

Preparing for Growth

II KINGS 4:1-7

Now the wife of a member of the company of prophets cried to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead; and you know that your servant feared the LORD, but a creditor has come to take my two children as slaves." **2** Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" She answered, "Your servant has nothing in the house, except a jar of oil." **3** He said, "Go outside, borrow vessels from all your neighbors, empty vessels and not just a few. **4** Then go in, and shut the door behind you and your children, and start pouring into all these vessels; when each is full, set it aside." **5** So she left him and shut the door behind her and her children; they kept bringing vessels to her, and she kept pouring. **6** When the vessels were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel." But he said to her, "There are no more." Then the oil stopped flowing. **7** She came and told the man of God, and he said, "Go sell the oil and pay your debts, and you and your children can live on the rest."



What principles can we learn from this passage regarding preparing for growth?

 A large, empty rectangular box with a light blue border, intended for the reader to write their reflections on the passage.

Preparing for Growth

We want to see our fellowships grow. Of course, we cannot make growth happen; what we can do, though, is create space for growth to happen. Like the widow who collected the jars and trusted God to fill them, we can make room for growth in our fellowships and trust God to bring that growth. Following are some steps to take in order to put out jars for God to fill.

Survey the landscape of your fellowship:

- ▶ What are the first impressions small group, large group, and your other fellowship activities make on newcomers?
- ▶ What are some things that probably couldn't work the same way if your fellowship were one size larger? These could be simple cosmetics, room sizes, etc. They could be leadership structures, or patterns of communication. They could be community values.
- ▶ How could you change these things to make room for growth? How long would it take to make the transition? What vision-casting would it take?
- ▶ Commit to making the change in order for growth to happen, not when growth happens.

Strategize about welcoming new people:

- ▶ Who do you want to be welcoming?
- ▶ Where do you want to greet new people? What do you have to do to make it welcoming to many new people?
- ▶ Where do you want to keep new people? What has to change for that to happen?
- ▶ What new partners do you need in order for these things to happen?



Assess the risks:

What would the costs of these changes be?

- ▶ The time it would take
- ▶ The things people would miss
- ▶ The people who would be alienated
- ▶ The other things that would not be done

In your opinion, are the changes worth the price? If not, how can the costs be minimized or redistributed? Keep working until you come up with a growth plan that is workable and desirable.

Dedicate your **plans for growth** to God.



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SMART Goals for growth:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-bound



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1. The woman came to Elisha in a state of desperation. Do we have a sense of godly dissatisfaction with the meager results we have been seeing in our ministry?
2. Elisha works with what the widow already had in her house. What can we have faith to believe God can work with to bring growth in our midst?
3. The pursuit of the goal involved the whole community.
4. We cannot make growth happen, but we can make space for God to bring growth.

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