

# LIFT

## Ministry Group September Resource

### Room to Grow

Whether you are a church planter looking to secure your first space or an established church looking to grow, there are several key factors to consider when deciding on property.

Brian White of NewChurches.com shares five facts about facilities that every church planter and pastor should know.

#### 1. Location! Location! Location!

Like any other piece of real estate, location matters when it comes to your church facility. If the space you choose is hard to access or hard to see, it will be less likely to become a known community point. Location matters. A positive location in the community – easy to access, readily known and strategically chosen – will make it easier for people to find the church and get involved.

#### 2. Space Matters

Two key issues to consider are the amount of space a church has in a facility and how that space is utilized for ministry. Be careful to consider more than the worship space. Think about the ministries that surround the worship time and make sure your space adequately fits and speaks to their importance. Space matters, so choose a facility that is rightly sized, rightly utilized and rightly secure.

#### 3. Stewardship Matters

Every facility costs money, so don't be afraid of spending the right amount to secure the right space. At the same time, you also want to avoid spending the wrong amount for the right space. Being overburdened can adversely affect a church's ability to hire additional staff, launch ministries or support missions.



### Shop Talk:

#### Stewarding Your Facilities

#### Is your church facility distracting people from hearing the gospel?

The gospel can be preached from a variety of places. However, how that gospel is received can be affected by the impressions left on people by their environment. Believe it or not, a clean and well-maintained facility can reflect a church's commitment to its mission. Although, not all churches can afford to completely renovate their facilities; there are things that every church can do to ensure that their buildings are well-maintained.

**1. Clean:** There is no excuse for a dirty facility. Most church facilities are cleaned and maintained by volunteers. However, that should not dilute the quality of the work being done to make the building attractive to visitors and members alike. Most churches focus on making the main sanctuary presentable. However, bathrooms and kid's church areas are of equal importance. Regardless of size, a ministry should develop a schedule that allows for systematic cleaning of a facility. This could include a list of those things to be cleaned weekly, monthly and even annually.

**Discussion:** Do you have an established cleaning schedule at your church?

**2. Purge/de-clutter:** A place for everything and everything in its place is not just a great adage, but a great ministry philosophy. What do people have to crawl over to hear the gospel at your church? Literally! Has your church foyer or church office become a proverbial dumping ground? Are there coats from three winters ago still hanging in the hall closet? The path from your front doors to the sanctuary should be clear, clean and inviting for those who enter your church. A good annual practice is to have a work day to purge the church of unneeded or unnecessary items.

**Discussion:** How do you determine what to keep and dispose of at your church?

## Room to Grow (Cont.)

Try to balance three inter-connected principles when it comes to finances and stewardship.

First, *walk in faith*. Just because you don't see how all the details and finances are going to fall into place doesn't mean it is the wrong choice to move forward. You will have to trust that God will provide through His people even while you are saving as much money as possible for a future facility.

Don't presume upon the Lord. There is a fine line between walking in faith and presuming upon the Lord. To risk good stewardship and choose an unaffordable space, on the hope that "if you build it they will come," is to set up a church for major financial pressure.

The third principle is to steward what God has given. Sometimes when growth begins to occur the desire to move to or build a bigger and better facility comes quickly. Slow down, be content, and steward your finances and your space well. Add services, manage the parking lot well, and ask people to move into open seats. All of these are ways to do ministry that maximizes space and stewards God's provision.

**Discuss:** What are some additional ways that a church can address the need to grow without purchasing property?

### 4. Future Matters

A common mistake among church planters is to choose a space that will work today but not tomorrow. Consider the path ahead when you are making decisions because the first option is not always the best option. Consider what your space will communicate about how you view the years ahead. Be patient and detailed to make sure your facility will give you a long-term presence in your community for maximum impact and the clear presentation of the gospel.

### 5. Priorities Matter

The most important thing to remember is that the facility isn't the most important thing to remember. The ministry that takes place in the facility is the most important thing; a building only facilitates that which is most important. Buildings serve the purpose of ministry. The gospel can ring out from a thousand places. People can be discipled and worship together in lots of different environments. The fellowship that is going to take place in a facility space holds a greater importance than the look, feel or location you choose.

<https://www.newchurches.com/resource/5-facts-about-facilities-every-planter-should-know/>



**3. Landscaping:** Does your church look abandoned when people drive by? It is hard for people to reconcile that inside the building are leaders who can care for their souls, but show little to no care of their church property. Poor curb appeal can hinder a potential family from visiting the church. If a church fails to maintain its grass, trim trees, and pull weeds it can be viewed as being unkept and unconcerned. Here are a few things that should be done, at a minimum, when it comes to the church's landscaping:

- Keep the grass mowed.
- Pull weeds from around the church and signage.
- Spray the parking lot for weeds.
- Make sure the church sign is visible and well-lit at night.
- Make sure all entrances are marked and clear of debris.

**Discuss:** What are some other practical ways to increase curb appeal?

**4. Maintenance Schedule:** Benjamin Franklin once said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Many things that become costly problems at a church could have been prevented with a little time and attention. Here are some simple fixes that can save a church time and money:

- Check and clean air filters.
- Regularly paint trim, doors and soffit.
- Have your heating/air conditioning system inspected annually.
- Replace missing roof tiles/shingles.
- Address plumbing leaks immediately.
- Replace lightbulbs with energy saving bulbs.
- Make sure water is draining properly away from building by checking gutters and downspouts.
- Install and check smoke detectors/fire extinguishers.
- Have your building checked and treated for rodents and bugs.

**5. Budget:** Do you have an annual budget for church maintenance? Many churches treat maintenance expenses like a natural disaster that creates catastrophic un-foreseen expenses. However, maintenance is a natural dynamic of owning property. Things are going to wear out. Weather is going to occur. Because of this, maintenance should be factored into our annual budget. Steve Law proposes, "Maintaining church buildings is expensive. And every year presents known and unknown expenses. Here's a rule of thumb for determining how much to budget: put into the annual budget 1.5% of the replacement value of your buildings."

**Discuss:** Do you have a line item in your budget for church maintenance? If not, how do you intend to manage maintenance expenses as they arise?

[1] <https://financeforchurches.org/1-5-rule-for-building-maintenance-budgets-2/>