

Churches That Break Out in 2018 Will Carry These 4 Characteristics

Where will your church be in a year?

Will it be unified, thriving and reaching its community for Christ? Or will it be divided, struggling and almost irrelevant to the community?

I have a watchful eye on churches that are “breakout churches,” meaning they have moved from struggling to thriving. I am seeing some specific traits common in many of these churches. And I see four of these traits to be unique and vital to the health of the congregations.

To be clear, these four characteristics are by no means an exhaustive list of traits of healthy churches. Instead, they are unique characteristics that became both the cause and the result of the breakout.

1. **They increased their efforts to reach their communities by fourfold.** These church leaders and members understood that the days of easy growth and cultural Christianity were ending. As a consequence, they increased their efforts, their spending, and their time by fourfold to reach their communities. And while the factor of four is not a magic number, something near that number was common among the breakout churches. Reaching and ministering to their communities became a very high priority.
2. **They focused their congregations to pray John 17:20-23 as an ongoing prayer effort.** Not all the congregations prayed Jesus’ prayer of unity specifically, but they did pray for church unity in one way or another. Many churches fail to have a gospel witness because of

infighting, self-serving behavior and tepid commitment. The breakout churches prayed, sometimes for a year or more, for unity in the church.

3. **They made a concerted effort to abandon the entitlement mentality.** Too many congregations have become religious country clubs, where the members pay their dues and get their expected perks. The breakout churches made intentional efforts to abandon that mentality. And though it's self-serving for me to say, I am grateful nearly 1.5 million church members have used my book, *I Am a Church Member*, to guide them in these intentional efforts.
4. **They prayed for hearts that would be willing to accept new paradigms.** Please hear me clearly. Your church will either change or die. I know. You don't change the truths of God's Word, but many of the methodologies and paradigms that describe the way we "do church" today will not be here tomorrow. The breakout churches deemed themselves mission churches, and they knew sacrifice and change was critical to the mission heart.

As we begin this new year, we have a new opportunity to start with new attitudes and renewed efforts. I am beginning to see a number of churches move toward breakout. In God's power, your church can be one of those churches.

My prayer for your congregation is that 2018 will be your best year ever.

In God's power, it can be done. {eo}

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