

ACTS 2 JOURNEY

VIDEO COHORT

PASTOR AND VISION TEAM GUIDE

A HEALTHY CHURCH IN EVERY COMMUNITY

THE IN-PERSON ACTS 2 JOURNEY COHORT

Each in-person **ACTS 2 JOURNEY COHORT** is made up of multiple churches that have committed to attend four weekend retreats over the course of 9-12 months.

The quality of leadership by the lead pastor throughout this transformation journey is critical. This is why each retreat weekend has two components:

FRIDAY afternoon or evening (approximately 3 to 4 hours) is dedicated to providing teaching to lead pastors and spouses about the importance of their leadership development related to time management, conflict resolution, leading change, and building teams. These sessions equip them to lead their teams through the process outside of the retreat settings because the facilitators are not present at those meetings, and the church team needs to begin looking to their lead pastor for leadership in these areas rather than depending on the Acts 2 Journey facilitators.

SATURDAY is for the lead pastors and their teams. In these interactive sessions, pastors and teams assess their current reality, calibrate their mission, discern God's preferred future (vision), commit to biblical values, and create an operating plan tailored to their context involving the five functions described in Acts 2:42-47. Pastors are asked to bring 8-15 people from their church—people who will help them plan the future of their congregation.

LEAD PASTOR SESSIONS IN THE ACTS 2 JOURNEY

“The Acts 2 Journey changed more than just my church. It truly changed me!”

While every pastor fills what society has clearly identified as a leadership role for their local church, not every pastor has had access to actual leadership training, especially what is needed to lead a change journey in the local church.

ACTS 2 JOURNEY LEAD PASTOR SESSIONS have been specially chosen to equip pastors and spouses for the unique requirements of their leadership role. Some of the themes addressed include:

- Guiding Change in the Local Church
- Priorities that Maximize Impact
- Recruiting and Developing Leaders
- Conflict Management
- Overcoming Insecurities
- Effective Communication

ABOUT THE FACILITATORS



Alton Garrison serves as the Executive Director of the Acts 2 Journey Initiative. Garrison has previously served as Assistant General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God; Executive Director of U.S. Missions; superintendent of the Arkansas District; and pastor of First Assembly of God, North Little Rock, Arkansas. Prior to pastoring, Garrison traveled as an evangelist for 18 years.

He has authored the books: Hope in America's Crisis, Building a Winning Team, Acts 2 Church Implementation Guide, The 360° Disciple, and A Spirit-Empowered Church.



Ron McManus serves as a facilitator for the Acts 2 Journey and as a transitional pastor for larger churches with Legacy Transition Group. McManus was a senior pastor for over 16 years. Under his leadership, the church grew from a congregation of 350 to over 3,000 attendees.

Dr. McManus has a passion for leadership development, having served as president of EQUIP, founded by Dr. John Maxwell, and as president of the Center for Church Leadership for the Assemblies of God USA.



Mike Clarensau serves as a facilitator and research coordinator for the Acts 2 Journey. He formerly served as Director of the Acts 2 Journey before departing to fill the role of Dean of the College of Bible and Church Ministries for Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) in Waxahachie, TX. Among the churches they have led, Mike and Kerry pastored Maranatha Worship Center in Wichita, Kansas, for ten years. They have also filled other district and national roles for the Assemblies of God.

Mike has authored numerous books, including A Spirit-Empowered Life, From Belonging to Becoming, Journey to Integrity, Your New Life in Christ, The Sanctity of Life, and We Build People, a discipleship strategy manual used in Assemblies of God churches throughout the United States.

VIDEO COHORT USER GUIDE

SUGGESTED PARTICIPANTS

- **The video cohort is designed for the lead pastor and a local church vision team made up of 8-15 leaders from the church.**

We've learned that regardless of the size of the church or the leadership ability of the pastor, effective change does not come without a team. The Acts 2 Journey cohort is no exception: Leaders drive the process of transformation. Therefore, a critical part of the discernment phase will be identifying leaders who can partner with the pastor to drive the transformation process.

- **The Vision Team should be comprised of between 8-15 members selected from the Church's leadership and congregation.**

Ideally the team membership should be representative of the mix of the congregation. It should be ethnically and gender diverse, multi-generational and include both elected and lay leadership. Each leader should be given a printed copy of the downloadable Workbook.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

Each of the five sessions of the video cohort can be completed within a three-hour timeframe. The workbook and downloadable PowerPoint provide instructions about when to break for team discussions and how to complete each discussion exercise.

SUGGESTED FORMAT

A team should be seated around one or more tables in view of a TV or projection screen. Each session includes a combination of viewing videos and engaging in group discussion.

Each video is embedded in the PowerPoint presentation through an online link. All the session content, including instructions, can be covered by displaying the PowerPoint presentation and advancing through the slides sequentially.



Note: Slides with embedded videos might appear blurry at first and delay a few seconds when clicked before beginning to play. Slides with embedded videos will have a play button in the center (see image below). If prompted, click "Enable Content" to view the embedded videos.



Those without Wi-Fi or unreliable Internet connection can download the videos in advance of the session and play them when the PowerPoint and workbook indicate they are to be played.

ASSESSING CURRENT REALITY



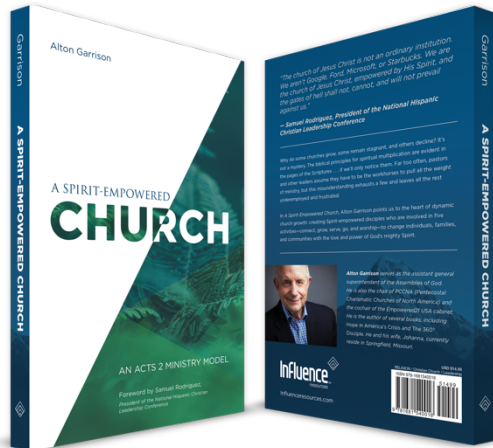
| | | | | |
|--|--|-------|-------|----|
| A SPIRIT-EMPOWERED CHURCH |  | 9:21 | ..... | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION |  | 12:32 | ..... | 2 |
| TRANSFORMATION PART 1 |  | 5:18 | ..... | 3 |
| TRANSFORMATION PART 2 / ASSESSING CURRENT REALITY |  | 5:23 | ..... | 4 |
| CONGREGATIONAL LIFE CYCLE |  | 16:31 | ..... | 8 |
| THE NEED FOR FRESH VISION |  | 9:16 | ..... | 11 |
| WE CAN'T STAY HERE (LEAP OF FAITH) |  | 5:31 | ..... | 12 |
| TURN AND TAKE YOUR JOURNEY |  | 15:49 | ..... | 13 |

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR THE SESSION 1 MEETING

| Est. time | Workbook page # | Video and exercises |
|------------|-----------------|---|
| 10 minutes | — | Welcome and what to expect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ex: “We’ll be watching a series of videos that correspond with our workbooks. We’ll pause periodically for discussion. You are at the table because we value your input about the future of our church.” |
| 10 minutes | 1 | Play video: A Spirit Empowered Church (9:21) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute copies of the book <i>A Spirit-Empowered Church: An Acts 2 Ministry Model</i> |
| 20 minutes | 2-3 | Play video: Introduction (12:32) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the “A Prayer for the Future” (pg. 3) and pause for prayer as a team |
| 5 minutes | 4 | Play video: Transformation Part 1 (5:18) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the Workbook blanks |
| 15 minutes | 5-7 | Play video: Transformation Part 2 / Assessing Current Reality (5:23) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the Workbook blanks Pause with the video for a time of prayer Follow the PowerPoint instructions to circle statements in “Assessing Current Reality” chart individually |
| 30 minutes | 8-10 | Play video: Congregational Life Cycle (16:31) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the PowerPoint instructions to complete the Current Reality chart Discuss where each member of the team sees the church on the Life Cycle and reach a consensus as a group. |
| 15 minutes | 11 | Play video: The Need for Fresh Vision (9:16) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pause for brief discussion about the video |
| 15 minutes | 12 | Play video: We Can’t Stay Here (5:31) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pause for brief discussion about the video using the instructions listed in the PowerPoint |
| 30 minutes | 13 | Play video: Turn and Take Your Journey (15:49) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate the date for Session 2 meeting for discussion about the video Assignment: Read chapters 1-9 in <i>A Spirit-Empowered Church</i> Communicate the date for Session 2 meeting Close with a time of prayer as a team |
| 2 h 30 m | | |

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Zoom call with an experienced Acts 2 Journey facilitator
 - email acts2@ag.org or call 417.862.2781 ext 3480
- A Spirit-Empowered Church: An Acts 2 Ministry Model* – acts2journey.com
- Church Health Metrics Calculator: acts2journey.com/assessment#calculator



A MESSAGE FROM ALTON GARRISON

When I became pastor of First Assembly of God, North Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1986, I had been an evangelist for 18 years. I had the Pentecostal experience, and I had the message. When I shared my experience and began to preach a Spirit-empowered message, revival came.

I knew how to preach a sermon, how to bring people to the altar, and how to help my congregation be blessed, but I didn't know how to take a church from where we were to where we needed to be. **I didn't have a process.**

A Spirit-Empowered Church: An Acts 2 Ministry Model is the foundational textbook for the journey you are about to engage. The book tells the story of our own journey, but also introduces the concepts of the process outlined in Acts 2.

You may be reading this and be in the same place I was. You are sincere, dedicated, committed, spiritual, and faithful, but you feel you are lacking something.

I believe many of us have been missing an understanding of what the Holy Spirit did in the first-century church. The early church impacted the then-known world, walking out God's plan and doing the work of the ministry as a chosen generation and royal priesthood. Certainly, it had some problems, but the first-century church turned the world upside down.

I am convinced that within **Acts 2** is the template, the plan, and the process that Jesus envisioned for the Church on the earth.

The best part is that anyone can do it. It is not dependent on the size of your congregation, your building, your town, or your bank account. It is dependent on our limitless God with whom all things are possible.

As I began to blend an understanding of Spirit-empowerment and planning, the church grew and became healthy. We've developed those principles over the years into a process we'd like to introduce you to called the **Acts 2 Journey**.

As a team, begin reading *A Spirit-Empowered Church: An Acts 2 Ministry Model*. As the textbook for the Acts 2 Journey cohort, *ASEC* provides

- A template for church health
- A template for personal spiritual growth
- A Spirit-empowered process to restore hope

When the Early Church began, one thing we often miss is their complete uncertainty about what to do. In Acts chapter 1, before we get to Acts 2, Jesus ascends, and we get a sense from Luke's account that the disciples stood around not knowing what to do next.

Even though Jesus had given them insights, the disciples didn't connect the dots. What they did know, however, was to stay in Jerusalem until they had received power from on high. Even for the disciples, uncertainty launches Acts 2. You might be able to sympathize with those feelings as you sit with your team. What's extraordinary is that by the end of Acts 2, they begin to function as a church and do the exact things we are still doing 2,000 years later.

ENCOUNTER: Acts 2:4

The first-century church began with the Encounter of Pentecost.

MESSAGE: Acts 2:14–36

Peter went out to the inquisitive Jews and explained what was happening; he was preaching the Message (or explanation) of what was happening. His message was so anointed that three thousand people were saved and immediately baptized.

PROCESS: Acts 2:42–47

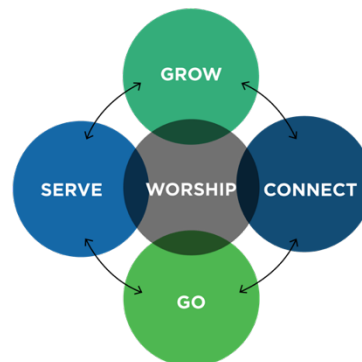
Luke wrote about a process, that when implemented, resulted in the first-century church that turned the then-known world “upside down.”

A HEALTHY CHURCH IS ONE THAT

- Engages and maintains loving relationships
- Develops and mobilizes the people
- Acts with clear direction and outward focus
- Reproduces and multiplies his mission in other peoples and places
- Pursues and obeys God passionately

Most church health experts derive five functions practiced by the first-century church from Acts 2:42–47:

- Evangelism
- Fellowship
- Discipleship
- Ministry
- Worship



INTRODUCTION

TEN QUESTIONS

- Why do we exist? (Mission)
- Where are we going? (Vision)
- How will we behave? (Values)
- How will we get there? (Strategic plan)
- How will we engage new people? (Evangelism)
- How will we treat them once they arrive? (Fellowship)
- How will we disciple them? (Discipleship)
- How will we train them to serve? (Gift-oriented ministry)
- How will we inspire them to be missional (locally and globally)?
- How will we help them connect to God? (Worship)

Remember, you can't lead your church on a road you're not walking yourself. In fact, leaders who have taken the Acts 2 Journey often tell us that what changed the most during their journey was their own hearts.

Begin each session with a time of focused prayer as a team.

A PRAYER FOR THE FUTURE

Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves, when our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little, when we arrive safely because we have sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things we possess, we have lost our thirst for the waters of life; having fallen in love with life, we have ceased to dream of eternity; and in our efforts to build a new earth, we have allowed our vision of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly, to venture on wider seas where storms will show your mastery; where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars. We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes; and to push into the future in strength, courage, hope, and love.

—Attributed to Sir Francis Drake (1540–1596)

**BUILDING THE FOUNDATION***There is hope for every local church.*

“Transformation is not a destination. For congregations it is not a place of arrival where the transformation journey can be declared as over. It is an ongoing journey. Congregations do not transform once. They are continually transforming.”

—George W. Bullard Jr., *Seven Enduring Principles for Transforming Your Congregation*

UNDERSTANDING CONGREGATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

Transformation is a _____.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherd, and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11–12 ESV).

Transformation is a biblical concept that is rooted in the principles of spiritual renewal and formation into the image of Christ.

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18, ESV).

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17, NKJV).

Transformation is _____

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (John 14:26, ESV).

Spiritual transformation occurs through the power of the Holy Spirit. As a teacher and guide, the Holy Spirit leads us to repentance and salvation, enables Christ to dwell in us, and reveals truth that enables believers to live transformed lives.

“But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as first fruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:13, NIV).

Transformation is _____.

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10, NIV).

At the center of the Acts 2 Journey is a belief in the potential for congregational transformation, that the church’s best years are still ahead. Often, we believe in the miracles, promises, and power of God for people in the Bible, but we do not believe they are available for us.



“I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart” (Psalm 40:8, ESV).

“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves” (Luke 10:1-3).

Let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God (Hebrews 6:1, NIV).

Transformation begins _____.

Congregations are changed as people are changed! Lasting transformation begins internally—within hearts and minds—as people are challenged and encouraged to unlearn what does not work and learn or relearn principles that will lead to transformation.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2).

Transformation is _____.

Transformation is an intentional process that combines learning with doing. Pursuing change without a well-designed plan will likely lead the church into chaos, but when people can see how changes fit together in a shared direction, they can engage the change with more confidence.

“Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: ‘We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”’ When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed” (Acts 13:46-48, NIV).

Transformation is a _____.

Transformation is possible for any congregation, but it does not happen overnight. To ensure change occurs at multiple levels and in alignment with God’s vision for the future, congregations must employ a long-term process, such as the Acts 2 Journey.

“Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6, NIV).

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it” (2 Timothy 3:14, NIV)



ASSESSING CURRENT REALITY

Like any organization, local churches have a life cycle—a predictable pattern of birth, growth, and even decline.

Therefore, for us to determine the life cycle, we need to discover where each church is on its life cycle without finding fault or blame.

Once we determine where we are, we can begin the journey to the next level in all areas of our church.

In each of the five rows in the chart on the next page, circle two statements that best describe your church. Work individually based on your view of the church. An example of rows 1 and 2 is provided below.

| | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|--|---|
| ROW 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive, supportive attitude Vision is always in focus and the highest priority High commitment level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong sense of mission and purpose among every member High level of “ownership” Everybody is finding their place | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High visibility and understanding of mission and vision Ministries share a common purpose Ministry leaders feel well-trained for their assignments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of mission and vision seems in decline New members do not sense church’s purpose Focus has shifted to the needs and likes of members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission/vision are unclear We’re looking for that “magic bullet” that can turn things around. We talk about “good ole days” more than about our hopes or plans for the future |
| ROW 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mutual dependency requires everyone to be involved or leave Nearly all members are actively serving Strong sense of team throughout | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High percentage of individuals’ time and identity committed to the church Volunteers are easy to find Lots of congregational energy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New members quickly find a place to become involved Good level of enthusiasm among membership for participation Clear system for discovering my gifts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some members assume others can get the job done More paid staff hired to lead or do ministry Original members feel “We have done our part” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs eliminated for lack of participation Difficult to find volunteers Seems like 10 percent of members do 90 percent of the work |

After you’ve circled ten statements (two in each of the five rows), set the chart aside. We will return to it shortly.

NOTE: The chart has been updated to include 15 statements in each row.

ASSESSING CURRENT REALITY



5:23

| | | | | | |
|-------|---|--|---|--|--|
| ROW 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive, supportive attitude Vision is always in focus and the highest priority High commitment level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong sense of mission and purpose among every member High level of “ownership” Everybody is finding their place | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High visibility and understanding of mission and vision Ministries share a common purpose Ministry leaders feel well-trained for their assignments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of mission and vision seems in decline New members do not sense church's purpose Focus has shifted to the needs and likes of members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission/vision are unclear We're looking for that “magic bullet” that can turn things around. We talk about “good ole days” more than about our hopes or plans for the future |
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| ROW 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal organization Communication is very strong—everyone knows what and why of all we do Spontaneity in decision making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The “why” of ministry always determines the “how” Structure is fluid and is created in response to needs Meaningful traditions are beginning to form | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New programs created to respond to new needs Delegation of leadership responsibility is evident. New roles and responsibilities have been created | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few new programs added The “how” of ministry has become more important than the “why” We're a bit too busy to consider new ideas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs eliminated due lack of leaders or funds Very few new ministries but more focus on what those we've been doing for several years Primary goal is preservation / survival |
| ROW 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members are receptive to new ideas Objectives are quickly accomplished Everything we do aligns with mission/vision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes is easily adopted and integrated Suggestions from all levels of membership It seems we're getting better at everything we do | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New proposals given serious consideration Church leaders responsible for initiating and implementing A team of leaders makes most decisions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few changes proposed Few changes considered that radically depart from status quo Most people prefer to keep things the same | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “We've never done it that way before” Rationalizations often made for why things can't be done Many think we can't do some of the things other churches do |
| ROW 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Morale is high People are finding great value in their participation. Solutions to conflicts seem easy to find. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Morale is higher Lots of energy and ideas. Everyone pulls together to help us be successful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Morale is highest Our greatest goals are being achieved Confidence is contagious that goals can be reached | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insiders don't always share everything with everyone else People are getting weary in ministry efforts. Commitment levels declining | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People attend more out of habit than expectation Most efforts aren't as strong as they once were Most of our efforts feel like a struggle |
| TOTAL | | | | | |

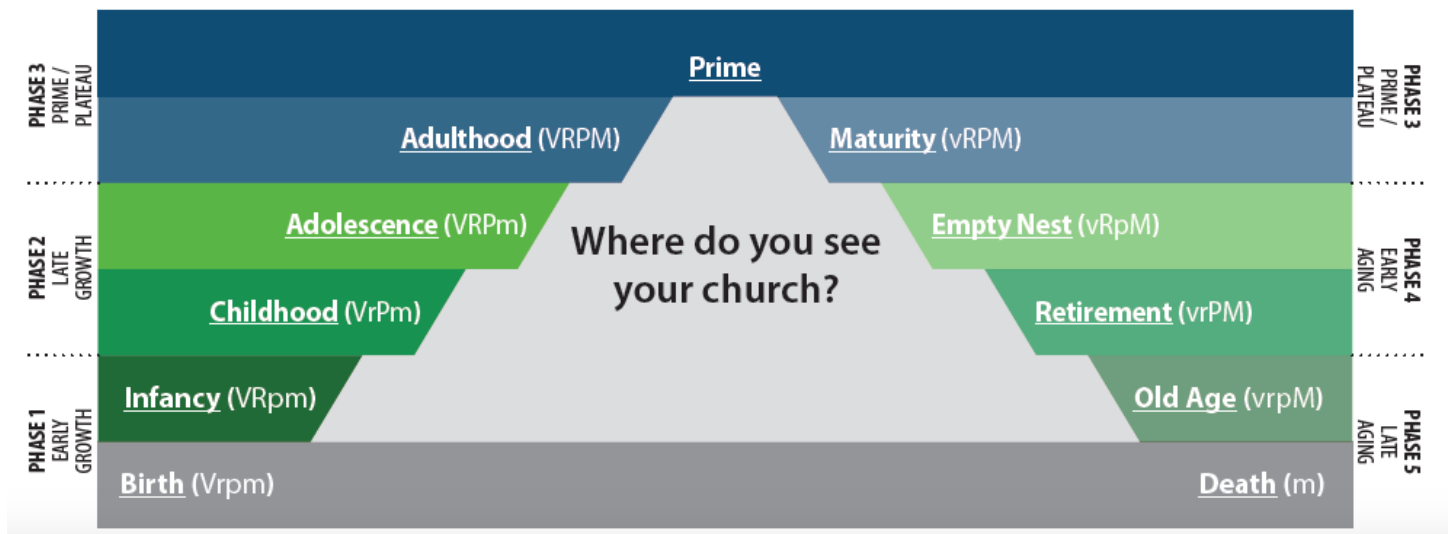


V _____ is the current understanding of God's preferred future for a congregation that is cast by leadership and owned by membership.

R _____ refer to activities to include people in the life of the church such as evangelism, outreach, assimilation, and discipleship.

P _____ are the functional attempts to provide projects, ministries, services, activities, and training for people connected to the congregation.

M _____ refers to the systems and structures that work to undergird the fulfillment of vision, and the implementation of relationships and programs. It includes the administration of resources, day-to-day operations, and overall efficiency.



"The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development," George Bullard, 2001. Used by permission.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--|
| PHASE 1 EARLY GROWTH | Birth | Vision is the driver; relationships, programs, and management are not fully developed. |
| | Infancy | Vision and relationships are dominant. |
| PHASE 2 LATE GROWTH | Childhood | Vision and programs are the focus. (Shift focus from Relationships to Programs) |
| | Adolescence | Vision, relationships, and programs are emphasized. It is often a time of growth. |
| PHASE 3 PRIME PLATEAU | Adulthood | Vision, relationship, programs, and management are all fully developed. |
| | Maturity | Vision is no longer dominant. Relationships, programs, and management are the focus. |
| PHASE 4 EARLY AGING | Empty Nest | Vision and programs not dominant. Management drives the direction of the church. |
| | Retirement | Vision and relationships are minimized as the church renews its focus on programs. |
| PHASE 5 LATE AGING | Old Age | Management is the only factor that is still dominant or fully developed. |
| | Death | The congregation ceases functioning as a spiritual and vibrant faith community. |



Return to your Assessing Current Reality Chart (pg. 7). Count the number of circles in each column of the chart, and write the number in the “TOTAL” box at the bottom of the chart.

| | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|--|---|---|
| ROW 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Morale is high ▪ People are finding great value in their participation. ▪ Solutions to conflicts seem easy to find. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Morale is higher ▪ Lots of energy and ideas. ▪ Everyone pulls together to help us be successful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Morale is highest ▪ Our greatest goals are being achieved ▪ Confidence is contagious that goals can be reached | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insiders don't always share everything with everyone else ▪ People are getting weary in ministry efforts. ▪ Commitment levels declining | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People attend more out of habit than expectation ▪ Most efforts aren't as strong as they once were ▪ Most of our efforts feel like a struggle |
| TOTAL | 2 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 3 |

After you finish adding the circled statements in each column of the Assessing Current Reality chart, here's how to determine your place on the life cycle diagram:

Column 1 = Phase 1,

Column 2 = Phase 2,

Column 3 = Phase 3, etc.

The column with the largest number determines the church's phase on the life cycle.

The above example has the highest number of circles in column 4. Thus, the church is in Phase 4 of the life cycle, “Early Aging.”

As a team, spend a few minutes discussing each person's results.

Then, reach a consensus on the church's life cycle stage. A description of each stage is provided below.



LIFE CYCLE STAGES

1. **Birth**: The Birth stage is driven by the expression of a passionate God-given Vision concerning the life of the newly emerging congregation. Relationships, Programs, and Management activities are happening, but they are not fully developed at this stage. Leadership is expressed through vision, and assists in fueling the forward progress of the congregation.
2. **Infancy**: Vision and Relationships are dominant. The expression of discipleship patterns that focus on worship, spiritual development, and the formation of warm and rich relationship patterns or a sense of true community in the congregation characterize infancy. During Infancy the passion of the congregation to fulfill its vision will increase as people discover their role in this exciting spiritual and strategic journey. Out of this passion people readily volunteer to do the work of the congregation because their congregation has the character of a movement they very much want to enhance and empower. Healthy patterns of worship, evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, and ministry and missions are established during this stage.
3. **Childhood**: This stage focuses on Vision and Programs. Childhood is initiated by the realization that the congregation is succeeding, but that its programs, ministries, and activities are unorganized and not developed in a form that will allow the congregation to reach its maximum potential. The energy that was going into the development of deep, meaningful Relationships is now focused on developing and implementing the Programs structure for the congregation.
4. **Adolescence**: During this stage, Vision, Relationships, and Programs are all emphasized. It is often a time of a great crescendo of qualitative and quantitative growth. The congregation is able to relax following five to six years of program development and implementation. People can enjoy their relationship with God and one another. It is also a time of some chaos as people begin to multiply the dreams they have for the future of the congregation, and the core dream or vision of the congregation may appear fuzzy.
5. **Adulthood**: Vision, Relationships, Programs, and Management—are all fully developed. The congregation is ready to soar as a fully development spiritual community with great resources and the proper balance or alignment of these resources.
6. **Maturity**: Maturity is when Vision is no longer dominant or fully developed. The congregation is no longer living out the vision that God has given them. They are, instead, living out the patterns of Relationships, Programs, and Management they have developed. Without the fueling and driving aspects of Vision, the congregation is being motivated by Management. At the same time, Maturity may be a very high quality stage in the life of the congregation. There continues to be a crescendo of quality, even if Vision is diminished. Often congregations will plateau numerically during Maturity.
7. **Empty Nest**: Empty Nest is when Vision and Programs are no longer dominant. The congregation is experiencing disintegration of the quality and quantity of programs, ministries, and activities. Management is driving the direction of the congregation. Relationships, while still vital, are turning increasingly inward in their focus.
8. **Retirement**: Retirement is when Vision and Relationships are no longer dominant or fully developed. Management is driving the direction of the congregation. Programs are once again dominant as congregations seek to revitalize their programs, ministries, and activities.
9. **Old Age**: Old Age is when Vision, Relationships, and Programs are no longer dominant or fully developed. Management is the only factor that is still dominant or fully developed. As such the habit or pattern, generally at a mediocre level, drives the direction of the congregation.
10. **Death**: Death is when a congregation ceases functioning as a Christ-centric faith community with regular worship, discipleship, and fellowship activity



See
CHAPTER 7
in
*A Spirit-
Empowered
Church*

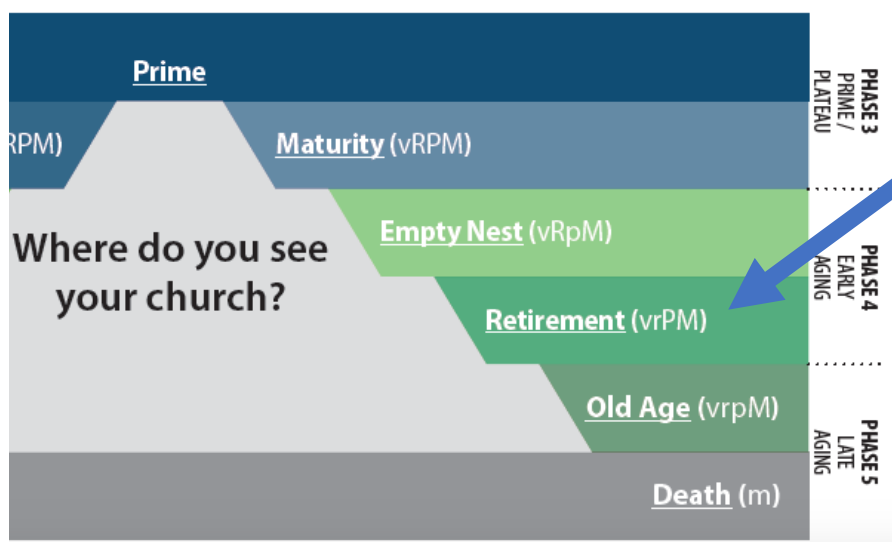
UNDERSTANDING THE LIFE CYCLE

A church is ascending if vision and relationships are driving it forward while programs and management are simply along for the ride.

In the local church, the primary cause of plateau is lost vision in the hearts of the people.

Thus, the ideal time to cast fresh vision is *before* we reach plateau in PHASE 3.

Unfortunately, most churches don't realize they are on the descending side of the life cycle until they start losing key people, around the Retirement stage.



On the descending side of the life cycle, we often look for new programs to implement to stop the decline when fresh vision is what we need.

The further down the backside of the life cycle we are, the more radical the adjustments will likely need to be.

“When Spirit-inspired vision gets in the hearts of people, nothing can stop that. It’s powerful, and it gives the church a whole new future.”



THE LEAP OF FAITH

For key leaders in a church to take the leap of faith alongside the pastor requires the shared development and articulation of a clear, compelling vision.

As a team, you must consider a couple of important questions before you decide to take the **leap of faith**.



The first question to ask yourselves when taking the leap of faith is, “Whose church is this?”

If it’s our church, then we can sit and figure out what we want to do. But if it’s God’s church, He has some ideas that He’d like to share. All too often in churches, we believe some version of, “If it’s not spontaneous, it’s not the Holy Spirit.” Within this false framework, the two alternatives become, “Will we trust God, or will we have a plan?” Instead of getting stuck choosing, why not seek God for His plan?



A second question to consider when taking the leap of faith is, “Do you believe that God has a plan for your church?”

Nearly everyone agrees that He does—you wouldn’t be in the room if you didn’t believe that. If you do believe God has a plan for the church, don’t you think He’d like to tell you what that plan is?

We believe that God wants to reveal plans to your team that you might not even be able to comprehend currently.

THE BRIDGE OF HOPE

When your team comes together on answers to these two questions and agrees to take the leap of faith, the next step build a bridge of hope for the congregation to walk across.



We must acknowledge as a team that we don't have everything figured out yet. However, having determined our answers to the two questions listed above, we also know that *we can't stay here*.

If "staying here" is an option, then we'll never get to where God is calling us. We must recognize and accept together that "staying here"—wherever we are on the life cycle—is no longer an option for us.

Before moving on, say these words in unison as a team: ***We can't stay here!***

Deuteronomy 1:6–7 (ESV):

⁶"The Lord our God said to us in Horeb, 'You have stayed long enough at this mountain. ⁷Turn and take your journey...' ⁸See, I have set the land before you. Go in and take possession of the land that the Lord swore to your fathers...to give to them and to their offspring after them."










As you commit together, consider these insights:

1. The credibility of the mission is not measured by the opinions or decisions of the people. Negativity can't stop the mission.
2. The journey is always more difficult than first perceived. If it were easy, anyone could do it.
3. The vision (preferred future) does not devalue previous successes.
4. Attitudes and actions should never be determined by personal disappointments. Don't let disappointments spoil your leadership or your attitude.
5. Vision is indispensable; I am not.
6. God's assignment is not limited by personal deficiencies. You may not consider yourself to be great, but you can still make a difference.
7. Failure is never final, and victory (success) is rarely instantaneous.

Pause for a time of prayer together as a team.

MISSION & VISION



| | | | | |
|---|---|-------|-------|----|
| WHY DO WE EXIST? (MISSION) |  | 4:40 | ..... | 14 |
| WHERE ARE WE GOING? (VISION) |  | 6:29 | ..... | 15 |
| FIVE REASONS PEOPLE ARE AT YOUR CHURCH |  | 10:12 | ..... | 16 |
| FIRST CENTURY VS. FOURTH CENTURY |  | 5:02 | ..... | 20 |
| FINDING VISION: THE AMANDA GAME |  | 18:06 | ..... | 22 |
| FINDING VISION: THE POWER OF YOUR STORY |  | 6:20 | ..... | 24 |
| BIBLICAL FUNCTIONS ASSESSMENT |  | 12:33 | ..... | 25 |
| I DREAM OF A CHURCH |  | 8:33 | ..... | 28 |
| CONSTRUCTING THE VISION STATEMENT |  | 15:28 | ..... | 30 |

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR THE SESSION 2 MEETING

| Est. time | Workbook page # | Video and exercises |
|------------|-----------------|--|
| 5 minutes | — | Welcome and Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ex: “Last time we met, we identified our church’s current reality and determined where we are on church’s our Life Cycle. Today we’ll begin addressing the ten questions using the same video and discussion format as we did for Session 1.” |
| 10 minutes | 14 | Play video: Why do we exist? (4:40) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the workbook blanks Review page 84 and chapter 8 of <i>A Spirit Empowered Church</i> |
| 10 minutes | 15 | Play video: Where are we going? (6:29) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the workbook blanks Pause for brief discussion about the video |
| 15 minutes | 16-19 | Play video: Five Reasons People are at Your Church (10:12) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the Workbook blanks Pause for brief discussion about the video |
| 15 minutes | 20-21 | Play video: First Century vs. Fourth Century (5:02) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the Workbook blanks Follow the PowerPoint discussion to complete the chart on page 21 individually. (Additional instructions for this exercise can be found in a video near the end of the PowerPoint). Discuss team members’ responses. |
| 30 minutes | 22-23 | Play video: Finding Vision: The Amanda Game (18:06) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the PowerPoint instructions for the “Amanda Game” discussion activity |
| 20 minutes | 24 | Play video: The Power of Your Story (6:20) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pause the video as needed and follow the PowerPoint instructions for the discussion activity |
| 25 minutes | 25-27 | Play video: Biblical Functions Assessment (12:33) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the PowerPoint instructions to complete the Biblical Functions assessment and accompanying discussion |
| 20 minutes | 28-29 | Play video: I Dream of a Church (8:33) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the PowerPoint instructions and work together on a draft of each of the five “I dream of a church” statements. (Additional instructions for this exercise can be found in a video near the end of the PowerPoint). |
| 30 minutes | 30 | Play video: Constructing the Vision Statement (15:28) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the PowerPoint instructions and work together on a draft of your church’s vision statement. (Additional instructions for this exercise can be found in a video near the end of the PowerPoint). Continue reading chapters 1-9 of <i>A Spirit-Empowered Church</i> Communicate the date for Session 3 meeting |
| 3 hours | | |



TEN QUESTIONS

1. Why do we exist?
2. Where are we going?
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

On page 84 of *A Spirit-Empowered Church*, you will find a list and brief description of the five classifications of people who attend our churches each week.

1. Unbeliever
 2. Believer
 3. Disciple
 4. Servant-Leader
 5. Reproducer
-

Now that we have determined our place on the life cycle, we will address the first of the ten questions:

- Why do we exist?

MISSION

The Acts 2 Church process directs the local church to grasp foundational teachings to establish the mission. The mission of the church is the objective of the church—who we are and how should we operate. The Acts 2 Church has been established with the Great Commission as its spiritual direction and the Great Commandment as its guide for love-directed attitudes and action.

The Great Commission focuses on the _____ system which Christ taught.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19–20, ESV).

The Great Commandment focuses on the _____ system Christ modeled.

And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37–39).

The church’s mission . . .

1. Provides long-term _____ and _____ for the local church.
2. Declares the church’s understanding of biblical _____ that shape beliefs and actions.
3. Captures the heart of Christ as it pertains to our _____ to all mankind.



1. Why do we exist?
- 2. Where are we going?**
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

“Vision is the best manifestation of creative imagination and the primary motivation of human action. It’s the ability to see beyond our present reality, to create, to invent what does not yet exist, to become what we not yet are. It gives us capacity to live out our imagination instead of our memory.”
 – Steven Covey, Roger Merrill, Rebecca Merrill, *First Things First: To Live, to Love, to Leave a Legacy*

VISION

The first step toward realizing your full kingdom potential is developing the ability to envision it. Vision is a clear, compelling picture of the future. It is seeing what could be, should be, and must be in light of God’s preferred purpose and plan.

- Vision is the ability to _____ explore possibilities.
- Vision understands who we are and what we are _____ designed to do.
- Vision answers, “_____ are we going?” and “_____ are we doing it?”
- Vision is the ability to imagine life beyond present boundaries.
- Vision is based on _____ but transcends current _____.
- Vision unites people around a common _____.
- Vision gives people clear focus on an _____ destination.
- Vision always entails _____.
- Vision involves _____ and invites _____.
- Vision pushes against the status quo.
- Vision is memorable, _____, ambitious, and relevant.
- Vision is _____ than your ability to achieve.

If we were to add a mathematical formula to the defining elements of vision, it could look something like this:

DIRECTION (Where are we going?)

+ PACE (How fast do we want to get there?)

+ PRICE (What is the investment we must make?)

BIBLICAL VISION

“When God calls a man or woman to spiritual leadership in the church, He also gives vision for the fulfillment of that calling. I believe to the core of my being that if God blesses you with an opportunity to lead, He will give you a clear vision of the path and the goal. He will not leave you to fend for yourself, stumbling in darkness and trying to figure out how to move or where to go. He gives you vision so that you can move ahead with confidence and certainty.”

—Kirk Nowery, *The Stewardship of Life*

1. Why do we exist?
- 2. Where are we going?**
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

Given that the local church typically struggles with change more than most other entities, it makes sense that there must be a reason that is unique to our setting—AND THERE IS!

For the local church, change will almost always threaten the very reasons our people identify with our local church. Studies have demonstrated that there are five primary reasons why people have connected with their local church. We can say that these are the reasons your people say that your local church is “MY Church.” And while each of these are good reasons to feel connected, each reason will also struggle to allow for change.

1. P

The top reason why many people connect with their local church relates to the significant events in their lives that have happened there. People say, “that’s my church” because of what has happened in their lives at that “place.”

“That’s my church because that’s where I received salvation.” “That’s my church because we were married there” or “our children were dedicated to the Lord there.” “That’s my church because we were married there” and many more. When people experience significant moments in our church, they can form a strong attachment to our place.

Of course, this is good. We want people to experience life-changing moments among us. But, funny thing about place people: They tend to want the place to keep looking like the place looked back when they had their significant moment. In fact, place people can become quite resistant when you want to make changes to the place.

Every pastor likely has stories of those people who resisted changes to carpet color or any redesign of the auditorium platform. Sometimes that resistance can take on an almost comical form (at least someday it will seem funny). These are place people and when you change the place, some of them will feel disoriented—*my church doesn’t feel the same anymore*.

2. P

Another group are attached to our local church because they have connected with one of the key leaders of our congregation. “That’s my church because that’s my pastor!” Perhaps their students feel a strong connection to the youth pastor or they find the efforts of the worship leader particularly inspiring.

Is this a good thing? Sure. Often on the road to significantly connecting with Jesus, people will connect with those who help them engage Him. Of course, as leaders in the local church we want to steward such responsibility well. Like Paul, we want people to follow us as we follow Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). But the truth is, they will follow us.

While connecting with a leader is an acceptable reason to feel connected to a local church, when change comes, this reason also proves unable to manage it easily. When that favorite youth pastor has moved on to a new assignment or someone else now leads us in worship, these “Personality people” feel disoriented, just like those PLACE people felt when we redecorated. Things simply aren’t the same anymore.

3. P

As you might imagine, here we are speaking of people who have connected with our local church because of one of the programs we use to help disciple them. “That’s my church because I love the Thursday night women’s Bible study.” “That’s our church because our children love the Kids’ programs” and on it goes.

Once again, we have found a great reason to connect with our church as it’s a good thing when our various ministries can create belonging and meaningful moments of life change for those who participate. However, this is another reason that doesn’t accept change easily. When that Thursday evening Bible study moves to Tuesday morning and I can no longer attend, my reason to be at this church feels compromised. Make changes in the Kids’ program and everything feels different. Once again, someone feels disoriented by our changes, even if our goal was to help us be more effective.

4. P

Our fourth reason why people connect to our local church is the people. Simply put, “My friends are there.” Now we know this is a good thing. We want people to build relationships with others in the body of Christ. Frankly, that’s the nature of the Church itself as we live out Christ’s command to “Love one another.”

But what happens when my friend moves away or (harder yet) my friend decides to worship at another church across town? Now my church doesn’t feel the same. Every pastor knows the two questions that quickly come to mind when we hear that someone is leaving our church—*What happened?* and *Who might be going with them?*

Again, this reason for connecting with our church is a great reason to be there, until it changes.

5. P

The final primary reason that people say “that’s my church” when speaking of your local congregation relates to the position they fill, “That’s my church because I’m a deacon there.” “That’s my church because I’m a part of the worship team,” or, “That’s my church because I’m a small group leader there.”

Again, this is another great reason to feel connected to our local church. We want people to feel that sense of ownership of the ministry assignment that Jesus has placed before them. We want them to move beyond simply “helping us out” to the real sense of mission that can be found when they’re doing what their abilities or God-given gifts have equipped them to do.

It’s a great reason to feel a part of our local church—*until change comes*. Maybe this is the year that the bylaws require me to step down from my deacon role or now others are available to help lead worship and I’m not on that schedule nearly as often. When I am no longer doing what I once have done in ministry, church feels different—even if I’m the one that made the decision to step away from that ministry.

One of the greatest challenges to leading change is that your effort for change will likely collide with one or more of these reasons and, thus, disorient or even anger those who are connected for such reason(s). If that’s the case, is there anything left for us to change?

No wonder the local church struggles mightily with change!

So, what do we do? To lead change effectively, you must help people connect for a 6th reason and the best reason of all:

6. P

When people connect to your church for this reason, they will embrace change when they believe that change will help us more effectively fulfill our purpose. However we state that purpose—*We're here to see lives changed*, or *We want to love God and love people*, or *We bring hope to the hopeless*, or *We want to invest in the next generation*—we want our people to identify most with that vision.

Now, we don't want to eliminate those other reasons to connect with our local church, but when we can help a PLACE person connect with our PURPOSE, change will impact them less. When PURPOSE becomes a bit more important than my other reason to connect with my church, I simply will need you to help me see how the proposed change can move us closer to our PURPOSE.

This is a key part of a pastor's responsibility in leading change—we must help people understand our need for change and keep our PURPOSE consistently before them so they can begin to grasp it more fully. Only then will people begin to embrace the

change journey our congregation desperately needs to engage.

1. Why do we exist?
2. **Where are we going?**
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

BUILDING ON THE FIRST-CENTURY MODEL

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers (Acts 1:12–14, ESV).

Imagine a twenty-first-century church that:

- Received the _____ willingly.
- Demonstrated power supernaturally.
- Was led _____.
- Prayed fervently.
- Fellowshiped _____.
- Taught sound doctrine consistently
- Preached the gospel _____
- Shared resources liberally.
- Grew _____.

The Book of Acts is an account of the birth and growth of the first-century church. Small groups of faithful believers met together, prayed together, and lived out the Great Commission. They were empowered by the Holy Spirit, motivated by mission, and committed to the cause of Christ. As a result of their efforts, a global movement began—the gospel story has been preached around the world, and millions of people have been saved and transformed by the power of God.

RETURNING TO GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN

The following exercise will provide a clearer picture of how you see your church. In each of the 17 categories, write down whether your church more closely resembles a first-century or fourth-century church. Write down either a “1” or a “4” in each row of the third column of the chart.

| | First-Century Church | Fourth Century Onward | Our Church |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Lord's Supper | Common Meal | Ceremony | |
| Worship | Participation | Observation | |
| Witness | Relationship | Salesmanship | |
| Ministry | Personal | Social | |
| Leadership | Gifted, Called Servants | Professionals | |
| Growth | Multiplication | Addition | |
| Mission | Being | Supporting Missionaries | |
| Discipleship | On-the-Job | Classroom Training | |
| Fellowship | Community Living | Large Meetings | |
| Body Life | Lifestyle | Membership | |
| Gifts | Widespread Use | Limited Use | |
| Empowerment | God's Power | Human Ability | |
| Buildings | Functional | Sacred Meeting Places | |
| Membership | Producer | Consumer | |
| Child Care | Parental Responsibility | Church Responsibility | |
| Bible Study | Doers of the Word | Hearers of the Word | |
| Evangelism | “Go” Structures | “Come” Structures | |

Adapted from William Beckham, *The Second Reformation: Reshaping the Church for the 21st Century*

Which of these areas present the best opportunities for our church to develop more of a first-century focus?



1. Why do we exist?
2. **Where are we going?**
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

**See
CHAPTER 9
in
*A Spirit-
Empowered
Church***

A key reason why team leadership is critical is that both the pastor and the established leadership bring needed components to the church's vision. Remember that an outward focus is the key ingredient for church transformation.

When our eyes are on the harvest field around us, we'll find ourselves asking the right questions and finding the right answers. Inward-focused churches aren't asking the right questions, but those whose eyes are focused where God is also looking have a much easier time finding the right path.

Designate one person at your table to serve as "Amanda." As a team, spend 30 seconds each sharing your heart for what you hope that person experiences because they are a part of your church. When we look at them, what do we want to see God do in their lives?

"_____, because you're a part of this church, here are some things I want to see God do in your life..."

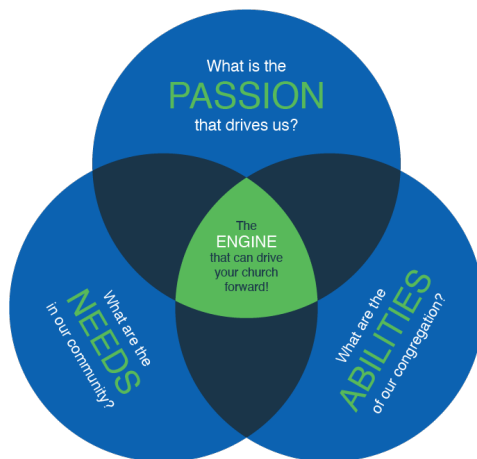
As you continue the practice of developing vision by looking in the eyes of people, pay attention to what keeps coming up. What is the Holy Spirit speaking to you?



The right vision for a church is one that reflects not only the passions of leaders, but the abilities of the congregation and the needs of the community.

If vision is only driven by pastoral passion and focus, the people may lack the needed capacity to function effectively in the path the pastor wishes to go. In such cases, the future will be filled with frustration for both the people and the pastor.

The right vision for a church is the nexus of three circles—the leader’s passion, the congregation’s abilities, and the community’s need.



Where these three intersect, the church will find . . .

1. the vision that pastor can lead because it’s his or her **passion**,
2. the vision the people can embrace and fulfill because it matches their **abilities**,
3. the vision the community will respond to because it connects with their **need**.

Find that merger point, and you will find the engine to drive your church forward!

1. Why do we exist?
2. **Where are we going?**
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

At the heart of the story of God's plan for salvation are personal testimonies. Each Christian has a story of how he or she came to know Jesus in a personal, life-changing way.

By sharing and reflecting upon God's work in the lives of people, the church—as individuals and as a collective body—is compelled to renew its commitment to mission and inspired to dream of new ways to know Christ, to make Him known, and to serve Him and others.

Take a few minutes to share the story of how you came to faith in Jesus.

“But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15, ESV).

Too often, leaders seek vision in isolation and separate themselves from the people they feel called to reach. Some seek the most marketable ideas, imagining that if they can just an appealing idea or phrase, people will rally to their pursuit. However, if you want to find God's vision for your life and for your church, you must look where God is looking: people!

What passions and abilities are surfacing among team members?

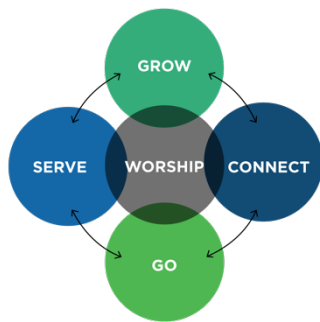


1. Why do we exist?
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6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

Before we can create and cast an overarching vision statement for the church, we must gather the correct information for the vision statement.

The process for acquiring this information begins by considering how five biblical functions will play into the vision statement. If the mission is the biblical foundation for a church's beliefs and behaviors, then the biblical functions of the Acts 2 church describe how our church should operate. These functions are found in Acts 2:42–47.

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:42-47, NIV).



- Fellowship (Connect)
- Discipleship (Grow)
- Gift-Oriented Ministry (Serve)
- Evangelism (Go)
- Worship

BIBLICAL FUNCTIONS ASSESSMENT



12:33

It's important that we acknowledge up front that we are already engaged in these five actions as a church. In fact, in some way and with differing levels of effectiveness, every local church pursues these actions. That's why we say that the Acts 2 Journey is not a program. A program is something you choose to do or choose not to do. A program is something you can start and stop.

In each row, mark the number that best describes where you see your church in relation to each of the five biblical functions. Add the numbers from each row to determine a total. A sample is provided below.

| Biblical Function: WORSHIP (EXAMPLE) | 1 Not at all | 2 Rarely | 3 Sometimes | 4 Often | 5 Very Often |
|---|-----------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|
| Our worship is Spirit-empowered and reflects a sense of reverence for God in His holiness. | 1 | | | | |
| Our worship supports the spiritual growth of our congregation and inspires us to live out our faith in the world. | | | 3 | | |
| We regularly engage in individual and corporate prayer. | | | | 4 | |

Total: 8

| Biblical Function: WORSHIP | 1 Not at all | 2 Rarely | 3 Sometimes | 4 Often | 5 Very Often |
|---|-----------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|
| Our worship is Spirit-empowered and reflects a sense of reverence for God in His holiness. | | | | | |
| Our worship supports the spiritual growth of our congregation and inspires us to live out our faith in the world. | | | | | |
| We regularly engage in individual and corporate prayer. | | | | | |

Total: _____

| Biblical Function: FELLOWSHIP (CONNECT) | 1 Not at all | 2 Rarely | 3 Sometimes | 4 Often | 5 Very Often |
|---|-----------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|
| A sense of belonging is nurtured and widespread within our congregation among various kinds of people. | | | | | |
| Caring, loving relationships are experienced through in-depth fellowship. When conflict occurs, we are able to resolve it and move beyond it. | | | | | |
| We support and encourage members in their contacts and involvement within the community around us. | | | | | |

Total: _____

BIBLICAL FUNCTIONS ASSESSMENT



12:33

| Biblical Function: DISCIPLESHIP (GROW) | 1 Not at all | 2 Rarely | 3 Sometimes | 4 Often | 5 Very Often |
|--|-----------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|
| Our church expresses the importance of bringing individuals to maturity. | | | | | |
| Members are spiritually nourished through life application-oriented teaching of God's Word. | | | | | |
| We are strong in our ability to integrate new members into the congregation. Spiritual maturation is as important as numerical growth. | | | | | |

Total: _____

| Biblical Function: MINISTRY (SERVE) | 1 Not at all | 2 Rarely | 3 Sometimes | 4 Often | 5 Very Often |
|---|-----------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|
| People are equipped to minister according to their unique gift mix. | | | | | |
| Members are joyful stewards, sharing their time, talents, and money. | | | | | |
| Participants in our congregation are encouraged to be involved in its mission and ministry. This congregation is strongly focused on serving the wider community beyond the congregation. | | | | | |

Total: _____

| Biblical Function: EVANGELISM (GO) | 1 Not at all | 2 Rarely | 3 Sometimes | 4 Often | 5 Very Often |
|--|-----------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|
| Our members actively share the gospel with spiritually lost people, resulting in regular conversion growth. | | | | | |
| Training and/or support is available to members to help them to share their faith. | | | | | |
| People are being added to the church by conversion growth, then disciplined in doctrine, spiritual formation, and ministry skills. | | | | | |

Total: _____

- What did your group list as strongest? _____
- What did your group list as weakest? _____

After working with hundreds of churches, our team has discovered that churches often answer this in similar ways. Most commonly, church leaders assess either worship or fellowship as the primary strength of their church, while the overwhelming majority identify evangelism as their area of weakness. Our ultimate goal is to make progress in each of these areas, so we aren't going to dismiss any of them as unimportant.



I DREAM OF A CHURCH

Discuss the following for each of the five functions of the church:

1. Why do we exist?
2. **Where are we going?**
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

- I dream of a church where fellowship is . . .
- I dream of a church where discipleship is . . .
- I dream of a church where gift-oriented ministry is . . .
- I dream of a church where evangelism is . . .
- I dream of a church where worship is . . .

Assign a team member to take notes on your team's discussion for each area. Then, finalize each "I dream of" sentence in the chart provided on the next page. Examples of finalized dream statements are shown below.

- **Connect:** welcome, find connection, compassion, hospitable, kind, warm, greeters
 - **Dream statement example:** I dream of a church where fellowship is an expression of God's love demonstrated in life-giving relationships that are multigenerational, forgiving, inviting, and fun.
- **Grow:** teaching, growth track, intentional, challenging, accountability, resource
 - **Dream statement example:** I dream of a church where discipleship is mentoring, training, and equipping believers through the Word of God to be mature disciples who in turn disciple others.
- **Serve:** servant-hearted, empowered, trained, equipping others to serve, gifts and talents, teams
 - **Dream statement example:** I dream of a church where every believer has discovered their spiritual gifts and confidently exercises them to demonstrate God's love.
- **Go:** marketplace evangelism, compassion, generous, relationships
 - **Dream statement example:** I dream of a church where evangelism is a lifestyle that reveals God's love and demonstrates compassion to people through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.
- **Worship:** alive, vibrant, life-changing, permeating, transformation, all-encompassing
 - **Dream statement example:** I dream of a church where worship is an authentic, Spirit-filled lifestyle that is biblical, intimate, relevant, and life changing.



| Function | Dream Statement |
|----------|-----------------|
| Connect | |
| Grow | |
| Serve | |
| Go | |
| Worship | |



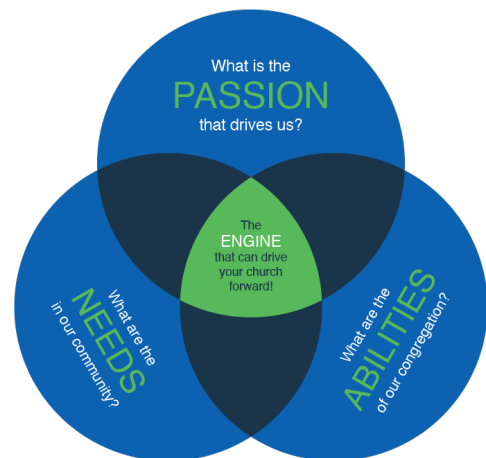
1. Why do we exist?
2. **Where are we going?**
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

WHY DO WE EXIST?

Mission is the common assignment for every church: The Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Vision is how our church will live out the mission given our unique passions, abilities, and community context.











Our church's vision statement:

- Does our vision statement capture our collective passion as a team?
- Is our vision statement clear and understandable to people young and old? People both inside and outside of the church?
- Does our vision statement include each of the five functions?
- Can we express it in nine words or fewer?

CORE VALUES



| | | | | |
|---|---|-------|-------|----|
| INTRODUCTION: THE FIVE LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP |  | 7:19 | ..... | 31 |
| THE FIVE LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP |  | 12:39 | ..... | 32 |
| McINTOSH GRID |  | 6:27 | ..... | 33 |
| VALUES-BASED CULTURE |  | 5:07 | ..... | 34 |
| HOW SHOULD WE BEHAVE? |  | 7:48 | ..... | 35 |
| CORE VALUES VS. PERSONAL PREFERENCES |  | 8:05 | ..... | 36 |
| IDENTIFYING NEGATIVE VALUES |  | 15:42 | ..... | 37 |
| CONSTRUCTING CORE VALUES |  | 2:09 | ..... | 39 |

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR THE SESSION 3 MEETING

| Est. time | Workbook page # | Video and exercises |
|------------|-----------------|---|
| 15 minutes | — | Welcome and Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ex: “Last time we met, we covered the first two of the ten questions about ‘mission’ and ‘vision.’ We developed a draft of a vision statement for our church. This time, we’ll look at the third question that deals with the values we’ll need to embrace as a team to carry out the mission and vision.” Take time to review and discuss the vision statement and make any necessary adjustments. |
| 10 minutes | 31 | Play video: Introduction: The Five Levels of Leadership (7:19) |
| 20 minutes | 32 | Play video: Five Levels of Leadership (12:39) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pause for brief discussion about the video and the chart on page 32. |
| 15 minutes | 33 | Play video: McIntosh Grid (6:27) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pause for brief discussion about the video and the chart on page 33. Discuss: Which sections of the chart best describe your church? |
| 15 minutes | 34 | Play video: Values-Based Culture (5:07) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the Workbook blanks |
| 15 minutes | 35 | Play video: How Should We Behave? (7:48) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the Workbook blanks |
| 20 minutes | 36 | Play video: Core Values vs. Personal Preferences (8:05) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the Workbook blanks |
| 30 minutes | 37-38 | Play video: Identifying Negative Values (15:42) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the Workbook blanks Follow the PowerPoint instructions and complete the discussion exercises on page 37 and 38. (Additional instructions for this exercise can be found in a video near the end of the PowerPoint). |
| 30 minutes | 39-41 | Play video: Constructing Core Values (2:09) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the PowerPoint instructions and work together on developing a list of 5-9 core values. (Additional instructions for this exercise can be found in a video near the end of the PowerPoint). Follow the PowerPoint instructions and work together to draft a descriptive sentence for each of the core values. (Additional instructions for this exercise can be found in a video near the end of the PowerPoint). Read chapters 10-11 in A Spirit-Empowered Church Communicate the date for Session 4 meeting |
| 2 h 50 m | | |

TEN QUESTIONS

1. Why do we exist?
2. Where are we going?
- 3. How should we behave?**
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

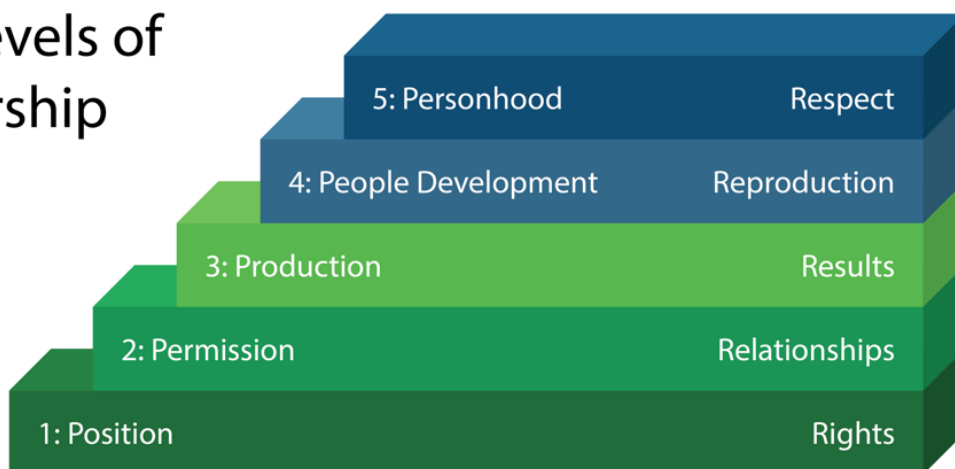
The next of our ten questions has to do with the priorities and actions our church will need to live out the vision God is calling us to live out.

- How should we behave?

THE FIVE LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP

In *Developing the Leader Within You*, John Maxwell defines leadership as influence and outlines five levels of leadership that must be mastered to achieve the highest level of influence.

Five Levels of Leadership





Level 1: Position (Rights)

- People follow the leader because they have to.
- Influence is based on the authority of the leader's position or title.
- People will do no more than is required.
- Activity at this level can be self-centered.
- You can't lead change at this level.

Level 2: Permission (Relationships)

- People follow the leader because they want to.
- The leader's influence grows as trust and respect deepen.
- People believe the leader is competent and believe the leader cares.
- Activity at this level can be fellowship centered.
- You will struggle to lead change at this level.

Level 3: Production (Results)

- People follow the leader because of what is being done for the church.
- The leader's influence expands as the leader accomplishes church goals.
- The leader communicates vision, and the congregation sees fruit.
- Activity at this level can be task centered.
- You can successfully initiate and lead change at this level.

Level 4: People Development (Reproduction)

- People follow the leader because of what is being sown into individuals.
- The leader's influence soars as people are empowered.
- The leader intentionally invests in developing and mentoring leaders.
- Activity at this level can be program or meeting centered.

Level 5: Personhood (Respect)

- People follow the leader because of who the leader is and what the leader stands for.
- The leader's influence extends beyond the pastor's lifetime.
- The leader is honored and respected because of his or her commitment and consistency over many years.
- Activity at this level can be succession centered.

LEADING TRANSFORMATION

To move from LEVEL 1 to LEVEL 2:

- ◆ Demonstrate competence.
- ◆ Grow spiritually, physically, and relationally.
- ◆ Do not use force to control.

To move from LEVEL 2 to LEVEL 3:

- ◆ Build a solid leadership team.
- ◆ Create a shared vision and a plan of action.
- ◆ Acquire and allocate resources.

To move from LEVEL 3 to LEVEL 4:

- ◆ Put people over programs.
- ◆ Intentionally invest in developing others.
- ◆ Be willing to make tough calls.

To move from LEVEL 4 to LEVEL 5:

- ◆ Be consistent.
- ◆ Share knowledge and wisdom.
- ◆ Create a succession plan.



The McIntosh grid describes the differences between small, medium, and large churches.¹

| | Small Church | Medium Church | Large Church |
|--------------------------|---|---|--|
| Size | 15–200 worshipers | 201-400 worshipers | 401+ worshipers |
| Orientation | Relational | Programmatical | Organizational |
| Structure | Single Cell | Stretched Cell | Multiple Cell |
| Leadership | Resides in key families | Resides in committees | Resides in select leaders |
| Pastor | Lover | Administrator | Leader |
| Decisions | Made by congregation; driven by history | Made by committees; driven by changing need | Made by staff and leaders; driven by vision |
| Staff | Bivocational or single pastor | Pastor and small staff | Multiple staff |
| Change | Bottom up through key people | Middle out through key committees | Top down through key leaders |
| Growth Patterns | Attraction model through relationships | Program model through key ministry | Proclamation model through word of mouth |
| Growth Obstacles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small-church image • Ineffective evangelism • Inadequate programming • Downward momentum • Ingrown fellowship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate facilities • Inadequate staffing • Inadequate financing • Poor administration • Increasing complexity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor assimilation • Increased bureaucracy • Loss of vision • Lack of member care |
| Growth Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renew a sense of purpose • Begin new ministries • Cultivate evangelism • Celebrate victories • Start new groups/classes • Involve new people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop distinct identity • Add additional staff • Use facilities multiple times • Offer multiple worship services • Write a long-range plan • Improve the quality of ministry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renew the vision • Design assimilation plan • Streamline procedures • Offer need-based events • Adjust leadership roles • Increase number of small groups |

¹ Gary McIntosh, *One Size Doesn't Fit All* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1999).



1. Why do we exist?
2. Where are we going?
3. **How should we behave?**
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
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9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

Insights from Craig Groeschel

“Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”
– Peter Drucker

VALUES-BASED CULTURE

Church culture can be defined as the style, substance, and shadows of a given church.

Style: how the church thinks and acts

Substance: the priorities and behaviors that the church’s leaders model to the congregation

Shadows: the priorities and behaviors that the church’s leaders exhibit behind closed doors

-
- Multiple _____ create culture.
 - More than environment
 - More than a feeling/atmosphere
 - Healthy culture never happens by _____.
 - Culture is a combination of what you _____ and what you _____.
 - Culture is created and _____ by leaders.

Culture can be positive and life-giving or toxic and deadly. Restaurants and other organizations (airlines, stores, etc.) can have cultures that will either attract you or repel you. In his book, *Culture Eats Strategy for Lunch*, Curt Coffman writes:

- People are loyal to culture, not to _____.
- Culture is more _____ than strategy.
- A brittle culture can doom even a great organization.
- When strategy and culture collide, _____ will always win.
- Cultural miscues are more damaging than strategic miscues.
- Culture will have a significant impact on your future bottom line.



1. Why do we exist?
2. Where are we going?
- 3. How should we behave?**
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

See
CHAPTER 10
 in
***A Spirit-
 Empowered
 Church***

INTRODUCTION TO CORE VALUES

A church's core values give its members direction for what matters most in the life of the church. They drive priorities, shape attitudes and actions, direct processes, govern relationships, and articulate what the church stands for. More than mission or vision, core values tell those inside and outside the congregation what is distinctive and important.

- Core values are the _____ of the church.
- Core values _____ behavior. They direct how the congregation acts based on what it believes about itself, the world, and its role as part of God's mission in and to the world.
- Core values determine _____ and actions on a daily basis and in times of celebration and conflict.
- Core values are the _____ in the ministry programming for the future vision.
- Core values are to be shared and _____ to new members.
- Core values are protected by the staff and key leaders.
- Core values are used to _____ all ministry programs for spiritual effectiveness, financial commitment, and achievement of purpose.
- Core values are to be lived out in the _____ of the congregation.
- Core values represent the core identity of the church and reflect how the congregation will live into its preferred future. They create boundaries for church life and must be identified and communicated for the church to reach its full Kingdom potential.



1. Why do we exist?
2. Where are we going?
- 3. How should we behave?**
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

Biblical absolutes:

Acts 4:12; John 14:6

Community standards:

Choices we live by within our group.

Personal convictions:

choices I have made for my own life.

VALUES vs PREFERENCES

Some elements can often seem like core values when they are something completely different. While many people in our churches may not understand core values, they do understand convictions. Biblical convictions are Spirit-directed boundaries for our core values. However, when core values become disconnected or wrongly derived from Scripture, unhealthy convictions take over.

Some convictions are not as connected to the Holy Spirit as people suppose. Unhealthy convictions can stem from personal issues or hurts that are masked by insisting that the issue in question is a spiritual conviction. When leaders fail to discern the difference between biblical convictions and more personal, dominant ones, the church's vision can be redirected and influenced in unhealthy directions.

From Scripture, we know of three levels of conviction:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

These conviction levels begin with scriptural directives and move toward the beliefs and behaviors people choose in their own spiritual growth. Discerning the differences in these categories affects not only individuals but the church.

However, when core values are not established and lived out, people within the church will create a fourth level called _____

Personal preferences are deeply ingrained beliefs that have developed over the lifespan of a person's Christian journey, are rarely questioned by anyone, are not written down, and are invisible to others in the church until conflict or vision-casting occurs.

Where personal preferences are accepted as biblical absolutes, conflict always erupts.

And when personal preferences become core values, church leadership cannot provide for and protect the congregation. When people's preferences become core values, efforts become focused on making people happy, giving in to what is unhealthy, and allowing immature Christians to dictate the leadership direction of the church.

IDENTIFYING NEGATIVE VALUES

1. Why do we exist?
2. Where are we going?
3. **How should we behave?**
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

Some obstacles we face in becoming the church of our vision are external. Others are internal. In some cases, “the way we’ve always done it” might be holding us back.

Examples of present behaviors that hinder growth and health are listed in the form of statements below.

- “_____ is more important than fruitfulness.”
- “New people should fit into our ways.”
- “Our memories are bigger than our dreams.”

As a team, discuss what priorities or behaviors might be holding your church back from becoming all that God intends.

What behaviors is your church embracing today that hinder growth and health?

These are often unwritten and unspoken.

☐
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In this exercise, take time to consider the priorities and behaviors your church must embrace to become the church of your vision. Some of these priorities and behaviors might be things you're already demonstrating. Other priorities and behaviors you identify might be aspirational; that is, they might be things your team must agree to begin demonstrating in the future to become the church of your vision.

| WHAT WE SAY | WHAT WE DO | WHAT WE WANT TO DO | PLAN FOR ALIGNMENT |
|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Stated values</i> | <i>Demonstrated values</i> | <i>Aspirational values</i> | <i>Behavior change</i> |
| Example "We are a welcoming church." | We have no plan for reaching out to the community or following up with guests when they attend. | We want to be a church where guests feel the love of Jesus through our members. | Modify the Acts Grow Track template for our church to use as a detailed assimilation plan. Train hospitality team. |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
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| | | | |
| | | | |



1. Why do we exist?
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There are different ways to structure core values.

- Core values can be one word, but the word must be clear.

Examples: Integrity; Forgiving; Relevant; Serving

- Core values can be two words (an adjective plus a noun)

Examples: Intentional Discipleship; Passionate Worship; Global Missions; Scriptural Fluency

- Core values can be a short, memorable statement.

Examples: Culture of honor; Every soul matters to God; The Bible is our guidebook to living; Equipping and empowering people; Committed to excellence

As you construct values, keep the vision statement close at hand to ensure each value you identify supports and aligns with the vision.

Use the chart below to list some potential core values. This list can include positive values that your church currently lives out. It should also include some aspirational values, or priorities and behaviors that your church will need to begin living out to become all that God intends.

Core Value 1:

Core Value 2:

Core Value 3:

Core Value 4:

Core Value 5:

Core Value 6:

Core Value 7:

Core Value 8:

Core Value 9:



The core values you develop should also include a definition or descriptor. While your church might value each of the five functions, simply listing them without descriptions or definitions does not provide enough information. Below are some examples:

- **Intentional Discipleship**

To help all ages grow in their knowledge of the Bible and in their relationship with Jesus Christ

- **A Welcoming Culture**

To help all feel valued and to connect people quickly into our church family

- **Relevant**

We strive to communicate biblical truth in a simple, understandable way

As you construct values, keep the vision statement close at hand to ensure each value you identify supports and aligns with the vision.

Use the chart below to draft a descriptive sentence for each of the core values you have identified.

| Core Value | Descriptive Sentence |
|------------|----------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |



Finally, each core value you identify should have a clear reference point in Scripture. Use the chart below to outline the Scriptural basis for each of the values you have identified as a team. An example of a core value that includes all three recommended elements is provided below:









- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. | <u>Core Value</u> | <u>Passionate Worship</u> |
| 2. | <i>Clear one-sentence description</i> | <i>God deserves our wholehearted worship in the words we proclaim and the way that we live.</i> |
| 3. | Scripture reference | John 14:15 |

| Core Value | Scripture reference(s) |
|------------|------------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
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| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

As you finalize your list of values, keep the vision statement close at hand to ensure each value you identify supports and aligns with the vision.

STRATEGIC PLANNING



| | | |
|--|-------------|----|
| HOW WILL WE GET THERE?  | 3:52..... | 42 |
| RESPONSES TO CHANGE  | 9:06 | 43 |
| HOW WILL WE ENGAGE NEW PEOPLE?  | 15:02 | 44 |
| HOW WILL WE TREAT THEM WHEN THEY ARRIVE?  | 8:37 | 47 |
| HOW WILL WE DISCIPLE THEM?  | 14:20 | 51 |
| HOW WILL WE TRAIN THEM TO SERVE?  | 11:45 | 56 |
| BECOMING THE RIGHT TEAM PLAYER  | 21:27 | 60 |
| HOW WILL WE HELP THEM ENCOUNTER GOD?  | 8:33 | 63 |

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR THE SESSION 4 MEETING

| Est. time | Workbook page # | Video and exercises |
|--|-----------------|--|
| 15 minutes | — | Welcome and Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ex: “Last time we met, we developed a draft of our church’s core values. Now, we’re ready to consider the strategy steps we’ll take for each of the five functions to fulfill the vision God has given us. We’ll do this by answering questions 4-10 in our outline. We will likely need an additional meeting between Sessions 4 and 5 to complete these strategy discussions.” Take time to review and discuss the core values and make any necessary adjustments. Have your vision statement handy to be sure each value aligns with the vision statement. |
| 5 minutes | 42 | Play video: How will we get there? (3:52) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate your “I dream of a church” statements from Session 1. |
| 10 minutes | 43 | Play video: Understanding Responses to Change (9:06) |
| 30+ minutes | 44-46 | Play video: How Will We Engage New People? (15:02) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the Workbook blanks Follow the PowerPoint instructions and begin drafting your strategic steps in the area of Evangelism/Go using the chart on page 46 of your Workbook. |
| 20+ minutes | 47-50 | Play video: How Will We Treat Them When They Arrive? (8:37) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the questions on pages 48-49 Follow the PowerPoint instructions and begin drafting your strategic steps in the area of Fellowship/Connect using the chart on page 50 of your Workbook. |
| 5 minutes | — | Play video: Connect: Becoming a Friendly Church (3:07) |
| 20+ minutes | 51-55 | Play video: How Will We Disciple Them? (14:20) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the PowerPoint instructions and begin drafting your strategic steps in the area of Discipleship/Grow using the chart on page 55 of your Workbook. |
| 20+ minutes | 56-59 | Play video: How Will We Train Them to Serve? (11:45) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the PowerPoint instructions and begin drafting your strategic steps in the area of Ministry/Serve using the chart on page 59 of your Workbook. |
| 25 minutes | 60-62 | Play video: Serve: Becoming the Right Team Player (21:27) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the Workbook blanks |
| 20+ minutes | 63-66 | Play video: How Will We Help Them Encounter God (8:33) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the PowerPoint instructions and begin drafting your strategic steps in the area of Worship using the chart on page 66 of your Workbook. Communicate the date for Session 5 Read chapters 11-17 in <i>A Spirit-Empowered Church</i> |
| 3 hours (additional time will be allotted in Session 5 to discuss and revise strategy steps) | | |



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“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD; and he delighteth in his way.” (Psalm 37:23, KJV).

“Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.” (Proverbs 16:3, ESV)

“The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.” (Proverbs 16:9, ESV)

BALANCING THE SPIRITUAL AND THE STRATEGIC

So far, we have established that our mission is universal, we began to build a vision around people, and we identified the core values and behaviors that reflect those values.

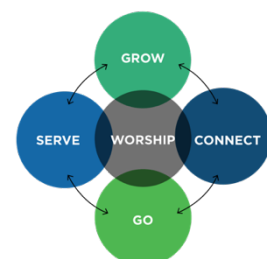
Now, it's time to put it all together into a strategic plan that will help you get from where you are to where you want to go.

Throughout Scripture, we see how God directed people by giving them a strategic plan.

- Moses sought the Lord and was given a strategic plan to lead Israel out of Egypt.
- Joshua had a strategic to lead Israel into the Promised Land and overcome their enemies.
- God gave David a strategic plan to overthrow Goliath.
- Paul was totally invested in a God-given strategic plan to spread the gospel on four missionary journeys.
- God Himself has a strategic plan for humanity.

When building an Acts 2 strategy, the five functions serve as the framework for organizing the plan. With the use of five strategic questions, the team can identify a path for pursuing vision and implementing values that will address the most significant elements of an effective plan.

Since outward focus is the key catalyst for church health, most churches must prioritize their movement outward into the community if momentum toward health is to be gained. For this reason, our first question will relate to the church's evangelism or “Go” strategy, and the remaining questions (and related functions) will follow in a more natural order.





1. Why do we exist?
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If people move at different paces and respond to changes differently, what implications does this have for pastoral and ministry leadership? What might cause some to lag in the change process, and what do leaders need to account for on behalf of those friends to ensure that they can reach the destination God intends for us?

| Group | % of congregation | Characteristics |
|----------------|-------------------|---|
| Early Adopters | 20% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close to the leader; involved in designing the change • Nothing to lose as a result of change • Accustomed to change • Thrive on change |
| Mid-Adopters | 60% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive information second hand • Wary of moving too quickly • Dislike having changes made <i>for</i> them • Need to see changes succeed before moving ahead |
| Late Adopters | 15% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have difficulty seeing how they will benefit from change • Comfortable; see change as work • Typically either older or have long-held leadership positions • Won't embrace change until they fear they will be left behind |
| Non-Adopters | 5% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pull back from previous involvement • Leave the group altogether |

The point here is to avoid mislabeling those who don't respond to the first opportunities to embrace change. Most will embark on the change journey, however slowly, if they are treated with respect and understanding. Remember, our goal is not just to reach our intended destination, but to do so together!

1. Why do we exist?
2. Where are we going?
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. **How will we engage new people?**
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

**See
CHAPTER 15
in
*A Spirit-
Empowered
Church***

EVANGELISM

To start a new life cycle, you must have _____!

To find new life, every church must identify “engines,” or those things that can drive us forward as we reach out in the community?

First, who are your friends?

- The best place to find new friends is among those its _____ are meeting and connecting with every day. If you’ve ever been a part of a growing church, you already know that the pastor isn’t the one bringing new people each week—the people are!
- Reaching people isn’t what your church pays the _____ to do.
- It’s not why your pastor decided to hire some _____ either.
- Consider Friend Day events or opportunities for the people to _____ their invitations.

Next, who are your church’s neighbors?

- If you’re looking for people to love, why not start _____ These folks are right there, just walking distance from your church!
- If the church people have little _____ with those who live closest, no one expects to find friends there.

Finally, what are your church’s ministry strengths?

- What a church does _____ needs to be visible to its community!
- _____ are more likely to show up when you are doing what you do.
- At the same time, those who drift in during your _____ quality moments seldom choose to come back.

Which of the five functions could be most effective in helping you connect to people outside your church? Which do you think you could do well?

- Some churches effectively use evangelistic _____ to connect with new people.
- Some church families find their “engine” in _____
- Some churches find their “engine” in meaningful ways of _____ their communities.
- Another church finds its engine in _____.

When the goal is to extend love and belonging to those on the outside, a church community can look to its strengths to find answers. Even if you insist that no such strengths exist, the effort to make friends is always available.

When you find your unique capacity as a congregation, aim it at people outside your doors. Trying to fix your weaknesses is exhausting and frustrating work, but pouring your best energy into your strengths will even help you find energy you didn't know you had and even bring new people who can help in those weaker areas. Your engine reveals what your church is made to be, and it will prove to be element your guests will find most attractive.

EXERCISE: (15 minutes) Discuss, in detail, your possible “engines” by using the following questions:

1. Do the people of your church invite their friends to come with them? What steps can you take to encourage them to do so?
2. What impressions do people in your community have of your church?
3. What are some of the most common reasons why people visit your church?
4. To what degree does your church reflect the neighborhood around it? Are there significant people groups in your neighborhood that you could reach? What steps might you take to do so?
5. Which of the following does your church do most effectively—worship, build relationships, serve others, teach, evangelize? Would people who don't attend your church agree with your assessment?
6. Which of the following would be more effective in bringing new people to your church—worship, relationships, serving, teaching, evangelizing?
7. What steps could you take to make your “engine” more visible to your community?

As you consider your strategy steps for evangelism, think about steps you could take in the next 2-3 years that could help you fulfill your vision in this area. Revisit your, “I dream of a church where evangelism is . . .” statement to help stir your thinking.

Use a whiteboard or large pad to record potential strategy steps and details. A template is provided on the next page.

| Area | Goal | Plan | Deadline | Who |
|--------------------|------|------|----------|-----|
| Evangelism (GO) | 1. | | | |
| | 2. | | | |
| | 3. | | | |



1. Why do we exist?
2. Where are we going?
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
- 6. How will we treat them when they arrive?**
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

**See
CHAPTER 12
in
*A Spirit-
Empowered
Church***

GUEST ASSIMILATION

Guest assimilation is much more than having front-door greeters. Assimilation is the process of moving new attendees to higher levels of Christian discipleship, from unbeliever to reproducer (see chapter six in *A Spirit-Empowered Church*). Guest assimilation is the process of moving new attendees to the level of Christian discipleship.

Most surveys indicate an effective guest-assimilation effort will take people from first visit to strong relational connections in *six weeks* and to active discipleship through ministry involvement and small-group participation by *eighteen weeks*. This process starts when we connect with people at their first visit and provide an opportunity for new friends to hear about the church. The church has a responsibility to communicate its desire and activities to meet the needs of the new people, engage in intentional acts of love and service throughout the week, and assist them in finding their place in ministry within this eighteen-week window.

How do you connect people from their first visit and assimilate them into the full life of the church in less than eighteen weeks? Make sure one of your focus points is discipleship, not just converting the lost. This process allows people to explore *belonging* before *becoming*. People want to *belong* before they *become*. Oftentimes, the church's actions demonstrate that people should *become* before they *belong*.



The Ministry of Greeters

When churches are asked if they are friendly, they almost always say yes. However, too often, “friendly” means we are friendly to each other. The real question should be, *Does your church make friends with the unchurched and new people easily?* To help address this, every church should have greeters. The number of different types of greeters that a church has and the role that each type plays will depend on its size and the number of guests the church welcomes. Each role is important, has unique qualifications, and requires an investment of training. The sidebar provides examples of greeting roles. Remember, your church may only get one chance to make a lasting impression.

1. **Parking lot greeters**—it’s never too early to welcome guests.
2. **Entrance greeters** help people feel welcome. These greeters should have clear gifts of hospitality and be some of the friendliest people in the church.
3. **Sanctuary greeters** realize that the Sunday morning auditorium experience can be unfamiliar and uncomfortable for some people, so sanctuary greeters must demonstrate the ability to help people feel comfortable.
4. **Exit greeters** make sure each person feels loved as they leave the church. A guest’s final experience should underscore the welcome you’ve been showing all morning.

Use the following items to discuss, in detail, your church’s process for guest assimilation.

1. Do you treat new people at your church as guests or as visitors? What steps might you take to treat these new friends more as guests?
2. Would you describe your church as guest friendly? What changes could you make that would make a guest’s first day in your church a little easier?
3. What are some of your memories of your first experience as a guest at your church?
4. In what areas are your church greeters most effective? Where are they least effective?
5. Are people with clear hospitality giftings the first people a guest might meet at your church? If not, who are your most friendly people, and how might you put them in such roles?
6. Would you describe your church’s approach to a guest as more information focused or friendship focused? What steps can you take to become even more friendship focused?
7. What are the first things a guest sees when entering your church?
8. What steps has your church taken to help guests find their way in your church building?



9. What will guests most likely experience in their first twelve minutes at our church? What could we add to those twelve minutes that might make a stronger first impression?
10. Are you currently providing ways for your guests to integrate into church life?
11. How do you track those moving through the guest-assimilation process? (In other words, how do you track first- and second-time visitors as well as those who recently have become part of the church?)
12. What steps can your church take to make its hospitality center more effective?
13. How could your church better help its guests understand your worship practices?
14. How does your church's worship service demonstrate the importance of compassion, prayer, relationships, worship, and instruction?
15. Do you ask guests for information before making a strong effort to welcome them?
16. What gift does your church give to first-time guests? Is the gift as appealing to the guests as it is to the church? Are there changes your church should consider in the type of gift given to guests?
17. How does your church use its welcome gift as a way to request guest information?
18. What would be the most important steps you'd want a new person in your church to take first?
19. Contextualize to each individual demographic and location.
20. Having designated people in these areas is good, but consider the "five-foot rule." Help every member realize the importance of doing their part in creating a welcoming atmosphere. The "Five-foot rule" is if a guest gets within five feet of a regular attendee, the regular attendee is responsible to care of that person by being friendly, introducing themselves, answering questions, or guiding the guest to their destination.

As you consider your strategy steps for fellowship, think about steps you could take in the next 2-3 years that could help you fulfill your vision in this area. Revisit your, "I dream of a church where fellowship is . . ." statement to help stir your thinking.

Use a whiteboard or large pad to record potential strategy steps and details. A template is provided on the next page.



| Area | Goal | Plan | Deadline | Who |
|-------------------------|------|------|----------|-----|
| Fellowship (CONNECT) | 1. | | | |
| | 2. | | | |
| | 3. | | | |

1. Why do we exist?
2. Where are we going?
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. **How will we disciple them?**
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

See
CHAPTER 13
in
A Spirit-
Empowered
Church

DISCIPLESHIP

It's true that conversions are much easier to measure than growing disciples. Since discipleship is a lifelong journey crafted by God in a unique way for each person, measuring our progress isn't always easy. But "making disciples" is the Commission Jesus gave to us. Clearly such an assignment deserves our best effort.

Every healthy church must have a plan for how they will disciple the adults in their congregation. What approach will they take to teaching people? Will they use small groups and what will those groups study together? To build an effective discipleship strategy, you must be intentional in what you teach.

While an exhaustive list of discipleship habits might not be possible, some include Bible reading, prayer, connecting to a local church family, stewardship, and witnessing. It's the local church's job to cultivate these practices among its people so they can take steps of continued growth in their relationship with Christ.

However, while discipleship habits and outcomes are certainly necessary, they are not altogether sufficient. Scriptures are clear about what a disciple should know (believe) and how a disciple should act (behave). According to 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

- **One significant purpose of God's Word is to teach us what we should believe (doctrines).** This is what we might call a *rational* purpose of truth.
- **A second valuable purpose of God's Word is to reveal to us how we should live.** Paul said Scripture has been given for reproof (to confront what is wrong) and correction (to define what is right and to equip us to do it). Ephesians 4:29 which gives instruction on how one should speak (let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up) as right living—a *behavioral* purpose of truth.

We might consider these boundaries of doctrine and behavior as the “curbs” alongside our road to intimacy with God. People stand between those two curbs—trying to learn more and trying to behave better. But is doing more and knowing more all there is to becoming a better disciple?

What is so often missing from our discipleship efforts is the **relational purpose of truth**; that is, an ever-deepening relationship with God and others.

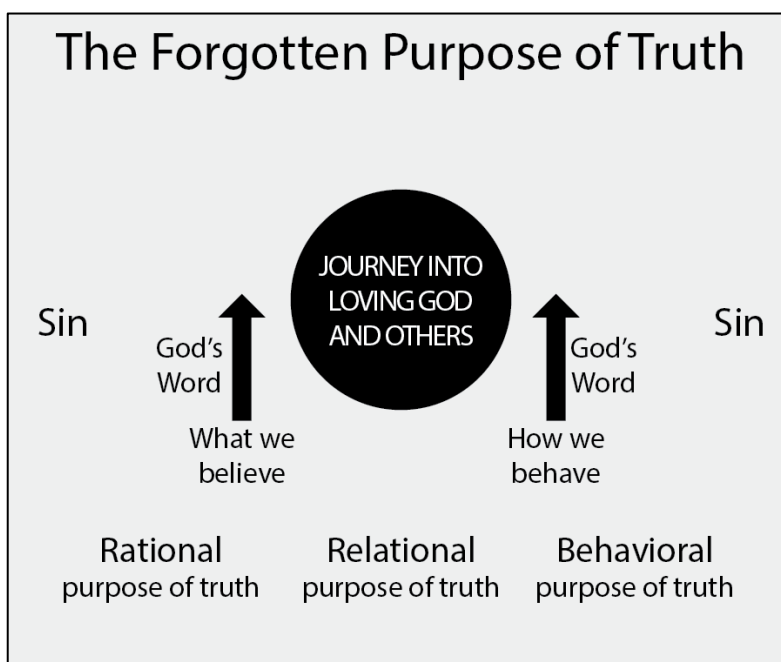
The word “training” in 2 Timothy 3:16 is translated from the Greek word *paideia*—to “bring up,” as in to “raise” or “parent” a child. This passage suggests that God’s Word is designed to “parent” us.

Truth without relationship leads to rejection. Likewise, discipline without relationship leads to anger and resentment. As parents might know, rules without relationships will produce a rebel.

But when you place truth within the context of a loving relationship, you almost always get a positive response.

Teaching is a key priority in most churches. As an Acts 2 Church, we recognize the Bible as our Source for Christ’s teaching. But while discipleship begins with discovering His truth, discipleship cannot be complete until that truth is lived.

Our classes and teaching sessions can only be the laboratory where Christian living is planned. The classroom cannot be our sole strategy for discipleship.



What steps is your church taking today to achieve the goal of discipleship? Each program or ministry effort should be evaluated based on its effectiveness in producing disciples. Like most churches, your time and financial resources for discipleship may be limited, so be certain that you're investing in the very best efforts.

Don't judge your discipleship efforts simply by attendance numbers. While a program with a large participation is exciting, the goal is to make disciples. That ministry might need to be focused more effectively, or even set aside so a more effective tool can be implemented.

While you don't want to make such decisions carelessly, you absolutely must be certain that your discipling ministries are helping make disciples.

Discipleship is the hardest work a church does. It begins with the smallest children in the nursery and extends to the eldest adult among us. So with this vast assignment, likely you will have numerous discipleship efforts working simultaneously. Your efforts will be age-appropriate, and thought must be given to how new believers are disciplined differently than those who have matured in their faith.

While each believer must be disciplined, the efforts we make with children and youth also have extraordinary potential. Building habits like Bible reading, prayer, stewardship, and witnessing are more easily achieved among the youngest believers and have the potential of solidifying into lifelong habits. Don't be reluctant to give your best resources to your efforts to disciple children.

The whole journey of a child's life matters in this discipleship process. When a child moves from children's church to the youth ministry, such a transition should be well planned and built upon a consistent discipleship plan. The methods of ministry will change and grow as a child grows, but the consistent, intentional effort of the church to chart an effective path must be ongoing.

Use the following questions to discuss the church's present reality and future plans for their children's ministries with the following questions as a guide:

1. Is there a system that allows children to grow spiritually and engage in Christian education?
2. Is the focus of your children's and youth ministries simply on social experiences, or are they focused on training children in biblical principles?
3. Has the church established the truths each child should know before graduating from high school?
4. How can the church become a more effective place for families and children to receive Christ?
5. How do you perceive children's ministries in terms of the five functions of the church?
6. How do families currently respond to the ministry provided to children?
7. How can you strategically use children's ministries to better equip families, even during the week?
8. How can building the foundation of discipleship, evangelism, and worship in children now impact the church positively in the future?
9. How can you connect children's ministries to the Sunday morning experience?

Make sure every step you plan to take will help you move in the direction of your vision. A strategy step that doesn't move you closer to your vision or underscore your values might be a good idea, but that's all it is. When it comes to discipleship, the list of possible ideas might be endless, so you need more than a few good ideas. You need a plan to take you to the next level.

As you consider your strategy steps for discipleship, think about steps you could take in the next 2-3 years that could help you fulfill your vision in this area. Revisit your, "I dream of a church where discipleship is . . ." statement to help stir your thinking.

Use a whiteboard or large pad to record potential strategy steps and details. A template is provided on the next page.

HOW WILL WE DISCIPLE THEM?

 14:20

| Area | Goal | Plan | Deadline | Who |
|------------------------|------|------|----------|-----|
| Discipleship (GROW) | 1. | | | |
| | 2. | | | |
| | 3. | | | |



1. Why do we exist?
2. Where are we going?
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. **How will we train them to serve?**
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

**See
CHAPTER 14
in
*A Spirit-
Empowered
Church***

GIFT-ORIENTED MINISTRY

In the local church, gift-oriented ministry releases us to minister to others, to discover the depths of God within us, and to connect us to those around us who are in need. Serving opens our hearts to enjoy the benefits of true worship as we yield to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Pastors know that the greatest need and greatest challenge before them is to get people involved in ministry. Yet, this is the essence of the pastor's work. In Ephesians 4, the Apostle Paul claims that pastors work to "equip the saints for the work of the ministry."

In too many local churches, the people are willing to let the pastor do the work of ministry, as though he was hired to do so. Those churches will never come close to reaching their kingdom potential.

It's been said that church can be like a football game: Twenty-two people are on the field really needing rest while sixty thousand sit in the stands really needing exercise. Now, that may sound extreme, but in most churches, 20% of the people are doing 80% of the ministry. That's not God's plan.

Ministry involvement touches virtually every other area of spiritual development. A recent discipleship survey showed that an individual's faithfulness to church, participation in a small group, and likelihood of tithing nearly doubled if that same person got involved in serving in some way.

So while serving helps the church accomplish its mission and perform its ministries, serving also plays a major part in growing the individual into a disciple. Likely we can draw a direct line connecting our difficulty getting people involved in ministry with our struggles to make disciples.

So how do you help your congregation become effective as servant leaders? A good place to start is to help people discover their areas of giftedness.

God created us all for a purpose. To help us accomplish our purpose, He gifted us all with spiritual gifts and talents so that we can use them for His glory. Discovering your spiritual gifts is the first step.

There are a variety of tools a church can use in helping people discover their gifts. Others establish apprenticeship-style programs where people can experience various types of ministry to see where they seem to fit best.



Discovering spiritual gifts should not be a difficult process. The Early Church may not have had the elaborate survey instruments available to us today, yet they still managed to find their ministry gifts by considering their abilities, passions, experiences, and the good counsel of spiritual friends. The biblical lists of gifts, particularly those found in Romans 12 and Ephesians 4, can be a good starting place to help people discover the ways God may have equipped them. While not exhaustive, these lists can show us how God has equipped others and how He may have shaped us to serve.

The Acts Grow Track includes an A.C.T.S self-assessment designed to help people identify their gifts and find the best place to serve in the church. The assessment includes four areas:

**A – Abilities
C – Calling
T – Temperament
S – Spiritual Gifts**

Whatever tool you use, your answer to the Serve question involves not only identifying gifts, but also offering training and developing those gifts in the lives of those you lead.

Certainly, financial resources are easy to track and show on a balance sheet – but how about your people resources? Are you being good stewards of those resources as well? A strategy for connecting people with meaningful opportunities to serve can best utilize the gifts and talents God has placed in your church.

While the ministries we plan and implement require people serving in order to get the job done, sometimes we may plan ministry for the primary purpose of giving people a place to serve. While those we minister to are always a primary target, giving people a place to use their gifts is also an important priority.

Picking up trash at a local park or beautifying the landscaping at an elementary school may be a blessing to your community, but such efforts are even more valuable to those who do the work. Finding ways to serve grows me. That's why an Acts 2 Church must have a strategy for getting its people involved in serving.

Don't limit your serving strategy to the ministries and programs that occur inside your church walls. Many people aren't involved in such ministries because the gifts required are too limited. They don't teach or sing or know how to run a sound system, so they sit and let others do the work of ministry. Connecting your people to serving opportunities in the community can open a much wider field for the expression of many different types of gifts.

Helping your people find ways to serve in the community can also open doors for connecting to people in the community. Even your goals for evangelism can be enhanced by these relationships. Remember that outward focus will drive your church toward its vision so serving efforts outside your church can help achieve several of your vision goals.



As you begin thinking about your strategic plan for the serving function of your Acts 2 Church, consider these questions:

1. Do you have an effective process for recruiting volunteers?
2. How does your church match volunteers to ministry needs?
3. How do you train people for their ministry efforts and how do you assess their effectiveness?
4. Finally, how do you show appreciation to those who serve? While God rewards those who serve Him, He can use your efforts of appreciation as a small part of that reward.

Make sure every step you plan to take will help you move in the direction of your vision. A strategy step that doesn't move you closer to your vision or underscore your values might be a good idea, but that's all it is. When it comes to discipleship, the list of possible ideas might be endless, so you need more than a few good ideas. You need a plan to take you to the next level.

As you consider your strategy steps for gift-oriented ministry, think about steps you could take in the next 2-3 years that could help you fulfill your vision in this area. Revisit your, "I dream of a church where ministry is . . ." statement to help stir your thinking.

Use a whiteboard or large pad to record potential strategy steps and details. A template is provided on the next page.



| Area | Goal | Plan | Deadline | Who |
|--------------------------------|------|------|----------|-----|
| Gift-Oriented Ministry (SERVE) | 1. | | | |
| | 2. | | | |
| | 3. | | | |



BECOMING THE RIGHT TEAM PLAYER

1. Why do we exist?
2. Where are we going?
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

Just as there are many parts to our bodies, so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of it and it takes every one of us to make it complete, for we each have different work to do. So we belong to each other, and each needs all the others (Romans 12:4–5 TLB).

Five qualities of a team player:

1. CHARACTER
2. COMPETENCY
3. CHEMISTRY
4. COOPERATIVE
5. COMMON GOAL

Definition of a team:

- The BODY of Christ functions as a team.
- Teams ACCOMPLISH more than individuals working separately.

T TRUST

Three building blocks:

1. Consistency
2. Loyalty
3. Time

The proof of trust is DELEGATION

**E** **EMPOWERMENT**

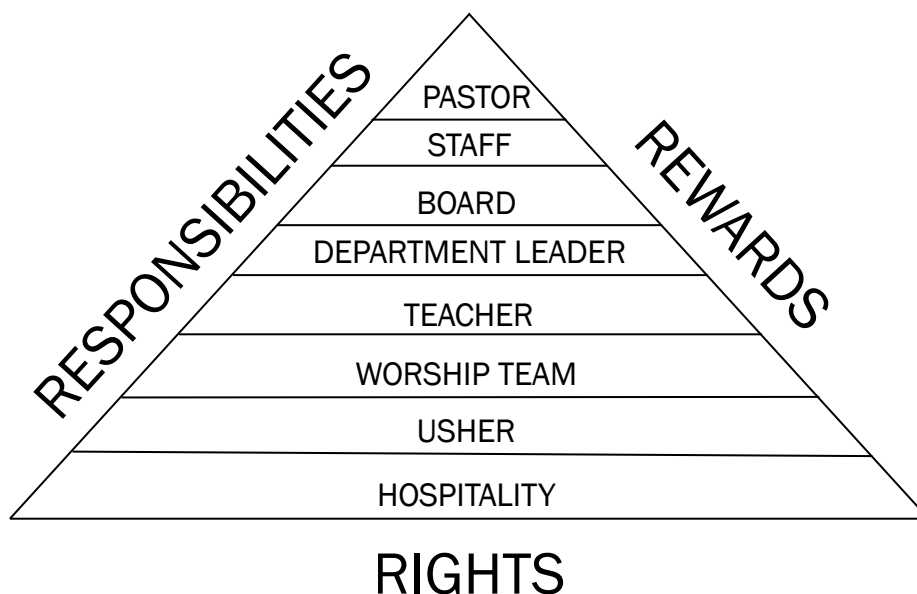
1. ENLIST: Show **BENEFITS** and **BLESSINGS** of serving.
2. EXPECTATIONS: You cannot **INSPECT** what you have not **EXPECTED**.
3. EQUIP: Adequately resource, **ASSESS** gifting, and **TRAIN** for competency
4. ENGAGE: Trust them with **RESPONSIBILITY** and unleash them with **AUTHORITY**
5. EVALUATE: Monitor them through **ACCOUNTABILITY**.
6. ENCOURAGE: Praise them in **PUBLIC**; correct them in **PRIVATE**.

A **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Accountability is offering necessary information before it is required.

See chart and accompanying discussion on pp. 54-55
of *A Spirit-Empowered Church*.

Options decrease as responsibilities increase





M MENTORSHIP

Definition of a mentor:

An experienced advisor and SUPPORTER; somebody, usually older and more EXPERIENCED, who provides advice and support to and watches over and fosters the PROGRESS of a younger, less experienced person.

There are two ways to receive wisdom:²

1. MISTAKES

2. MENTORS

Mentors/Best Friends

1. Your mentor is not necessarily your best friend.
2. Your best friend loves you the way you ARE.
Your mentor loves you TOO MUCH to leave you the way you are.
3. Your best friend is comfortable with your past.
Your mentor is comfortable with your future.
4. Your best friend IGNORES your weakness.
Your mentor REMOVES your weakness.
5. Your best friend is your CHEERLEADER.
Your mentor is your coach.
6. Your best friend sees what you do RIGHT.
Your mentor sees what you do WRONG.
7. Your mentor sees things you cannot see. He sees weaknesses in you before you experience the pain of them. He sees an enemy before you discern the enemy. He has already experienced the pain of a problem you are about to create.
8. Recognition of a trusted mentor can prevent a thousand heartaches.

² Adapted from Mike Murdock, *The Law of Recognition* (Ft. Worth, TX: Wisdom International, 2007), 33-37.



1. Why do we exist?
2. Where are we going?
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

**See
CHAPTER 16
in
*A Spirit-
Empowered
Church***

WORSHIP

Some people view worship in the limited moments of a Sunday morning, but worship by God's definition involves much more than that. In fact, the real worship leader at a church is its lead pastor, and everyone who guides people toward God is a part of that team.

Worship involves singing (Eph 5:19); commitment (Rom. 12:1,2); praying (Psa. 95:6); hearing the Word (John 17:17); giving (1 Cor. 16:1,2); baptism (Rom. 6:3,4); meditating (Hab. 2:20); and communion (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

While some of these actions occur when we gather for a worship service, many of these and others can occur every day of our lives. In fact, Jesus gave greatest focus to obedience as an act of worship. He told us that if we loved Him, we would obey His commandments; therefore, how we live every day may be our greatest demonstration of worship.

So the steps you take in the area of worship will be designed to cover a lot of ground. You may want to consider Bible reading programs, stewardship campaigns, and renewed focus on the way small groups can provide healthy accountability. Actually, the more you think about helping people demonstrate their love for God each day, the more you begin to see how God intended us to be connected to Him every moment of every day.

Of course, a big part of your worship strategy will be built around your primary worship services. Here is where we not only guide the congregation in worship, but we demonstrate how to worship God so people can continue to worship Him all week long. Here's some insight concerning making the most of your worship moments.

Across the world, many churches gear their ministries, resources and outcomes based on the Sunday morning experience. Unfortunately, many churches have lost track of the opportunity for real connection, and Sundays have become more of a place of ritual and lost reason for being. Some have even lost focus on the worship function of the church and created an environment where the desire for human attention overrides the pursuit of the power of God.

During worship services, people from all levels of faith should have an opportunity to express their worship, receive knowledge from the Word, and participate with the Holy Spirit in ministering to others.



The Sunday morning experience begins when each person attending enters the church parking lot. Unfortunately, many churches think that the experience begins when the music starts. People need to feel welcomed at every moment if they will genuinely engage the ministry inside.

From the time a person steps out of the car they give themselves (and the church) approximately 12 minutes to connect in a meaningful way. Therefore, if a person shows up 5 minutes before church, the church has 7 minutes to help the guest know they are valued.

However, if the church begins with casual conversation, announcements for the church family, and starts 5 minutes after the announced start time, the guest will likely view the church in a negative light. Also, if the church announces a start time for the Sunday morning church experience, but doesn't begin at that time, people will see the church as disorganized and careless of their time.

Psalm 22:3 states that God inhabits the praises of His people. Knowing this, churches should seek to engage people in worship at the outset of the worship experience.

God will only move in conviction, comfort and strength in a service to the level that the people of God welcome Him with praise.

A church that prays demonstrates where they have placed their hope. Times of prayer and altar response both during and at the conclusion of a service show that we understand how life change really takes place. When we demonstrate our trust in God to help us, we also help people build the habit of praying in their daily lives.

Leaders demonstrate their own trust in God by their openness to the move of the Holy Spirit and their readiness to follow His leading. Churches that are truly Spirit-led desire God's purposes at every moment of the worship experience, not just during times of singing or preaching. Often God will use a greeting time to open the hearts of individuals to His love.

If congregations will begin to focus on how behaviors in the service make a serious difference in people's response to the Spirit, then those attending will have a greater desire to participate. The Holy Spirit is ready to bring amazing life change to each person. We get to participate by demonstrating love and following His leading.



The Sunday morning experience doesn't end until each person opens the door car to leave.

Knowing this, we should make sure that people are ministered to while they leave the building. While many churches have entrance greeters, making a similar effort at the exits can send one final greeting home with your guests.

Some of the questions to consider in this function might be:

1. What can you do now to make the Sunday morning experience more effective?
2. How does the Sunday morning experience enhance opportunities for people to find God?
3. How does our worship service demonstrate the importance of compassion, prayer, relationships, worship, and instruction?
4. How could our church better help our guests understand our worship practices?
5. How can you use positive elements of the Sunday morning experience as an on-ramp to accomplishing your vision?

When it comes to worship, consider what your vision says about connecting people to God. Be sure the heart of your statement guides every plan you make. Your goals here aren't simply to plan powerful worship services. You want to connect people to God in meaningful ways. When you do that, it's guaranteed to be powerful because encounters with God are always life changing.

In thinking about your worship strategy, don't assume people will engage acts of worship on their own as easily as they do in a group setting. And don't assume people understand even the familiar elements of your worship services. Guide people in the simplest manner possible so no one is left behind.

As you consider your strategy steps for worship, think about steps you could take in the next 2-3 years that could help you fulfill your vision in this area. Revisit your, "I dream of a church where worship is . . ." statement to help stir your thinking.

Use a whiteboard or large pad to record potential strategy steps and details. A template is provided on the next page.

HOW WILL WE HELP THEM ENCOUNTER GOD?






8:33

| Area | Goal | Plan | Deadline | Who |
|---------|------|------|----------|-----|
| WORSHIP | 1. | | | |
| | 2. | | | |
| | 3. | | | |

COMMUNICATION & LAUNCH



| | | | | |
|--|---|-------|-------|----|
| CRAFTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN |  | 21:37 | ..... | 67 |
| CONNECT..... | | | | 70 |
| GROW..... | | | | 71 |
| SERVE..... | | | | 72 |
| GO..... | | | | 73 |
| WORSHIP..... | | | | 74 |
| COMMUNICATION AND LAUNCH |  | 16:49 | ..... | 75 |
| THE THREE AUDIENCES FOR CHANGE COMMUNICATION..... | | | | 76 |
| LAUNCH SUNDAY..... | | | | 79 |
| ACTS 2 MENTORING |  | 9:12 | ..... | 86 |

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR THE SESSION 5 MEETING

| Est. time | Workbook page # | Video and exercises |
|------------|-----------------|--|
| 15 minutes | — | Welcome and Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ex: “We have begun a draft of our strategic plan for ministry for the next 2-3 years in our church. We’ll continue working on these strategy steps today for each of the five functions. Then, we’ll turn our attention to how we will present our vision, values, and strategy to the congregation. We’ll devote special focus to how best to communicate the plan in an understandable way that creates congregational buy-in.” View slides 1-6 of the Session 5 PowerPoint to review the 10 questions. |
| 60 minutes | 67-74 | Play video: Crafting the Strategic Plan (21:37) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit the strategic steps for each of the five functions that you began outlining in Session 4. Follow the PowerPoint instructions to add to and adjust your strategic plan based on the suggestions presented in the video. |
| 60 minutes | 75-85 | Play video: Communication and Launch (16:49) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill in the Workbook blanks Follow the instructions on pages 79-81 of your Workbook regarding Launch Sunday. Review downloadable examples of strategic plan presentations. Discuss your team’s strategy for the launch Sunday. |
| 10 minutes | 86 | Play video: Acts 2 Mentoring (9:12) |
| 5 minutes | — | Play video: Supplementary Resources (4:30) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit acts2journey.com to explore the resources mentioned in the video |
| 30 minutes | 56-59 | Play video: Security or Sabotage (31:45) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> View video together if time allows. |
| | — | Share your Launch Sunday date with the Acts 2 Journey team. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://assembliesofgod.formstack.com/forms/launch_sunday |
| 2 h 45 min | | |



A HEALTHY CHURCH IS ONE THAT . . .

- Pursues and obeys God passionately (Worship)
- Engages and maintains loving relationships (Connect)
- Develops and mobilizes the people (Grow)
- Acts with clear direction and outward focus (Serve)
- Reproduces and multiplies His mission in other peoples and places (Go)

THE TEN QUESTIONS

1. WHY DO WE EXIST? (MISSION)

As we have said, the mission of the Church is the common assignment—the one we share with every other congregation that proclaims Christ as Savior. The Acts 2 Church has been established with the Great Commission as its spiritual direction and the Great Commandment as its guide for love-directed behavior.

The Great Commission focuses on the BELIEF system which Christ taught.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19–20)

The Great Commandment focuses on the BEHAVIOR system which Christ modeled.

And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37–39)



2. WHERE ARE WE GOING? (VISION)

Vision is our congregation's unique expression of that mission. Remember that there is a unique, Holy Spirit empowered dynamic for every local church and our first step in this Acts 2 Journey has been to prayerfully identify that direction. Our vision should proclaim the church we believe God has intended us to become.



3. HOW WILL WE BEHAVE? (VALUES)

More than mission or vision, **CORE VALUES** tell those inside and outside the congregation what is distinctive and important. Core values represent the identity of the church and reflect how the congregation seeks to live into its preferred future.

Some of the core values we've chosen are already in place and others are aspirational—we aspire to them so we can become the church of our vision. Core values drive priorities, shape attitudes and actions, direct processes, govern relationships, and must be identified and communicated for the church to reach its full kingdom potential.

Remember that while vision can be clever and creative, values must be absolutely clear. Consider using two words (an adjective and a noun) to label your values, such as “Passionate Worship” or “Relational Evangelism” so your intent will be clearer.

Then write a sentence that explains the value itself, such as “God deserves our wholehearted worship in the words we proclaim and the way that we live.”

Finally, add a Scripture reference so our congregation can know where our values come from. So, the following demonstrates an effective way to format each of our values

Passionate Worship

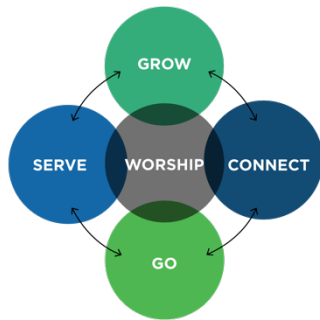
*God deserves our wholehearted worship in the words we proclaim
and the way that we live.*

John 14:15



4. HOW WILL WE GET THERE? (STRATEGIC PLAN)

Once a congregation establishes its mission, vision, values, and the five functions, it is prepared to create a strategic plan. In the Acts 2 Journey, we have built our strategic plans around the five functions of the church that we find in Acts 2:42-47:



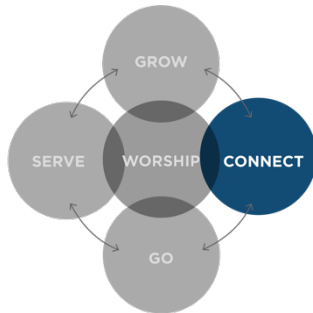
- Fellowship (Connect)
- Discipleship (Grow)
- Gift-Oriented Ministry (Serve)
- Evangelism (Go)
- Worship

So, the entire journey comes together in the strategic plan we've prayerfully designed.

Remember that strategy can never be a replacement for our pursuit of the Holy Spirit's direction. Instead, strategy should always be a result of that pursuit. We know that God has a plan for our congregation. Our hunger is for His plan, and we believe He will and has revealed it to us as we have sought His direction.

1. Why do we exist?
2. Where are we going?
3. How should we behave?
4. How will we get there?
5. How will we engage new people?
6. How will we treat them when they arrive?
7. How will we disciple them?
8. How will we train them to serve?
9. How will we inspire them to be missional?
10. How will we help them encounter God?

Your team will now work together to create a 2-3-year strategic plan for your church. This plan will take shape around the five functions. Below are some areas to consider including in your strategic plan for each function.



CONNECT

Every healthy church must have a plan for connecting new people to the congregation. This assimilation plan encompasses every action we take from the moment new friends drive onto our campus through the first several weeks of their journey with us.

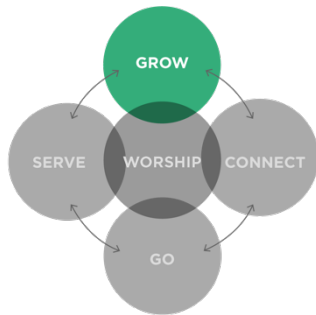
While there is certainly more to healthy Spirit-empowered fellowship than effectively welcoming guests into our services, effective efforts in loving and assimilating our guests will raise the level of all our fellowship efforts. Frankly, if we love new friends well, it's highly likely that our love for one another will grow as well.

Develop an assimilation process that extends from the church parking lot to full involvement in the life and ministry of your church. Consider the following areas:

- ☐ Appearance of property
- ☐ Guest parking
- ☐ Clear signage (entrance, children's areas, restrooms)
- ☐ Greeters (exit and entrance)
- ☐ Follow-up communication with first-time guests
- ☐ Simple connect card
- ☐ Acts Grow Track / Newcomers' class

Purchase and download the customizable Acts Grow Track at digital.myhealthychurch.com.





GROW

The Great Commission defines discipleship quite clearly. Jesus said to “baptize them” and “teach them.” While baptism is a single moment that demonstrates the choice for new life, teaching them all Christ has commanded requires an ongoing effort—and a plan!

So, how will we teach them what Jesus has taught us? Healthy churches have a plan for such efforts. Here we must think about a new believer’s early steps, the deeper journeys of those who’ve known Christ for a while, the age-appropriate needs of our children and youth, and the development of personal Bible study disciplines that will help people continue their growth between Sundays.

1. What will we teach our children and students, and how will we communicate this to the congregation?
2. What will our adult discipleship process look like?

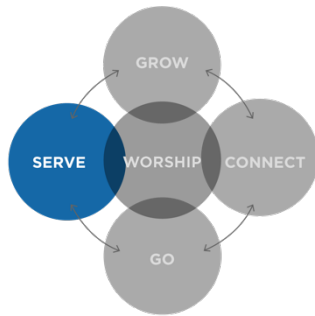
As you prepare your plan in the area of Discipleship, refer to pages 168-172 in *A Spirit-Empowered Church*.

Imparting Faith to the New Believer

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|--|--|
| Explore | Embrace | Experience | Express |
| The truths of faith | The truths of the faith in a personal way | The truths of the faith in everyday life | The truths of the faith to others through my identity as a Christ-follower |

Impacting Faith at Home

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Birth-Preschool | Grade School | Middle School | High School |
| Explore The truths of faith | Embrace The truths of the faith in a personal way | Experience The truths of the faith in everyday life | Express The truths of the faith to others through my identity as a Christ-follower |

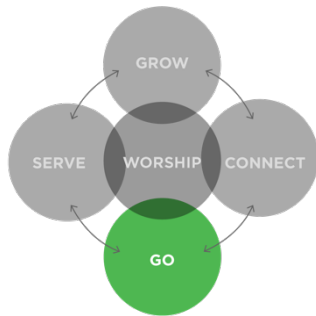


SERVE

Every individual has gifts and abilities to be used to strengthen the body of Christ. In truth, one can't really be following a Servant if he or she is not learning to serve. So, we need a plan for engaging people in serving Christ's mission.

Serving is a primary way in which we express our love for Christ. Self-sacrifice is the Bible's best definition for the love we are called to show to others. Of course, our principal focus in serving extends beyond the walls of our local church. While serving on Sundays is important and a great way to develop a servant's heart by "practicing" on those who share our faith, the real impact of our lives should be in our community—that's the mission we're made for.

- 1. Move from a "leader with helpers" mentality to a team concept of ministry. List ministry teams for the congregation to see.**
- 2. Create an onramp of training for each ministry team.**



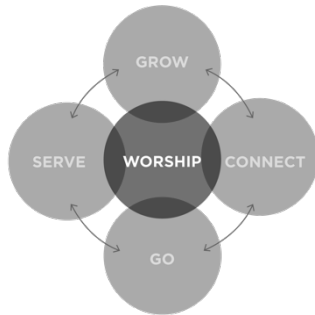
GO

Our Commission extends well beyond our street corner. The local church is made to impact its world, both near and far. So, what is our plan to get people involved in Christ's mission beyond our setting?

Here we find our own efforts to engage our community, our partnerships with other congregations to fulfill Christ's purposes around us, and our investment in the work of missionaries who will go where we do not.

This question also may encourage us to consider planting another congregation in our community or beyond. Remember that just as healthy disciples produce other healthy disciples, healthy churches can reproduce other healthy congregations.

1. **World Missions:** What will we do to help reach the world with the gospel?
2. **Acts of love:** What will we do to demonstrate Christ's love to our surrounding community?
3. **Marketplace evangelism:** How will we help our congregation become involved what God is doing in the surrounding community?



WORSHIP

Our final strategic question calls for a plan to help every individual connect with God. This is certainly not a last step in the sequence of our efforts. We need a plan to help people engage God regularly and directly in worship, repentance, and pursuit. Studies have demonstrated that unless people learn to engage God on their own, they will often stop growing after around five years of becoming a Christian. Simply put, *one day a week does not make a healthy spiritual life.*

Spirit-empowered daily living requires each of the following:

- Fresh encounters with Jesus (John 8:12)
- Frequent experiences of Scripture (Psalm 119:105)
- Faithful engagement with God's people (Matt. 5:14).

Each time your church gathers for corporate worship, are you inviting them into encounters with Jesus, experiences with Scripture, and engagement with God's people?

1. Reframe worship from a Sunday morning practice to an everyday reality.
2. Develop a prayer ministry strategy that includes personal and corporate prayer.

PRESENTING THE PLAN

The following pages include instruction on how to communicate and launch the strategic plan. To aid in this process, compile each of the elements you have worked on thus far into a written plan.

Your written plan should include

1. The church's vision
2. A list of the church's core values with definitions
3. A broad overview of the church's strategic plan in each of the five areas.

PREPARING TO LAUNCH THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Now that you have designed your strategic plan, it's time to prepare for launch. Effective communication is crucial and requires thorough and intentional preparation. After all, even the best plan will experience limited success if poorly communicated.

Preparing to launch the strategic plan must occur in two phases:

- Initial communication and planning steps
- Launch Sunday

INITIAL COMMUNICATION AND PLANNING STEPS

As you prepare for launching your strategic plan, certain questions need to be answered:

1. Who needs to be added to the team as we prepare for implementation?
2. When will Launch Sunday take place?
3. What communication pieces need to be prepared?
Remember the importance of a key “brochure” that provides greater detail of the strategic plan and becomes the primary handout for Launch Sunday.
4. Who needs to be brought “up-to-speed” before Launch Sunday? (*see discussion of Missional People and Ministry People below*)

THE THREE AUDIENCES FOR CHANGE COMMUNICATION

While there are numerous ways to view the types of people in your local church, when it comes to communicating change, seeing them in one of these three groups can be most helpful.

- **Consumer** people (those who are primarily focused on their own needs)

Now, many of us may have a visceral reaction to the label “consumer.” After all, consumers are focused on what they want and they “shop around” until they find it. Consumers at church is hardly an appealing picture.

But keep in mind that all of us came to Jesus initially because of our own need. Like the crowds described in the Gospels, we came with our hurts, our brokenness, our needs for healing and hope—and we found what we longed for in Jesus and His community of worshipers. “Consumer” was even the starting point for the original twelve disciples and all who would later bear the label “apostle” and sacrifice themselves for the message they carried.

The local church at its best cares for the needs of people, both inside its walls and throughout its community. So, “consumer” is a starting point on the road to discipleship and that’s the level at which many of our people currently engage our local church.

If your conversations with people are heavily focused on how they are doing or what they are gaining or how we can minister to their needs, you have likely identified them as consumer people—currently.

About two-thirds of your congregation currently engage their local church as consumers, and it’s up to the remaining one-third of us to minister to their needs.

- **Ministry** people (those who help us minister to the needs of people)

Fortunately, along the way, some of our consumers have recognized the needs of others and stepped up to help us minister to those needs. These “Ministry people” serve in a variety of ways from helping in our kids’ ministries to leading a small group or caring for our facilities or helping on the worship team.

While these still have their own needs, their participation in their local church has shifted more to how they now contribute to the efforts of our church. Like that day when the disciples wondered how they could possibly feed the hungry multitude, these friends are aware of more than their own hunger and they’re ready to help us distribute whatever loaves and fish we have.

Moving consumer people to this next stage is an important part of discipleship. As we know, Christ’s kingdom calls us to the needs of others so the step into ministry service is important for every individual.

In most congregations, regardless of size, about one-third of the congregation can be identified as ministry people.

One important note: The ratio of consumer people to ministry people (2:1) isn't likely to change very much, regardless of the effectiveness of our discipleship efforts. While we certainly want to guide every consumer into ministry involvement, the truth is that the more ministry people we have, the more consumer people we can minister to.

So, as this second group grows, the first group grows too. Simply put, the more ministry people we have, the more consumer people we will draw into our worshipping community.

- **Missional** people (those who find their purpose in Christ's kingdom)

Of course, the math itself raises questions about a third group of people. If two-thirds of our congregation are consumer people and one-third are ministry people, everyone would be included in these two groups. But among our Ministry people, there's another group that have taken an even deeper step and become truly missional in their efforts for Christ.

These are the people who have found their own sense of purpose and commitment in their ministry efforts. They use their abilities and God-given gifts to lead others and they model the heart of Christ alongside their pastor. As one pastor described them, these people "get it." Pastor can share his deepest heart with these friends. They are committed to Christ's mission and to the ongoing effectiveness of their local congregation.

Somewhere in their journey of following Jesus, the Twelve became missional. They moved beyond lining up those who needed Jesus to heal them and began to see their assignment as a part of His. Identifying exactly when that happened may not be possible, but it's clear that such a shift did occur for each them. In the same way, as we engage consumer people and guide them to ministry efforts, their faithfulness and commitment will one day bring a similar shift as they, too, begin to "own the mission" of Christ.

In truth, becoming missional is something that occurs as the Holy Spirit works in the life of an individual believer. As leaders, we cannot make that happen. We can simply provide ministry opportunities where people can serve Christ's mission and trust the Holy Spirit to lead these servants in His timing and manner. We can, however, note one or more of the following indicators of a missional disciple:

- Missional people are motivated by **LOVE** for Christ and for those He has called them to serve.
- Missional people have found a sense of **PURPOSE**, even calling, in their ministry efforts.
- Missional people are more than ministry helpers. They **LEAD OTHERS** to give their best in serving Christ.
- Missional people see needs and look to **THEIR OWN** resources before placing expectations on others.
- Missional people reflect the **HEART** of Christ and act in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Missional people pursue Christ in their daily lives at their own **INITIATIVE**.
- Missional people seek **UNITY** and **HUMILITY** rather than preference and control.
- Missional people will stand for Christ even when **ALONE**.

So, now that we understand these three groups, let's consider how we use this information on communicating change.

| Group | Percentage of Congregation | Order of communication | Setting |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Consumer | Two-thirds | Last | On Launch Sunday |
| Ministry | One-third | Second | In a team meeting |
| Missional | A segment within the Ministry group | First, well before launching new initiatives | Individually over a cup of coffee |

When communicating any significant change in our church's ministry efforts, such as our new vision, values, and strategic plan, these three groups present three distinct steps in that communication. In truth, any major change will benefit from this approach to communication.

First, we must communicate the new direction to our Missional people. These friends carry the heart of Christ with us within our local church. Likely some of them have been a part of our praying and planning for this new direction, but any who have not participated need to be brought into the new direction we are taking. Usually, these conversations should be personal and individual—a cup of coffee over which we describe how God is directing us. We want and need to input these Missional people can provide and we absolutely need their support as we move forward.

Second, we communicate the new direction to our Ministry people. This can be done in larger groups where they are gathered with others who also assist our ministry efforts. These friends will play important parts in helping us implement our new plans so we want to help them understand our new direction well ahead of our effort to implement our plans. So, this might occur in team meetings or a larger gathering of our entire ministry team.

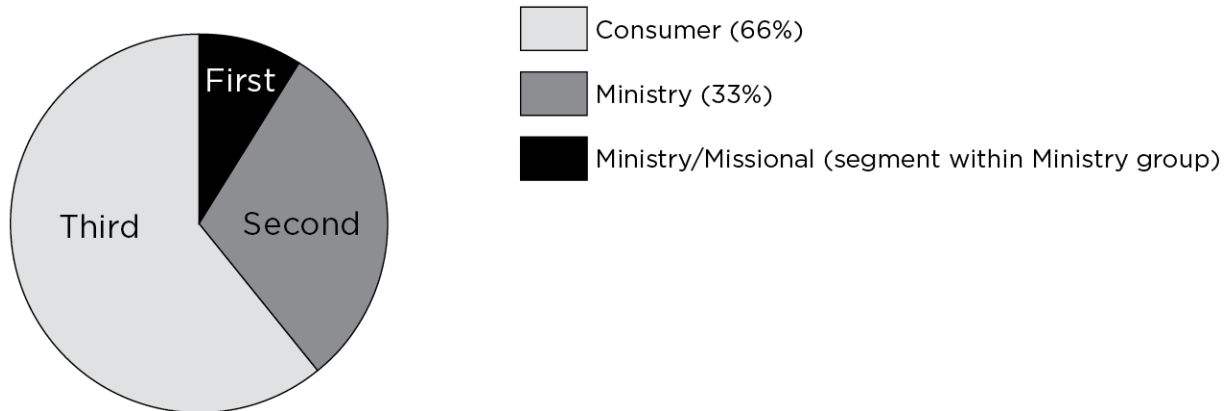
Finally, we communicate the new direction to our Consumer people, usually in the form of a Vision Sunday or some type of special announcement setting.

When you take this approach, you will have already unveiled the new direction to one-third of your congregation before the “big announcement” to the entire congregation. This is very important to clear communication. Remember that your consumer people will hear this new information through a “how will this affect me” filter. Because you have already equipped your Missional and Ministry people with clear information, these friends can assist you in addressing questions or even concerns expressed by the larger group.

If you wait and announce big changes to everyone at once, you will stand alone in addressing all uncertainties and your chances of success will diminish. Significant change should be an “us” decision whenever possible.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Never treat your Missional people or Ministry people like consumers. They are your partners in ministry effort and need to be treated as such. If you treat these committed friends like consumers, over time some of them will likely return to that status.

Communication order



5. How will the preaching schedule prepare for Launch Sunday? For example, a sermon series that highlights the mission of Christ, the needs of our community, and perhaps even describes the history of our local congregation to this point may help prepare the congregation to hear the plan that will be unveiled on Launch Sunday.

LAUNCH SUNDAY

For several months, perhaps even a year, you and your team have been preparing for your church's future. You have sought God's direction concerning vision, needed values, and specific strategic steps toward becoming a true Acts 2 church. The magnitude of this moment in your local congregation's history is potentially enormous!

Now it's time to bring the full congregation into this journey. Remember, they haven't walked these steps with you so Launch Sunday plays a major role in engaging them and inviting them to walk the road mapped out before us.

Launch Sunday should be a much-anticipated and exciting day and your team should take every available step to make it exactly that. Here's some planning advice for Launch Sunday and a few of the best practices taken from the efforts of those who have already celebrated Launch Sunday with their congregations.

Prior to launching the vision:

- ☐ Promote the date for launch Sunday to create anticipation, excitement, and energy.
- ☐ Order banners, handouts, matching shirts, wristbands, etc. to help in creating buzz. Make the launch Sunday a big deal. Let people know that Launch (or Vision) Sunday will determine the future of our church.
- ☐ Research some of the statistics on your surrounding community as you prepare the launch Sunday presentation. Where possible, use data to present a clear picture of the community's demographic makeup and needs (web resources like city-data.com can be helpful).
- ☐ Have each team member tour the church's facilities as if they were guests. Make notes about observations, including issues that require immediate attention and ideas for improving the guest experience—restrooms, cleanliness of décor and furniture, ease of access, etc.
- ☐ Consider how you want the congregation to respond, and create a commitment card (see below for ideas on what the commitment card might include)

During the presentation of the Vision:

- ☐ Create PowerPoint® presentations or videos to help people capture the vision.
- ☐ If possible, create a booklet outlining the vision, values, and strategies. "Write the vision and make it plain" (Habakkuk 2:2, NKJV). Because it can be difficult to capture all the detail provided in an electronic presentation or a video, printed pieces are important.
- ☐ Remember that this Acts 2 Journey has been a team effort. It's VERY IMPORTANT that the team be visible and fully participating in the Launch Sunday communication! While every team member may not have a speaking role in the presentation, find meaningful ways to demonstrate that this journey has been an "US" event from the outset. When the team is visible, the congregation will see clearly that this strategic plan is what we are doing, not just what pastor or a few leaders want us to do.

During the sermon/presentation:

- ☐ Give some facts about the needs of the community and take a few moments to reflect on your church's historical effort to minister to the community.
- ☐ Then, reveal the vision statement and your passion for its intent, knowing this is your new destination for the future.
- ☐ Share the values that the team has identified.
- ☐ Provide an overview of the strategic plan, but keep in mind that the primary goal is to unveil the new vision and challenge everyone to get involved.
- ☐ Close with a reminder of the need, perhaps using the number of people who are unchurched in the community, county, etc.

IMPORTANT: Don't overwhelm the congregation with too many strategy steps in your presentation. Keep the focus on vision and values and share enough strategy to demonstrate that you have a plan. More strategy pieces can be included in the printed booklet.

Response Time

- ☐ Make available a list of ministry teams, groups, and classes.
- ☐ Distribute a commitment card to use for response. Remember that the goal is for the congregation to express their desire to be a part of the journey ahead. Some groups have found it beneficial to identify certain expressions of commitment to help people get engaged. Below is an example of what might appear on a commitment card:

"I commit my time, talent, and resources to God's vision for our church."

- *Attend a worship service each week*
- *Grow in a small group or Sunday School class*
- *Serve in some ministry area or join a ministry team*
Identify three friends who need Jesus and begin praying for the opportunities to influence them or even invite them to a church service.

MANAGING CHANGE COMMUNICATION

Because significant change encompasses so many different communication parts, at times your team or those you lead may demonstrate uncertainty or confusion with certain parts.

The chart below can serve as a guide for identifying the area(s) of emphasis needed, depending on where the uncertainty or confusion seems to be expressed.

Using the chart below, we can see that if all elements are being communicated effectively (Row 1), the result will most likely be “Successful Change.” However, if we are currently experiencing a different result (Column 7), we can use this chart to determine which area(s) need greater emphasis.

For example, if we are experiencing “Confusion” or even “Chaos,” this would indicate a need to emphasize “Vision” as this is the piece most lacking. If, instead, we are currently encountering “Conflict” or “Apathy” among our team or congregation, likely our “Values” need to be emphasized more fully.

Each row of the chart below indicates which item should be emphasized, depending on the result we are currently experiencing (Column 7). You will likely find this chart to be useful throughout your entire journey of implementing significant change.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--------|--------|--------------------|--------|-----------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Vision | Values | Communi- cation | Skills | Resources | Action Plans | Successful Change |
| | Values | Communi- cation | Skills | Resources | Action Plans | Confusion Chaos |
| Vision | | Communi- cation | Skills | Resources | Action Plans | Conflict Apathy |
| Vision | Values | | Skills | Resources | Action Plans | Misunder- standing |
| Vision | Values | Communi- cation | | Resources | Action Plans | Anxiety Insecurity |
| Vision | Values | Communi- cation | Skills | | Action Plans | Frustration |
| Vision | Values | Communi- cation | Skills | Resources | | False Starts |

1. The above chart appears in “Leading in Times of Change,” Leadership Development Resources, LLC, 2002.

TEAM MEMBERS' NEW ROLES

As a member of the Acts 2 Team in your local church, your leadership influence may be growing. You may have been a part of your church's leadership team in the past or this may have been a first such experience in your own life journey.

Either way, you're now a leader—whether you feel like one or not!

While you have been a part of this important journey with other leaders around your table, the need for your voice and influence continues to matter greatly. Yes, you have been “on the inside” of this strategic planning process, and for that reason alone, people in your congregation will now see you as one of the leaders in your local church. Don't resist that or be fearful. You have much to offer to the journey ahead, so trust God to continue to guide you as He has throughout this journey.

What can you do? First, be faithful in prayer and in support for your pastor and every member of the leadership team. Unity has never mattered more than it does now as we begin a journey to the future together.

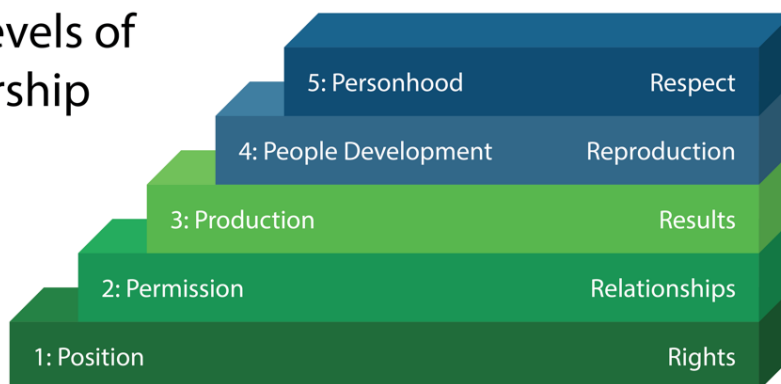
Second, bring the scope of your influence to the effort. Regardless of the role(s) you may have filled previously, you have a level of influence with various members of the congregation and that is likely to grow even more now. Back in Retreat 2, we discussed leadership influence and we were mostly talking about your pastor's influence at that point.

Now let's talk about yours...

Leadership as Influence: Five Levels of Leadership

In *Developing the Leader Within You*, John Maxwell defines leadership as influence and outlines five levels of leadership that must be mastered to achieve the highest level of influence.

Five Levels of Leadership



Level 1: Position (Rights)

- People follow the leader because they have to.
- Influence is based on the authority of the leader's position or title.
- People will do no more than is required.
- Activity at this level can be self-centered.
- You can't lead change at this level.

Level 2: Permission (Relationships)

- People follow the leader because they want to.
- The leader's influence grows as trust and respect deepen.
- People believe the leader is competent and believe the leader cares.
- Activity at this level can be fellowship centered.
- You will struggle to lead change at this level.

Level 3: Production (Results)

- People follow the leader because of what is being done for the church.
- The leader's influence expands as the leader accomplishes church goals.
- The leader communicates vision, and the congregation sees fruit.
- Activity at this level can be task centered.
- You can successfully initiate and lead change at this level.

Level 4: People Development (Reproduction)

- People follow the leader because of what is being sown into individuals.
- The leader's influence soars as people are empowered.
- The leader intentionally invests in developing and mentoring leaders.
- Activity at this level can be program or meeting centered.

Level 5: Personhood (Respect)

- People follow the leader because of who the leader is and what the leader stands for.
- The leader's influence extends beyond the pastor's lifetime.
- The leader is honored and respected because of his or her commitment and consistency over many years.
- Activity at this level can be succession centered.

In every relationship you have in your local church, you have some level of influence. And, that influence is likely to grow, perhaps even reaching higher levels in the days ahead.

So, how can you use your influence to help your team communicate effectively and encourage the congregation toward this new future? Your conversations matter! Your voice needs to be heard among your friends! Step into this moment with an open and humble heart and God may use you to impact some who are hesitant to respond to other members of your team. Your influence will make a difference!

LEADING TRANSFORMATION

To move from LEVEL 1 to LEVEL 2:

- ◆ Demonstrate competence.
- ◆ Grow spiritually, physically, and relationally.
- ◆ Do not use force to control.

To move from LEVEL 2 to LEVEL 3:

- ◆ Build a solid leadership team.
- ◆ Create a shared vision and a plan of action.
- ◆ Acquire and allocate resources.

To move from LEVEL 3 to LEVEL 4:

- ◆ Put people over programs.
- ◆ Intentionally invest in developing others.
- ◆ Be willing to make tough calls.

To move from LEVEL 4 to LEVEL 5:

- ◆ Be consistent.
- ◆ Share knowledge and wisdom.
- ◆ Create a succession plan.

Finally, we need every team member to demonstrate passion for the vision and model the values we're pursuing. Model serving by finding the place where your gifts and abilities can be used to impact the lives of others. As each of us do our part, others will join us, bringing their unique gifts and abilities to the journey. When that begins to happen, we establish a new momentum toward the future we believe God has for our church.

Then, we will really be on an Acts 2 Journey!

Our Prayer for You

"Go, make disciples" are three powerful words that gives us a clear-cut directive for the people who come in our lives, our churches, and our future.

Our prayer is that of Hebrews 13:20–21 (ESV):

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Our team is always available to you in the future.

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ACTS 2 MENTORING

How do you maintain health as a church?

The Acts 2 Journey team has partnered with Paul to Timothy Institute to create a resource called Acts 2 Mentoring designed to answer this question.

Acts 2 Mentoring assists lead pastors in the following ways:

1. **CREATE ORGANIZATION EFFECTIVENESS BY IMPLEMENTING THE ACTS 2 TEMPLATE.** Continue developing and integrating the principles that you have been working on during the Acts 2 Journey. Maintain focus and alignment as a team to become a healthy church that
 - Pursues and obeys God passionately (Worship)
 - Engages and maintains loving relationships (Connect)
 - Develops and mobilizes its people (Grow)
 - Acts with clear direction and outward focus (Serve)
 - Reproduces and multiplies His mission in other people and places (Go)
2. **DEVELOP THE CHURCH'S LEADERSHIP PIPELINE.** Potential leaders will be equipped with five competencies:
 - See: Clarify and communicate vision
 - Discern: Develop spiritual sensitivity
 - Build: Form a unified team
 - Adapt: Contextualize ministry to culture
 - Empower: Release others to minister with their gifts
3. **PRODUCE MATURE DISCIPLES.** Marks of a mature disciple include:
 - Submission to God
 - Honor to leaders
 - Interdependence with peers
 - Service to followers
 - Investment in calling

OVERVIEW OF THE ACTS 2 MENTORING PROCESS

Step 1: Explore to assess fit and timing.

Step 2: Get certified: invite key leaders to attend the training to gain mentoring skills.

Step 3: Teach biblical mentoring by preaching the *Mentoring that Leaves a Legacy* series.

Step 4: Launch with Core: Select and invite followers and begin monthly meetings

- Mentees will complete a series of 12 online mini-courses (*Spirit-Empowered Leaders*) to prepare for their monthly mentoring sessions
- Each mini-course is \$25

Step 5: Celebrate on a Sunday when your mentees complete their one-year journey.

Step 6: Launch new groups.

Step 7: Engage (or re-engage) in the Acts 2 Journey cohort with a new group of leaders.

A HEALTHY CHURCH IN EVERY COMMUNITY

A healthy church is a Spirit-empowered community of disciples following Jesus, fulfilling his mission.

A healthy church is one that...

- Reproduces and multiplies his mission in other peoples and places | **GO**
- Engages and maintains loving relationships | **CONNECT**
- Develops and mobilizes the people | **GROW**
- Acts with clear direction and outward focus | **SERVE**
- Pursues and obeys God passionately | **WORSHIP**



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