

Project #7

Your Idea of Church

Exercise

Select two of these people and make a list of what you think was important to them based on their life story.

- Joseph – Genesis 37-50
- Mary Magdalene – Luke 8:1-3, Mark 16:1-11, John 20:1-18
- Gideon – Judges 6-7
- Daniel – Daniel 1-6
- Simon Peter – John 1:41-42; Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75; John 21:15-23

- Paul – Acts 9:1-20, 22:3-16

It is interesting that there were no church buildings for the first three-hundred years of church history. In urban areas, owning a building is not a priority or an option.

In Acts 16:1-10, Paul is on a church planting mission:

1. What did Paul think of the community he was to go to? What happened to his plan?

2. What was Paul's back-up plan? What took place in regard to Paul's back-up plan?

The Lord led Paul to a new continent. Macedonia, a region of northern Greece, was God's target for Paul. Some church planters are excited about the potential of a particular location, but do not evaluate whether the Holy Ghost has called them to birth a church there.

Write out Psalms 127:1 in your own words:

The Benefit of Knowing You Are Called to THAT City

There are four benefits to knowing you are to labor in a particular place:

1. *Focus* – You are more diligent in following through with people and responsibilities. In short, this is your life plan and place. There is no fall-back.
2. *Proper Values* - The local economy falls apart. Do you leave? Not if you KNOW that you are fulfilling God’s purpose. You are delivered from the “success syndrome.”
3. *Right Approval* - You are the Lord’s man for the Lord’s project in that place. Others may look doubtfully at your efforts. Only one approval really matters.
4. *Perseverance* – Adversity will come! A family you “won” will transfer. A “knot head” causes problems; offerings are inadequate with you getting paid last or not at all; the church isn’t growing. Persevering is hard unless you know that God called you THERE to birth a church.

God does this in many ways. Sometimes it is a matter of an audible voice, other times a sense of direction, and in other occasions, simply being in a place with a need. Jesse Williams is a church planting icon. Birthing and growing a church in Fayetteville, NC, he has said, “I never heard God call me to Fayetteville. My job took me to Fayetteville and there was no Apostolic church. There need was there so we started one in our home.” Such things happen quite often.

Don’t feel there is only one way for God to call or direct you to birth a church.

Exercise

What is the goal for this church?

It is possible to shoot without knowing the goal. However, you will not score many points. Some seem to think you do not have a “real” church until you own a building or have a choir. Are any of those things part of the minimum requirements for something to be denoted as a “church?”

To help define what you feel are the minimum requirements for a church do the following exercise. For each option, choose A, B, C or D.

A = An absolute essential for a local church.

B = Good, but not absolutely necessary.

C = Someday, but not very important for a baby church.

D = Not important.

Some possible components of a “real” church:

- The gospel is preached (evangelistic preaching)
- Regular gatherings for worship (church services)
- The group is able to support itself (not receiving financial assistance from beyond the local church)
- Bus ministry
- Biblical teaching
- Children’s classes and youth ministry
- A “paid” pastor
- A “full time” pastor
- Owns or is renting a building
- Incorporated as a non-profit corporation
- Participates in missions
- Has a constitution and bylaws
- A minimum of ten people gather for worship each week
- Has an official membership list, with certain membership standards
- A minimum of five official tithe paying members
- Has a pipe organ
- Teaches home Bible studies
- Has a small group ministry

Defining What Makes a Church

From the activity you just completed you should be able to determine what you define as a church.

My definition of a church is (“A” items):

Important, but not essential

List the items you denoted with a "B."

Someday...maybe

List the items you denoted with a "C."

Determining Your Values

Some of the work you have just done is part of deciding the things you value. The things you value – may not be important to God. Your life story, the relationships, work and recreation that you discussed in a previous project are all tools used by God to clarify what is important to you – your values.

Your values should be:

- Christian
- Consistent
- Passionate
- Biblical

If these really are your values, they will determine your priorities, influence your decisions, drive your ministry, and demonstrated by your behavior.

Just like meanings and needs drive those who live in your community, your values are the “why” behind your “what.”

Values are not:

- Doctrinal beliefs alone. Interestingly, what is “believed” is not necessarily valued. Most Christians say we believe in evangelism, but do we do it? If we actually evangelize, then evangelism really is a value.
- Methods. Methods are the delivery systems to accomplish the things we value. What works with one baby will not work with another. There are three areas where dependence on particular methods become dangerous:
 - Implementing the concepts of much larger and more mature churches that have an abundance of people to carry out particular activities.
 - Depending on the same strategy as the church you were born into.
 - Methods that are based on having a particular personality or gifting. If you do not have singers, do not have an Easter Cantata as a method.
- Dependence on technology. Keyboards and video projectors do not build churches, nor do they keep them from being built. Demographic information may have relevance and an excellent sound system is nice but neither will grow a church. With enough money you can draw a crowd, but only God can build a church.

Why does this business of values matter? Values shape attitudes, which influence actions. How we spend our time and money is the best indicator of our values. Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Think about the values visible in the early church in Acts 2:44-47. Notice the behavior that set them apart:

What they did (Actions)

1. They continued in the apostles’ teachings (doctrine).
2. They met on a daily basis.
3. They were in “one accord.” The phrase indicates a singleness of purpose.
4. They prayed together.
5. They gave to any who had need.
6. They praised God together.
7. They evangelized the city.

What was their motivation? They did seven things— but why did they do these things?

What were their motives?

1. Apostles’ teachings—their motivation was a desire to correct falsehood and bring revelation of Jesus as the Messiah.
2. Being daily together indicates they valued relationships with each other.

3. "One accord" portrays a value of unity.
4. Prayer indicates they valued intimacy with God.
5. Giving shows the value of generosity and compassion.
6. Praise shows how they valued giving honor to God.
7. Evangelism shows they saw the need to reach others with the gospel.

What other possible values do you see expressed in the same passage?

Contemporary Examples of Value and Actions

A single value can be expressed by several different actions; a given action may be the expression of several different values.

Action	Value
Prayer	Intimacy with God and/or spiritual discipline
Weekly date with spouse	Healthy family relationships
ACTS ministry	Compassion for the "lost" or understanding addictions
Attention to detail	Excellence

Values are statements of the things you assume about ministry and how ministry should be conducted. The following values can be seen in the operation of many churches. Go through the list and check the values that are important to you. If you hold values that are not listed add them at the end. Mark as many of them as you would like.

1. _____ Lifestyle evangelism
2. _____ Evangelistic preaching
3. _____ Expository teaching/preaching
4. _____ Quality/excellence

- 5. _____ Multi-ethnic ministry
- 6. _____ Creativity
- 7. _____ Demonstrative praise
- 8. _____ Deep worship
- 9. _____ One-on-one discipleship
- 10. _____ Small group ministry
- 11. _____ Standards of right living
- 12. _____ Community involvement
- 13. _____ An effective children’s ministry
- 14. _____ The people active in ministry
- 15. _____ Planting daughter churches
- 16. _____ North American Missions involvement
- 17. _____ Global Missions involvement
- 18. _____ Cooperation within the organization
- 19. _____ Team ministry
- 20. _____ Church growth
- 21. _____ Long-term pastorate
- 22. _____ Cultural relevance
- 23. _____ Member care
- 24. _____ Prayer-centered ministry
- 25. _____ Contemporary style
- 26. _____ Traditional style
- 27. _____ Disciple-making
- 28. _____ Leadership Development
- 29. _____ Minister in training sessions

Now, list below the values you checked. Rate each one on a scale of one to ten. One indicates something is somewhat important, while a ten is absolutely vital to you as you birth this baby church. Five to twelve core values are generally the limit. In essence, a baby church cannot do everything that a forty year old church does. In narrowing your values list, it should bring you to a focus on a few areas that are most important to you in the planting of the church.

Now, ask others to review these values with you and give you their input.

Exercise

Record your work as you do the following.

1. Think through a typical week in your life and schedule. Based on your review, identify your values and describe how they influenced the decisions you made and actions you took.

2. Ask a friend to reflect on your life and make a list of what they think is important to you.

3. Go through your time management tool outlook, (Day-timer/PDA/calendar) and checkbook. Identify what is important to you as demonstrated by how you spend your time and money. If you in the past gave nothing to support those birthing a baby church (through Christmas for Christ, Metro Missions or Friends of American Missions) then how important is church planting to you?

- 4. Write your core values here. Describe how they affect the way you will serve as you plant this church.

Value: _____

How it affects what I will do:

Value: _____

How it affects what I will do:

Value: _____

How it affects what I will do:

Value: _____

How it affects what I will do:

Value: _____

How it affects what I will do:
