

Simple Church

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NOTES:

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WHAT the church should be doing:

- Evangelism
- Prayer
- Helping people build relationships with believers
- Seeing people grow deeper
- Serving
- Worship

WHY: to glorify God

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Many programs (evaluated by popularity, attendance –,...) but they are not part of a **process** – to make disciples – that moves people toward spiritual maturity (p. 26)

- HOW can we structure all of this to make disciples?
- Everything should fit together to produce life change (p. 26)

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Church leaders design opportunities for spiritual growth

- We're designers, not programmers, not the producers of spiritual growth > > God
- We can design an environment where life change is likely to occur – a process that moves people through stages of spiritual growth to become a mature follower of Christ

Discussion Question: **Why is it so hard to see the big picture in ministry?**

- Can't see the forest (process) for the trees (programs)

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What is the church's process for discipleship?

How do you structure your church to make disciples?

How do you set up your ministry programs to move people toward spiritual transformation?

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Need a beginning point:

- The program you expect the majority of your guests/new members to attend
- The program you teach your people to invite their friends and neighbors to

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Programs should not be ends in themselves. They should be used as tools to move people toward spiritual maturity.

The end result of programs must always be about people. Programs should only be tools.

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Include movement to the next step

- Guest reception
- New member class (guest to member)
- Small groups info booth (joining a small group)

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Definition of a Simple Church:

- A congregation designed around a straightforward and strategic process that moves people through the stages of spiritual growth.

Goal:

- To partner with God to move people through the stages of spiritual growth.
- Changed lives
- Christ formed in people

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4 Elements Necessary in a Simple Church Design – critical in a ministry process that contributes to a vibrant church: (compared to *Extreme Home Makeover*)

Clarity > Movement > Alignment > Focus

DEFINITION: A congregation designed around a straightforward and strategic process that moves people through the stages of spiritual growth. The leadership and the church are clear about the process (CLARITY) and are committed to executing it. The process flows logically (MOVEMENT) and is implemented in each area of the church (ALIGNMENT). The church abandons everything that is not in the process (FOCUS).

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CLARITY: the ability of the process to be communicated and understood by the people

- Clearly defined; leadership and people know exactly how the church is structured to move people toward spiritual growth
- The process (HOW) is discussed, taught, and illustrated, and the people get it.

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MOVEMENT: the sequential steps in the process that cause people to move to greater areas of commitment (e.g. the hand-off in relay race)

- Assimilation/ next steps
- What happens in between the programs – how someone is handed off from one level of commitment to a greater level of commitment

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ALIGNMENT: the arrangement of all ministries and staff around the same simple process

Without alignment > sub-ministries

- Each ministry has its own leaders that are only passionate about their specific ministry
- Everyone is competing for the same space, resources, volunteers, time on calendar

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FOCUS: the commitment to abandon everything that falls outside of the simple ministry process

- Often means saying NO
- Without focus, the church becomes cluttered, and the process becomes unrecognizable
- The unnecessary can hide the necessary

Discussion Questions:

- **What is our church's ministry process? Is it clear?**
- **Does our process effectively move people toward greater levels of commitment?**
- **Is our process implemented in all areas of our church? Are we aligned around our process?**

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CLARITY

Define your ministry process (strategy) – HOW

1. Determine what kind of disciple you wish to produce in your church – what do you want the people to be? (e.g. passionate lovers of God, servants in the kingdom of God, connected in vibrant relationships to people;)
2. Describe your purpose as a process (e.g. love God, love others, serve the world)
3. Decide how each weekly program is part of the process (programs defined by how they will be used to bring people to spiritual maturation)

Illustrate your process

- Should be reflective of your process
- Should show progression
- Should help simplify

Measure your process – to evaluate if people are progressing through your process

- Learn to view numbers horizontally (used to see movement across the programs – progression) and not vertically (used to see if a program was successful)
- Measure attendance at each level/stage in your process (e.g. worship, small groups, ministry teams)

Discussion Questions:

- **Is there a defined process at our church? If so, what is it? How is each of our weekly programs used?**
- **What is the illustration or metaphor we most often use to describe spiritual growth?**

MOVEMENT

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What is your part?

e.g. Moses placed himself in the right place to be transformed by God. He discovered the place where God would move in his life, and he put himself there.

Your part as a church leader is to place people in the pathway of God's transforming power.

****Design a ministry process that puts people in the place for God to transform them. The ministry process is not where the power lies. Only God does the transforming.**

The ministry process moves people to greater levels of commitment – with ever-increasing levels of discipleship. People are challenged to progress through the simple process.

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Strategic Programming

1. Begin with your clearly defined process (matching programs with the process)
2. Choose one program for each phase of your process.
3. Design each program for a specific aspect of the process.
4. Place the programs in sequential order – then the programs become tools to facilitate the process of transformation.
 - a. Order the sequence of your programs to reflect your process.
 - b. Designate a clear entry point to your process
 - c. Identify the next levels of programming

Steps to Becoming a Simple Church:

1. Design a simple process (clarity)
 - a. On paper – start with blank sheet
 - b. Don't try to squeeze the process into your programs
 - c. Be sure each program in your process is designed to meet that specific aspect of discipleship effectively.
 - d. Discuss what discipleship looks like. Fill in blanks: Disciples at our church are ____, ____, ____, and _____. (< or >) – place in order based on differing levels of commitment – starting point > next step >...
 - e. Discuss HOW it happens (progress through the above) – how spiritual transformation takes place
 - f. Describe definition of discipleship in process terms: People become disciples at our church by ____, ____, ____, and _____. (sequential order)
2. Place your key programs along the process (movement)
 - a. Choose one church-wide program for each phase of your simple process.
3. Unite all ministries around the process (alignment)
4. Begin to eliminate things outside the process (focus)