacy of practitioners, or their networks were either omitted or altered in the report. While quotations remain verbatim for accuracy, locations and names may be generalized where necessary to protect participants.

**Confidentiality** - Quotations are included with participant permission, with names and identifying details anonymized upon request. Care has been taken to avoid exposing sensitive contexts, especially in regions experiencing persecution or conflict.

**AI Usage**: In preparing this report, the research team made selective use of AI-based tools to support organizational clarity, some language refinement, and synthesis of already anonymized material. These tools were employed strictly as organizers and writing aids and did not have access to raw transcripts or confidential data. At no point was confidential information shared with AI (OpenAI's ChatGPT or other LLM's - Large Language Models). All sensitive material remained securely stored and accessed only by the Two Four Eight core team.

All observations and conclusions in this report are solely the result of the research team's engagement with the interviews and data, and do not specifically represent the views of Two Four Eight.

# Appendix C

## Definitions and Preconceptions

**Note on Definitions**: The definitions included in this report are provided as working definitions to support clarity and consistency. They are not a synthesis of interview data, nor do they represent the collective views of interviewees. Likewise, they do not reflect the official position of Two Four Eight. These definitions are offered solely as interpretive tools to aid the reader in engaging with the report.

### Working Definitions

**Disciple-making**
A spirit empowered process of leading a person into a journey of relationship with, discovery of and obedience to Christ in the community of others on the same journey. Discipleship involves both personal transformation and participation in God's redemptive purposes.

- **Invitation to follow Jesus** (faith and baptism, Acts 2:38)
- **Life-on-life learning** (being with and learning from Jesus, Mark 3:14)
- **Obedience to Jesus' commands** (Matt 28:20)
- **Transformation in community** (Acts 2-4)
- **Generational reproduction** (2 Tim 2:2)

**Disciple-Making Movement:**
A Disciple Making Movement* (DMM) is

- A Holy Spirit led process**
- chain reaction
- of ordinary people
- making disciples who obey all Jesus' commands
- in their natural social networks
- resulting in generations of gatherings spawning gatherings
- that maintains its quality
- without depending on the ones who started it.

*Tasse, A., Brown, H., Corley, L., Djao, Y., Hartman, C., Moran, R., & Sah, C. K. (2024). Discovery presentation paper [Unpublished manuscript]. New Generations / Motus Dei Network.
**Report has added (Holy Spirit Led process)

**Persons of Peace**
In the context of Luke 10 and Matthew 10, a "person of peace" refers to an individual whom God has already prepared to receive the messenger and the message, offering hospitality and relational access to their social networks. The principle underscores discernment of divine initiative in mission, where receptivity and relational embeddedness provide natural pathways for the spread of the Gospel.

### City

For the purposes of this research, a city is a continuously inhabited settlement meeting both functional and quantitative criteria. Functionally, it includes developed infrastructure and complex social networks and functions as an administrative, economic, or cultural hub for its region. Quantitatively, it typically corresponds to an "urban center": a contiguous built-up area (e.g. grid cells) with a population density of at least ~1,500 inhabitants per square kilometer and a total population minimum of 50,000 people. Cities may range from smaller urban centers with tens of thousands of inhabitants to megacities with well over 10 million. They commonly exhibit high rates of internal migration and mobility, significant cultural, linguistic, and social plurality, forming both fragmentations of traditional ties and the rise of new affinity-based networks. Such cities not only have visible impact in their administrative boundaries but also through their extended suburban or peri-urban agglomerations.

**References for this definition:**

- European Commission, Global Human Settlement, Degree of Urbanization definitions: "An Urban Centre consists of contiguous grid cells with a density of at least 1,500 inhabitants/km², and a minimum total population of 50,000."

- UN World Urbanization Prospects (2018): Describes "urban agglomerations" as population within contiguous territories with urban density levels, often spanning beyond administrative boundaries; defines megacities as agglomerations with over 10 million people.

**Urbanization**
Urbanization refers to the demographic and social process by which a growing proportion of a country's population lives in settlements officially classified as "urban," usually towns or cities, alongside the expansion of built-up areas and increased development of infrastructure, services, and economic activity. Because there is no single global threshold, many countries use minimum population thresholds (often 2,000 or 5,000 people) or other criteria such as density and non-agricultural employment to distinguish urban from rural places. In this report, we understand urbanization not only as a shift in numbers, but as a transformation of social, cultural, and economic life: patterns shaped by density, plurality, mobility, and complexity typical of urban contexts.

**References for this definition:**
- Harvard College Pressbooks: Urbanization – Environmental Biology, noting most frequently adopted population thresholds are 2,000 and 5,000 inhabitants.
- Our World in Data: "How is an urban population defined?" – shows that definitions vary, with many countries using thresholds of 2,000 or 5,000 people.
- IPUMS-International: "URBAN" variable documentation – provides examples of how different countries define urban/rural.
- United Nations / DESIPA (Statistics Division): notes that while "urban population" is a common indicator, national definitions vary considerably.

**Urban Context**
An urban context is any environment shaped by the social, cultural, and economic realities of city life. It is not solely determined by population density, but also by patterns such as diversity of cultures, transient populations, complex social
networks and rapid change.

**Informal Settlements / Township / Slums**
Informal settlements, sometimes called "slums" or "townships," are residential areas that develop outside formal planning frameworks. They are characterized by insecure tenure, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to services, yet they often host vibrant social networks and are significant contexts for urban disciple-making.

**Complex Adaptive System (CAS)**
A complex adaptive system is a network of interconnected agents (people, institutions, systems) whose interactions give rise to unpredictable, constantly evolving patterns. Cities function as CAS because they are dynamic, shaped by migration, economics, technology, governance and culture, factors that continually adapt in response to one another.

## Preconceptions
This research is undertaken as an attempt at holding a critical realist framework. We affirm that truth exists and can be known, but always through partial, contextual and imperfect lenses.

We enter this study with several core preconceptions:

1. **Christ-Centered Worldview**
   We affirm the authority of Scripture and the Lordship of Jesus Christ, grounding our interpretation of findings in a biblical worldview (as articulated in the Lausanne Covenant).

2. **Co-Mission with God**
   We believe God is the primary agent of mission, inviting His people to join Him in His redemptive purposes in the world. Our task is to listen, discern and cooperate with what He is already doing.

3. **Movements-Informed Framework**
   Our inquiry is informed by global movements of multiplying disciples and communities, with Disciple-making Movements (DMM) as the most closely aligned model. We recognize, however, that no single framework captures the full range of what God is doing, and that any model or method will require adaptation in light of the unique complexity and diversity of urban contexts. Models are imperfect lenses: useful for identifying principles and patterns, but always subject to refinement through ongoing learning.

4. **Growing Significance of Cities**
   We see cities as strategic centers of cultural, economic and spiritual influence, functioning as complex adaptive systems (CAS). Understanding and engaging cities requires both theological reflection and systems-

aware practice.

5. **Participatory and Contextual Learning**
   We value the lived experience of practitioners as a primary source of insight. Our approach seeks to integrate biblical principles, field realities, and contextual wisdom, trusting that meaningful learning emerges through dialogue and reflection rather than from theory alone.

## Phase 2 Refinements to Preconceptions

Compared with Phase 1, we began this phase with a stronger awareness that:

- Not all cities function alike - Practices fruitful in one urban context may not work in another, even within the same country.

- Some contexts are exceptionally high-pressure - Heightened persecution, political instability, economic collapse or active conflict can radically alter the dynamics of disciple-making.

- Complex environments - Many practitioners work in spaces that are both ordered and unpredictable, requiring agility and responsiveness.

- Technology integration is no longer optional - Digital tools are now a normal part of urban disciple-making, shaping both relationships and strategy.

## Further Suggested Reading

Note: The following works are recommended solely by the report author as resources for further study. They do not represent the views of the interviewees or of Two Four Eight, nor do they imply endorsement by them.

**Urban Studies and Sociology**


- Saskia Sassen. The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo. Princeton University Press, 2001 (updated edition).
- Jane Jacobs. The Death and Life of Great American Cities. Random House, 1961.
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. World Urbanization Prospects: The 2024 Revision. UN DESA, 2024.
- UN-Habitat. The State of the World's Cities 2022/2023: Envisioning the Future of Cities. United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2023.


**Urban Theology and Ministry**


- Keller, Timothy. Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City. Zondervan, 2012. (Especially Parts 1 and 2)
- Ray Bakke. A Theology as Big as the City. InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- Alan J. Roxburgh. Joining God in the Neighborhood. Morehouse Publishing, 2015.


**Disciple-Making and Missiology**


- Watson, David & Paul Watson. Contagious Disciple Making: Leading Others on a Journey of Discovery. Thomas Nelson, 2014.
- Cooper, Michael T. Ephesiology: A Study of the Ephesian Movement. William Carey Publishing, 2020.
- Trousdale, Jerry & Shodankeh Johnson. The Kingdom Unleashed: How Jesus' 1st Century Kingdom Values Are
- Transforming Thousands of Cultures and Awakening His Church. DMM Publishing, 2018.
- Farah, Warrick, ed. Motus Dei: The Movement of God to Disciple the Nations. William Carey Publishing, 2021.
- Garrison, David. Inside Church Planting Movements:
  What Twenty-Five Years of Church Planting Movements Has Taught Us. Monument, CO: WIGTake Resources, 2026.

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