

5 Easy Steps to Fix a Broken Church

An overnight fix is available for the church, but is anybody willing to implement it?

So much of today's church is drunk on all the wrong things: growth, notoriety, busyness, endless programs, marketing, visitor assimilation and more. It's no wonder pastors are spinning out, members are disgruntled and stress is overtaking most. Though there's a deep reformation necessary, there are a handful of simple, quick steps we can take to kick-start the shift.

Release Pastors and Church Leaders to Give Themselves to Prayer and the Word

So the twelve called the multitude of disciples together and said, "It is not reasonable for us to leave the word of God and serve tables. Brothers, look among yourselves for seven men who are known to be full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint over this duty. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:2-4).

It seems many of today's senior leaders are doing everything but spending hours in intercession and study of the Word. They are expected to visit people in homes and hospitals, counsel the hurting, attend birthday parties and other celebrations, clean the church, befriend members, assimilate visitors, develop programs, raise funds and so much more that is sucking the very life out of them—and out of the church.

Set them free. I believe we will skyrocket towards revival if pastors drop almost every ball they are juggling and give themselves to hours and hours of prayer and study in the Word

every day. Let them be the preachers God called them to be. No more endless meeting, projects or programs. Pray, study and preach. Repeat.

Stop Expecting a Single Church to Do It All

The competitiveness in the kingdom must cease. It's time we understand that a single local church plays a small part in the larger scheme of the city church. In Scripture, the church was designated by city, not by street corner.

I propose adopting a culture that encourages people in our local churches to also connect faithfully in other churches and ministries in the region. As a church planter and senior leader for many years, I was keenly aware of my strengths and my weaknesses. I was also determined to run in the very specific vision and mandate that God entrusted to me, which meant that I would intentionally, by design, minimize or fully eliminate other seemingly obvious programs and ministries. Needs would go unmet. This meant that I had to trust other leaders in the city to minister to those needs. I encouraged the people to connect in several places each week and to take responsibility for their own spiritual growth.

In fact, I so embrace this mindset and I so believe that city ministry is the healthiest and quickest path to an outpouring in the region that I had an open-hands policy with people in my church. I let it be known that any leader of any church in the region could, without fear or reservation, approach anybody in my church and invite them to leave to join their ministry. They could recruit my biggest givers, my best leaders, my favorite worship team members, my most faithful workers and my best friends. I understood they wouldn't be leaving my church, but rather they would simply move from one department of the city church to another. Their positioning is more important than any selfish desire to keep them close.

Immediately Stop With the Church Growth Madness

Two realities will threaten local church growth:

1. The regional church about which I wrote in the above point.
2. The call to gather the remnant.

As we “catch and release” those who venture into our church, believing for the right positioning in the region and as we focus on the hungry, surrendered, on-fire remnant who will gather and contend in prayer for revival, the numbers will most often diminish.

I wonder if pastors understand the severity of the stress and the deep cost being paid because of the seduction of numerical and financial church growth. Let it go. Simply enjoy going into the church every day to meet with Jesus and to relay the burning revelation He pierces you with.

Quit trying to herd cats. Stop with the gimmicks. Repent for compromising the message in an attempt to attract the moderates. Simply pray, lead, equip and celebrate with people when they leave your church for another and stay faithful to the call with those who remain.

Reassign Pastors and the Entire Fivefold Ministry

Pastors are typically best suited for nurturing people, not leading movements. I believe we need to see pastors resign senior leadership positions as prophetic, apostolic leaders step in to advance more powerfully. They are gifted to lead, while many pastors will be most successful and satisfied in smaller settings where they can connect one-on-one with people.

Many pastors will remain as the senior leader of churches, and this can absolutely be okay if they embrace their role in the broader city church model. Their churches can remain very small as they minister to their congregations; however, it's

extremely important that they are strategically connected to apostolic ministries in the city.

They will need to attend city church meetings and encourage everybody in their church to join them. As they do this, the greater city church will continue to expand, and people will be connected more appropriately. And leaders will see the joy of ministry return as unnecessary tension is eliminated.

Eliminate Most Every Program Except Prayer Meetings

I believe this may be the most significant, powerful and immediate trigger of revival of everything I have shared so far.

I am serious when I suggest most every program, focus, strategy, service and function of the local church should be dropped for a significant season to do little else but pray.

Instead of our typical, mostly predictable and often extremely boring Sunday-morning church service, transition it into a fiery, passionate eruption of intercession. As people walk through the doors, they would hear groans and cries of desperation fill the sanctuary. The musicians would be right there with them for the first hour or so, at the altar, contending for an outpouring. At some point, the worship team can start playing in the background as the choruses of heaven-shaking prayer continue to erupt from hungry hearts.

Intermix short declarations of Scripture and allow for potent prophetic revelation to be released to all. Encourage people to release short prayers on the mic. Leaders can give appropriately timed messages that will take the atmosphere to an even higher place.

Remember, the church isn't a house of fellowship, a house of teaching, a house of visitor assimilation, a house of evangelism or a house of worship. It's a house of prayer, and

prayer must be the driving force, the main thing and the dominant activity of all.

Are We Ready for Such a Dramatic Shift?

I believe we could take a giant leap overnight toward great corporate strength and an outpouring that will rock nations if we embrace and adopt a mighty shift in the church. Understand, these are preliminary steps that will make us ready for an even more costly, troubling and important reformation that must come to the church. Baby steps.

These are simple though very costly steps that every one of us is able to take, but few probably will. I want to encourage you to prayerfully consider the reality that revival is withheld and that the church, in general, is quite weak and compromised. Do you want to live your entire life outside of the shock and awe of God's glory? He wants to move, but the church must transition dramatically if we want to see it happen in our cities and in our lifetimes.