

Growth Points

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Five Questions You Need to Ask & Answer

Just as doctors encourage all of us to have an annual checkup, your church, no matter how large or small, should also undergo a checkup each year.

To get you started, here are five questions you need to ask and answer about your church this year.

First, Are the lost being found? The healthiest churches see around five percent of their average weekly worship

attenders coming to faith in Christ each year. For example, a church averaging 125 people at worship will normally see about six or seven people make professions of faith each year. A church averaging 500 will see 25 people come to faith, and a church of 1,500 worshipers will see 75 people accept Christ.

Second, Are we serving other people with the love of Christ? Growing churches normally have a minimum of three ministries that focus on serving people outside their church with the love of Christ. A variety of “servant” ministries come under this category, from support groups, to healthcare, to education, etc.

Third, Are the people being transformed into the likeness of Christ? Healthy churches see at least 60% of their people involved in ministry, attending Bible classes, and participating in groups. While these activities do not always correspond to growth in Christlikeness, they are one measure of Christian growth.

Fourth, Are we starting new ministries or services each year? Not only do new ministries and services attract and hold new people, but they send a signal to everyone that your church is progressing with the times. Stuck for an idea for new ministries? Ask your people what they need.

Fifth, Are we making new disciples as compared to the last couple of years? If worship attendance has managed to stay the same over the last couple of years, don’t breathe a sigh of relief, you have achieved zero growth in making new disciples. Flat growth is a warning signal for more serious problems in the future.

How is your church doing?

The Bible and Evangelism

In 1994 the North American Conference for Itinerant Evangelists, hosted by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, affirmed “The Bible is the source of our message and the final authority for all evangelistic ministry.”

“Without a strong, resolute conviction about the Word of God, there would be neither need nor desire for missions and evangelism.”

—Charles L. Register

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Prayers and Praying

Different styles of prayer offer variety.

The following different styles or elements of prayer can be used to give more variety in corporate and personal prayer.

> **Adoring the Lord:** worshipping God for His attributes, nature, works, the way He makes you feel, etc.

> **Confession of Sin:** agreeing with God that you have committed a sin, naming it specifically, and then expressing the desire, with His help, never to do it again.

> **Thanksgiving and Appreciation:** recognizing and thanking God for what He is daily doing for you and for your church; telling Him how much this means to you; what would be true of your life if He did not do these things, etc.

> **Interceding:** praying for the needs of others, both for things they have asked for in prayer and those things you know God wants for them (like salvation, change of attitudes, etc.).

> **Petition:** asking for yourself.

> **Praying the Scriptures:** using Scriptures to stimulate prayer and expanding on the ideas presented; claiming promises as you read them; thanking God for what a specific Scripture reveals about His nature or actions, etc.

> **Prayer Partners:** two persons who covenant to pray together regularly for specific things, such as the church, for each other, for social issues, etc.

> **Prayer Triplets:** much like prayer partners except three are involved. Salvation of family and friends is often a key focus.

> **Huddles:** three to five people praying for a short time, often at church or in a meeting. Churches may have several huddles praying just before or throughout a worship service.

> **Unison Prayer:** like the Lord's Prayer, but it can also be done in unison where each person prays about a subject within a group.

> **Conversational:** group praying where no individual dominates the prayer time, although there can be a leader. People just pray a short time, similar to a normal conversation.

> **Led by one:** a leader has requests or asks for requests, then either prays for them all from the front, or assigns someone else to pray for them all, or can ask for volunteers to pray for each one of the requests.

> **Prayer Vigil:** a number of people focusing concentrated prayer for a specific need and usually for a specific time frame.

> **Prayer Covering:** a form of intercession mainly focused on an individual by another individual.



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