

Church Size Dynamics

a "why" and "how"

Why

Because as church leaders, we are committed to becoming better at guiding others in a life of faith. Hopefully this chart encourages you and your church to be authentic to who you are today while preparing for growth tomorrow. As a result, we will deepen our faith and increase our capacity for mission.

How

Simply put, this document is an easy way to locate your church alongside similarly sized churches who often share the same strengths and challenges. These are generalizations, and while there are always exceptions, your chart can be a helpful reference. Begin by "finding yourself on the map" and then identify ways your church can grow to the next level. Pay close attention to the expectations for "growth in impact" columns, as these are key ways a church can proactively increase its capacity for mission.



0-50 “Small Family”

281 or 53% of GNJ churches

Recommended resources: PaCE, “Breakthrough”, Regional Days of learning

Church archetype	Pastoral archetype	Strengths	Challenges	Congregations grow in impact by...	Pastors grow in impact by...	Attendance Benchmarks
<p>Fierce loyalty to local church</p> <p>Mission/outreach are characterized by personal contribution</p> <p>Congregation is comprised of several families</p> <p>Traditional worship style and organization</p> <p>Decisions heavily influenced by matriarch/patriarch</p> <p>Upholding relationships is prioritized over most everything: worship quality, length of meetings, decor, etc.</p>	<p>Chaplain: cares/advocates for the people who are already there</p> <p>Usually part-time pastors (bi-vocational or multi-point charge)</p> <p>Local pastor or Certified Lay Minister</p>	<p>Shorter pastoral appointments lead to stronger, more involved laity</p> <p>Safe space for traditionalists</p> <p>Well-established rhythmic schedule (special service times/ styles, fall roast beef dinner, etc)</p> <p>Kids are welcomed in as part of the family</p>	<p>Conflict is taken personally</p> <p>Very difficult to implement most change</p> <p>Attendees often drive in from outside the community (including pastors)</p> <p>Low trust of outsiders, including pastors</p> <p>Pastor has very limited time to be present</p>	<p>Proactively building relationships with key leaders in the community</p> <p>Encouraging membership to take increased role in Sunday morning experience (hospitality, liturgy, etc)</p> <p>Identifying strengths and spiritual gifts of congregation</p> <p>Increasing ability to make decisions and move forward without unanimous agreement</p>	<p>Establishing healthy administrative norms and leadership within committees</p> <p>Implementing best practices in the 5 markers of vitality</p> <p>Commitment to training opportunities (continuing education, conference resourcing, seminary, ordination process, etc)</p>	<p>25</p> <p>35</p>

85-124 “Extended Family”
 56 or 10% of GNJ churches
 Recommended Resources: Breakthrough, Team Vital

Church archetype	Pastoral archetype	Strengths	Challenges	Congregations grow in impact by...	Pastors grow in impact by...	Attendance Benchmarks
Members know each other	Attends most or all church activities	Strong relational bonds	Strong relational bonds	Focusing on ministries to reach new people	Introducing and leading change required to grow	85
Affinity groups around members’ interests	Matches the culture of the congregation	Sustains full time	Visitors struggle to find their place	Growing to be more multicultural	Expanding mission into the nearby community	
Fellowship high priority	Resolves conflict	Has the critical mass necessary to feel welcoming	Limited thinking, culture	Expanding interest and ministries to areas that would welcome and meet the needs of new people	Improving administrative skills	100
Children and youth ministries are often identified as key growing edge	Does all visitation		Avoid conflict	Administrative and long-range planning ability	Ability to create a long-range plan to grow the church	
	Leads worship well		Financial challenged to meet full-time pastoral needs	Increasing in affinity/ small group gatherings	Increasing affinity/small group gatherings	
	Preaching relatable in multiple subgroups			Growing leaders to manage programs and areas on ministry	Introducing program ministry	115
	Highly relational				Adding new worship service	

125-250 “Program”
 52 or 10% of GNJ churches
 Recommended resources: PaCE, Team Vital for <175

Church archetype	Pastoral archetype	Strengths	Challenges	Congregations grow in impact by...	Pastors grow in impact by...	Attendance Benchmarks
<p>Multiple possible connection points for involvement</p> <p>Highly established systems and habits. Quality programs can be the main connection point (rather than worship). This allows for a wide array of preaching quality.</p> <p>Programs often led by long-time members of the congregation.</p> <p>Less commitment of average worshiper</p>	<p>High administrative and sacramental abilities</p> <p>Strong coordinator of multiple leaders</p> <p>Understands how to move an idea through multiple committees</p>	<p>Financial stability</p> <p>Programs provide connection points for a wider demographic</p> <p>Congregations’ connection to programs make the church more resilient to inconsistent preaching and worship experiences.</p>	<p>Programs are working and “not to be tinkered with”</p> <p>Higher pastoral overhead, but not as much income as a corporate church</p> <p>Systems/structure make for slower change</p>	<p>Practicing “change.” That is, a congregation must shorten the time it takes to go from an idea to implementation to establishing a new habit.</p> <p>Successfully launching a significant new opportunity for new participants to connect. New service, new type of gathering that offers a clear onramp to the life of the church</p> <p>Improved media, online, promotional presence</p>	<p>Working with existing leaders and bring on new leadership to own the church’s vision to reach new people from the community, and get the buy-in of congregation</p> <p>Reviewing and rewriting policies to make the vision a reality, especially fostering cooperation across multiple committees.</p> <p>Developing new and next leaders for small groups, worship and other new initiatives.</p>	<p>125</p> <p>150</p> <p>175</p> <p>200</p> <p>225</p>

250-349 "Larger Program"
6 or 1.1% of GNJ churches
Recommended resources

Church archetype	Pastoral archetype	Strengths	Challenges	Congregations grow in impact by...	Pastors grow in impact by...	Attendance Benchmarks
<p>Maintains a baseline of good quality in most/all major program categories - worship, small groups, music, hospitality, education, mission, children's, youth, etc</p> <p>Maintains around 30 involved/capable leaders</p> <p>Often has an "in-between" feeling with corporate tendencies but smaller staff - programs are still mostly run by volunteers</p> <p>Church council has strong focus on longterm vision</p>	<p>Generalist with strong preaching abilities</p> <p>Associates have areas of focus, but are still generalists</p> <p>Does not "know everyone" in the church</p> <p>Ability to recruit, develop, and retain leaders</p> <p>Ability to cast vision and garner enthusiasm, especially to core volunteer team</p>	<p>Many good quality programs provide faith development for diverse groups of people.</p> <p>Baseline expectation of good quality for preaching, worship, hospitality and other programming</p>	<p>Finding enough quality volunteer program leaders</p> <p>Setting a clear discipleship path of next steps for new disciples</p> <p>Hiring excellent part-time staff specialists</p>	<p>Establishing excellent, automated follow-up and integration system for newer guests</p> <p>Identifying and leveraging key programs (in addition to worship) that are the best venues for first time guests</p> <p>Cultivating stewardship and budgeting habits that allow for the necessary spending associated with growth</p>	<p>Actively offloading responsibilities to well-trained volunteers and support staff as a way of freeing up time to invest in new growth</p> <p>Ability to fundraise and build a budget for a staff/space that is designed for a congregation that isn't yet there</p>	<p align="center">250</p> <p align="center">275</p> <p align="center">300</p> <p align="center">325</p>

350-499 "Corporate"
8 of 1.5% or GNJ churches
Recommended Resources: Specialized Coaching, Specialized events

Church archetype	Pastoral archetype	Strengths	Challenges	Congregations grow in impact by...	Pastors grow in impact by...	Attendance Benchmarks
<p>"professionalized operations"</p> <p>Strong sense of long-range vision</p> <p>Excellent volunteer systems</p> <p>Most connection is via small groups</p>	Head of Staff	Variety of excellent programming opportunities	Aligning the budget and ministry strategy with vision, mission and strategy.	Launching a significant new faith community: "church within a church," multisite, age-specific worship gathering, etc.	Investing significant time managing key lead staff to ensure the mission and vision are being lived out in all areas of the church	350
	Fundraiser	Clear discipleship pathway for spiritual growth	Finding and affording excellent part-time and full-time specialized staff	Beginning moving to all specialized lead staff	Separating preaching from executive work	375
	Maintains an emphasis on discipleship process	Staff leadership and ownership of programming		Media, communications, promotion becomes a full-time position	Understanding culture and demographic of the region to identify a place to plant a new faith community	400
				Addressing building and property needs to promote church growth	Shifting the focus of care to the staff team and key lay leaders.	425
						450
						475

500-799 "Mid Corporate"
7 or 1.3% of GNJ churches
Recommended Resources: Specialized Coaching, Specialized events

Church archetype	Pastoral archetype	Strengths	Challenges	Congregations grow in impact by...	Pastors grow in impact by...	Attendance Benchmarks
Staff is comprised of specialists	Pastor able to manage staff well	Draws newcomers because of high quality ministries	Facilities keep church from growing	Building ministry teams which program, grow and thrive independently.	Increased accountability to financial stability and growth	500
Executive team handles visions and strategic plans	Excellent Communicator	Facilities are maintained	Fewer peers in a Mainline system	Investing finances in ways to ensure future ministry	Investing in multisite growth	525
Staff equips other team leaders for ministry	Pastor has clarified vision and values to the extent that staff and volunteers are able to make decisions on the ground	Vision, mission and values lead congregation to greater discipleship and missional action	Destabilization associated with launch of new campuses	Designing worship experience, language, and invitations for a steady flow of visitors who are not oriented with your church, denomination, or even faith.	Lead pastor narrows focus and begins handing management responsibilities to an executive pastor.	550
Church Council operates as a board of directors		Creative and excellent worship planning and music				575
Nearly all of participants' relational interaction with the church is in sub-groups		Growth emerges in different campuses and ministry areas all at the same time		Encouraging independent ministry area to create new initiatives and engage new people		600
Independent campuses and departments with their own growth, initiatives and new people		Strong departmental leadership		The governing board relinquishes the daily management of the church to the staff team to focus on vision direction and staff protection		625
						650
						675
						700
						725
						750
						775

**800+ "Large Corporate"
2 or .37% of GNJ churches**

Recommended Resources: Specialized Coaching, Specialized events, multiplication cohort

Church archetype	Pastoral archetype	Strengths	Challenges	Congregations grow in impact by...	Pastors grow in impact by...	Attendance Benchmarks
<p align="center">Multisite</p> <p>Excellent worship experience</p> <p>Connection primarily in small groups</p> <p>For each ministry area to succeed, a system of teams of full-time, part-time staff, and volunteers is required.</p> <p>Staff takes on the responsibility of leading team leaders; recruiting and leadership development is necessary to sustain ministry</p>	<p>Lead pastor is "public face" of church to the community, typically dynamic persona and excellent communicator</p> <p>Preaching, quality worship, and vision casting are paramount responsibilities for this lead pastor.</p> <p>Does not do "maintenance mode;" rather, is always launching major initiatives</p>	<p>Facilities</p> <p>Excellent programs and systems</p> <p>High value on making new disciples and launching new communities of faith</p> <p>Leadership pipeline actively identifying and training new ministry leaders.</p>	<p>Facilities</p> <p>Even further decentralization of programming and leadership.</p> <p>The full-time staff team is beginning to grow so large that it is a challenge to identify as one team. The result is that staff teams to break into manageable sub-teams (worship, administration, discipleship/education, etc)</p> <p>Developing the rhythm and resources for regular new faith community launches</p>	<p>Building a regular rhythm of planting new faith communities</p> <p>Developing and hire church leadership for excellence, leadership development, and strategic alignment.</p> <p>Enabling the church council to focus on strategic decision-making and support/accountability, especially for the executive staff.</p>	<p>Leading the executive staff team, who take responsibility for strategic direction.</p> <p>Keeping the staff and church leadership in the habit of asking, "what's next" in all areas of church life.</p> <p>Creating and sharing resources for the broader church through writing and publishing.</p>	800
						825
						850
						875
						900
						925
						950
						975
1000						
						+