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# Acts 2 Journey Cohort

## Retreat 1 Handout

### Pastor and Vision Team Guide



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**Use the QR code to visit the Retreat 1 resources page.**

Here, you'll find video segments of the teaching, along with guidance on how to complete discussion activities prior to Retreat 2.

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**ENCOUNTER:** Acts 2:4

The first-century church began with the Encounter of Pentecost.

**MESSAGE:** Acts 2:14–36

Peter went out to the inquisitive Jews and explained what was happening; he was preaching the Message (or explanation) of what was happening. His message was so anointed that three thousand people were saved and immediately baptized.

**PROCESS:** Acts 2:42–47

Luke wrote about a process, that when implemented, resulted in the first-century church that turned the then-known world “upside down.”

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**A healthy church is one that . . .**

- Engages and maintains loving relationships
- Develops and mobilizes the people
- Acts with clear direction and outward focus
- Reproduces and multiplies his mission in other peoples and places
- Pursues and obeys God passionately

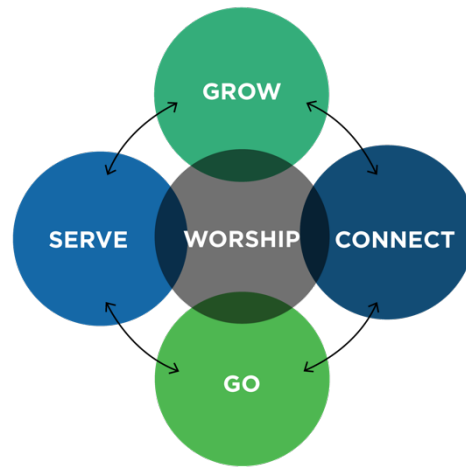
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**Ten Questions**

- Why do we exist? (Mission)
- Where are we going? (Vision)
- How will we behave? (Values)
- How will we get there? (Strategic plan)
- How will we engage new people? (Evangelism)
- How will we treat them once they arrive? (Fellowship)
- How will we disciple them? (Discipleship)
- How will we train them to serve? (Gift-oriented ministry)
- How will we inspire them to be missional (locally and globally)?
- How will we help them connect to God? (Worship)

Most church health experts derive five functions practiced by the first-century church from Acts 2:42–47:

- Evangelism
- Fellowship
- Discipleship
- Ministry
- Worship



### Building the Foundation

“Transformation is not a destination. For congregations it is not a place of arrival where the transformation journey can be declared as over. It is an ongoing journey. Congregations do not transform once. They are continually transforming.”

—George W. Bullard Jr., *Seven Enduring Principles for Transforming Your Congregation*

### A Prayer for the Future

*Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves, when our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little, when we arrive safely because we have sailed too close to the shore.*

*Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things we possess, we have lost our thirst for the waters of life; having fallen in love with life, we have ceased to dream of eternity; and in our efforts to build a new earth, we have allowed our vision of the new Heaven to dim.*

*Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly, to venture on wider seas where storms will show your mastery; where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars. We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes; and to push into the future in strength, courage, hope, and love.*

—Attributed to Sir Francis Drake (1540–1596)

## Introduction to the Acts 2 Journey cohort

The Acts 2 Journey Cohort team is leading the effort to equip local congregations to discover and pursue God’s vision for health and vitality. Utilizing biblical principles and best practices, the team has developed a strategic, faith-centered process called the Acts 2 Journey, which provides a clear template for a pastor and team to collectively discern God’s vision for the church.

The Acts 2 Journey template is culturally relevant, scalable to location, biblically based, and stylistically neutral.

Through in-depth training, leadership development, relational connecting, and peer learning, congregations are empowered to rediscover their purpose and continually to engage in a transformative process that allows them to reach their next-level potential.

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## Understanding Congregational Transformation

“For Christians there is a strong theological grounding for change. **We must change. The way things are in the world at any moment is never synonymous with God’s ultimate will.** There is always a ‘not yet’ quality and an incompleteness about things as they are. God is always pulling us into the future with a call for an order far different from the current state of things.”  
 Lovett H. Weems, Jr., *Church Leadership: Vision, Team, Culture, Integrity*

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On page 84 of *A Spirit-Empowered Church*, you will find a list and brief description of the five classifications of people who attend our churches each week.

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Congregational transformation is the process of change that occurs by adjusting behaviors, goals, relationships, structures, technologies, capabilities, and/or systems in response to an internal or external issue that causes the church to examine its present state and future direction in light of its kingdom potential.

**Transformation is a \_\_\_\_\_.**

Transformation is a biblical concept that is rooted in the principles of spiritual renewal and formation into the image of Christ. Often, the Apostle Paul used the concept of radical change to describe the process of salvation and the work of the Holy Spirit in believers’ lives.

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And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherd, and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11–12 ESV).

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And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18, ESV).

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17, NKJV).

**Transformation is \_\_\_\_\_.**

Spiritual transformation occurs through the power of the Holy Spirit. As a teacher and guide, the Holy Spirit leads us to repentance and salvation, enables Christ to dwell in us, and reveals truth that enables believers to live transformed lives.

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“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (John 14:26, ESV).

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“But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as first fruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:13, NIV).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22–23, ESV).

**Transformation is \_\_\_\_\_.**

At the center of the Acts 2 Journey is a belief in the potential for congregational transformation, that the church’s best years are still ahead. Often, we believe in the miracles, promises, and power of God for people in the Bible, but we do not believe they are available for us.

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“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10, NIV).

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“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer” (Matthew 21:22, NIV).

“For nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:37, ESV).

**Transformation begins \_\_\_\_\_.**

Congregations are changed as people are changed! Lasting transformation begins internally—within hearts and minds—as people are challenged and encouraged to unlearn what does not work and learn or relearn principles that will lead to transformation.

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“I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart” (Psalm 40:8, ESV).

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“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2).

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“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves” (Luke 10:1-3).

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Let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God (Hebrews 6:1, NIV).

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**Transformation is \_\_\_\_\_.**

Transformation is an intentional process that combines learning with doing. Pursuing change without a well-designed plan will likely lead the church into chaos, but when people can see how changes fit together in a shared direction, they can engage the change with more confidence.

“Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: ‘We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”’ When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed” (Acts 13:46-48, NIV).

**Transformation is a \_\_\_\_\_.**

Transformation is possible for any congregation, but it does not happen overnight. To ensure change occurs at multiple levels and in alignment with God’s vision for the future, congregations must employ a long-term process, such as the Acts 2 Journey.

“Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6, NIV).

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it” (2 Timothy 3:14, NIV).

To start the transformation process, we must start with our church’s current reality. If you were to open up Google Maps for directions, the program would prompt you to enter your current location before it could display directions to your destination. The same principle applies to taking our church to the next level. We are assessing our current realities without finding guilt, blaming an individual, or trying to justify our past.

The world is changing rapidly. Culture changes every three to four years. The church, however, typically changes every thirty to forty years.

## Culture

Church culture can be defined in terms of the *style*, *substance*, and *shadows* of a given church.

**Style:** how the church thinks and acts

**Substance:** the priorities and behaviors that the church's leaders model to the congregation

**Shadows:** the priorities and behaviors that the church's leaders exhibit behind closed doors

If the priorities and behaviors on display to the congregation (*substance*) align with the priorities and behaviors exhibited behind closed doors (*shadows*), then a positive culture of growth will result. However, if the substance and shadows are misaligned, a negative culture will develop.

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Like any organization, local churches have a life cycle—a predictable pattern of birth, growth, and even decline.

Therefore, for us to determine the life cycle, we need to discover where each church is on its life cycle without finding fault or blame.

Once we determine where we are, we can begin the journey to the next level in all areas of our church.

### Assessing Current Reality

In each **row** in the chart below, circle two statements that best describes your church.

|              |   |  |   |  |   |
|--------------|---|--|---|--|---|
| <b>ROW 1</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Positive, supportive attitude</li> <li>▪ Vision is always in focus and the highest priority</li> <li>▪ High commitment level</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strong sense of mission and purpose among every member</li> <li>▪ High level of “ownership”</li> <li>▪ Everybody is finding their place</li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High visibility and understanding of mission and vision</li> <li>▪ Ministries share a common purpose</li> <li>▪ Ministry leaders feel well-trained for their assignments</li> </ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clarity of mission and vision seems in decline</li> <li>▪ New members do not sense church’s purpose</li> <li>▪ Focus has shifted to the needs and likes of members</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mission/vision are unclear</li> <li>▪ We’re looking for that “magic bullet” that can turn things around.</li> <li>▪ We talk about “good old days” more than about our hopes or plans for the future</li> </ul> |
| <b>ROW 2</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mutual dependency requires everyone to be involved or leave</li> <li>▪ Nearly all members are actively serving</li> <li>▪ Strong sense of team throughout</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High percentage of individuals’ time and identity committed to the church</li> <li>▪ Volunteers are easy to find</li> <li>▪ Lots of congregational energy</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New members quickly find a place to become involved</li> <li>▪ Good level of enthusiasm among membership for participation</li> <li>▪ Clear system for discovering my gifts</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some members assume others can get the job done</li> <li>▪ More paid staff hired to lead or do ministry</li> <li>▪ Original members feel “We have done our part”</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Programs eliminated for lack of participation</li> <li>▪ Difficult to find volunteers</li> <li>▪ Seems like 10 percent of members do 90 percent of the work</li> </ul>   |
| <b>ROW 3</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minimal organization</li> <li>▪ Communication is very strong—everyone knows what and why of all we do</li> <li>▪ Spontaneity in decision making</li> </ul>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The “why” of ministry always determines the “how”</li> <li>▪ Structure is fluid and is created in response to needs</li> <li>▪ Meaningful traditions are beginning to form</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New programs created to respond to new needs</li> <li>▪ Delegation of leadership responsibility is evident.</li> <li>▪ New roles and responsibilities have been created</li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Few new programs added</li> <li>▪ The “how” of ministry has become more important than the “why”</li> <li>▪ We’re a bit too busy to consider new ideas</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Programs eliminated due lack of leaders or funds</li> <li>▪ Very few new ministries but more focus on those we’ve been doing for several years</li> <li>▪ Primary goal is preservation / survival</li> </ul>   |
| <b>ROW 4</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members are receptive to new ideas</li> <li>▪ Objectives are quickly accomplished</li> <li>▪ Everything we do aligns with mission/vision</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Change is easily adopted and integrated</li> <li>▪ Suggestions from all levels of membership</li> <li>▪ It seems we’re getting better at everything we do</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New proposals given serious consideration</li> <li>▪ Church leaders responsible for initiating and implementing</li> <li>▪ A team of leaders makes most decisions.</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Few changes proposed</li> <li>▪ Few changes considered that radically depart from status quo</li> <li>▪ Most people prefer to keep things the same</li> </ul>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “We’ve never done it that way before”</li> <li>▪ Rationalizations often made for why things can’t be done</li> <li>▪ Many think we can’t do some of the things other churches do</li> </ul>                    |
| <b>ROW 5</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Morale is high</li> <li>▪ People are finding great value in their participation.</li> <li>▪ Solutions to conflicts seem easy to find.</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Morale is higher</li> <li>▪ Lots of energy and ideas.</li> <li>▪ Everyone pulls together to help us be successful</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Morale is highest</li> <li>▪ Our greatest goals are being achieved</li> <li>▪ Confidence is contagious that goals can be reached</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insiders don’t always share everything with everyone else</li> <li>▪ People are getting weary in ministry efforts.</li> <li>▪ Commitment levels declining</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ People attend more out of habit than expectation</li> <li>▪ Most efforts aren’t as strong as they once were</li> <li>▪ Most of our efforts feel like a struggle</li> </ul>                                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |   |  |   |  |   |

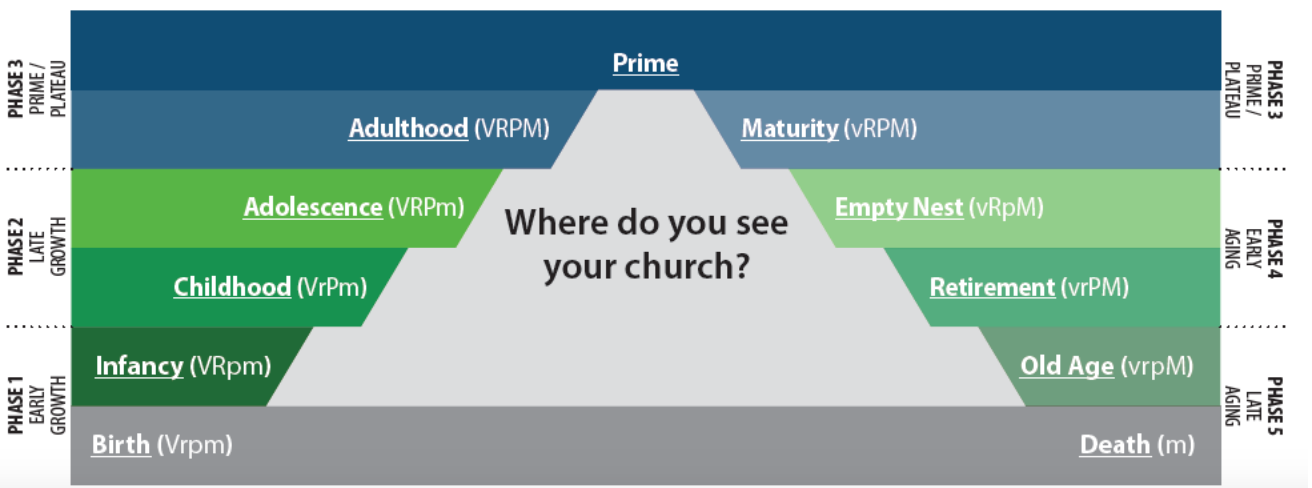
\_\_\_\_\_ is the current understanding of God’s preferred future for a congregation that is cast by leadership and owned by membership.

\_\_\_\_\_ refer to activities to include people in the life of the church such as evangelism, outreach, assimilation, and discipleship.

\_\_\_\_\_ are the functional attempts to provide projects, ministries, services, activities, and training for people connected to the congregation.

\_\_\_\_\_ refers to the systems and structures that work to undergird the fulfillment of vision, and the implementation of relationships and programs. It includes the administration of resources, day-to-day operations, and overall efficiency.

### Congregational Life Stage Diagram



“The Life Cycle and Stages of Congregational Development,” George Bullard, 2001. Used by permission.

|                             |                    |  |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| PHASE 1<br>EARLY<br>GROWTH  | <b>Birth</b>       | Vision is the driver; relationships, programs, and management are not fully developed. |
|                             | <b>Infancy</b>     | Vision and relationships are dominant.   |
| PHASE 2<br>LATE<br>GROWTH   | <b>Childhood</b>   | Vision and programs are the focus. (Shift focus from Relationships to Programs)        |
|                             | <b>Adolescence</b> | Vision, relationships, and programs are emphasized. It is often a time of growth.      |
| PHASE 3<br>PRIME<br>PLATEAU | <b>Adulthood</b>   | Vision, relationship, programs, and management are all fully developed.                |
|                             | <b>Maturity</b>    | Vision is no longer dominant. Relationships, programs, and management are the focus.   |
| PHASE 4<br>EARLY<br>AGING   | <b>Empty Nest</b>  | Vision and programs not dominant. Management drives the direction of the church.       |
|                             | <b>Retirement</b>  | Vision and relationships are minimized as the church renews its focus on programs.     |
| PHASE 5<br>LATE<br>AGING    | <b>Old Age</b>     | Management is the only factor that is still dominant or fully developed.               |
|                             | <b>Death</b>       | The congregation ceases functioning as a spiritual and vibrant faith community.        |

After you finish adding the circled statements in each column of the Assessing Current Reality chart, here's how to determine your place on the life cycle diagram:

Column 1 = Phase 1,

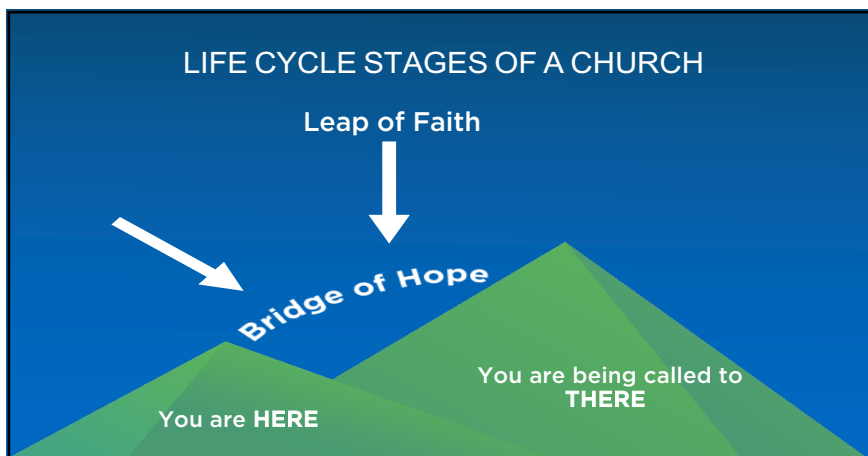
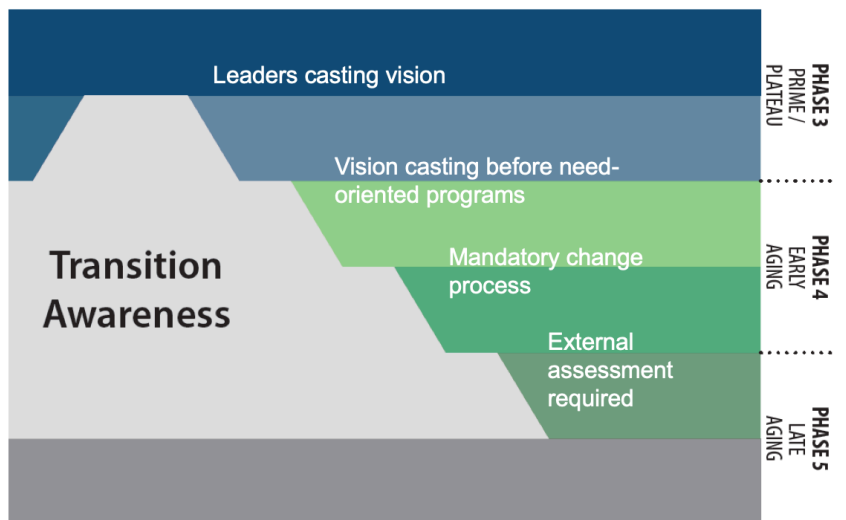
Column 2 = Phase 2,

Column 3 = Phase 3, etc.

The column with the largest number determines the church's phase on the life cycle.

If each person has reached a different conclusion about the church's current reality, discussion should occur until consensus can be determined. For the next 15–20 minutes, have everyone share where they see the church. By the end of the discussion, teams should come to an agreement regarding the church's current reality.

For video instruction on how to complete the Life Cycle assessment, use the QR code on the first page of this handout or visit [tinyurl.com/a2jvision](http://tinyurl.com/a2jvision).



## Ten Questions

Now that we have determined our place on the life cycle, we will address the first two of the ten questions:

- Why do we exist?
- Where are we going?

## Mission

The Acts 2 Church process directs the local church to grasp foundational teachings to establish the mission. The mission of the church is the objective of the church—who we are and how should we operate. The Acts 2 Church has been established with the Great Commission as its spiritual direction and the Great Commandment as its guide for love-directed attitudes and action.

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They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:42-47, NIV).

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The Great Commission focuses on the \_\_\_\_\_ system which Christ taught.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19–20, ESV).

The Great Commandment focuses on the \_\_\_\_\_ system Christ modeled.

And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37–39).

The church's mission . . .

1. Provides long-term \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for the local church.
2. Declares the church's understanding of biblical \_\_\_\_\_ that shape beliefs and actions.
3. Captures the heart of Christ as it pertains to our \_\_\_\_\_ to all mankind.

### Vision

The first step toward realizing your full kingdom potential is developing the ability to envision it. Vision is a clear, compelling picture of the future. It is seeing what could be, should be, and must be in light of God’s preferred purpose and plan.

- Vision is the ability to \_\_\_\_\_ explore possibilities.
- Vision understands who we are and what we are \_\_\_\_\_ designed to do
  - A megachurch is not a small church grown up; a small church is not a megachurch deficient.
- Vision answers “\_\_\_\_\_ are we going?” and “\_\_\_\_\_ are we doing it?”
- Vision is the ability to imagine life beyond present boundaries.
- Vision is based on \_\_\_\_\_, but transcends current \_\_\_\_\_.
- Vision unites people around a common \_\_\_\_\_.
- Vision gives people clear focus on an \_\_\_\_\_ destination.
- Vision always entails \_\_\_\_\_.
- Vision involves \_\_\_\_\_ and invites \_\_\_\_\_.
- Vision pushes against the status quo.
- Vision is memorable, \_\_\_\_\_, ambitious, and relevant.
- Vision is \_\_\_\_\_ than your ability to achieve.

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“Vision is the best manifestation of creative imagination and the primary motivation of human action. It’s the ability to see beyond our present reality, to create, to invent what does not yet exist, to become what we not yet are. It gives us capacity to live out our imagination instead of our memory.”  
 – Steven Covey, Roger Merrill, Rebecca Merrill, *First Things First: To Live, to Love, to Leave a Legacy*

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If we were to add a mathematical formula to the defining elements of vision, it could look something like this:

- DIRECTION (Where are we going?)
- + PACE (How fast do we want to get there?)
- + PRICE (What is the investment we must make?)

#### BIBLICAL VISION

“When God calls a man or woman to spiritual leadership in the church, He also gives vision for the fulfillment of that calling. I believe to the core of my being that if God blesses you with an opportunity to lead, He will give you a clear vision of the path and the goal. He will not leave you to fend for yourself, stumbling in darkness and trying to figure out how to move or where to go. He gives you vision so that you can move ahead with confidence and certainty.”  
 –Kirk Nowery, *The Stewardship of Life*

**What distinguishes a good idea from a God-inspired vision?**

| A Good Idea   | A God-Inspired Vision  |
|---|--|
| Provides a solution for a current problem.<br>Can come from someone else’s story.<br>Is based on personal experience.<br>Is limited by human ability.<br>Is self-serving.<br>Is exclusive.<br>Is goal-oriented.<br>Expresses a personal desire. | Provides a _____ for generations to come.<br>Flows out of God’s _____ plan for my life.<br>Has scriptural _____.<br>Is limitless because of God’s _____.<br>Serves the needs of others.<br>_____ for others.<br>Is people-oriented.<br>Expresses a shared _____. |

**GROUP ASSIGNMENT** In the **Appendix**, you will find an chart entitled “First Century vs. Fourth Century. For video instruction on how to complete this assignment, use the QR code on the first page of this handout or visit [thisurl.com/Christian](#)

**Building on the First-Century Model**

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers (Acts 1:12–14, ESV).

**Imagine a twenty-first-century church that:**

- Received the \_\_\_\_\_ willingly.
- Demonstrated power supernaturally.
- Was led \_\_\_\_\_.
- Prayed fervently.
- Fellowshipped \_\_\_\_\_.
- Taught sound doctrine consistently
- Preached the gospel \_\_\_\_\_
- Shared resources liberally.
- Grew \_\_\_\_\_.

The Book of Acts is an account of the birth and growth of the first-century church. Small groups of faithful believers met together, prayed together, and lived out the Great Commission. They were empowered by the Holy Spirit, motivated by mission, and committed to the cause of Christ. As a result of their efforts, a global movement began—the gospel story has been preached around the world, and millions of people have been saved and transformed by the power of God.

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“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9, ESV).

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“But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15, ESV).

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## The Power of Your Story

At the heart of the story of God’s plan for salvation are personal testimonies. Each Christian has a story of how he or she came to know Jesus in a personal, life-changing way. By sharing and reflecting upon God’s work in the lives of people, the church—as individuals and as a collective body—is compelled to renew its commitment to mission and inspired to dream of new ways to know Christ, to make Him known, and to serve Him and others.

Please remember when you share your testimony/story:

- You should have the ability to share your story in less than three minutes.
- Your story is an important part of your church’s overall strategic plan.
- Names don’t build churches; stories do.

To build an effective Acts 2 Church, there can only be one starting place: Acts 2. In this amazing portion of Scripture, we see three foundation stones for the Church that Jesus established. In the first portion of Acts 2, we encounter the powerful events that launched the Church on the Day of Pentecost. God poured out His Spirit upon His people with the primary purpose of empowering them as witnesses at home and abroad.

The final portion of Acts 2 shows us what the Church looks like in action. Luke describes how the Early Church functioned and reveals their priorities and behavior. Those same actions drive the church today.

## Developing Vision

Where there is no vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29:18, KJV).

We know Proverbs 29:18 is a powerful verse. However, let’s think about this: what happens when there is a biblical vision cast? Where there *is* vision, the people *flourish*.

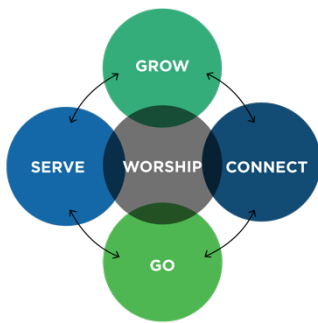
Too often, leaders seek vision in isolation and separate themselves from the people they feel called to reach. Some seek the most marketable ideas, imagining that if they can just an appealing idea or phrase, people will rally to their pursuit. However, if you want to find God’s vision for your life and for your church, you must look where God is looking: people!

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“These five activities . . . constitute the business or purpose, of the church. It is what a biblically functioning community looks like. It is what the church does.”

—James Emery White, *Rethinking the Church: A Challenge to Creative Redesign in an Age of Transition*

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### Information Gathering for Casting Vision

Before we can create and cast an overarching vision statement for the church, we must gather the correct information for the vision statement. The process for acquiring this information begins by considering how five biblical functions will play into the vision statement. If the mission is the biblical foundation for a church’s beliefs and behaviors, then the biblical functions of the Acts 2 church describe how our church should operate. These functions are found in Acts 2:42–47. In this passage of Scripture, we see five biblical functions emerge:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:42–47, NIV).

### What should the Church be doing?

- Fellowship (Connect)
- Discipleship (Grow)
- Gift-Oriented Ministry (Serve)
- Evangelism (Go)
- Worship

It’s important that we acknowledge up front that we are already engaged in these five actions as a church. In fact, in some way and with differing levels of effectiveness, every local church pursues these actions. That’s why we say that the Acts 2 Journey is not a program. A program is something you choose to do or choose not to do. A program is something you can start and stop.

Every church is engaged in the functions described in Acts 2, regardless of whether their leaders choose to take this journey. To some degree, every church is patterning their efforts after the Acts 2 Church.

The local church should regularly assess its effectiveness in each of the five Acts 2 functions. A key part of the strategic plan a church must define will include the steps it will take in each of these areas.

The following exercise will give each team member the opportunity to their own church in these areas.

In each row, mark the number that best describes where you see your church in relation to each of the five biblical functions. Add the numbers from each row to determine a total. A sample is provided below.

**Biblical Functions Assessment**

| <b>Biblical Function: WORSHIP (EXAMPLE)</b>   | <b>1<br/>Not at all</b> | <b>2<br/>Rarely</b> | <b>3<br/>Sometim</b> | <b>4<br/>Often</b> | <b>5<br/>Very</b> |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Our worship is Spirit-empowered and reflects a sense of reverence for God in His holiness.                        | 1                       |                     |                      |                    |                   |
| Our worship supports the spiritual growth of our congregation and inspires us to live out our faith in the world. |                         |                     | 3                    |                    |                   |
| We regularly engage in individual and corporate prayer.   |                         |                     |                      | 4                  |                   |

Total: 8

| <b>Biblical Function: WORSHIP</b>   | <b>1<br/>Not at all</b> | <b>2<br/>Rarely</b> | <b>3<br/>Sometimes</b> | <b>4<br/>Often</b> | <b>5<br/>Very Often</b> |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Our worship is Spirit-empowered and reflects a sense of reverence for God in His holiness.                        |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |
| Our worship supports the spiritual growth of our congregation and inspires us to live out our faith in the world. |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |
| We regularly engage in individual and corporate prayer.   |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Biblical Function: FELLOWSHIP (CONNECT)</b>  | <b>1<br/>Not at all</b> | <b>2<br/>Rarely</b> | <b>3<br/>Sometimes</b> | <b>4<br/>Often</b> | <b>5<br/>Very Often</b> |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| A sense of belonging is nurtured and widespread within our congregation among various kinds of people.  |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |
| Caring, loving relationships are experienced through in-depth fellowship. When conflict occurs, we are able to resolve it and move beyond it. |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |
| We support and encourage members in their contacts and involvement within the community around us.  |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Biblical Function: DISCIPLESHIP (GROW)</b>  | <b>1<br/>Not at all</b> | <b>2<br/>Rarely</b> | <b>3<br/>Sometimes</b> | <b>4<br/>Often</b> | <b>5<br/>Very Often</b> |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Our church expresses the importance of bringing individuals to maturity.   |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |
| Members are spiritually nourished through life application-oriented teaching of God’s Word.  |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |
| We are strong in our ability to integrate new members into the congregation. Spiritual maturation is as important as numerical growth. |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Biblical Function: MINISTRY (SERVE)</b>  | <b>1<br/>Not at all</b> | <b>2<br/>Rarely</b> | <b>3<br/>Sometimes</b> | <b>4<br/>Often</b> | <b>5<br/>Very Often</b> |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| People are equipped to minister according to their unique gift mix.   |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |
| Members are joyful stewards, sharing their time, talents, and money.  |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |
| Participants in our congregation are encouraged to be involved in its mission and ministry. This congregation is strongly focused on serving the wider community beyond the congregation. |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Biblical Function: EVANGELISM (GO)</b>  | <b>1<br/>Not at all</b> | <b>2<br/>Rarely</b> | <b>3<br/>Sometimes</b> | <b>4<br/>Often</b> | <b>5<br/>Very Often</b> |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Our members actively share the gospel with spiritually lost people, resulting in regular conversion growth.                        |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |
| Training and/or support is available to members to help them to share their faith.   |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |
| People are being added to the church by conversion growth, then disciplined in doctrine, spiritual formation, and ministry skills. |                         |                     |                        |                    |                         |

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

- What did your group list as **strongest**? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- What did your group list as **weakest**? \_\_\_\_\_

After working with hundreds of churches, our team has discovered that churches often answer this in similar ways. Most commonly, church leaders assess either worship or fellowship as the primary strength of their church, while the overwhelming majority identify evangelism as their area of weakness. Our ultimate goal is to make progress in each of these areas, so we aren’t going to dismiss any of them as unimportant.

**GROUP ASSIGNMENT**

In the **Appendix**, you will find additional space to complete this assignment. For video instruction, use the QR code on the first page of this handout or visit [tinyurl.com/a2jvision](http://tinyurl.com/a2jvision).

**I Dream of a Church**

Discuss the following for each of the five functions of the church:

- I dream of a church where fellowship is . . .
- I dream of a church where discipleship is . . .
- I dream of a church where gift-oriented ministry is . . .
- I dream of a church where evangelism is ....
- I dream of a church where worship is . . .

Brainstorm words that you associate with each function. Some examples of finalized dream statements are provided below:

- **Connect:** welcome, find connection, compassion, hospitable, kind, warm, greeters
  - **Dream statement example:** I dream of a church where fellowship is an expression of God's love demonstrated in life-giving relationships that are multigenerational, forgiving, inviting, and fun.
- **Grow:** teaching, growth track, intentional, challenging, accountability, resource
  - **Dream statement example:** I dream of a church where discipleship is mentoring, training, and equipping believers through the Word of God to be mature disciples who in turn disciple others.
- **Serve:** servant-hearted, empowered, trained, equipping others to serve, gifts and talents, teams
  - **Dream statement example:** I dream of a church where every believer has discovered their spiritual gifts and confidently exercises them to demonstrate God's love.
- **Go:** marketplace evangelism, compassion, generous, relationships
  - **Dream statement example:** I dream of a church where evangelism is a lifestyle that reveals God's love and demonstrates compassion to people through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.
- **Worship:** alive, vibrant, life-changing, permeating, transformation, all-encompassing
  - **Dream statement example:** I dream of a church where worship is an authentic, Spirit-filled lifestyle that is biblical, intimate, relevant, and life changing.

Use the words you came up with to begin crafting a one-sentence dream statement for each of the five functions in the chart below. As a team, continue working to finalize these dream statements before Retreat 2.

| Function | Dream Statement         |
|----------|-------------------------|
| Connect  | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| Grow     | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| Serve    | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| Go       | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| Worship  | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |

### Creating the Vision Statement

Once you begin to imagine how the five functions could look in your church, you can see the impact a vision statement will have in focusing your church to go to the next level.

Your vision statement should address three areas:

- Vertical to God,
- Horizontal to the church
- Horizontal to the lost

**GROUP ASSIGNMENT**

In the **Appendix**, you will find a vision statement group assignment. Agree on a vision statement that is nine words or less and that represents all five functions, either specifically or implied. For video instruction, use the QR code on the first page of this handout or visit [tinyurl.com/a2jvision](http://tinyurl.com/a2jvision).

The best vision statements combine the passion of our leaders, the abilities of our people, and the needs of our community.

Begin with the ministry passions that keep coming up in your vision conversations. Your vision statement should help the average person in the pew want to be actively involved in the life and ministry of the church.

Draft vision statement:

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## Review

### Mission

- The mission of your church is based on the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.
- The mission provides long-term direction and stability for the church.
- The mission declares the church’s core biblical philosophy.
- The mission captures the heart of your church’s ministry.

### Vision

- The vision is the dream of the church given by God.
- A vision creates enthusiasm and energy in the present about the future of your church.
- A vision captures and maximizes what is unique about your church.
- A vision draws people in and calls them to commitment and involvement.

### Recommended Resources

- *A Spirit-Empowered Church*  
Alton Garrison
- *Developing the Leader Within You*  
John C. Maxwell
- *A Spirit-Empowered Life*  
Mike Clarensau
- *There's Hope for Your Church: First Steps to Restoring Healthy and Growth*  
Gary McIntosh

### Biblical Functions of the Church

- Fellowship (Connect)
- Discipleship (Grow)
- Gift-Oriented Ministry (Serve)
- Evangelism (Go)
- Worship

### Personal Assignment

- Join your team in 13 weeks of prayer (see below).
- Develop a vision statement for your life, seeking God for His direction for your life.
- Ask the Lord to open areas of ministry to you. You are a vital part of the future of your church.
- Schedule a three-day fast to support your prayer time before the Lord prior to the next retreat.
- Look for opportunities to demonstrate your personal vision statement to others.
- If you're not already involved in personal Bible-study devotion, read the Gospel of Mark before the next meeting and find fifteen new spiritual insights.

### Group Assignment

- As a group, join together in 13 weeks of prayer (see below).
- Bring your "I dream of a church" statements for the five functions of the church to Retreat 2. (You will need these statements in Retreat 3.) Using what you began in the above exercise, finalize a one-sentence statement for each function.
- Bring your vision statement to Retreat 2.
- Read and discuss chapters 1 to 9 in *A Spirit-Empowered Church: An Acts 2 Ministry Model* by Alton Garrison (available in English and Spanish).

The following content should be used to guide Vision Team meetings between Retreats 1 and 2.

## Meeting 1: Review the Life Cycle Assessment

Our Current Life Cycle Stage: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. Birth:** The Birth stage is driven by the expression of a passionate God-given Vision concerning the life of the newly emerging congregation. Relationships, Programs, and Management activities are happening, but they are not fully developed at this stage. Leadership is expressed through vision, and assists in fueling the forward progress of the congregation.
- 2. Infancy:** Vision and Relationships are dominant. The expression of discipleship patterns that focus on worship, spiritual development, and the formation of warm and rich relationship patterns or a sense of true community in the congregation characterize infancy. During Infancy the passion of the congregation to fulfill its vision will increase as people discover their role in this exciting spiritual and strategic journey. Out of this passion people readily volunteer to do the work of the congregation because their congregation has the character of a movement they very much want to enhance and empower. Healthy patterns of worship, evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, and ministry and missions are established during this stage.
- 3. Childhood:** This stage focuses on Vision and Programs. Childhood is initiated by the realization that the congregation is succeeding, but that its programs, ministries, and activities are unorganized and not developed in a form that will allow the congregation to reach its maximum potential. The energy that was going into the development of deep, meaningful Relationships is now focused on developing and implementing the Programs structure for the congregation.
- 4. Adolescence:** During this stage, Vision, Relationships, and Programs are all emphasized. It is often a time of a great crescendo of qualitative and quantitative growth. The congregation is able to relax following five to six years of program development and implementation. People can enjoy their relationship with God and one another. It is also a time of some chaos as people begin to multiply the dreams they have for the future of the congregation, and the core dream or vision of the congregation may appear fuzzy.
- 5. Adulthood:** Vision, Relationships, Programs, and Management—are all fully developed. The congregation is ready to soar as a fully development spiritual community with great resources and the proper balance or alignment of these resources.
- 6. Maturity:** Maturity is when Vision is no longer dominant or fully developed. The congregation is no longer living out the vision that God has given them. They are, instead, living out the patterns of Relationships, Programs, and Management they have developed. Without the fueling and driving aspects of Vision, the congregation is being motivated by Management. At the same time, Maturity may be a very high quality stage in the life of the congregation. There continues to be a crescendo of quality, even if Vision is diminished. Often congregations will plateau numerically during Maturity.
- 7. Empty Nest:** Empty Nest is when Vision and Programs are no longer dominant. The congregation is experiencing disintegration of the quality and quantity of programs, ministries, and activities. Management is driving the direction of the congregation. Relationships, while still vital, are turning increasingly inward in their focus.
- 8. Retirement:** Retirement is when Vision and Relationships are no longer dominant or fully developed. Management is driving the direction of the congregation. Programs are once again dominant as congregations seek to revitalize their programs, ministries, and activities.
- 9. Old Age:** Old Age is when Vision, Relationships, and Programs are no longer dominant or fully developed. Management is the only factor that is still dominant or fully developed. As such the habit or pattern, generally at a mediocre level, drives the direction of the congregation.
- 10. Death:** Death is when a congregation ceases functioning as a Christ-centric faith community with regular worship, discipleship, and fellowship activity

### Meeting 1: First Century vs. Fourth Century

#### Returning to God's Original Plan

The following exercise will provide a clearer picture of how you see your church. In each of the 17 categories, write down whether your church more closely resembles a first-century or fourth-century church. Write down either a "1" or a "4" in each row of the third column of the chart.

For video instruction, use the QR code on the first page of the handout or visit [tinyurl.com/a2jvision](http://tinyurl.com/a2jvision).

|               | First-Century Church    | Fourth Century Onward   | Our Church |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Lord's Supper | Common Meal             | Ceremony                |            |
| Worship       | Participation           | Observation             |            |
| Witness       | Relationship            | Salesmanship            |            |
| Ministry      | Personal                | Social                  |            |
| Leadership    | Gifted, Called Servants | Professionals           |            |
| Growth        | Multiplication          | Addition                |            |
| Mission       | Being                   | Supporting Missionaries |            |
| Discipleship  | On-the-Job              | Classroom Training      |            |
| Fellowship    | Community Living        | Large Meetings          |            |
| Body Life     | Lifestyle               | Membership              |            |
| Gifts         | Widespread Use          | Limited Use             |            |
| Empowerment   | God's Power             | Human Ability           |            |
| Buildings     | Functional              | Sacred Meeting Places   |            |
| Membership    | Producer                | Consumer                |            |
| Child Care    | Parental Responsibility | Church Responsibility   |            |
| Bible Study   | Doers of the Word       | Hearers of the Word     |            |
| Evangelism    | "Go" Structures         | "Come" Structures       |            |

Adapted from William Beckham, *The Second Reformation: Reshaping the Church for the 21st Century*

Which of these areas present the best opportunities for our church to develop more of a first-century focus?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Meeting 2: Our Church's Dream Statements

Continue working on a one-sentence dream statement for each of the five functions in the chart below. Bring this completed assignment sheet to Retreat 3 to refer to when you work on your strategic plan. **For video instruction, use the QR code on the first page of the handout or visit [tinyurl.com/a2jvision](https://tinyurl.com/a2jvision).**

| Function | Dream Statement         |
|----------|-------------------------|
| Connect  | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| Grow     | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| Serve    | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| Go       | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| Worship  | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |

### Meeting 3: Our Church’s Vision Statement

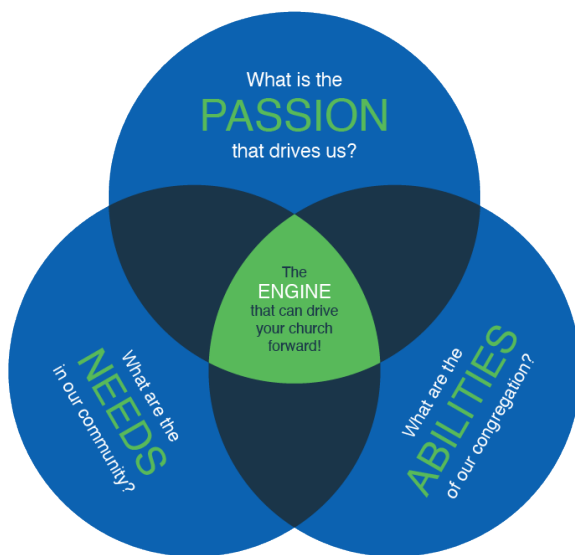


As you continue the practice of developing vision by looking in the eyes of people, pay attention to what keeps coming up. What is the Holy Spirit speaking to you?

The right vision for a church is one that reflects not only the passions of leaders, but the abilities of the congregation and the needs of the community.

If vision is only driven by pastoral passion and focus, the people may lack the needed capacity to function effectively in the path the pastor wishes to go. In such cases, the future will be filled with frustration for both the people and the pastor.

The right vision for a church is the nexus of three circles—the leader’s passion, the congregation’s abilities, and the community’s need.



Where these three intersect, the church will find . . .

1. the vision that pastor can lead because it’s his or her **passion**,
2. the vision the people can embrace and fulfill because it matches their **abilities**,
3. the vision the community will respond to because it connects with their **need**.

**Find that merger point and you will find the engine to drive your church forward!**

If necessary, revise your church’s vision statement:

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## 13 Weeks of Prayer

*“Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:19, ESV).*

“Prayer is our means of communication with our Heavenly Father. Prayer is not primarily about learning or having an emotional experience. Prayer is primarily an act of love. When we pray, in addition to expressing our needs, we communicate our love to our Heavenly Father. Then, in the quietness of our devotional time, He speaks words of hope, encouragement, strength, courage, and healing to our spirit.”

—Alton Garrison

### How to Use This Guide

Over the next 13 weeks, you will join with others in dialogue and prayer to build a strong spiritual foundation for the Acts 2 Journey. The following has been designed to guide you as you engage in prayer, reflection, and dialogue. As a starting point for prayer, each week a prayer focus is outlined with corresponding Scriptures for personal study and reflection. Individuals are encouraged to pray about issues related to the prayer focus, record their insights and/or issues, and discuss them with their prayer group during the twice-monthly transformative encounter.

### Recommendations for Structuring Transformative Encounters

- Discussion of prayer focus
- Insights from personal time in prayer
- Application for congregational transformation/Acts 2 Journey
- Sharing prayer requests for individuals and congregations
- Group prayer
- Journal

### Other Considerations

*Connection.* Relationship building is a priority throughout the process. Be open to making new connections within the congregation. *Confidentiality.* As people reflect, dialogue, and pray, they will inevitably have new discoveries and be faced with their own personal challenges. The prayer groups should be safe places for people to share their thoughts and personal challenges without judgment or fear of confidentiality being broken. Be clear with one another concerning your need for confidentiality and about your expectations of one another.

**Week 1 Prayer Focus: Compelled to Pray**  
**Guiding Scriptures**

**James 5:16, ESV**

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

**Hebrews 4:16, ESV**

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**Mark 11:24, ESV**

“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

**Philippians 4:6, ESV**

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

**1 John 5:14, ESV**

And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.

**Jeremiah 29:12, ESV**

“Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you.”

**Matthew 21:22, ESV**

“And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”

**Personal Discoveries:**

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**Application for the Acts 2 Journey:**

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**Week 2 Prayer Focus: Commitment to God**

**Guiding Scriptures**

**Proverbs 3:5–6, ESV**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

**Matthew 6:33, ESV**

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

**Mark 12:30, ESV**

“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

**Deuteronomy 10:12–13, ESV**

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?”

**Romans 14:8, ESV**

For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

**Deuteronomy 30:19–20, ESV**

“. . . I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

**Personal Discoveries:**

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**Application for the Acts 2 Journey:**

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### Week 3 Prayer Focus: Cost of Discipleship

#### Guiding Scriptures

**Luke 9:23–24, ESV**

And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.”

**John 15:5–6, ESV**

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.”

**John 15:20, ESV**

“Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.”

**Luke 14:26–27, ESV**

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.”

**Galatians 2:20, ESV**

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

**Personal Discoveries:**

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**Application for the Acts 2 Journey:**

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**Week 4 Prayer Focus: Condition of the Heart**

**Guiding Scriptures**

**1 Samuel 16:7, ESV**

But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.

**Proverbs 23:7, NKJV**

For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

**Proverbs 4:23, ESV**

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

**Luke 6:45, ESV**

“The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

**Proverbs 27:19, ESV**

As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man.

**Psalms 139:23–24, ESV**

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

**Psalms 51:10, ESV**

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

**Personal Discoveries:**

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**Application for the Acts 2 Journey:**

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### Week 5 Prayer Focus: Careful Words

#### Guiding Scriptures

Psalm 17:3, ESV

You have tried my heart, you have visited me by night, you have tested me, and you will find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.

Proverbs 4:24, ESV

Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you.

Proverbs 8:7, ESV

For my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

Proverbs 21:23, ESV

Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.

Proverbs 27:2, ESV

Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.

Ecclesiastes 5:6, ESV

Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?

James 1:26, ESV

If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

#### Personal Discoveries:

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#### Application for the Acts 2 Journey:

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## Week 6 Prayer Focus: Channels of Love

### Guiding Scriptures

#### 1 Peter 4:8–9, ESV

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

#### 1 John 3:18, ESV

Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

#### Romans 5:8, ESV

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

#### John 13:34, ESV

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”

#### 1 John 4:7–12, ESV

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

### Personal Discoveries:

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### Application for the Acts 2 Journey:

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### Week 7 Prayer Focus: Community, Care, and Compassion

#### Guiding Scriptures

**Romans 12:10, 13–17, ESV**

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor . . . Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.

**Romans 14:19, ESV**

So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

**Ephesians 4:1–3, ESV**

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**Ephesians 4:29, 31–32, ESV**

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear . . . Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

**Personal Discoveries:**

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**Application for the Acts 2 Journey:**

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## Week 8 Prayer Focus: The Church's Mission

### Guiding Scriptures

#### Matthew 5:14–16, ESV

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

#### Mark 16:15, ESV

And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”

#### Acts 1:8, NIV

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

#### Matthew 9:37–38, ESV

“Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’”

#### Matthew 28:18–20, ESV

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

### Personal Discoveries:

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### Application for the Acts 2 Journey:

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## Week 9 Prayer Focus: Chosen for Good Works

### Guiding Scriptures

#### Ephesians 2:10, ESV

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

#### Matthew 5:13–16, ESV

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

#### Ephesians 4:11–13, ESV

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

#### Romans 12:6–8, ESV

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

### Personal Discoveries:

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### Application for the Acts 2 Journey:

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## Week 10 Prayer Focus: Charting a New Course

### Guiding Scriptures

#### Deuteronomy 2:2–3, ESV

Then the LORD said to me, “You have been traveling around this mountain country long enough. Turn northward.”

#### Jeremiah 29:11, ESV

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

#### John 14:12, ESV

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”

#### Philippians 3:13–14, ESV

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

#### John 16:13, ESV

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”

#### Proverbs 4:25, ESV

Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you.

### Personal Discoveries:

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### Application for the Acts 2 Journey:

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### Week 11 Prayer Focus: Conquering Fear

#### Guiding Scriptures

**2 Timothy 1:7, ESV**

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

**Philippians 4:13, ESV**

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

**Isaiah 54:17, ESV**

“No weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD.”

**Deuteronomy 31:7–8, ESV**

Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it. It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”

**Isaiah 41:10, ESV**

“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

**Psalms 27:1, ESV**

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

**Personal Discoveries:**

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**Application for the Acts 2 Journey:**

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## Week 12 Prayer Focus: Choosing to Walk By Faith

### Guiding Scriptures

#### Hebrews 11:1-2, ESV

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation.

#### Hebrews 11:6, ESV

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

#### 2 Corinthians 5:7, ESV

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

#### Romans 10:17, ESV

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

#### James 2:17, ESV

So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

#### Matthew 17:20, ESV

He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."

### Personal Discoveries:

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### Application for the Acts 2 Journey:

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### Week 13 Prayer Focus: Complete Obedience

#### Guiding Scriptures

**Isaiah 48:17, ESV**

Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go."

**John 14:15, ESV**

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

**John 15:10, ESV**

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

**1 John 2:3-6, ESV**

And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

**Luke 11:28, ESV**

But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

**Hebrews 13:17, ESV**

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

**Personal Discoveries:**

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**Application for the Acts 2 Journey:**

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