

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

NEXT STEPS

*...for You and
Your Church*

Syllabus



Daniel A. Brown, Ph.D.

ctw
Commended to The Word



Therefore be careful (diligent, intentional, exacting, circumspect) *how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of* (buying back, improving the opportunity of) *your time...*

Ephesians 5:15-16

For we will surely die and are like water spilled on the ground which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not take away life, but plans ways so that the banished one will not be cast out from him.

2 Samuel 14:14

The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation.

Psalms 33:11

So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them with his skillful (thoughtful, analytical, reasoning) hands.

Psalms 78:72

Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed.

Proverbs 15:22

The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.

Proverbs 16:9

Many plans are in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord will stand.

Proverbs 19:21

The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage, but everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty.

Proverbs 21:5

But the noble man devises noble plans; and by noble plans he stands.

Isaiah 32:8

"For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."

Jeremiah 29:11

DANIEL A. BROWN, Ph.D.
Commended to the Word
280 State Park Drive, Aptos, CA
95003 831.688.2568
www.ctw.coastlands.org

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE (AND DISCLAIMER)

Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain. (Psalm 127:1)

Except for the Bible, every written piece dealing with leadership, prayer, evangelism, discipleship, the church, or any other facet of the Kingdom of God is incomplete. This brief set of notes and practical suggestions is more incomplete than most—so much so, that I seriously considered scrapping the entire project out of concern that anyone would read it and think that it offered them a comprehensive view of spiritual leadership...(or pastoring).

It doesn't! These pages never once touch the issue of your personal walk with Jesus. No attention is given to grace, love, salvation, prayer, Truth, brokenness, forgiveness, humility, discernment, miraculous interventions, kindness, suffering, repentance, hope, fasting, Christ in you, desert places, the old self, or faith. And only scant mention is made, in passing, of Bible study, preaching, discipleship, and evangelism. I do not talk about the invisible dimension of reality, the arena in which all our true battles are fought—and won or lost (Ephesians 6:10-12).

See what I mean? Compared to all the weighty topics that I'm not discussing, this syllabus is little more than a Dixie cup of water held out to passing marathoners, who have done all the training and preparation and conditioning for the race. A few swallows of water or a quick splash on the face will not make a marathoner out of a couch potato. Neither will these notes make a fine spiritual leader out of anyone who neglects the powerful and profoundly-other ways of the Lord.

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize?

Run in such a way that you may win. 1 Corinthians 9:24

But if you are looking for a pragmatic tool to help you arrive at some "Next Steps," you may find that these suggestions (about how to arrange your church resources in obedience to what Jesus has asked you to do) will help you a bit on your way...

My focus in these pages is very narrow: to help ministry leaders understand the particulars of their God-given assignments, and how to align a church-wide, total-program response to that mission. Have fun with this. Capture the heart of God who, as the Father and Founder of the multi-national corporation, WORLDWIDE RECONSTRUCTION ENTERPRISE, is excited to have you in the family business!

Aptos, September 2007

A C L I N I C N O T A C O N F E R E N C E

you may be the largest clue

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S PRIMARY TOOLS

MINISTRY ALIGNMENT EXERCISES

S E C T I O N

0 1



FIRST THINGS FIRST

AS HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, JESUS GAVE GIFTS TO HIS FLEDGLING CHURCH.
(EPHESIANS 4:8-13)

The gifts Jesus left His Church were not magical, nor were they imbued with mystical power. He left us no accumulating bank accounts or clues to buried treasure. True to all He had taught about things of great worth in the Kingdom of God, He bequeathed to the Church what did not, and still does not, appear that great. He gave people-gifts—apostles, showers of mercy, givers, teachers, prophets, etc.—an expression of His intention to make disciples and shepherds out of His followers.

We must never forget that God loves to work His great purposes through (who-me?) people. Isn't the Incarnation the great miracle that set up our salvation (John 1:14; Philippians 2:7-11)? And isn't that why we have been commissioned to make disciples—because the God who could write His glory and truth in giant script across the sky chooses, instead, to write in on human hearts and reflect it indirectly to the rest of the world? We have been entrusted with God's most treasured message: His earnest longing for reconciliation with humankind (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). That doesn't mean that we are infallible or that we ought to be self-reliant, but it does mean that we are central to all God's plans.

If we rely primarily on ourselves and our natural capabilities for our plans, then we are doomed to frustration and failure.

In all matters of the Kingdom, leaning on our own understanding will surely lead to collapse (Proverbs 3:5). Pride, egocentricity and self-congratulation are deadly to us personally, but they also lead to barrenness in organizations we lead. But that does not change the fact that people (like us) are God's tool of choice, and He almost never chooses to do anything on the earth except through the agency of a human being.

[A great place to start](#) in order to gain profound insight into God's purpose for your church and the group of people you lead at this point in time, is to begin the whole exercise of strategic and purposeful planning with you!

Even though it will feel awkward to spend time/energy considering how God has made and led you thus far in life, remember that He raised up Esther and David, and so many other distinct people, to fulfill His particular purposes in the world. You are His workmanship, created specially by Him to carry out a prepared set of good works with your life (Ephesians 2:10).

Though we are encouraged to think more about others' needs than our own, and not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, Paul still gives us a reason for thinking about ourselves. The point is not so that we can compare ourselves with others, but to make good judgments about where we are on our journey and what we might need in order to become more useful to Him in the future:

For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. Romans 12:3

Many believers mistakenly conclude that the New Testament summarily says, “Forget about yourself.” Actually, the message is to use ourselves for others’ sake—to consciously take the form of a servant so that others can be lifted up. Positioned as spiritual leaders to serve God’s purposes in others’ lives, we have a great place in His plans. We are destined to be great in the Kingdom!

Whoa—that sounds strange, doesn’t it? Being great?!?

Serving others...That’s what Kingdom greatness is all about; that’s what Jesus meant when He said those who serve others will be great in the Kingdom (Matthew 20:25-26). Every one of us wants to have our lives count for something—to make a lasting difference in the lives of others. That is why we fight lifetime battles regarding ego/identity, purpose/calling and self-worth. Our experience and upbringing may have stolen away our hope of having an(other) opportunity to live our destiny, but deep down we know that we were made for greatness. I do not mean celebrity status, vast wealth, or political influence. Those are hollow. I mean being great in the way the Lord defines greatness.

One of the intolerable tortures of this broken world is that it shuts the door in everyone’s face—sooner or later. Even if we were good enough to be a squad leader for intramural softball in 10th grade PE, we weren’t good enough for the varsity baseball team—or, if we were, we weren’t good enough to earn an athletic scholarship at the University—or, if we were, we weren’t (translate that won’t be) good enough, smart enough, cute enough...

Eventually, we get cut. Those daring enough to keep entering life’s contests all find themselves, at some point, left out—*has-beens, wannabes, third-place finishers, alternate selections, old trophy-dusters*... Life is rigged like the cheesiest carnival game, and no one takes home the big stuffed animal. But God has another plan.

As ministry leaders, our #1 job is to serve God’s purposes in others’ lives.

You and I sense that, even when we get so discouraged in ministry that we want to quit. We want to make the best use of all the resources at our disposal, and we are willing, like Paul, to sacrificially pour ourselves out in service to people’s faith, and to be expended for their souls (Philippians 2:17; 2 Corinthians 12:15).

That’s why we begin our strategic planning process with you—because the Lord selected you as His vessel-of-choice for this people at this time.

YOUR UNIQUE SELF

“I WILL GIVE THANKS TO THEE FOR I AM FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE... AND MY SOUL KNOWS IT VERY WELL.” (PSALM 139:14)

Simply put, since you are one of the primary resources that Jesus uses to accomplish His will, then we’re likely to get a better idea about His will (the whole point of planning) by looking first at the primary tool He has selected. And that would be you!

Because God has a particular plan for the course of your life, you cannot really fulfill His purposes by copying others. His calling on your life is not necessarily like that of other spiritual leaders (John 21:18-22). Much of the Lord’s plan simply has to do with who He’s designed you to be, and how, as a result of His intricate fashioning, you (super)naturally function. You are His “workmanship created in Christ Jesus,” and He has prepared good works beforehand for you to walk in (Jeremiah 1:5; Ephesians 2:10).

There is, therefore, an important connection between how you have been designed *and* the particular things God wants you to end up doing. His will for you, indeed His plans for you are intricately interwoven with His work in you. That has profound implications for the church you pastor since you are its primary leader.

Before you were formed in the womb, God gave you a specific Ministry Gift-Mix, (i.e., prophet, evangelist, mercy-shower, pastor-teacher, apostle, helper), and that means how you “do” ministry—whether it’s preaching, conducting a volunteer-staff meeting or training your cell group leaders—is unconsciously shaped by that Gift-Mix (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; and Ephesians 4).

The better you understand your role in the whole body, and work accordingly, the more everyone around you will grow.

Knowing your primary Gift-Mix is very helpful in coming to understand the ways in which the Lord is most likely to use you. These brief descriptions of *some* of those Gift-Mixes can serve as a beginning for your personal discovery:

Exhorters: Find it easy to get close to people and their situations, usually by relating a similar personal experience, in order to help them move ahead or break through. Like expert mountain guides, exhorters can point out loose stones and shortcuts. And they make fabulous storytellers.

Teachers: See lessons to be taught in almost every situation, and they want every one to be secured and well grounded in truth. As tireless mentors, teachers take special delight when others gain a new or deeper awareness of truth. Their organized touch brings simplicity and beauty to almost anything.

Server-Helpers: Derive the most satisfaction and fulfillment from being invisible, behind-the-scenes parts of a larger “team effort.” Using their know-how, skills, time and talents, server-helpers undergird people and churches, relieving them of their burdens and workloads. They toil with eagerness and endless stamina.

Mercy-Showers: See beyond people’s sin and move toward their hurt with gracious sensitivity and compassion. Filled with great wisdom and strength, mercy-showers believe the best of others, and want the best for them, regardless of

may have caused their present circumstances. They can reach those who are deep in pain or shame.

Apostle-Pioneers: Lay foundations of truth and understanding upon which others in the church build. As pioneers moving into spiritually uncharted or underdeveloped arenas, apostles rarely function conventionally or according to the status quo. Their trail blazing tendencies and their keen sense of direction inspire followers.

Givers: Experience an almost irresistible desire to meet the physical and financial needs of anyone they meet. Compelled by cheerful generosity, givers invest in Kingdom enterprises and facilitate others' vision. Having usually suffered several financial reversals, they have little worry about parting with more of their money voluntarily.

Evangelists: Continually "find themselves" in the middle of incredible opportunities to tell people about Jesus, and they do—with an eagerness to explain how people's life situations can be made so much better by the Lord. Not easily discouraged by roadblocks in life or in conversations, evangelists keep pressing ahead as carriers of the "good news."

Prophets: Carry messages in their own hearts (like letter pouches) that come from the heart of God about His plans and purposes for people or churches. Wanting to counsel people according to God's revealed word, prophets are focused on one question: "What is God saying right now?" They act as excellent compasses in the woods.

Leader-Champions: Rise up on behalf of people or causes with a combination of strength and initiative in order to establish lasting change for the better. Stepping up in support or defense of those in need, leader-champions assume responsibility for getting things done. They lead by taking care of anything that needs doing.

Pastor-Teachers: Seek out, gather and watch over other people with a strong desire to see each one of them flourish. Wanting to make sure everyone has whatever they need to grow, pastor-teachers "go over" the particulars of people's lives like someone counting loose change in their pocket. They lead and feed their sheep.

Additionally, you have received various spiritual gifts and "tools of the trade" to utilize in ministry (1 Corinthians 12; 2 Corinthians 10). Though you cannot produce these spiritual enablements by planning, your planning is incomplete if you do not factor them into your overall strategy. It is not a contradiction in terms to speak of planning spiritually; this is an excellent example—understanding the ways and means of the Kingdom, and reasoning through to the best solution for the issues at hand.

We believe in the power of prayer as a prime tool for bringing about change in our circumstances — as opposed to just waiting around hoping that things will change. Using prayer is strategic and intentional. We use the Scriptures similarly, knowing that a timely word sustains weary people. The New Testament is unequivocal in its declaration that you and I are chosen vessels for accomplishing God's purposes in the earth.

As pastors we understand that if we want someone to lay out a systematic teaching on the power of praise, we shouldn't ask an exhorter because the teaching will end up being one story after another—not a Biblical exposé on the subject. Doesn't it seem likely that God is at least as aware of ministry differences as we are? So, why has He selected you and your ministry uniqueness for the tasks at hand?

YOUR LIFE-COURSE IS NEITHER RANDOM NOR ACCIDENTAL—EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE FREE WILL—AND GOD ALWAYS HAS A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE...FROM EACH MOMENT ON.
(PSALM 139:15)

MEANINGFUL LIFE-VERSES

“...IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROPHECIES PREVIOUSLY MADE CONCERNING YOU... BY THEM FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT.” (1 TIMOTHY 1:19)

Through the years, various passages in the Bible have spoken directly to you about your ministry/life. Beyond just teaching you points of truth and doctrine, they have had personal and particular significance. More than simply helping you through a difficult time in your life, they have become prevailing words to your soul—reminding you of Jesus’ call on your life.

Additionally, over the course of your life/ministry, people have given you prophetic words—perhaps while being prayed for or spoken to by spiritual authorities in your life. They may be promises, or words of comfort, or something else that lets you know He is intimately acquainted with you. Perhaps these landmark verses or prophecies have seen you through times of trouble or confusion, giving you something to hang onto or some stable point to reference when all else was shaken.

Maybe the verses convey some detail of your heart, or some hope you have for your future. It’s essential that you “hang onto” those words while you are living and contending for the Kingdom of God on earth (1 Timothy 1:18; 4:14). As we’ll see, they contain clues about your “NEXT STEPS” in ministry.

What are your favorite verses (or passages) in the entire Bible? What makes your heart resonate with them?

Why are they so special to you? What do they say especially to or for you? How might they define priorities for your ministry, guidelines for how you seem to function best in the Kingdom? Are there clues about what you ought always to keep in mind, or simple promises of how God will use you?

For instance, in my case the passages are: [Psalm 25:4-5](#), [John 21:18-22](#), [2 Corinthians 10:1-18](#), [1 Samuel 14:6-7](#) and

- [Deuteronomy 33:17](#)—I push people to the ends of the earth.
- [1 Thessalonians 2:5-8](#)—I must impart not just words, but my very life.
- [Romans 15:18-20](#)—I’m not supposed to build on others’ foundation.
- [1 Timothy 4:12-16](#)—Paying attention to my walk will secure others.

A wonderful exercise that you may want to try on your own sometime: flip through the pages of your Bible, and pick out 20-30 of your favorite texts—several of which you may have not recalled recently. Jot down the references, and then print them out on a couple sheets of paper, using a convenient Bible software program. You will be amazed at how those verses “speak” to you about your life and future ministry.

List four of your life/ministry scriptures with a brief explanation of what they tell you about you or your ministry.

1)

2)

3)

4)

Select two of your life verses. Using each of them as a promise from the Lord, predict what sorts of things you will likely end up doing over the course of your ministry. Putting it another way, clearly state what you should do according to these scriptures.

1)

2)

DESCRIPTIONS OF YOUR LIFE AND MINISTRY

FOR THE BODY IS NOT ONE MEMBER, BUT MANY...IF THE WHOLE BODY WERE AN EYE, WHERE WOULD THE HEARING BE...? (1 CORINTHIANS 12:14-20)

As God's tools of choice, we have been fashioned to work in very precise ways. Not only are each of us but one of many sanctified and useful and prepared vessels chosen by Him (2 Timothy 2:21), but as individualized parts of the Body, we function best in distinctively particular ways.

According to God's Word, we are particularly choreographed to contribute to the whole body when we are working *properly*—that is, “operating at peak efficiency according to design” (Ephesians 4:16). Another simple way to put it is that we are good at some things, and not so good at others.

God numbers and names each star, and He does not see some as dim and others as bright. He has no preference in stars, and certainly none in His children.

Unfortunately, our simple and practical theology has been overwhelmed, at times, by a celebrity perspective that mistakenly highlights people because of the *number* or the *magnitude* of their gifts, instead of the *matchlessness* of their endowments (and all ours, as well). We struggle unnecessarily in ministry when we compare ourselves with others—as though God has a preferred personality and ministry profile.

People have a hard time thinking of themselves as *gifted* because their specialties seem insignificant compared to super-sized saints. As spiritual leaders, we may struggle trying to define *how God most uses us* because we slip a word into the equation and end up focusing on *how much God uses us* (compared to well-known spiritual leaders).

The shape of our ministry has nothing to do with its scope. A screwdriver, large or small, doesn't do what a saw does. The more we understand the marvelous and uniquely-designed tool that we are, the less we will be tempted to compare ourselves with others—and the more we will be able to get on with what we are supposed to be doing.

The shape of a screwdriver is a good clue about its intended use! Though it can gouge a piece of wood repeatedly in a malformed simulation of a saw, the results are better (and less messy) if the screwdriver waits to attach the sawn board with screws.

OVER TIME, A MINISTRY HISTORY DEVELOPS—THE SCREWDRIVER LEARNS TO LOOK FOR SCREWS THAT NEED TURNING, RATHER THAN BOARDS THAT NEED CUTTING.

What is your unique design as a tool in the hand of God? Think back on the kind of effect you have most often had on people or situations. What happens through you and around you to other people? Many times, spiritual realities are best communicated and understood through analogies, metaphors and similes. That's why Jesus compared the Kingdom of God to so many aspects of people's daily lives; spiritual principles and Kingdom ways are not always easy to spell out in linear language!

As with all these exercises, learning how to clarify God's purpose/calling in your own life will enable you to help others do likewise. One of the most profound gifts we can give those whom Jesus has entrusted to our care, is to tell them about how God uses them. That's one reason why we're practicing on ourselves. So, what gives others a good idea of how God uses you?

We are what we are by God's grace, but what exactly are we intended to be? And how do we work best?

For instance, I would tell you that I am like Captain Kirk from Star Trek: I like to go where others have not gone before, to boldly explore uncharted territory. Also, I am like a "downfield blocker" in football: I clear lots of stuff out of others' way, so they can run further in their ministry. I could be compared to an editor who helps other writers fine-tune their calling.

I have been called a "plow" because I often stir up and overturn things in preparation for new plantings/harvests. More than anything, though, I see myself as an *orphan-grown-older* who collects stray children and invites them to join the family at an orphanage I'm privileged to oversee. My wife, Pamela, is "The Princess and the Pea"—she feels and discerns everything, no matter how small or hidden it may be.

What analogies or metaphors tell how God shaped you to best function? They can be images God has given you or ones you make up right now. The pictures of yourself might be something someone has prayed over you or just told you. In either case, the emphasis is on how God uses you on a fairly consistent basis.

Paint three verbal pictures of how God designed you to function. Be as specific as you can be with the pictures or analogies, and briefly explain why they describe how God seems to most/best use you.

1)

2)

3)

Select two of your ministry metaphors. For each of them, complete the sentence, “I’m never happier than when I ...” Using the language of the metaphor, define what is the best-of-the-best, the thing that makes you feel the most excited, fulfilled and useful in ministry?

1)

2)

ASPECTS OF YOUR “DREAM MINISTRY”

“BEFORE I FORMED YOU IN THE WOMB, I KNEW YOU...AND APPOINTED YOU A PROPHET TO THE NATIONS.” (JEREMIAH 1:5)

God gives us the desires of our heart (Psalm 37:4), and whether that means He responds to our desires by fulfilling them, or that He plants those desires in us in order to fulfill us, godly desires that are born out of delighting ourselves in Him hold a clue to God’s future plans for us.

Of course, I’m not suggesting that everything we want is a hint about what God wants; our motives may be wrong in some cases (James 4:2-3), and God is not going to fulfill evil-hearted desires. Nevertheless, God will often use hope to point us toward our future—and His plans for us (Jeremiah 29:11).

From long ago He has had designs for how to use us, and He faithfully adheres to those plans as they get worked out, in an unfolding manner, throughout our lives (Isaiah 25:1). The Lord is not making this up as it goes along. Neither our history, nor our future, are happenstance.

Our desires for power-packed Kingdom enterprise go hand-in-hand with our calling; the provision with which God wants to supply us is linked to our desires to bring “goodness” to others (2 Thessalonians 1:11). Not only has the Lord recruited us for the job—based on much more than a scouting report—but in a mind-boggling prior-time, He made us suitable and fit for our present and yet-to-come assignments.

God keeps on working the plans He formed long ago, and He forces all things to work together for the great good of making us more like Jesus.

His creative, redemptive power must sometimes come along *after* we have made a mess of things, in order to get life back on course, and when we make a wrong turn that puts us off track, He sovereignly finds a way to move us forward according to His plan. He causes all things to keep working together for good for those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

Doesn’t it make sense, accordingly, that a God who has already planned the plan for our church future, has also already arranged resources for carrying out that plan in the same way that David collected the materials for his son, Solomon, to build the Temple?

KNOWING WHAT WOULD FULFILL AND SATISFY AND DELIGHT US, GOD WOVE CERTAIN PENCHANTS AND INCLINATIONS INTO OUR SOUL. THOSE LEANINGS IN MINISTRY MAY BE INKLINGS OF HIS WILL FOR YOU. AND HINTS ABOUT THE “NEXT STEPS” IN MINISTRY.

I’ll put it another way: **He has been setting you up for this—for a long time.** Part of that setup, I believe, has been the desires He has placed in your heart through the years leading up to this day. Couldn’t that be the meaning behind the admonition to Timothy: “Fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:5)? How else can we explain why we are drawn to some things, and not to others?

God calls us by name—

selecting individually those whom He has already crafted and framed and ordained in the womb for days not yet come.

(Psalm 139:14-18)

If five different pastors were given an opportunity to select among a hundred different ministry activities (assuming they had equal obscurity levels and identical effort/time requirements), I believe each of the five would choose five different tasks/roles. Some teachers describe these as your “majors” as opposed to your “minors.”

All ministry involves sizeable portions of *work-we-would-rather-not-have-to-do*, and some pastors “burn out” in ministry because they keep searching for ministry assignments void of all tasks except those they love to do. As long as we live in this broken world—where weeds, not flowers, grow in the cracks in our driveways—we will be unable to escape brow-sweating (i.e., hard and unappealing) work.

Your “dream ministry” will never be an entire reality. But, if you were released (with enough time, childcare, opportunity, money, staff support) to do *anything* you wanted to do, what would fill your personal ministry agenda? What do you find most rewarding and stimulating? What components make “ministry” satisfying to you personally—at this point in time?

This isn’t about a “job title” (i.e., being a pastor, a worship leader or overseeing singles’ ministries). Instead, describe the actual activities you most enjoy doing. For instance, do you most enjoy praying for people about direction for their lives; helping improve people’s sense of their worth; encouraging faith; being a bridge to skeptics; counseling proactively or in response to crisis; helping with practical needs; reproducing an attitude of servanthood in others; getting people to think of others; etc.?

If you could write the ideal ministry description for yourself, what four elements or types of activities would be at the top of the list—and why?

Favorite ministry activities:

1)

2)

3)

4)

DELEGATING TOWARD YOUR “DREAM MINISTRY”

“WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SLAVE. YOU WERE FAITHFUL WITH A FEW THINGS, I WILL PUT YOU IN CHARGE OF MANY THINGS; ENTER INTO THE JOY OF YOUR MASTER.” MATTHEW 25:21

“IT IS NOT DESIRABLE FOR US TO NEGLECT THE WORD OF GOD IN ORDER TO SERVE TABLES. THEREFORE...SELECT FROM AMONG YOU SEVEN MEN OF GOOD REPUTATION, FULL OF THE SPIRIT AND OF WISDOM, WHOM WE MAY PUT IN CHARGE OF THIS TASK.” ACTS 6:2-3

Now that you have identified your dream ministry components, let’s look at your existing ministry assignments. Ask yourself what you do throughout the week—especially things for which you retain ultimate responsibility. As a church leader, what areas do you oversee directly, either by doing the work yourself or having the worker(s) report directly to you.

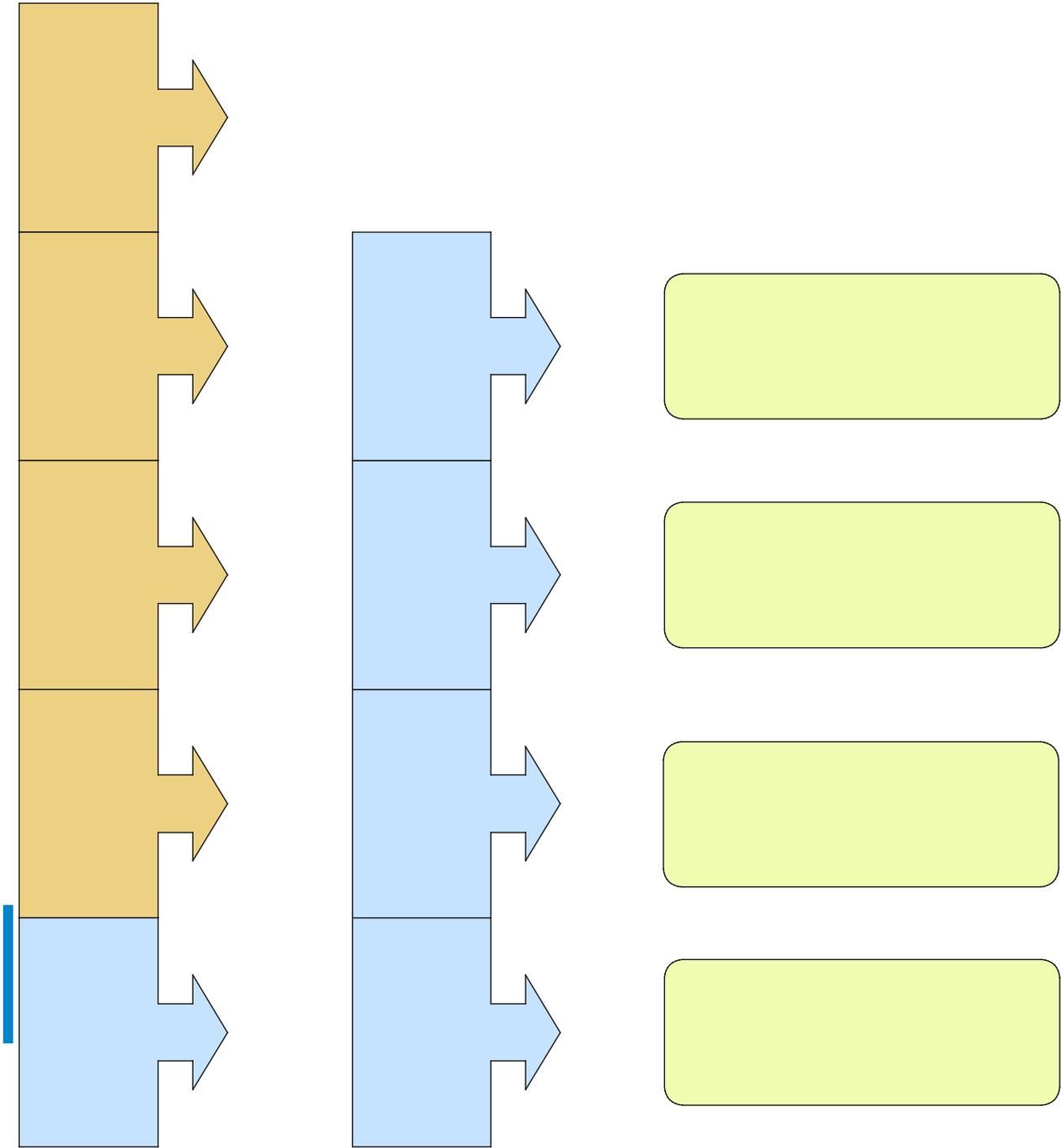
If you have delegated a task or an area of ministry completely away from yourself, do not include it on your list. For instance, if worship is handled completely by your worship leader—meaning that the worship leader selects the songs, runs the rehearsals and leads the congregation without any involvement from you (i.e., running the list of songs by you for approval)—you have delegated it. It’s on the worship leader’s list, not yours.

Under each major category of responsibility, jot down a few specific duties. An example might be VISITATION with subcategories like *hospital*, *newcomers* and *home*. SUNDAY SERVICE would include activities like *sermon prep*, *bulletin*, *logistics* and *setup*, *greeters/ushers*, etc. Use the diagram on the following page as your worksheet.

Questions:

How can you do more of your *dream ministry* activities as part of fulfilling your current *ministry assignments*?

How can you involve more people to help you accomplish your current ministry?



Next Steps Exercises:

Give away complete responsibility for one-fifth of your current ministry assignments. This can include subcategories.

- Identify a person to whom you plan to delegate the job. Invite that person to partner with you (and watch what you do) for two months.
- For the following two months, be available as often as the person might need you to answer questions, give advice, etc.
- Lastly, suggest that eight weeks later, you will both have an opportunity to decide if the person and the assignment are a good fit.

Select one of your dream ministry activities and offer to train people from your church how to do it. These people are not replacements-in-waiting. You are not necessarily intending to work yourself out of this job; you're simply sharing the delight of ministry with them. If you love to counsel pre-marrieds, invite someone to sit in on your counseling sessions. If part of your dream ministry is to teach new believers how to read the Bible for revelation and encouragement, get someone (or three) to join you in your prep time and in the new believer's class.

THEME VERSES OF YOUR CHURCH

“HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.”
(REVELATION 2:17)

Spirit-led leaders understand the thrill of receiving a prophetic word for their congregation, announcing a new season of breakthrough or change, and we have each responded to inner promptings to begin a teaching series on some topic stirring in our soul. We’ve prepared special programs and schedules for Easter and Christmas. Knowing that summer is coming, and youth are free all day long, we have reacted with camps, day-time events and other “special” preparations.

Just as God gives individuals prophetic scriptures and life verses, so He gives such guidance to entire congregations. These Bible passages give us an extraordinary sense of who and what our churches are supposed to be within the larger Body of Christ. As pastors, we’re supposed to take pains with such counsel from the Lord, and occupy ourselves with thoughts about how our church programs, activities and resources can facilitate those prevailing words.

If we aim our whole church for the long-haul, according to these prophetic scriptures, we will discover many (fairly) obvious steps to take—arranging and rearranging people, priorities and programs. Whereas Peter had a calling more to the Jews, Paul’s primary work was ordained among the Gentiles. One plants; another waters. All are not the same part of the body. This truth, expressed in so many ways throughout the Bible, is a bedrock principle in true strategic planning for the local church. Without adhering to it, churches are prone to having their sole strategic question be, “How can we be more like that successful church?”

God’s macro purposes for the whole Church always have micro implications for our daily lives that are as individual as we are.

Each person and each congregation has been apportioned a sphere of reach measured to them by the Lord for touching others (see 2 Corinthians 10:13-18). Though the whole Church has the single assignment to make disciples, many details about how one person or church carries out that job—like where, how and with whom—will differ from how other individuals and churches fulfill their roles.

For instance, our commission at The Coastlands is to develop disciples who do to others what has been done to them. That calling came to me, and is described in greater detail, through one of our theme passages:

“The smallest one will become a clan” ... “The Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted.” ... “They will repair desolations.” Isaiah 60:22-61:4

Such guiding words are much more than poetic, generic language! They are more like military orders received from Central Command, posting us to a specific base, or like the blocking assignments for the tight-end in football. They have very clear, strategic implications; for instance:

- ❑ If the smallest one is supposed to become a clan of peoples, doesn't it make sense that we are probably supposed to have a vital cell-group ministry in our church; otherwise, what are the chances of normal people becoming leaders of others?
- ❑ And if we're going to repair desolations in people's lives, we probably need a ministry component in our church that trains people in counseling and deliverance.

Because I believe that these qualities are supposed to characterize our church, I can keep asking myself what we're doing that intentionally promotes the smallest, not-noticeably-gifted (but faithful) person into roles of spiritual leadership. It is one of my measures for success—and one of the things I think about when fellow pastors ask me how my church is doing!

- ❑ After the afflicted and tormented in our congregation have experienced spiritual freedom and recovery themselves, they are (according to this scripture) supposed to offer healing to others.

It follows, then, that our (deliverance) ministry to such ones ought to be team-based, and include people who are at varying places of recovery—as opposed to specialist counselors doing most of the ministry alone. The mending and training become a seamless continuum, rather than an either/or categorization of where people are in their spiritual development. Additionally, we emphasize spiritual counseling—as opposed to clinical counseling because the text emphasizes the role of the Spirit.

Carved in a stone plaque on the back wall of our sanctuary is the last phrase of the following verses:

“A bruised reed He will not break and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not be disheartened or crushed until He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law [instruction].” Isaiah 42:3

If you read these verses looking for counsel/direction from the Lord, as to how to aim our church life and program, you would conclude, as we have, that

- ❑ Our ministry is to heal bruised reeds and to fan nearly extinguished candle wicks into full flame until such people regain their God-intended inheritance.
- ❑ Furthermore, the best way for us to resist the inevitable temptation—to become discouraged—is by waiting expectantly for what God will tell us next.

Preachers are good at teaching with their lips (and their personal examples) about such texts, but they sometimes neglect to teach biblical principles by modeling the truth with the way their whole church is arranged. With their ministry structures, programs and predictable formulas for who-gets-chosen-as-leaders, pastors unintentionally communicate that their churches are primarily intended merely to identify and promote full-flamed candles and never-been-bent reeds!

As a leader who is trying to be obedient to this text, I am constantly on the lookout for ways to legitimately bring along (promote) those who used to be broken stalks and smoldering embers. This, too, is one of my measures for success—and another of the things I think about when fellow pastors ask me how my church is doing!

How to obey the Lord's assignment for our church is what we'll be studying later, but for now the issue is what we should begin planning. The element that stymies most spiritual/strategic planning is [what-to-do, not how-to-do-it](#).

List three theme verses for your congregation—and tell why you hold on to them for meaning and direction (and for dear life...).

1)

2)

3)

Based on two of the theme verses for your church, write a simple sentence telling yourself what you should do (more often or more intentionally). Translate the verses into “marching orders.”

1)

2)

THE MISSION OF YOUR CHURCH

“RECORD THE VISION AND INSCRIBE IT ON TABLETS, THAT THE ONE WHO READS IT MAY RUN. FOR THE VISION IS YET FOR THE APPOINTED TIME...” (HABAKKUK 2:2-3)

Your church, like every other congregation, has an assigned mission from God. All churches do not play the same position on God’s team; one church might have an assignment to care mostly for the elderly, and another church might feel burdened for inner-city homeless. Beyond such obvious differences, there are many more subtle variations in calling.

The important issue is whether or not the outcome matches with what God has asked us to do. In other words, a church may feel directed to minister primarily to young, urban professionals, but if that church has no appreciable number of 20-somethings attending services, then either the mission has been misunderstood, or the church program/plan has not been shaped by the mission.

In brief terms, God has asked The Coastlands to do three basic things:

- ❑ Love, mend, train and send people into more significant ministry than they find themselves involved in currently.
- ❑ Proclaim a refreshing Gospel in the language of ordinary people, so they can do to/for others what is done to/for them.
- ❑ Establish local churches throughout the world, and provide resources for leaders of local churches for more effective ministry.

What, in particular, is your church called by God to do? Do not think about the church services themselves, or what you feel called to do at church. Be thinking, instead, about what overall impact you feel your church is intended to have in your community, in the larger Body of Christ, and in the world.



List three purposes or focuses of your church—and explain them.

1)

2)

3)

Select one of your church assignments, and list all the things you are doing in/with the church in an attempt to fulfill what God has asked you to do.

ASSIGNMENT

MINISTRY/ACTIVITIES

WHAT YOU APPRECIATE ABOUT YOUR CHURCH

“WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD, THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, PRAYING ALWAYS FOR YOU...” (COLOSSIANS 1:3)

Generally speaking, the best strategy for revitalizing people or organizations is to start with what is right or strong or good, and enhance those aspects first—before trying to tackle what needs change or repair. Putting it another way, what are the strengths of your church? What do you feel really good about? What is working as you envisioned it?

You may find encouragement in many different components of your entire church, such as: the physical plant—the size, location and decoration of your church building(s); the interpersonal relationships—the affection, interconnectedness and closeness of the people in your congregation; or, the spiritual condition—the maturity, awareness and developmental level of people in your church. Do not necessarily try to find only “big things.” Sometimes the little things contain the largest clues about what God wants to do in the next season of your church’s life.

To better help you refine your thinking, I’m going to show you a list I made recently:

1. **Broad mobilization of many unique people at many levels** — Not only are we living out our theology (“ministry of every believer”), but we have people spread out all along the volunteer continuum.
2. **Amazing eagerness of many middle-age (and older) men for more ministry training** — Though I do not know the specifics of what it will look like, I know that we are about to discover far better ways of effectively using men at that stage in their life.
3. **World-connectedness and relational links with congregations all over the world**—The many years of intentionally focused short-term missions teams have paid off, and we have numerous opportunities to offer more than money to assist churches.
4. **The dormitory structure of our church building** — Being able to have an Intern Program and a place to host guests and model another style of doing church gives us a unique advantage.
5. **Revision of our long-held philosophy of ministry** — For awhile we get to say, “Love, mend, train and LEND,” meaning I am supposed to be gone more while we delay exporting three young ministers-in-training.

List five strengths/positives about your total church program as it is now. Be as specific as possible about the strengths, and why you consider them strong points for what you're called to do.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Select two of the aspects of your church you most enjoy, and turn them into proactive advice from a consultant – as though they are special resources that should be used more extensively throughout the entire church program, or activities that ought to be increased in number.

1)

2)

NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS IN YOUR CHURCH

“YOU SEE THE BAD SITUATION WE ARE IN...COME, LET US BUILD THE WALL OF JERUSALEM THAT WE MAY NO LONGER BE A REPROACH.” (NEHEMIAH 2:17-20)

Since all of us are in process, it will always be the case that our church is also in process. That means we will always have room for improvement. Things continually need tweaking. We must keep changing things in response to changing times and seasons. If we presume our thoughts about our church are prophetic (as opposed to just critical), we can begin working on them as a way of following the Lord’s leading.

What has your attention? What’s been nagging in the back (or front) of your mind? About which situations, programs, people or departments have you been feeling unsettled? Are there obvious needs—for improvement, development, or existence?

Do not allow yourself imprecise thinking; do not reply, “Money!” or “Everything!” Those are easy answers, but they are not very helpful because they have a hidden premise—and, thereby, a foregone conclusion that stymies Kingdom enterprise! Can you guess what that is? “**Until I have more money or more everything, I can do nothing!**”

Ministry leaders do not mean to come to that conclusion because we truly believe that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us, and that He will supply all our needs (Philippians 4:13). If Jesus promises to add “these things” to individuals who seek first the Kingdom (Matthew 6:32-34), He will also add them to congregations.

You do not have to have the solution to your problems—not yet! Actually, strategic planning that is spiritual views problems as prophetic hints for taking “Next Steps.” Here was my list the last time I did this exercise:

- ❑ Our ICU Leaders and Apprentices are not functioning as well as in the past, and that means we’ve got to re-tool and retrain them—not just bark at them to do a better job.
- ❑ We are not very good at Community Outreach; my concept of our church is too much as a congregation (the people who worship in my church) as opposed to a parish (the people who live in my town).
- ❑ Other than cell groups and church services, we do not have many components of a total church program; there’s almost nothing going on at church during the evenings. We need more events/activities on weeknights.

In your church, what three things would you most like to see changed, developed or improved?

1)

2)

3)

For two of these problems write a simple, clear sentence that assigns a very clear task to a staff member, volunteer or an outside consultant (i.e., Get more volunteers for CM; Develop a worship team that responds to the Spirit; Make the congregation more friendly and welcoming to new people.)

1)

2)

SOME “NEXT STEPS” FOR YOU AND YOUR CHURCH

THE STEPS OF A MAN ARE ESTABLISHED BY THE LORD, AND HE DELIGHTS IN HIS WAY.
PSALM 37:23

You may be surprised to discover that you have a better sense of what you ought to do next than you think you have. This next series of exercises asks you to counsel yourself—as though you were someone else. Do not think too long or too hard about these questions; just answer them with your first impressions. There are no correct answers. There are no silly responses.

Taking only a few moments to consider these questions, jot down the first three answers that come to your mind:

What do you need personally (i.e., more time, delegation skills, clearer priorities, a new computer) in order to better fulfill your ministry assignment?

1)

2)

3)

What kinds of people, doing what kinds of things would help you to better fulfill your church’s ministry assignment?

1)

2)

3)

USEFUL MEASURES OF SUCCESS

“THIS BOOK OF THE LAW SHALL NOT DEPART FROM YOUR MOUTH...FOR THEN YOU WILL MAKE YOUR WAY PROSPEROUS, AND...HAVE SUCCESS.” JOSHUA 1:8

Rarely is it useful to measure ourselves and our ministries against others'. What God asks of us is not identical to what He asks of others: where and how other leaders live out their God-given assignments and emphases has little, if any, bearing on how we are to pursue ours.

We are not Olympic swimmers from different nations competing against one another in the 200-meter Butterfly. Rather, we are on the same National Team: one of us is a high hurdler; another of us pole vaults; the shot putter is not supposed to do what the high diver or the 1500m runner does.

For each of us, success is different. As a final exercise in your personal and ministry alignment, define the terms of your own success in light of what God has done and directed you toward in ministry.

What is the primary thing you want to do to/for people who attend your church over the next nine months?

1)

2)

What do you most want to do with the people in your church? How would you like to see them used or mobilized? What do you want to see them doing?

1)

2)

A C L I N I C N O T A C O N F E R E N C E

you know more than you think you do

DEFINE THE CONNECTIONS

QUESTIONS,
ANSWERS
& “NEXT
STEPS”

S E C T I O N

0 2



INTRODUCTION

“ALL THIS [PLAN FOR THE TEMPLE],” DAVID SAID, “THE LORD MADE ME UNDERSTAND IN WRITING BY HIS HAND UPON ME, ALL THE DETAILS OF THIS PATTERN.” (1 CHRONICLES 28:19)

Spiritual planning begins with figuring out what the Lord wants for us personally and corporately. Once you have a fairly good sense of who you are in the Lord, and how He has designed you to function best in the Kingdom, it is possible to arrive at a long-term strategy for “making the most” of your days/life/efforts.

But that is where many “plans” fail to deliver: they may have a marvelous mission statement and several fine long-term goals, but there is a virtual disconnect between a pastor’s vision for the future and how to take the “next steps” in the process to get there. Pastors are usually fairly good at casting a vision for the church’s future and planning the logistics of programs and events. But we frequently run out of ideas for what else we can do to arrange all the particulars of church to work together in a unified effort and direction.

This tool you are about to use will help you link your long-range vision for church with important destination points along the way, much like a travel itinerary gives you not only the headline (“Grand Tour of Old Europe”), but also breaks the trip down into various levels of detail like countries, specific sites/routes in those countries, accommodations, and even directions for how to get a taxi from your river cruise to the train station.

Our vision may be to drive from San Francisco to Montreal, but we’re going to have to drive through several cities along the way. In order to drive through those cities, we have to take certain roads. On those roads, there will be a choice of where to eat and where to spend the night. A good strategic plan connects people and activities to larger intentions. And vice-versa!

Before we begin our exercise in strategic planning, let’s look at four successive connection layers moving from (1) the ultimate purpose we hope to accomplish some day to (4) the specific action steps we can take today. The graphic on the next page will give you an overview of where we’re headed with “NEXT STEPS for You, Your Ministry and Your Church.”

Strategic Planning is a Process of Answering Layers of Questions:

#1 State the Mission ↻

Ultimately, what do you want to accomplish?

#2 Describe the Destination ^

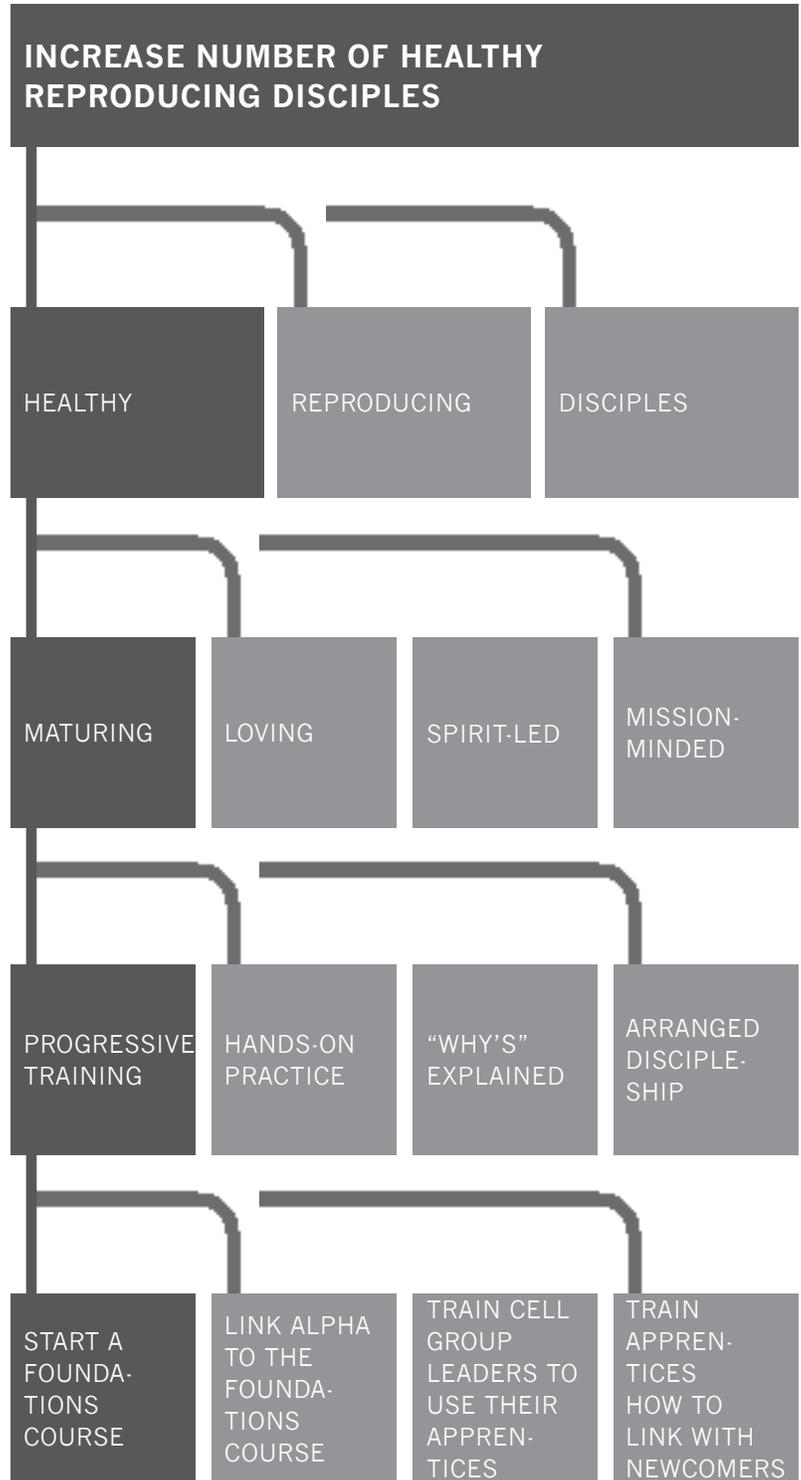
What do the key words mean to you? What are you hoping to see as success?

#3 Envision Components of the Process ↵

What elements or programs will likely lead people to the destination? What ingredients does your discipleship recipe call for?

#4 List Specific Action Steps ↘

What can you do right now, without any additional resources?



DEFINITIONS

All good planning begins with a purpose, and the most important (only) purpose for us as spiritual leaders is to do what the Lord has asked us to do. It is fruitless and dangerous to strategize or plan according to our own, self-inspired intentions. Unless He’s building, we’re wasting our time. That is why our definition of strategic thinking/planning must be an act of obedience — of listening, first and foremost, to what the Lord of the church has told us to do.

Jesus is the One who defines the ultimate goal — what we’re really trying to do, the one thing that determines success or failure. When we put that purpose into words, those words become the basis upon which we invite others to evaluate our performance; otherwise, they are a meaningless slogan.

It is one thing to be inspirational with our words; it is another thing to be intentional with our actions. Having been inspired by God, we intentionally set out to “do His will.” That’s what I mean by planning a strategy.

STRATEGY IS A SUPPORT TO SPIRITUAL PURPOSE, NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR IT.

Even with a limited event like a Men’s Retreat, there are layers of planning, each building upon another to make the whole event work toward a common purpose. For instance, we usually plan the first night as a foundation for developing attitudes and understandings that will culminate a day or two later.

Planning alone will not assure success but poor planning can undercut the full spiritual potential and dynamics of an event.

The “worship” was planned, on another level, as a list of songs selected to convey a message and to build toward another goal — bringing the worshippers to deeper responsiveness to what the Lord has for them. Prayer teams were probably selected and trained before the retreat, so that we would be ready for the prayed-for goal — ministering to the participants’ deep needs/responses.

Unfortunately, in the church world, most planning is limited to one-time events, programs and activities. Planning that most leaders engage in typically deals solely with logistics for a church service, a men’s retreat or an outreach concert. Instead of beginning with an upcoming program, and planning its details, spiritual strategy begins with a much broader purpose.

Strategic Planning, as we’re defining it, focuses (initially) on layers beyond the tactical level, beyond events happening in the next few months — in order to accomplish the prevailing purpose for which our churches and ministry organizations exist. Individually, we have been called with a purpose,

...not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity... 2 Timothy 1:9

Thus, we live our personal lives according to that purpose — making decisions about what we will and will not do, not just in daily activities, but in the larger scheme of our lives. In the same way — forgive that this sounds so obvious — our churches exist for/with a purpose, and that purpose is very easy to define. It is the answer to simple, but rarely answered questions: “Why should we have sermons, church services, retreats, cell groups, outreaches, greeters, CM, etc?”

As you’ll see, **Strategic Planning** is mostly a process of asking and answering several layers of questions. You will be encouraged to discover that neither the questions nor their answers are very difficult. It’s just that we rarely take the time to consider them.

Let’s begin by asking ourselves the fundamental question as Pastors. You can ask it several different ways, but it is the same question:

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO DO SPIRITUALLY? WHAT IS “MISSION ACCOMPLISHED”? ON WHAT BASIS DO WE INVITE EVALUATION? WHAT’S THE POINT OF HAVING CHURCHES? WHAT IS A PASTOR’S JOB?

What follows on these pages is a series of steps that consist of simple questions you can ask and answer yourself. The more familiar you become with them, the more they become intuitive. The whole notion behind them is to discover what we are supposed to do next as pastors, not according to some ideal, one-pattern-fits-all Manual of Pastoral Steps, but according to what the Lord is bidding us to do.

There isn’t any way to learn the steps for pastoring like you might learn to do a waltz (1-2-3), but there is a way to resolve the “NEXT STEPS” For You, Your Ministry and Your Church...

STEP 1—STATE YOUR PURPOSE



STATE THE MISSION (THE ANSWER TO OUR PURPOSE QUESTION):

Increase the number of disciples who are healthy and reproductive.

STEP #2—DEFINE WHAT THAT MEANS TO YOU



Define all the parts (words) of the mission—how you identify them. What are you looking for in/about someone before you think of them as...

- ☺ DISCIPLES = PEOPLE WHO ARE...
 - ^ Intentionally following biblical teachings.
 - ^ Proactively mentoring and caring for others.
 - ^ Responsive to the Holy Spirit's direction.
 - ^ Living with a missionary purpose.
 - ^ Teachable and accountable.
 - ^ Servant-hearted.
 - ^ Loving.
 - ^
 - ^

List other qualities of a disciple that are important to you.

☺ HEALTHY = BELIEVERS WHO ARE...

- ^ Maturing in spiritual understanding and practice.
- ^ Fully committed to Spirit-empowered ministry (to others).
- ^ Spiritually vibrant (prayerful, evangelistic, biblical).
- ^ Gracious, loving and affectionate.
- ^ Mobilized in leadership and volunteer ministry.
- ^ Mission-minded and world-conscious.
- ^ Impacting their immediate world with the Gospel.
- ^
- ^

Can you think of other qualities of health – as you define it?

🕒 REPRODUCING = BELIEVERS WHO...

- ^ Win others to Christ.
- ^ Evangelize and witness to others.
- ^ Share lessons learned with individuals and groups.
- ^ Invite acquaintances and family to church.
- ^ Pass along ministry assignments to apprentices.
- ^ Help start new ministries and churches.
- ^
- ^

You may have additional thoughts about attributes of a reproductive believer.

CONNECTIONS

The Bible is full of “If...Then” principles. So is life. There are certain expected results from particular actions: a golf ball flies on the trajectory determined by the mechanics of the golfer’s swing; money spent on dinner is no longer available for gas. Everyone understands cause and effect — one thing leading to another.

Of course, a tree limb can change the flight of the golf ball, and more money might get found in the glove box, but by and large, we live life according to reasonable assumptions that connect one activity with another.

We encourage people to pray because God answers prayer. We tell them to read their Bible because God’s word transforms the mind and heart. We witness because we know people cannot believe unless they hear. If we repent, then times of refreshing come our way. If we humble ourselves before the Lord, He will exalt us in due season.

All these are “If...Then” principles.

Such spiritual principles are the main focus of our activities as leaders in the church. They are why we do/say/preach what we do. Because we want our flocks to reap bounty, we encourage them to sow to the Spirit, not to the flesh.

The Bible is full of organic principles that might not seem too spiritual — but do actually support spiritual victory!

When Moses’ arms were getting heavy in the battle against the Amalekites, the answer (two arm-holders) was practical, not spiritual; and without Joshua’s band of sword-wielding men-at-arms, the lifted arms would not have carried the day. Jethro understood cause and effect when he predicted that his son-in-law would “wear out” unless Moses approached ministry more strategically by getting others involved in the ministry process.

Red skies in the morning predict particular weather patterns, and though we cannot affect the weather, we can still deduce that one thing (red sky) leads to another—even if we do not know exactly why. When a baby’s eyes begin to droop or when she is cranky, we know the infant is tired. There is some kind of causal connection; and by solving the tiredness with a nap, we change the droopy eyes and fussy behavior.

We think nothing of such “problem-solving,” and we would be amazed at any parent who attributed the droopiness or crankiness to sinister spiritual forces or “just the way my child gets sometimes.”

Raising our children well (spiritually and physically) is hugely strategic — we look ahead to the qualities we want to see fully developed in them, and do the little things along the way that will instill and reinforce those attributes in them. *Strategic Planning* merely takes this solution-thinking to a broader, longer-range level. When we pastors see the droopy “health” of our churches, and the lack of disciple-making, what do we deduce about our churches?

Proverbs admonishes us not to lean on our own understanding, but to acknowledge the Lord in all our ways. That isn’t telling us not to plan—and just “wing it” in ministry. Rather, we’re being reminded of two great realities:

- ❑ God always knows better; and,
- ❑ His plans always pre-date any sincere efforts to do our part in them.

IN OTHER WORDS, OUR ROLE AS SPIRITUAL LEADERS IS TO LINE UP WITH THE PLANS AND PURPOSES OF GOD, DETERMINING FIRST OF ALL, WHAT THOSE PLANS ARE AND THEN PURSUING THEM WITH EVERYTHING OF OUR HEART, MIND, ENERGY AND GIFTEDNESS.

In *Strategic Planning* we simply consider how to do what He’s said to do...

NOTES:

STEP #3—DEVELOP LIKELY LEAD-UPS OR INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS



Use the spiritual principle of sowing ► reaping. What can you do/change/introduce that will INCREASE the degree OR amount of...

☞ DISCIPLES = PEOPLE WHO ARE...

^ Intentionally following biblical teachings.

⇄ Increased amount of teaching offered at church.

⇄ More emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who reminds us of God's will and way.

⇄ Teaching that is more Bible-centered.

⇄ Testimonies from members who obeyed particular instruction.

⇄ Clear distinctions made between natural thinking and Kingdom thinking.

⇄

⇄

What else will increase the likelihood of your congregation matching your vision of disciples?

🔄 DISCIPLES = PEOPLE WHO ARE...

^ Proactively mentoring and caring for others.

⇄ A well-developed CULTURE of apprentices and assistants.

⇄ Better connections between people and one another.

⇄ More opportunities for people to experience the rewards of loving discipleship.

⇄ Clear incentives to those who care for and disciple others.

⇄ Personal modeling of such care and discipleship.

⇄

⇄

☺ HEALTHY = BELIEVERS WHO ARE...

^ *Maturing in spiritual understanding and practice.*

↳ Progressive, sequential training venues and subjects.

↳ Numerous ministry equipping sessions that combine hands-on practice with biblical truth.

↳ Constant explanation of the "Why's" and "How To's" of ministry.

↳ Arranged-for one-on-one and small-group discipleship opportunities and situations.

↳ A well-established *culture* of servanthood.

What other ingredients can you introduce into your church environment?

↻ HEALTHY = BELIEVERS WHO ARE...

^ Fully committed to Spirit-empowered ministry (to others).

- ↻ Regular teaching about and ministering of the baptism in the Spirit.
- ↻ Practical instruction about hearing God's voice and being led by the Spirit.
- ↻ Teachings about how to discover people's spiritual gifts and ministries.
- ↻ Regular involvement of more people praying for those in need of healing, deliverance or provision.
- ↻ Heightened and steady focus on the unseen dimension of reality.
- ↻
- ↻

What else will help people become more convinced that Holy Spirit empowerment is crucial?

☺ REPRODUCING = BELIEVERS WHO...

^ Evangelize and witness to others.

↕ Prayer for specific unsaved friends.

↕ Teachings on how to talk about our faith.

↕ Events specifically designed for outreach.

↕ More testimonies from those who have witnessed (successfully) to their friends.

↕ Full understanding about the biblical admonitions and implications for sharing the "Good News."

↕

↕

What else will increase the likelihood that your church will witness more?

🕒 REPRODUCING = BELIEVERS WHO...

^ Share lessons learned with individuals and groups.

↕ People keeping track of God's dealings in their lives.

↕ More meetings structured to allow for individual testimonies.

↕ Pastors and key leaders modeling lessons-learned-and-shared..

↕ More encouragement for people to tell others what they tell
pastors/leaders.

↕ A church culture in which people regularly ask one another what the
Lord is working on in them.

↕

↕

NOTES:

THE “NEXT STEPS”

Now we have connected outcomes  with purposeful ideas  and ingredients  that will likely produce those desired qualities and help people process toward our final destination. The next step in Strategic Planning is to consider those process components  one at a time (in prayer, in heart and in mind). Keep in mind that we cannot do everything at once—or we’ll accomplish nothing. But remember that a clearly focused vision for what we want to accomplish will prevent our efforts from dissipating into little bits of nothing (Proverbs 29:18).

Once again, we simply ask ourselves simple questions about another layer of activity. We want to think of specific ways to introduce or increase the programs, mentalities, values and activities that we believe will likely lead to success. This 4th layer of planning is the level where we come up with particular ideas—new things to do or arrange in church. You will be pleasantly surprised at the way the process elements  generate ideas almost on their own. Concentrate on one ingredient or ideal component at a time, and think about specific steps you can take to put more of it in your total church environment.

Those ideas become our action plans —the actual things you can do to affect the outcomes we desire for our churches. These are the things we do to “make the most of our days...” In several cases, the action plans will be so obvious that it is tempting to wonder why we took such a long way around to come to such easy-to-get-at solutions—and things we may already be doing in our churches. That should encourage you to realize that you have already been doing some amount of intentional and strategic planning in your ministry.

Dozens of other ideas await us in the intentional planning process! There is still lots of gold in old mines that we unintentionally

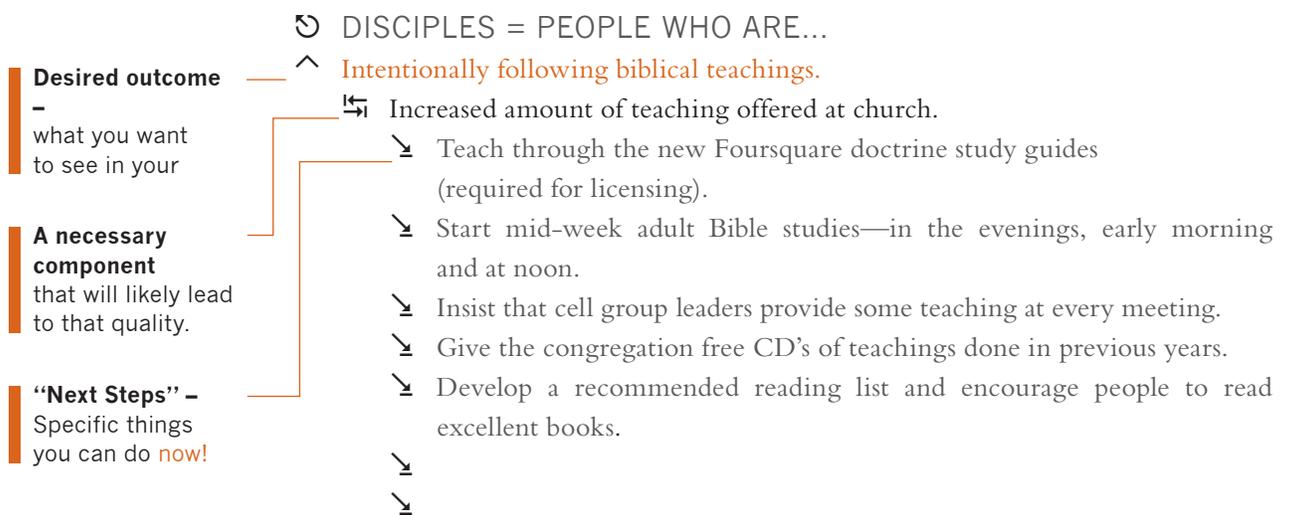
Many of the things we’re doing in church are already directly tied to our mission; either we arrived at those particulars through an intuitive process of goal-setting and action planning, or we simply copied what seemed to be working elsewhere. Hopefully, you are beginning to get a feel for linking future goals with present actions and programs. The reason we’re taking the long way around is to look for “NEXT STEPS” to take beyond what we have already tried or known to do. There are still plenty of great ideas and plans within your own church’s capabilities. The Lord has not left any church without hope for fruitfulness.

Expect the Lord to furnish spiritual insights and prophetic counsel, and then do as David advised his son, Solomon: “Be strong, courageous and act” (1 Chronicles 28:20). Whereas the process components  are **what** we want to have in place in our church environment over the next few years, the action plans  are **how** we plan to begin increasing those components — right now! Immediacy is the key to this planning step. With (only) what we have today, and thinking about what we do not have, how can we be faithful to His purposes for our church?

STEP #4—DECIDE WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW



Without waiting for any additional resources (people, money, time, facilities, etc.), how can you develop more of the necessary ingredients  to produce desired outcomes in the church?



Another necessary component that will likely produce quality in your disciples.

☺ DISCIPLES = PEOPLE WHO ARE...

— ^ **Intentionally following biblical teachings.**

- ↳ More emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who reminds us of God's will and way.
 - ↳ Begin a 4-week teaching series on the Person and work of the Spirit.
 - ↳ Arrange for teams of leaders to pray for people to be filled with the Spirit after each service.
 - ↳ Do a personal inventory of my own degree of reliance on the Spirit for ministry—and share my shortcomings.
 - ↳ Distribute copies of another pastor's teaching on the Holy Spirit.
 - ↳ Publicly describe the various operations of spiritual gifts before/after their manifestation.
 - ↳ At each public service, set aside 2-3 minutes as opportunity for trusted leaders to prophesy.
 - ↳ Establish and reinforce basic guidelines for spiritual gifts in public services.
 - ↳ Acknowledge every time the Spirit interrupts my plans during church services.
 - ↳ Begin discussion among staff and leaders about the difference between an idea and a revelation.
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 - ↳

Can you think of any other "Next Steps" – things you can do now!

🔄 DISCIPLES = PEOPLE WHO ARE...

Desired outcome

- what you want to see in your

A necessary component

that will likely lead to that quality.

"Next Steps" –

Specific things you can do **now!**

Try to think of additional action steps

to create a culture of apprentices.

— ^ Proactively mentoring and caring for others.

↳ A well-developed CULTURE of apprentices and assistants.

↳ Establish a folklore of stories, slogans and successes based on "Two are better than one."

↳ Temporarily suspend elders' meetings for three months, and ask each elder to collect a similar-sized group to meet with instead.

↳ Insist that all cell groups have apprentice leaders, not just leaders.

↳ When recruiting for event planners, convey the presumption that there will be an assistant.

↳ Constantly ask others the question, "Who are you training to do the same quality job you are doing?"

↳ As frequently as possible, promote assistants by finding other assignments for former leaders.

↳ When inviting leaders to special occasions, insist that they invite someone else, too.

↳ On ministry trips, try to take someone along to assist with various (but specific) aspects of the trip.

↳ On mission "scouting trips" always send people in pairs.

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↻ DISCIPLES = PEOPLE WHO ARE...

— ^ Proactively mentoring and caring for others.

↪ Better connections between people and one another.

The same outcome – what you want to see in your “finished” congregants.

Another of the necessary ingredients for your church.

“Next Steps” – Specific things you can do *now!*

- ↘ End every conversation by introducing someone (new)—either by reference or in person.
- ↘ Try to arrange for all ministry/service to be done in groups, not individually.
- ↘ Arrange for a special program, like “Invite Someone New to Dinner.”
- ↘ Emphasize “between-the-meetings” fellowship.
- ↘ Take a mental inventory of who is spending too much time with just close friends—and point it out to them.
- ↘ Change all breakfast appointments to include 2-3 men, instead of meeting with just one at a time.
- ↘ Emphasize “breakout time” in public services, getting people to speak with others.
- ↘ Instruct ushers to fill in all empty seats before sitting people in back rows.
- ↘
- ↘

↻ HEALTHY = BELIEVERS WHO ARE...

Another desired outcome that you hope to see in the people of your church.

An ingredient of the whole church environment that is likely to lead to people who are maturing

Try to think of additional action steps to create a sequence of instruction and training.

— ^ **Maturing in spiritual understanding and practice.**

- ↳ Progressive, sequential training venues.
 - ↳ Start three 10-week courses: Kingdom Foundations; Kingdom Patterns; Kingdom Ministry.
 - ↳ Coordinate Alpha Course with Foundations.
 - ↳ Conduct six “Event Planning” sessions, one building on another, and certify levels of completion (I, II, III) for participants.
 - ↳ Have specialized training for cell group apprentice leaders, and different training (at the same time/place) for cell group leaders.
 - ↳ Reintroduce deliverance ministry by providing free copies of foundational teaching CD’s—followed by a new practicum series of teachings.
 - ↳ Ask all specialized ministry leaders to identify two apprentices and a plan for training them in new areas.
 - ↳ Borrow curriculum from Foursquare Institutes, and offer courses sequentially.
 - ↳
 - ↳

☺ HEALTHY = BELIEVERS WHO ARE...

^ *Maturing in spiritual understanding and practice.*

- ↳ Numerous ministry equipping sessions that combine hands-on practice with biblical truth.
 - ↳ Conclude sermons with suggestions for applying truths learned to daily life.
 - ↳ Insist on two months of training for everyone going on a short-term missions trip.
 - ↳ In small group training sessions, change teaching method from deductive to inductive—asking why we do various ministry activities.
 - ↳ At monthly leadership training, always include one-to-one ministry before the teaching.
 - ↳ Like med students who “practice” on one another, regularly have people lay hands on and pray for each other.
 - ↳ In Bible studies, ask participants what they get from the text — then reinforce what they “got right.”
 - ↳
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Can you think of additional action steps to help produce more “practice” ministry equipping session?

Each of these general ideas about what to do spawns dozens of specific actions to take.

🔄 HEALTHY = BELIEVERS WHO ARE...

— ^ Fully committed to Spirit-empowered ministry (to others).

- ↳ Regular teachings about and ministering of the baptism in the Spirit.
 - ↳ Begin a 4-week teaching series on the Person and work of the Spirit.
 - ↳ Arrange for teams of leaders to pray for people to be filled with the Spirit after each service.
 - ↳ Describe my personal journey toward more of God's fullness — and my hesitations along the way.
 - ↳ Develop new and fresh analogies for describing what happens when we're baptized in the Spirit.
 - ↳ Encourage people to pray/praise in the Spirit during corporate times of worship.
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The best "Next Steps" are specific. Make a couple more suggestions.

☺ HEALTHY = BELIEVERS WHO ARE...

^ Fully committed to Spirit-empowered ministry (to others).

- ☞ Practical instruction about hearing God's voice and being led by the Spirit.
 - ☞ Do an extensive teaching series on hearing God.
 - ☞ Begin meetings by asking for scriptures that are unexpectedly on people's heart.
 - ☞ Coach people in how to "hear" what God is saying through pictures they get or scriptures that come to mind.
 - ☞ Think of several new and fresh ways to describe a prompting by the Spirit.
 - ☞ Tell stories that emphasize the counter-intuitive leadings of the Lord.
 - ☞ Weekly describe the little and big ways I have been led by the Lord to do things that wouldn't have occurred to me on my own.
 - ☞ De-mystify spiritual leadings and promptings by showing numerous biblical examples.
 - ☞ In group prayer situations ask people to express themes they heard in the prayers of the group.
 - ☞ When asking people to open a meeting in prayer, encourage them to "let themselves pray," as opposed to praying usual prayers.
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 - ☞

🔄 HEALTHY = BELIEVERS WHO ARE...

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🔄 REPRODUCING = BELIEVERS WHO...

This is one of your key definitions for a reproducing believer – a characteristic that can be nurtured

A necessary component that will likely lead to people witnessing to their friends.

— ^ Evangelize and witness to others.

↳ Prayer for specific unsaved friends.

↳ Ask cell group leaders to lead their cell groups in praying for friends once a month.

↳ Include the admonition in my closing prayer each week.

↳ Look for testimonies from people who prayed for friends who were then touched by the Lord.

↳ Encourage the congregation to offer to pray for any need of a co-worker.

↳ Create a small “prayer list” bookmark for people’s Bible.

↳ Encourage “prayer partners” to agree to pray for one another’s unsaved friend.

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**Another element
you can add**

to your church
environment that
will help produce
believers who
witness to friends.

↻ REPRODUCING = BELIEVERS WHO...

— ^ Evangelize and witness to others.

↳ Teachings on how to talk about our faith.

↳ Each week offer a small, simple bit of advice about how (not) to witness to people.

↳ Tell stories of my evangelistic encounters.

↳ Invite a speaker to share about evangelism.

↳ Encourage people to form relationships with unsaved friends.

↳ Ask gifted evangelists in the church to offer practical training for others.

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🔄 REPRODUCING = BELIEVERS WHO...

^ Share lessons learned with individuals and groups.

🔄 Encourage people to keep track of God's dealings in their lives.

↳ Suggest a journal.

↳ Constantly suggest to people whose stories I hear, that they tell other particular people (whom I name).

↳ Look for great stories and ask people to write something for the bulletin.

↳ Ask different members of counseling/prayer teams to explain how they can relate to the person being prayed for because of what God has done for them.

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🔄 REPRODUCING = BELIEVERS WHO....

^ Share lessons learned with individuals and groups.

➡ Meetings structured to allow for testimonies.

- Set aside time in the public services for testimonies.
- Begin leadership meetings by having everyone tell someone about what God has done/said.
- Tell cell group leaders to begin their teachings with a brief story about God's dealings in their lives.
- Regularly begin events and meetings during the week with "Who can report something God has done for you?"
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↻ REPRODUCING = BELIEVERS WHO...

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SUMMARY EXERCISE

LIFE VERSES—Clearly state what you are called to do.

1)

2)

3)

MINISTRY METAPHORS—"I'm never happier than when..."

4)

5)

6)

FAVORITE MINISTRY ACTIVITY—Do more of what you like doing!

7)

8)

9)

CHURCH VERSES—What should your church be doing?

10)

11)

12)

CHURCH ASSIGNMENTS—What is your church called to emphasize?

13)

14)

15)

CHURCH STRENGTHS—What can you utilize more or do more?

16)

17)

18

19)

CHURCH WEAKNESSES—What should you be fixing now?

20)

21)

22)

CONCLUSION

One of the reasons that the church at large does not embrace strategic planning is that its leaders spend so much time lamenting the way things are — concentrating on what we don’t have, or what we need more of — rather than looking at what we do have. Church leaders also often end up concentrating on money, buildings, equipment, etc. rather than on intangible aspects of ministry. At best, those material objects and resources are merely tools for our action plans ↘ or partial ingredients ↗, not objectives we’d like to see in our congregations ^, and certainly not our goals ↻ or mission. Too often we have our eyes on the wrong destination...

Additionally, because we are a part of a larger Church, we ought to keep its mission in mind — viewing our leadership and our church as vital components of a much grander mission. The mission of **The Foursquare Church** is simple and straight-forward: with the enablement of the Holy Spirit to make disciples of all people, by...

INCREASING THE NUMBER OF HEALTHY, REPRODUCING CHURCHES LED BY HEALTHY, REPRODUCING PASTORS.

While most would agree that the best way to develop future Foursquare pastors for our districts is through organic processes in local churches that have a passion for sending laborers into the harvest field, we do not yet have enough such healthfully reproductive churches to fill the ever-enlarging leadership vacuum that seems to persist in so many of our existing churches — not to mention the many additional churches we hope to see started in the next few years.

That in itself is somewhat startling—to realize that churches usually do not, within their regular ministry routines, give rise to an abundance of leaders who go out and multiply themselves several times over. At some point we’re going to have to examine this thing we call church to see why it so often requires an external infusion of leaders(hip), as opposed to organically developing a steadily increasing supply of leaders from within itself.

Consequently, the strategic planning we do for our congregation will only be complete and well-rounded when we accept the responsibility to ask more than just “what will likely produce healthy, reproductive believers?,” but also “what processes, components and mentalities will develop a reproductive, healthy church — one that spawns an over-abundance of pastors/leaders who plant healthy churches in our district and beyond?” **Strategic Planning** is simply a purposeful way to work backwards from the focused goal to the ideal arrangement — an adequately configured church process. Why wait for regret to hand us an agenda of what might have been accomplished when we can ask enough questions now to enable foresight to draft the same agenda?