



# At the TABLE with Keith Anderson

## A Curriculum of Love: How Questions Become Prayer

*A Reflective Guide for Mentors, Friends, and Fellow Travelers*

### The Art of Paying Attention

Every one of us is being shaped by what we love, chase, or cling to. Mentoring isn't about handing out answers; it's about paying attention to the subtle ways our lives are being formed—through joy and sorrow, success and disappointment, stillness and motion.

"Spiritual direction is really about learning to see. The mentor helps another person look for the fingerprints of God in the ordinary." — Margaret Guenther

To walk with someone in their becoming is to practice reverent curiosity. These questions are not meant to close a conversation but to open one—an invitation to honesty, discovery, and quiet wonder. Sometimes, the most genuine form of prayer begins with the courage to ask.

#### **1. Our Picture of God**

- What image of God lives within you?
- When you hear the word "God," what emotions rise—comfort, confusion, longing, resistance?
- How did your early life shape this image?
- Whose voices gave you that picture—and whose voices need to be released or reimagined?
- What kind of God-story are you living from now—and is it still large enough for who you are becoming?

"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience." — Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, quoted by Joan Chittister

#### **2. Our Stories of Self**

- What messages about your worth or identity were written into you early on?
- Are there old wounds, unspoken expectations, or lies that still have power?
- What inner phrases play when life feels heavy: "I'm not enough." "I have to hold it all together." "I can't risk being seen."
- How has your sense of self changed as you've grown, healed, or unlearned?
- You might ask: "What story am I living now—and what new story wants to emerge from within me?"

"We become whole not by eliminating our darkness but by integrating it."  
— Thomas Merton

### **3. Moments of Wholeness**

- When have you felt a moment of healing or clarity that seemed to arrive unannounced?
- What experiences have left you with the quiet sense: I was not alone in that.
- If your life were a book of becoming, what chapter would be titled *Transformation*?

"Wholeness does not mean perfection. It means embracing brokenness as an integral part of life."  
— Joan Chittister

### **4. What We Love**

- What do you love most deeply, and how can you tell?
- If you had to let go of something to stay truly alive, what would you release—your possessions, your control, your image, your comfort?
- What would you keep no matter what?

"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."  
— Frederick Buechner

### **5. Voices and Companions**

- Whose voice has really mattered to you this year?
- Who helps you stay honest and grounded?
- Who has shaped you in ways that weren't healthy—and what wisdom have you gathered from that?
- Who asks you questions that call out your best, truest self?

"Companionship is not about fixing each other's lives; it's about seeing each other clearly enough to walk the road together." — Keith R. Anderson

### **6. Stories of Heartbreak and Healing**

- Choose one story of loss, disappointment, or failure. Write it down. Then read it to someone who will listen with gentleness.
- Notice how they listen. What questions arise? What begins to heal just by being spoken aloud?
- Our stories don't need polishing; they need to be witnessed.

"A wound is a place where light can enter." — Rumi  
"Blessing meets us in the wound, not once it is healed but while it is still tender."  
— Jan Richardson

### **7. Circles of Connection**

- No one grows alone.
- Draw a simple map of your relationships—friends, mentors, peers, family, anyone who seeks your guidance.
- Where do you feel alive and connected? Where do you sense distance or stagnation?
- Who helps you grow in authenticity and courage?

"Community is the space where we discover that we belong to each other and to something greater than ourselves." — Keith R. Anderson

## 8. Practices That Keep You Awake

Which rhythms help you stay centered and awake to what matters? Consider these invitations:

- Silence or time away from noise
- Breathing prayer or mindful pause
- Journaling or reflective writing
- Evening examen: What gave me life today? What drained it?
- Slow reading—words that nourish the soul
- Sabbath rest or unplugged time
- Honest self-reflection and change
- Small acts of kindness, justice, or repair
- Making peace with someone
- Extending compassion to someone who frustrates you

“A practice is something that grounds us so that grace can surprise us.” — Joan Chittister

### Practice:

Before your next conversation with a friend or mentor, choose one question that stays with you. Write or walk with it. Let your mind wander. Notice what rises to the surface when you stop trying to sound right.

“The questions we ask reveal the shape of our soul.” — Keith R. Anderson

Sometimes the question itself is the prayer.



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He is the author of several books, including his most recent: [On Holy Ground: Your Story of Identity, Belonging and Sacred Purpose](#) (Wipf & Stock, 2024). His other works include [Reading Your Life's Story](#) (IVP, 2016), [A Spirituality of Listening](#) (IVP, 2016), and [Spiritual Mentoring](#) (IVP, 1999). In his writing, teaching, and mentoring, Keith seeks to set a table for people looking to enter the “amazing inner sanctuary of the soul” in the most ordinary and extraordinary moments of life.