

Principles of re-Activate...

Church re-Activation Process

(Participant)

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Getting Started

Using This Workbook

This workbook is designed to help you and your church assess where you are in its history, stage of development and how to move forward. It is intended to provide you with principles and guidelines to re-Activate the mission, vision, passion, effectiveness and direction that brought about past vitality and effectiveness by starting a new life cycle for your church.

We want to state from the outset that this is not to be approached as program or formula for guaranteed success. The following are biblical principles and guidelines that we pray will be used to re-Activate the spiritual vitality of your church in order to see your mission and vision become reality. ***re-Active is a resource, but neglecting to rely on the Holy Spirit as your primary resource, earnestly sought through prayer, you will sadly discover re-Activate to be just another program.*** It is critical that you make this a matter of prayer for God to re-Activate the vitality of your church that flows out of your mission and vision.

It is assumed you already have in place a mission and vision statement as well as established core values. At this point in the history of your church it has become necessary to conduct a prayerful intensive evaluation of your church and ministry to discover God's next step in your journey. Each section of this workbook has one or more "**Implementation Tasks**" associated with it to help you reflect on the present state of your church and trust God for a fresh vision for the future.

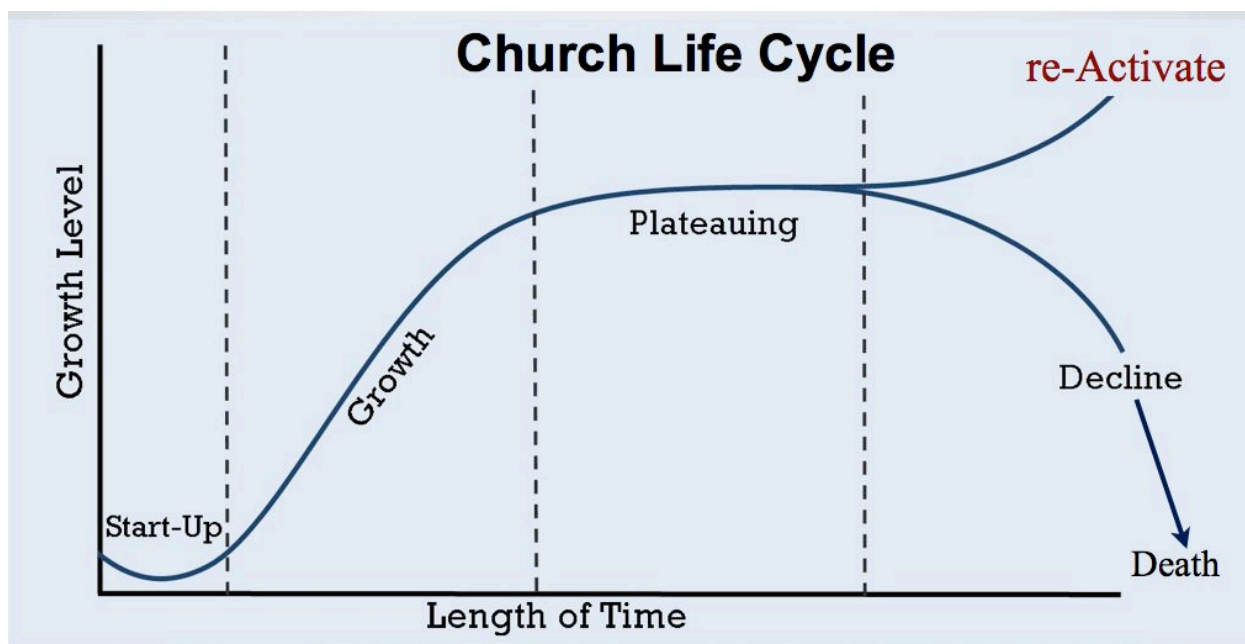
If your church has never established a vision and mission statement or its core values and framework please visit the Ministry Advantage website for information or benefitting from one of their coaches. www.ministryadvantage.org/online-training

State of The Church

Proverbs 27:23-24

Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; 24 for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations.

- Church attendance dropped 9% since 1991 with only _____ of declared Christians attending church
- One out of five attend Sunday School
- Since 1991 church volunteering has dropped from 30% to _____
- In the last 20 years Bible reading has dropped from 51% to _____
- Of those who call themselves Christian 10% are more likely to be unchurched and 31% have not attended church in the last six months.
- Only _____ of church attendees claim to experience God's presence weekly and 18% on a monthly basis.
- _____ claim their lives have been changed or affected greatly by attending church
- _____ claim church was somewhat influential in changing their lives
- _____ say their life had not been changed at all by attending church
- _____ could not remember any significant insight related to faith from last service attended
- Those between the ages of 18-27 were less likely to describe positive outcomes when attending church
- _____ of pastors report having no training on how to effectively lead and manage a church.
- Over 1,600 ministers per month resign or are terminated.
- Only one out of ten pastors will retire as a pastor.
- The majority of church staffs struggle with relational conflicts.



Characteristics of a Church Life Cycle

Each stage in the life cycle of a church has its own unique characteristics in how it operates as well as in the behaviors of its members.

Stage 1 - Birth

General Characteristics:

- Mission is developing and motivating,
- Forming programs & structures,
- Organizing ministries.
- Church members are excited about inviting others to church

Key Characteristic: Celebration

- Energized, enthusiastic commitment, focused on the possibilities, hopeful of the future, some struggling to find their way to organization and stability.
- At this early stage of the church they are very focused on God's mission for the church and its responsibility to reach the lost.
- People coming to Christ is a regular and expected occurrence.

Key Statement: "All things are possible."

- With a high level of commitment and people sacrificing time resources they seek to keep things going on a growth trajectory.
- The truly have sense they are making a difference in the lives of people in the church and impacting the community.

Key Problem: Lack of Clarity, Identity, Direction & Resources.

- Uncertainty or undefined mission & vision, a small pool of people to draw from so lack of mature leadership and congregational base.(good problem to have)

Key Verse: *Acts 2:46, "They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity 47, all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.*

- Although the time frame from stage to stage varies this is considered to be the shortest of all the stages. Yet this stage is the most crucial in defining the churches mission, culture and identity as it moves forward.
- The founding pastor and members have the greatest impact on what shape and direction the church will take.

Stage 2 - Growth

General Characteristics:

- Passion to fulfill the vision,
- People accepting Christ is regular but slowing,
- Organized strategies for outreach and assimilation,
- Now a balancing of resources from evangelism to internal programs and discipleship.
- Increased emphasis on fellowship,
- Formal education and discipleship established,
- Understanding of beliefs and values,
- Formal leadership structures,
- Intentional plans for future growth while experiencing continued present growth.

Key characteristic: Stability

Key Statement: It doesn't get much better than this.

Key Problem: Success = Overconfidence & indifference

- The plan is working we just need to keep doing what we are doing.

Stage 3 - Plateau

General Characteristics:

- Programs and traditions begin to replace vision,
- Occasionally people come to Christ,
- Worship and the Word are still a high value and priority,
- Old guard feels the need to protect the church from change,
- People becoming passive,
- Not much new happening,
- If it's not broke don't fix it mentality,
- Finances are adequate to meet budget,
- Youth begin to decline,
- Quality of programing becomes more important then vision,
- Fewer new ideas and directions are introduced,
- a satisfaction with the way things are,

Key Characteristic: Stagnation

- Status quo, don't mess with our stuff, change is hard and slow.
- This is a comfort stage, most people are happy with the way things are.

Key Statement: "If it ain't broke don't fix it." Or "Don't rock the boat."

- There is a false sense that everything is fine.
- The thinking s who wouldn't like this church, we are such a warm, friendly and welcoming place.

Key Problem: Complacency

- Church in a high-risk situation but doesn't realize it.
- Without intentional focus on the mission and vision of the church this can happen within a few years.

Key Verse: Revelation 3:2, (NLT), *Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God.*

Proverbs 6:9 *How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? **10** A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—**11** and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.*

Stage 4 - Declining

General Characteristics:

- Decline in Sunday attendance,
- Struggling programs,
- People looking for excuse to leave,
- Overly protective of resources,
- Lack of volunteers,
- People look with fondness to the past,
- See their best days behind them,
- Congregation is aging,
- Assign blame for negative circumstances,
- Finances drop,
- Stop inviting people,
- Want a change in leadership and programming,
- Dissention and discord begin to emerge,
- Decreasing confidence in pastors leadership,
- People no longer want to serve,
- Fear of taking risks,
- Ministry suffers for lack of leaders

Key Characteristic – Critical Analysis

- Leadership and people now recognize they have a problem and are trying to figure out what to do about it.

Key Statement: “Huston, we have a problem.”

- Why are we losing people? Why aren't people giving? Why, why, why?
- This is a questioning stage as the church attempts to get a handle on the problem.
- Find someone to blame, usually the pastor.

Key Problem: Reacting instead of responding

- People react to fix the crisis rather than prayerfully responding.

Key Verse: 2 Chronicles 20:12b (NLT), “...We do not know what to do, but we are looking to you for help.”

Stage 5 - Death or Dying

General Characteristics:

- survival mode,
- look for outside support to continue,
- discouragement and hopelessness is prevalent,
- must let pastor go or become part-time,
- congregation becomes increasingly older
- Increasing sense of hopelessness,

Key Characteristic: Reminiscing

- nostalgia sets in, looking with fondness to the way things used to be.

Key Statement: “Living on borrowed time.”

- People spend a lot of time talking about the way things used to be, how it was when a particular leader was there, reflecting on some great events of the pass and their impact.

Key Problem: Best days are believed to be in the past rather than the future.

Key Verse: Ezekiel 37:3 *He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” I said, “Sovereign Lord, you alone know.” 4 Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! 5 This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath[a] enter you, and you will come to life. 6 I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’”*

(not sure which way you want to go here with verses)

“For everything there is a season . . . a time to be born, and a time to die . . . a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted . . . a time to break down, and a time to build up . . . a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together . . . a time to keep, and a time to throw away” (Eccles. 3:1a; 2; 3b; 5a; 6b).

- If a church does come to this stage it is important to celebrate the history, impact and influence this congregation has had in the past.
- It is not impossible for this church to turn around but it will be very difficult and require divine intervention.

Evaluate & Identify Present Church Stage

(Good place for an evaluation survey here to direct people to as an appendix)

Solution Stage – Stage 3 Plateau

re-Activate – renewed focus on spiritual vitality, prayer for future, defining biblical success, active volunteer involvement, clear plan of direction, ministry alignment

Key Characteristics...

- Understanding this is not MY church.

(We could discuss what to put here as key characteristics, statement etc like is in other stages)

Considerations for re-activating a plateaued church...

Charles Arn...

- Change of pastors
- Church crisis
- Mother a church plant
- Renewal of a pastor
- Close and reopen or plant a new church
- Renewal of laity
- Denominational intervention
- Outside consultants
- Relocation
- Begin another worship service

The leader must...

- Preach solid biblical messages that are relevant to people's daily lives, connecting on a spiritual, intellectual and emotional level.
- Be a person of integrity, competence and inspiring leadership able to give direction.
- Be passionate about what they are doing.
- Believe he/she can make a difference.
- Understand they can't do ministry alone.

Questions to consider in the reactivate process...

- Are we a Christ centered church?
- Are we passionate about reaching the lost and missions?
- Are we more interested in insiders or outsiders?
- Are we sensitive to new people who come or do we want to spend time with old friends?
- Are we trying to do too much with too few resources?
- What areas do we need to simplify in order to be more effective?

Doing a lot of good things does not necessarily mean you are doing the best things.

Church community relationship covenant...

To move forward in the re-Activate journey it is vital that the community of believers pursue alignment with regard to leadership, process, change and format in moving towards a new future.

The behavioral covenant is an agreed up set of biblical principles, practices and attitudes that will help ensure a smooth and unified transition to this new future.

We must not fall into the trap of thinking the objective of this process is to keep everyone happy, our objective is not happiness but faithfulness to Gods direction for the future of your church. Nowhere in scripture do we find complete happiness among Gods people to changes in direction or function.

Objective – *define a means of relating or operating that will move the congregation away from focusing on fixing problems or addressing complaints to address its purpose and identity.*

Introduction to Church re-Activation

Objectives

As you work through this manual you will be able to:

- Develop a well-designed strategy for your ministry area.
- Evaluate your church and ministries to determine its current strengths and weaknesses.
- Define the specific purpose of your ministry.
- Implement a strategy that will serve as a guideline to organize and carry out your ministry goals and objectives.
- Identify ministry events and activities that are essential for the future success and effectiveness of your ministry.
- Develop a Ministry Area Plan that will serve as a map for your ministry and team for the future.
- Align your ministry area with the overall mission and vision of your church.

Priority of Planning Your Ministry Strategy

The purpose of this workbook is to help you develop a ministry _____ and design a plan to help fulfill God's vision for your church.

The greater your efforts in the planning stage the more effective your ministry and the greater the _____.

God is very strategic.

Psalm 40:5

"The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare."

Ephesians 5:15-17

“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity...Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.”

Why Have A Ministry Strategy?

Your ministry strategy will **serve as a** _____ providing direction to your destination.

Proverbs 14:22

“...But those who plan what is good find love and faithfulness.”

Thinking & Planning must precede _____.

Job 42:2

“I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.”

Your ministry plan will **provide you with a** _____ for your ministry and a means of measuring your effectiveness and results.

How do you perceive your strategic plan?

Game Plan vs Blue Print

- Game plan is _____.
- Blue print is _____.

Blueprints leave little room for variation or flexibility, a game plan does.

With a game plan, as circumstances or the game changes, the plan needs adjustment.

The Strategic Planning Process

Your strategic plan should be _____ to address occasional changes that can sometimes occur within the church.

Proverbs 19:21

“Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.”

See appendix A for all task work sheets. Have copies available for the initial training and let your teams know they should photo copy work sheets from appendix B for future use.

re-Activation: Planning and Implementation

Five Step Church re-Activation Process

Step 1: Understanding Your Church Context.

Step 2: Defining Your Purpose.

Step 3: Evaluating Your Existing Ministry.

Step 4: Developing Your Strategy.

Step 5: Pursuing Alignment.