

CHURCH GROWTH IN A CHURCH PLANT CONTEXT

Growing a church and ultimately an established church requires a recognition of the **stages** of the church...

AND

Practicing **proper growth habits** respective to where the church is and what stage it will enter next.

Stages of a new church plant

1. **Survival**

Scratching, clawing to get some "traction" as a church.

Fighting to establish an identity. Rented facilities, multiple moves to different facilities.

If I was planting a church again I would have less figured out on the front end...not saying have NOTHING figured out...just less that I knew for sure because it changes. (locations for services change, you don't know what that first group you'll tap into will be for a harvest, etc.)

I would focus on these four things:

- Bible studies
- Prayer
- Meeting lots of people
- Worship services as good as they can be

2. Foundation

Very important what we put in that foundation!

Foundations are meant to be there a long time...Question...what ways of thinking do I want in our church for the long haul?

This is where I decide if I want to have a church like other churches or an Apostolic church. We don't have to always point out our differences from other belief systems, faiths, denominations...but neither do I like the "bait and switch" method. (don't say you're Apostolic and then let people know once they've come for a while)

Questions in the Foundation stage:

- What kind of worship will we have as normal?
- Will I emphasize giving as part of the worship service?
- Setting values...what's going to be important to us?

3. Formation

Some ministries begin to take shape...youth group, men's ministry, ladies, etc. I believe it's wise to get good at a few ministries rather than feel like you need to have many ministries to "really be a church".

4. Expansion

More ministries **preceded by** more leaders.

5. Multiplication

Leading other churches, daughter works

Proper growth habits...

1) **Survival to Foundation** - stay at it! Trust the law of the harvest.

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, **if** we faint not. (Galatians 6:9 KJV)

2) **Foundation to Formation** - be good at a few things...resist the urge to offer many things until you have the leaders and their passion. (common lie - More is better...sometimes it's not!)

Ways to confirm that your church is good at a ministry:

- You as a leader feel like your church is good at a certain ministry.
- People in the church recognize that this is a quality ministry

- People outside your church (guests) recognize that your church does this ministry well.

3) **Formation to Expansion** - I must raise the level of my leadership if I'm going to attract great leaders. Great leaders help start other ministries and plant churches out of the mother church.

4) **Expansion to Multiplication** - As a leader I must resist selfishness and invest in the kingdom...The Lord of the Harvest will take care of us...The nature of planting a church is highly cyclical.

Tim Gaddy Beautitude :

"Blessed is the church planter who understandeth stages and seasons."