

Consider Relaunching like a Replant

As churches are reopening, pastors and leaders are surprised that things are not like they were before the coronavirus pandemic. They maybe opening back up, but they are missing the manpower and the resources upon which they once relied. These voids made me envision the relaunch process to be more like a replant or a new plant!

RELAUNCH



How can you do what you did when you don't have who you had or what you had? Confused? Let me explain.

Who is LISTENING to your vision for reengaging and relaunching? How will that relaunch look? Will it be back to the previous NORMAL? Who even clearly remembers what that looked like? Was the church being effective, healthy, and growing? If not, this is the best time to grasp hold of new processes, new ministries, and new people. Don't return to THE OLD if the THE OLD was not expanding or enhancing the Kingdom of God!

What will the church of tomorrow look like if we invest our time, our energy, and our resources in a simpler and successful manner?

1. Don't Throw Out the Baby with the Bath Water

Preaching and teaching the Word of God must not be replaced. Caring for men, women, students, and children must be our priority. Worship is vital but make certain it is not the only thing you do well. How about equipping the people with new evangelism avenues? Not a new method but training them to share their faith at work, in their neighborhood, in their clubs, at the golf course, during a kid's soccer game, etc. Equip them to be a discipler, not just a pew sitter. My dad never had a discipler, but he would benefit from one today at 89 years of age.

The vision needs to be about people engaging with people all the time and everywhere they go. Don't let past programs and processes drag you back into the pit of defeat and despair. Chop off the worthless and grab hold of what is vital and valuable.

2. State your Plans Often and Clearly

Our nation is divided like I have never experienced in my lifetime. How do we defeat division in our churches? First, pray with fervency! Second, make sure the vision you are seeing is God's vision and a desire for fame. Third, make certain that the entire congregation knows exactly where you are going and what their role is in the vision. When an army marches forward with clear orders, specific plans, and a unified directive,

rarely can any enemy thwart their assault. They should hear distinctly WHO we are reaching, WHAT resources we have, WHY God needs us to accomplish this vision and HOW we propose to move forward.

A vision tells the church and the community what we value most! It should be about people and service. It should make members and those yet-to-be-reached have a passionate willingness to give up time and TV to join the goal! It should be **Achievable**, **Imperative** and **Detailed**. Achievable, so no one runs from it like they used to run from the permanent positions they knew would result in burnout. Imperative, because without it, the church will die! Detailed, not to the point of boredom, but so everyone will know where they fit in and how to be effective in their role. People need to know they are not just wanted, but they are seriously needed.

Restate the Vision. Repeat the Vision. Reiterate the Vision. Reaffirm the Vision. Got it? Make certain it is well known, easily repeated, and passionately pursued. Vision is about more than just your church. It is kingdom focused.

3. Embrace the Power of Prayer

Prayer is indispensable. As you are seeking God's leadership, ask Him to move the mountain ahead of you while you restart? He will knock down the barrier between you and the goals you believe God is leading you to. He reminded Zerubbabel through Zechariah, in building the temple: “‘(It is) Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of hosts (Zechariah 4:7). Our victory is a reality when He is the power behind of the goals and plans. Our best fought fights will always be won on our knees!

Kingdom success requires the power of God. Embracing the power of the Holy Spirit is the most important resource for any church relaunch.

4. Recruit for Small Group Ministry

Small groups are the best vehicles for training and caring within the church. No matter what you call these groups, they have the best opportunity to minister to people one-on-one. Matthew 28:18-20 commands us to make DISCIPLES. If we adhere to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, we will find small groups help us accomplish these mandates like no other part of the church.

Expect people to become a small group leader. Equip them for the task. People involved in small group ministry are much more apt to serve the community, more likely to volunteer in the church, and much more passionate about sharing their faith with the lost than those not connected to a group. Jesus was the prime model for small group investment.

5. Intentionally Evangelize

The method is not of vital importance. Understanding of the reality of a literal hell, and that evangelism is a matter of life and death, should be the driving force for community outreach and equipping people to share their faith.

6. Join the Turn Around

Pastors have more than enough to keep them busy (sermon preparation, emails, phone calls, meetings, visitation, hospital contacts, video recording, connecting with shut-ins, etc.), and if he is a co-vocational/bi-vocational pastor he is holding down two (2) full-time jobs but with only 1½ pay. Your pastor is not Superman or a hired gun to do the church member's bidding. He cannot do it all. He should not do it all! Pastors are to equip and invest in people who are committed to the Lord's service. The entire congregation needs to join in this relaunching effort. Whenever we serve the Lord or share our faith, we NEVER fail.

Overall, churches in America have been on a consistent and catastrophic decline for a few decades. We need to turn this ship around and get back to the last commands of our Lord and Savior (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). But remember this: the church is a massive organism (like an aircraft carrier), and an aircraft carrier conservatively takes 10 minutes to make a U-turn (which is not recommended for safety's sake). We need to be patient, but intentional, as we work on relaunching/restarting after being stalled for almost 14 months.

Plan extensively, pray fervently, equip diligently, proclaim the vision zealously and clearly, and get back on track quickly because our time is short and the lives of the lost need us to be effective and productive.