

# STRUCTURING THE CHURCH TO GROW!

How do you structure a church so it just keeps on growing and doesn't plateau?

**1. You must have a purpose statement** that describes (in their own words) your understanding of God's will and intent for the church. This statement must express in simple form the church's commitment to building around the New Testament purposes, such as: worship, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, & ministry. Everyone in the church must know the basic Bible beliefs and purpose for why the church exists!

**2. You must develop an unshakable conviction about growth.** First and foremost, you need to settle on the idea that God wants his church to grow. No apologies are needed, God wants his church to grow; it's his will and his command. The reason churches must grow is because people are going to hell without Jesus Christ. As long as there is one person within driving distance of your church that does not know Jesus Christ, you must keep growing.

## WHY SOME DON'T GROW?

**a. Some fear growth will ruin the fellowship!** Even though your members may not say this, some of them will subtly fight growth because they fear that when the congregation gets bigger, they won't know everybody anymore. So they say, "I like the way it is; I know everybody. If we get bigger, I'm afraid I'll just become a number." The antidote to this fear is building small groups within your congregation. These smaller groups become the source of caring for one another. The church must grow larger and smaller at the same time. You plan to GROW.....larger through EVANGELISM ...deeper through DISCIPLESHIP...warmer through FELLOWSHIP...stronger through WORSHIP...broader through MINISTRY!

**b. Some do not bring friends to church!** We pray, we ask, we pressure, we motivate, we emphasize, but members still don't bring friends to church. Why? (1) Most of our family and friends are already here. (2) Often, the truth is we're embarrassed. We instinctively know that the services are not designed for unbelievers, for seekers, or for the people they know from work. **One antidote is to allow changes so that every worship service is designed to appeal to unchurched friends** and that other nights of study or worship will be to build up the saved! **What are you willing to do differently to reach others for Christ?**

**c. Clinging rigidly to tradition!** Traditions are actually rooted in success. Something becomes a tradition because it works in the first place. And because it works, we repeat it over and over again. Unfortunately, the tradition then begins to drive us. "The message never changes, but occasionally the methods do!"

**d. Trying to appeal to everybody!** You cannot appeal to everybody. It simply won't work. If a radio station in your community played Bach, followed by the Beatles, followed by a Polka song, do you think it would please everybody or actually please no one? Radio stations niche because they understand people are attracted by different styles. I'm not talking about presenting a different Gospel; what I'm saying is that define your target and then do everything you can to hit that target.

**3. You must change the primary role of the preacher from minister to leader!** A capable minister can grow a church to 300 with pastoral skills or ministry skills, but growing beyond 300 will require leadership skills. (a) Preachers must learn to communicate the vision in very personal and practical ways. (b) Preachers must also motivate the church through messages, and understand that it's easier to motivate a group than it is to motivate individuals. (c) Preachers must also equip others for ministry.

**a. Ask yourself: Is the present church decision making body of leaders structured for control rather than for growth?** Many churches today are over-programmed and over-structured, and the structure is strangling them to death. How many hoops do you have to go through to get something done? The goal is to keep the structure of leadership simple, flexible, and ready to meet the all the challenges that the future may hold.

**b. Ask yourself: Do you trust your preacher?** If people don't trust your preacher, then the church won't accomplish much at all. His leadership must be humble, vulnerable, persistent, willing to risk failure - and willing to believe God for great things. He must be qualified to serve as an elder. He must earn and keep the respect of his flock! The preacher must be the supervisor of the staff! The eldership must be an affirming, delegating, empowering, and implementing body! The preacher must not be expected primarily to please people but to lead people!

**c. Ask yourself: What is the role of the elder?** What are the scriptural tasks of an elder? An Elder's work may include preaching and teaching (I Timothy 5:17), praying for the sick as in James 5:14, shepherding the flock and serving as a good example as in I Peter 5:2 & 3, plus as needed making doctrinal stances as was done in Acts 15. Read: Acts 6:2-4 "So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. ...So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly...." The eldership must be an affirming, delegating, empowering, and implementing body!

#### **4. You must organize around the gifts of your people.**

Organizing around the gifts of people will allow the church to focus on ministry, not maintenance. A gifts-based ministry encourages teamwork. That's why God brought this talent into the church!

##### **a. Ask yourself? Are 20 percent of the people doing 80 percent of the work?**

We must not always look at attendance at worship alone as a measurement for being on target. Another measurement that is needed to gauge how well are we doing Christ's work looks at the 2nd priority of the church which is turning passive spectators into active leaders in ministry. It must be an intentional plan to turn every one of your members into a minister with a ministry. We need 80% of the people doing of the work!

##### **b. Ask yourself? What is being done to increase to equip workers and increase the number?**

The church must have some equipping program that systematically teaches the basic Bible doctrines, core values, and expectations of membership! Many churches have adapted the Saddleback teaching material for Classes 201 (Maturity) 301 (Ministry) and 401 (Mission). The goal is to move the church family from membership to maturity in Christ, to a place in ministry, that the mission of Christ's Church is accomplished!

#### **5. You must budget according to your purposes and priorities.**

Obviously the budget of the church shows the priorities and the direction of the church. I'd suggest you take the budget items and ask of each item, "Which purpose does this fit under?"

##### **a. You must not be afraid to teach Biblical stewardship and ask for a commitment!**

An expanding ministry demands you to raise money. Those who know and agree upon the agenda must underwrite the agenda!

##### **b. You must provide the tools for ministry to staff and volunteers.**

The staff and office personnel must have the best computers, copiers, equipment, and supplies to "work smarter not harder." **Is there something that needs upgraded?**

##### **c. You must add surplus seating space and parking.**

When it comes to building a facility, most churches build too little and too soon. And then the shoe begins to tell the foot how big it can get! You want to build as big as you can, which means having more than enough seating and more than enough parking.

#### **6. You must add staff on purpose.**

Build your staff by first adding generalists and then specialists. First, you want to add people who can do lots of things because you're only going to have one. Then as you go down the road, you can add more and more specialists. When do you want to add staff? As

soon as you can ... immediately, if at all possible. Anytime you add a staff member, that's a faith step and allows the church to grow to the next level.

**7. You must offer multiple services.** Obviously to expand the structure, you will have to multiply, and to multiply, you have to offer multiple services. Why? Because more hooks in the water mean you can catch more fish.

**a. If you're trying to reach new people, you have to have a large enough crowd so that the new people who just walked in don't feel like everybody's looking at them.** At what point should you add a new service? When you can have at least 75-100 people in that service.

**b. If you are trying to reach young adults and their children, the music must be upbeat and visuals be vibrant!** People appreciate music at church like they listen through the week! Most of the people and guest in the church have high tech sound and video systems in their homes. Those who now attend church anticipate the addition of quality video, sound, and lighting to enhance their worship of God!

**c. If you want to reach adults in worship, their must be teaching with application.** Preaching without application merely informs rather than transforms. The preaching must focus on obedience. The Bible tells us to be doers of the word and not hearers only. In every weekend message, and in every Bible study group, and in every Sunday school session, moving people into doing ministry should be the bottom line – what are we going to do as a result of what we heard.

**8. You must create small groups to enhance community.** The more small groups you have, the more ways you have to connect with people. Deliberately structure your church so it won't become one big group that doesn't reach out to other people. (i.e. MOPS for young mothers, sports for young adults, day trips for seniors!)

**9. You must intentionally break through attendance barriers with big days.** Crowds attract crowds! People like to be around crowds. When you have big, special days - maybe Easter, maybe a Friend Day - there's something about seeing an extra 100 people that expands your congregation's vision. They see what the church can be. These special days help the church to see itself as bigger and growing and vibrant.

**10. You must welcome and cultivate the first time guests!** "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." Statistics show guests often make up their mind to return in the first 12 minutes of their initial visit! Greeters from the parking lot to the nursery are essential!

Within 48 hours after a guest visits the church service, a members contact is equally encouraging and leaves a significant impression!

**a. The First Impression card** gives us feedback from first-time visitors. It helps us see the service from their perspective.

**b. The Welcome card** gives us feedback from our regular attenders and members. We receive a steady flow of suggestions and tips from those in the Crowd.

**11. You must continually evaluate your progress.** Take a regular and honest look at what is going on in your church and where your church is going.

**a. Understand your purpose.** Purposes will never change; they are eternal. But your methodology will need to be ever-changing. I suggest you periodically review – at least once a year - all your programs and then assign them to one of three options:

1. Reaffirm it – yes, it's still working.
2. Refine it – we need to tweak it so it will become more effective.
3. Replace it - You can't use yesterday's tool in today's ministry to meet tomorrow's challenge.

**b. Don't try to study everything** or you'll end up with the paralysis of analysis. Decide to track three or four significant numbers, such as attendance or small groups. Then compare the numbers of where you are now with where you've come from and where you want to be.

**c. Don't compare yourself with a church down the road.** Decide on a standard for measuring the health of your church and shoot for it. The process is constant; you may not hit the mark you've set today, but tomorrow is a new day. Continually evaluate your progress and make the necessary adjustments to grow healthy while growing larger.

