
Acts 2 Journey Cohort

Pastor and Spouse Session

Intentional Communication

Introduction

Then the LORD replied: “Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it.” Habakkuk 2:2, NIV

“The Father who sent me commanded me all that I have spoken.” John 12:49, NIV

“Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?” 1 Corinthians 14:8, NIV

“When I am with those whose consciences bother them easily, I don’t act as though I know it all and don’t say they are foolish; the result is that they are willing to let me help them. Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him. I do this to get the Gospel to them and also for the blessing I myself receive when I see them come to Christ.” 1 Corinthians 9:22–23, TLB

While the contexts for the verses above differ dramatically from one another, these passages share a central theme—*clear communication is critical*. In the life of the local church, there may be no arena where clear communication is more critical than when we are leading change. After all, people do not need much information to continue in their current patterns, but any move in a new direction will require clear direction, fresh and accurate motivation, and new processes of evaluation.

In this session, we’ll discover insights for effectively communicating your newly developed strategic plan and consider ways to help you and your team become even better communicators for all the important messages you have to share.

The best plans poorly communicated will never reach their full potential.

Communicating on Purpose

From the moment people drive onto your local church campus, they are receiving communication from the church, whether positive or negative. In fact, that communication likely started even earlier as some message (invite, event) from somewhere (friend, website) is likely the reason for their visit. Of course, in all our communication, we want to be certain that the message their receiving is the one that we truly want to communicate.

Unintentional Communication

Before we take a close look at how to be more intentional in our communication, let's consider what we might be communicating unintentionally. Here are some examples of unintentional (and unfortunate) communication:

UNINTENTIONAL COMMUNICATION	EXAMPLE	WHAT IT SAYS
Poorly kept church facilities or landscaping	Overgrown weeds Unrepaired damage	"We don't care for our facilities" "Our church is not a priority to us."
Inadequate signage	No clearly marked entry point	"We didn't know you were coming." "We didn't plan for new people to be here."
Absence of a welcoming culture	Regular attenders only interacting with other regular attenders	"We're only here for ourselves." "We don't work here and feel no responsibility to make you feel at home."
Pre-service media incongruent with atmosphere	Sanctuary that becomes a concert venue	"We don't prepare well."
Insider speech	Common Christian clichés Acronyms for ministries or rooms in the church	"We're only focused on our regular attenders. You'll have to figure out what we mean on your own."

Now, most of us would insist that these types of mistakes don't automatically mean that the suggested message is true. After all, the guy that mows the yard was sick this week or there was a new guy in the sound booth that chose the wrong playlist for the pre-service music. Still, we need to realize that people, especially our guests, do not have access to the reasons for these slip-ups. The message communicated is the one that fills their thoughts, not ours.

One helpful exercise would be to take a *Fresh Eyes Inventory* of the messages your local church may be sending. Look at the Sunday morning experience through the eyes of the uninitiated—especially someone who has little or no church experience—and ask, "What might we be unintentionally communicating?"

4 Key Steps Toward Intentional Communication

The enormous number of potential messages for us to communicate—biblical truth, announcement of ministry events, office hours, vision and values, sign-ups for the next pot-luck dinner, etc.—are not created equal. Some of our messages are life- and even eternity-altering, while others will be obsolete before next Sunday. But all of our communications require our attention to four key steps, if we will communicate our messages effectively.

I. Gain Attention

Before people will hear what we have to say, they need to see that we are talking. Something must gain their attention before any message can be received. In a sermon, this might be an opening statement or illustration that gains attention. In an article, we might call it “the hook” that draws the reader to the rest of the content. For an announcement slide, perhaps a compelling photograph or on a poster, this might be an eye-catching graphic. Somehow, in all communication, we must first gain the attention of those with whom we wish to share a message.

People are inundated with hundreds, even thousands of messages every day. It’s simply not possible to pay attention to them all so the ones that get communicated are the ones that effectively gain attention.

II. Clear and Singular Focus

Intentional communication always gives close attention to the specific message to be communicated. What are we trying to say?

In most cases, it’s best to “boil down” the intended message to a single sentence so we can make certain that our efforts to communicate get the job done. The main idea should be the first and clearest part of our communication.

Don’t bury the lede! Some people spend paragraphs (either verbal or written) before they get to the point. Such communications are ineffective at best and may miss the goal altogether. Lead with your main idea and make sure that everything else communicated reinforces that single point.

If we’re going to provide clear and singular focus, we must decide what the most important pieces of information will be if we are to get the response we desire. And to do that, we must see our communication through the eyes of the one with whom we want to communicate. Have you ever seen an event poster where the start time was omitted, or the location wasn’t identified? Such communication errors occur because someone didn’t see that poster through the eyes of the one who would need such information.

III. Motivation

For communication to move someone to action, often the “why” must be clear. Many of our local church communications are invitations for people to become involved in meaningful activities or acts of service. Keep in mind that the “why” is just as critical as the “where” and “when.” The best communications will connect the dots between such invitations and the values that drive us as a local church.

Again, there are many opportunities vying for the limited hours and energies of our people. Before they will take the action you desire, they'll need to know why such efforts rise above the other opportunities clamoring for their involvement. *Why matters.* So, that kids camp announcement must provide more than just the dates, departure time, and cost. Maybe a photo of kids engaging the fun activities or worshipping together can help convey some of the "why." No matter what the message, once you've gained my attention and provided key information, you must help me find the reasons that will make me want to act on that information.

IV. Desired Action

Finally, every effective communication will lead me to the "next step." What should I do? Good communicators never assume that people will know what to do with the information they gain, no matter how motivated they might be. Instead, they paint clear pictures of the response(s) in action.

Whether you're preaching on forgiveness or announcing this weekend's senior adult trip, you must communicate the "next step." In communication, remember that the "next step" is usually someone's "first step" in the desired direction, and first steps are often the most uncertain. But effective motivation (#3 above) coupled with a clear picture of the desired action will produce the response you originally set out to achieve.

To communicate effectively, you must gain attention, provide a clear focus to your communication, motivate appropriately, and communicate the desired action. When each of these four parts of effective communication is in place, you have given your people every opportunity for success.

Intentional Communication for Leading Change

As we said previously, effective and intentional communication in a change journey is absolutely critical, and there are many factors to consider.

The Three Audiences for Change Communication

While there are numerous ways to view the types of people in your local church, when it comes to communicating change, seeing them in one of these three groups can be most helpful.

- **Consumer people** (those who are primarily focused on their own needs)

Now, many of us may have a visceral reaction to the label "consumer." After all, consumers are focused on what they want and they "shop around" until they find it. Consumers at church is hardly an appealing picture.

But keep in mind that all of us came to Jesus initially because of our own need. Like the crowds described in the Gospels, we came with our hurts, our brokenness, our needs for healing and hope—and we found what we longed for in Jesus and His community of worshipers. "Consumer" was even the starting point for the original twelve disciples and all who would later bear the label "apostle" and sacrifice themselves for the message they carried.

The local church at its best cares for the needs of people, both inside its walls and throughout its community. So, “consumer” is a starting point on the road to discipleship and that’s the level at which many of our people currently engage our local church.

If your conversations with people are heavily focused on how they are doing or what they are gaining or how we can minister to their needs, you have likely identified them as consumer people—currently.

In truth, about two-thirds of your congregation currently engage their local church as consumers, and it’s up to the remaining one-third of us to minister to their needs.

- **Ministry people** (those who help us minister to the needs of people)

Fortunately, along the way, some of our consumers have recognized the needs of others and stepped up to help us minister to those needs. These “Ministry people” serve in a variety of ways from serving in our kids’ ministries to leading a small group or caring for our facilities or serving on the worship team.

While these still have their own needs, their participation in their local church has shifted more to how they now contribute to the efforts of our church. Like that day when the disciples wondered how they could possibly feed the hungry multitude, these friends are aware of more than their own hunger, and they’re ready to help us distribute whatever loaves and fish we have.

Moving consumer people to this next stage is an important part of discipleship. As we know, Christ’s kingdom calls us to the needs of others, so the step into ministry service is important for every individual.

In most congregations, regardless of size, about one-third of the congregation can be identified as ministry people.

One important note: The ratio of consumer people to ministry people (2:1) isn’t likely to change very much, regardless of the effectiveness of our discipleship efforts. While we certainly want to guide every consumer into ministry involvement, the truth is that the more ministry people we have, the more consumer people we can minister to. So, as this second group grows, the first group grows too. Simply put, the more ministry people we have, the more consumer people we will draw into our worshipping community.

- **Missional people** (those who find their purpose in Christ’s kingdom)

Of course, the math itself raises questions about a third group of people. If two-thirds of our congregation are consumer people and one-third are ministry people, everyone would be included in these two groups. But among our Ministry people, there’s another group that have taken an even deeper step and become truly missional in their efforts for Christ.

These are the people who have found their own sense of purpose and commitment in their ministry efforts. They use their abilities and God-given gifts to lead others and they model the heart of Christ alongside their pastor. As one pastor described them, these people “get it.” Pastor can share his or her deepest heart with these friends. They are committed to Christ’s mission and to the ongoing effectiveness of their local congregation.

Somewhere in their journey of following Jesus, the Twelve became missional. They moved beyond lining up those who needed Jesus to heal them and began to see their assignment as a part of His. Identifying exactly when that happened may not be possible, but it’s clear that such a shift did occur for each of them. In the same way, as we engage consumer people and guide them to ministry efforts, their faithfulness and commitment will one day bring a similar shift as they, too, begin to “own the mission” of Christ.

In truth, becoming missional is something that occurs as the Holy Spirit works in the life of an individual believer. As leaders, we cannot make that happen. We can simply provide ministry opportunities where people can serve Christ’s mission and trust the Holy Spirit to lead these servants in His timing and manner. We can, however, note one or more of the following indicators of a missional disciple:

- Missional people are motivated by **LOVE** for Christ and for those He has called them to serve.
- Missional people have found a sense of **PURPOSE**, even calling, in their ministry efforts.
- Missional people are more than ministry helpers. They **LEAD OTHERS** to give their best in serving Christ.
- Missional people see needs and look to **THEIR OWN** resources before placing expectations on others.
- Missional people reflect the **HEART** of Christ and act in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Missional people pursue Christ in their daily lives at their own **INITIATIVE**.
- Missional people seek **UNITY** and **HUMILITY** rather than preference and control.
- Missional people will stand for Christ even when **ALONE**.

So, now that we understand these three groups, let’s consider how we use this information on communicating change.

Group	Percentage of Congregation	Order of communication	Setting
Consumer	Two-thirds	Last	On Launch Sunday
Ministry	One-third	Second	In a team meeting
Missional	A segment within the Ministry group	First, well before launching new initiatives	Individually over a cup of coffee

When communicating any significant change in our church’s ministry efforts, such as our new vision, values, and strategic plan, these three groups present three distinct steps in that communication. In truth, any major change will benefit from this approach to communication.

First, we must communicate the new direction to our Missional people. These friends carry the heart of Christ with us within our local church. Likely some of them have been a part of our praying and planning for this new direction, but any who have not participated need to be brought into the new direction we are taking. Usually, these conversations should be personal and individual—a cup of coffee over which we describe how God is directing us. We want and need to input these Missional people can provide and we absolutely need their support as we move forward.

Second, we communicate the new direction to our Ministry people. This can be done in larger groups where they are gathered with others who also assist our ministry efforts. These friends will play important parts in helping us implement our new plans, so we want to help them understand our new direction well ahead of our effort to implement our plans. So, this might occur in team meetings or a larger gathering of our entire ministry team.

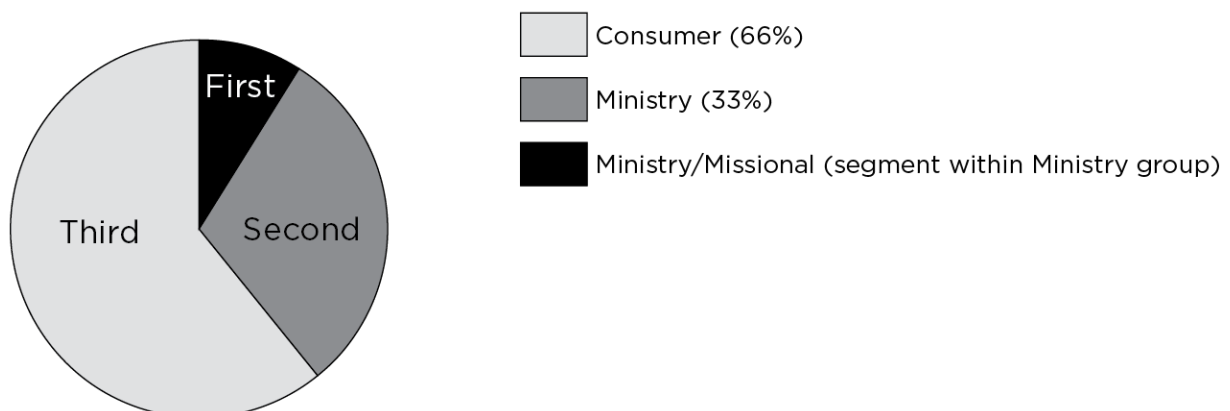
Finally, we communicate the new direction to our Consumer people, usually in the form of a Vision Sunday or some type of special announcement setting.

When you take this approach, you will have already unveiled the new direction to one-third of your congregation before the “big announcement” to the entire congregation. This is very important to clear communication. Remember that your consumer people will hear this new information through a “how will this affect me” filter. Because you have already equipped your Missional and Ministry people with clear information, these friends can assist you in addressing questions or even concerns expressed by the larger group.

If you wait and announce big changes to everyone at once, you will stand alone in addressing all uncertainties, and your chances of success will diminish. Significant change should be an “us” decision whenever possible.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Never treat your Missional people or Ministry people like consumers. They are your partners in ministry effort and need to be treated as such. If you treat these committed friends like consumers, over time some of them will likely return to that status.

Communication order



The Three Environments of Communication

I. The Pulpit

Many pastors today often preach various series of messages throughout the year, but few have considered how these series could connect to strengthen and support the direction of the church. Although each series may have impact for the moment, there is no long-term direction established for the church, no constant vision presented, and no strategic plan for the leadership or congregation to follow.

Here are a few observations for building a strategic pulpit:

A. The pulpit must **CONNECT** to the journey.

Our pulpit should be connected to the process we are creating for the vision and values of the church. It is the process of the journey that gives people enough understanding so they can make personal growth steps along the way. Instead of just preaching a “State of the Church” address message on the first Sunday in January, we should be connecting our vision within our messages throughout the year.

Remember, we’re going somewhere! We are on our way to becoming the church of our vision, and we are building values that will help us become the people we need to be if we will get there. Through sermon series, and by regular insertions into all our communication opportunities, we can help people maintain focus on the journey we are taking together.

B. Celebrate the **WINS**

Celebrate wins for an individual, a ministry, a group, or a church-wide victory. Connecting your message to celebrate moments can give you the renewed energy you’ll need to continue forward. It also gives the congregation a connection point that what they do does make a difference and your acknowledgement gives them a good feeling.

As you see your vision and values being lived out among your people, celebrate those moments. When an activity that seeks to produce your values has been completed, celebrate the moment where your values were in action. The more you celebrate what your people are doing, the more likely they are to continue in such efforts.

And, the more we celebrate the wins, the easier it becomes for us to take people on the journey. It may take some time for people to respond to such celebrations (especially if this hasn’t been occurring), but in time they will appreciate your statements and support. A compliment can take you a long way. One way to show value in people is to compliment them on their attitudes and actions. Celebrating small things will open the doors to big things.

C. Cast **VISION** and Emphasize **VALUES**

During the announcements, the opening greetings, at offering times, and within the message – CAST VISION. Instead of simply announcing activities, share how they fit in the vision for the future. Don’t waste platform time with detailed event announcements. Focus on the Values that inform *why* we do this event. Details can be placed in visual and print pieces, but passion needs a voice.

PREPARING PREACHING SERIES FOR THE LAUNCH AND THE JOURNEY

Before you are ready to launch your new direction and after you have launched your new plan, consider how your preaching can provide the “burning platform” for your journey. Here are a few sermon series ideas you may want to explore:

- Great Commission Series – the beliefs of the church
- Acts 2 Series – Biblical Mandate (this series should include the five functions of the church, the Holy Spirit empowerment, the Pentecostal directive, and at least one message on today’s Pentecost)
- Ephesians 4:16 Series – the biblical model for church, the priesthood of the believers, serving the Lord and His church, the redefinition of ministry from pastors just *doing ministry* to *developing people to do ministry*.
- Great Commandment Series – behaviors of the church.
- We Can’t Stay Here – the necessity of moving from where we are to where God is calling us.
- The Spiritual Journey of Possessing Tomorrow - the applications that can be made from the story of Israel’s journey to the Promised Land

II. The Leadership Team

While the pastor will focus on the preaching in communicating vision, the leadership team must begin to unpack their Vision Team journey so others can be part of the process. The more people we can engage in the journey, the stronger our energy and resources will grow for the road ahead

Remember to keep the vision and core values as part of the continued strategy for communication.

***Effective leaders aren’t measured by how much they know,
but by their continued focus on what is important.***

Leaders who move together at the same pace will arrive at the same location at the same time. As leaders, we must help make this happen. We’re taking our team on a journey that will require each of us to remain connected to one another. This will ensure that each individual team member feels they are a valued part of the team and that people in the church and those visiting will see the united efforts of leadership.

Throughout the process, we have emphasized the importance of leadership. Schedule regular meetings with the vision team and your leadership team. Be sure that every leadership team member maintains focus on our vision and is aware of the strategic next steps ahead.

III. The Congregation

Imagine the day when your vision statement and values become embedded in the congregation! That’s the day when you start hearing your vision and values language from their lips and you see these things evident in the way that they live, both on Sundays and throughout their weeks. Arriving at such a day is usually a journey itself, but when people know where we’re going and why, and are now ready to bring their best to pursuing that destination, we can then say that a new lifecycle may well have been born.

When ministering to the congregation, be sure to keep the direction and pace for change within reach of those in the pews. When a church family feels disconnected from the leadership, they may tend to resist when the problem is only a lack of information or a clear understanding of how to take new steps.

Repetition and redundancy will be your friend provided you don't make the critical information boring and one-dimensional. Schedule services throughout the year when the objective is to keep everyone in focus. To capture the full essence of the vision, congregations need patience, continued explanation of the plan, and a workable solution for conflicts and misunderstandings.

The value of keeping the congregation informed is that leadership sees the progress being made, the congregation doesn't feel like there are private meetings taking place, and leaders can include the people in each step while modeling their complete dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Throughout the journey, the congregation needs to know how to stay connected to where the church is going, and to reconnect if along the way they have become disconnected for a time. Use every available communication resource to keep people focused on the journey together.

Managing Change Communication

As your change communication unfolds, you may find moments where certain aspects of your plan need to be emphasized. Because significant change encompasses so many different communication parts, at times your team or those you lead may demonstrate uncertainty or confusion with certain parts.

The chart below can serve as a guide for identifying the area(s) of emphasis needed, depending on where the uncertainty or confusion seems to be expressed.

Using the chart below, we can see that if all elements are being communicated effectively (Row 1), the result will most likely be "Successful Change." However, if we are currently experiencing a different result (Column 7), we can use this chart to determine which area(s) need greater emphasis.

For example, if we are experiencing "Confusion" or even "Chaos," this would indicate a need to emphasize "Vision" as this is the piece most lacking. If, instead, we are currently encountering "Conflict" or "Apathy" among our team or congregation, likely our "Values" need to be emphasized more fully.

Each row of the chart below indicates which item should be emphasized, depending on the result we are currently experiencing (Column 7). You will likely find this chart to be useful throughout your entire journey of implementing significant change.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vision	Values	Communi- cation	Skills	Resources	Action Plans	Successful Change
	Values	Communi- cation	Skills	Resources	Action Plans	Confusion Chaos
Vision		Communi- cation	Skills	Resources	Action Plans	Conflict Apathy
Vision	Values		Skills	Resources	Action Plans	Misunder- standing
Vision	Values	Communi- cation		Resources	Action Plans	Anxiety Insecurity
Vision	Values	Communi- cation	Skills		Action Plans	Frustration
Vision	Values	Communi- cation	Skills	Resources		False Starts

The above chart appears in "Leading in Times of Change," Leadership Development Resources, LLC, 2002.

Becoming an Intentional Communicator

As we have said, intentional communication is critical with every message you wish to communicate, not just when you are initiating significant change. In fact, every leader should seek continuous improvement in his or her ability to communicate effectively. The following insights can help you become a more effective communicator in all settings.

I. Connecting at the Heart Level¹

A. Who is my **AUDIENCE**?

- What occupies their **TIME**?
- What are their greatest **CONCERNS**?
- What do they **CARE DEEPLY** about?
- What do they **LONG FOR**?
- What do they **LACK**?
- What are they be **FACING** right now?

B. How can I say it so it makes **SENSE**?

- What do you want them to **KNOW**?
- What do you want them to **DO**?
- What do you want them to **EXPERIENCE**?
- **DISCUSS** the reason why they should do it
- **DEMONSTRATE** how to do it.

C. What is the most **POSITIVE** way to say it?

“The wise of heart is called perceptive, and pleasant speech increases persuasiveness.” (Proverbs 16:21, NRSV)

D. What is the most **ENCOURAGING** way to say it?

“Anxious hearts are very heavy, but a word of encouragement does wonders!” (Proverbs 12:25, TLB)

¹ Questions A-F are based on Rick Warren, “8 Questions to Ask When Preparing Your Sermon,” <http://pastors.com/8qs/>

- They need their **FAITH** reinforced.
- They need their **HOPE** renewed.
- They need their **LOVE** restored.

E. What is the most **POWERFUL** way to say it?

“We loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.” (1 Thessalonians 2:8, NIV)

F. What is the most **EFFECTIVE** way to say it?

II. The Communication Connection

- A. Communicators are **AUDIENCE** focused. Speakers are **SUBJECT** focused.
 - B. Communicators concentrate on **ATMOSPHERE**. Speakers concentrate on **TECHNIQUE**.
 - C. Communicators are **APPLICATION** oriented. Speakers are **INFORMATION** oriented.
 - D. Speaking is giving out. Connecting is getting through.
 - E. Great communicators have the ability to **CONNECT**.
 - F. Connecting with people is the bridge between **VISION** and action.
 - G. Communicators have a style that is totally consistent with who God made them to be.
 - H. Communicators **DISCERN** what is happening with their listeners.
 - I. Communicators use fresh **PHRASES** and easily remembered **SLOGANS**.
 - J. Communicators know how to begin.
 - Start with a comment that fits within the **IMMEDIATE SETTING**.
 - Compliment an action, person, or achievement.
 - Use a **SHOCKING** statement or statistic.
 - Use **EXAMPLES** or exhibits.
 - Ask weighted questions.
 - Give an **INSIDE** story.
 - Get **PERSONAL**.
-

- Use HUMOR.
- K. Communicators know people remember how you made them FEEL.
- L. Communicators make specific applications.
- M. Communicators adjust to the Spirit's whispers in the moment.
- N. Communicators create a sense of ANTICIPATION.
- O. Communicators affect CHANGE.

Preaching as Intentional Communication

Creating a Preaching Schedule

A planned preaching schedule can help get us on track with a true discipleship plan for those we lead. While some resist such planning, perhaps thinking that these efforts might undermine the leading of the Holy Spirit, we know that God is able to guide our planning whether we are working on a message for this week or one for months ahead. Of course, we will always want to maintain flexibility and be able to adjust where needed, but a good plan is like a road map for a trip. The journey is much clearer than simply picking roads as we come to them.

Let's look at a simple way to create a preaching schedule for your ministry. We're going to use the topic of launching vision for our church. With each message in your preaching schedule, you'll want to prepare for the 5 elements in message creation we discussed earlier.

Week 1 – Preach on the biblical definition of vision. Define what biblical vision is and how God uses biblical vision to set His church in order.

Week 2: Preach the complete overview of your church's vision, including all the elements of the vision statement. You could launch the logo, other promotional pieces, and why this vision statement will help this church family go to the next level.

Weeks 3–5: Preach the individual components of the vision statement each week. If relevant, week 3 could focus on the “vertical to God” idea of our vision statement; week 4 could address the “horizontal to the church family” concept; and week 5 could target the “horizontal to our lost world” component.

Within each message, you can present the vision statement as catalyst for your church's ministry for the next two to three years, and you can even start building bridges to other series of messages. With a preaching calendar, you can continually emphasize the vision throughout the year.

As you begin the process of a preaching schedule, remember the insights we introduced earlier in this session. If you are moving into a series-preaching approach, be sure to focus on only two or three major leadership themes during the first year. Focus on our passion for Christ's mission, your vision, and your core values.

REMEMBER – Throughout the process of preaching, we must ensure that our commitment to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment is prioritized. Evangelism, spiritual growth, and ministry service each must be included in the formation of your preaching agenda.

Three Calendars in the Church

When you make use of a preaching calendar, you can begin to experience the benefits of three calendars for strategically leading the local church. Once leaders begin to understand how these calendars function best, they can adjust their use for a greater focus on health and growth.

1. The **EVENTS** Calendar

The event calendar consists of the activities of the church. It is built by the ministry departments within the church, the special days calendar of events (Christmas, Easter, etc.) that occur annually, and other special events that each church schedules throughout the year. The events calendar will often be crowded with overlapping events—the youth group is raising money for camp, the kids' ministry is selling cookies for BGMC, the women's department has been and is currently selling cookbooks, and we have volunteer training scheduled for next week. These events can stretch the leadership energy and finances of the church and that of each church family. The events calendar is usually available to all departments, and scheduling is often focused on the individual ministries. It may have been built without regard for how ministries might be taking strength from other efforts. The events calendar in some instances is a first-come, first-serve calendar.

2. The **PREACHING** Calendar

The preaching calendar is just that, a preaching calendar. Here, the senior pastor determines the messages that will be delivered each Sunday morning. Many churches have a Sunday night service and/or a Wednesday night service. Each service should probably have its own preaching calendar.

In many churches the events calendar and the preaching calendar are independent of one another. Keep in mind that a preaching calendar exists, even if the pastor doesn't plan a preaching calendar, but provides messages as he senses their necessity. He or she determines from week to week or from series to series what will be preached. In many cases, there may be no organized thought or strategic process as to how the messages might connect to the events calendar or bring clarity to the people's understanding of where the church is headed together. Scheduling of special speakers or receiving of project offerings may occur randomly without connecting to a bigger picture. The preaching calendar gives direction to the content of worship services, but it might miss the opportunity to connect people to the action opportunities provided by the church's ministry events.

However, there is a third calendar that, when discovered and developed by the pastor along with the team, can give the church greater energy toward their vision and toward greater impact.

3. The **STRATEGIC** Calendar

The strategic calendar brings the events calendar and the preaching calendar to the same page. When the strategic calendar comes to the forefront, the pastor and leadership teams can begin to merge their efforts more effectively and can prayerfully establish direction, pace, and price for taking the church to the next level.

The strategic calendar looks at all the ministries of the church and the community, and then seeks opportunities to merge messages and series with significant opportunities to live out the messages' applications. This calendar can then focus the resources of the church and the efforts of ministry departments within the church on priorities established by the preaching series. Such a calendar can also look beyond a single year and provide a strategic approach to the full 2-3 year period of implementing your strategic plan. Simply put, the strategic calendar can maximize both new and long-standing events by connecting them to the messages being communicated on Sundays.

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