

# Six Things Growing Churches Do That Others Don't

Ninety percent of the churches in the United States today are stagnant or declining.

Dying churches are closing their doors at the rate of ten per day. Even church members who have been dedicated to the church for years are attending church less than ever before.

It would be easy to throw up our hands in frustration with church growth and give up, but perhaps there's a glimmer of hope. If ninety percent of churches aren't growing, that means there's ten percent that are. Which leads me to two conclusions, either God is choosing to bless these churches over the others, or these churches are doing something the other churches are not.

I've been in dying churches, and I've been in growing churches. And I choose to believe the later. They look quite different from each other. Here are six differences.

## 1. **Growing Churches are Outsider Focused**

Growing churches focus on those outside the church. The Pastor speaks a message each week that appeals to those who don't know Christ. Every ministry in the church puts a high priority on guests. Church events are geared towards reaching those in the community who don't attend a church. The church budget is geared around evangelism. Discussions revolve around the best way to reach those far from Christ.

Dying churches focus on those inside the church. The Pastor speaks a message to the congregation each week with little thought of guests. Ministries in the church place a high priority on serving those inside the church. Church events are geared towards fellowshiping with one another. The church budget is geared towards keeping members happy. Discussions revolve around the color of the carpet.

## 2. **Growing Churches are Staff Led**

In growing churches, the Senior Pastor is allowed to lead and make decisions based on the vision God has given him for the church. The Senior Pastor is allowed to hire his own staff as the budget allows. The Senior Pastor decides what ministries to add and what ministries to cut. The Senior Pastor decides what events should take place and which shouldn't.

In dying churches the church or church board lead and make decisions. The church or board nominate and approve any hires made. The church or board decides what ministries should be funded and which shouldn't. The church or board decides what events should take place and which shouldn't. In a dying church, the Pastor only has as much authority as the church or board chooses to give him.

## 3. **Growing churches value innovation over tradition.**

Growing churches are innovative churches. They are always seeking out new ways to reach the communities they serve. They leverage technology for the benefit of the Gospel. Growing churches have a strong online presence through their website and social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Innovative churches believe the best way to make disciples is through community, so they embrace small groups.

Dying churches are churches so rooted in tradition they refuse to change. They are always seeking out ways to preserve what has already been established. They fear technology and believe it's a danger to the Gospel. Dying

churches have little to no online presence. They believe the best way to make disciples is in a classroom, so they embrace class settings such as Sunday School.

#### 4. **Growing Churches have a bias toward action.**

Growing churches get things done. They're not satisfied with just talking about problems and opportunities. They do something about them. Growing churches are willing to make decisions that benefit the church, even though it may hurt some feelings. They're not satisfied with waiting for those far from Christ come to them. They go out into the communities to reach people right where they are.

Dying churches talk about getting things done but never actually act. They talk about the same problems and opportunities over and over again but never do anything about them. Dying churches refuse to make hard decisions that may hurt someone's feelings, even though it would benefit the church. They're satisfied with who's already in church and refuse to reach out to those outside the church.

#### 5. **Growing Churches Celebrate Well**

Growing churches gather together to celebrate what God is doing in their church and community. There's always a sense of excitement of what God may do next. Because of this people are hesitant to miss church. People are excited to serve and give back to the church because they see how it's leading to life change. Smiles, handshakes, and hugs are frequently seen in a church that celebrates.

Dying churches gather together out of obligation. There's never a sense of excitement about what God may do, so people don't think twice about missing church. Most people refuse to serve or give back to the church because they never see how it's impacting lives. Dying churches don't have time for smiles, handshakes, and hugs because most people are looking to leave church as fast as possible.

#### 6. **Growing Churches have faith in God.**

Growing churches believe God can do something great through their church. They embrace risk and take chances to advance the Gospel. They believe God is with them and through Him they can accomplish things that look impossible. Growing churches have meetings that are filled with ideas on how they can accomplish the vision God has given them.

Dying churches believe God has forgotten them. Maybe there was a time when God did something great in their church, but that was a long time ago. They avoid risk at all costs and never take chances. They allow fear to control their decisions. Dying churches forget that God is with them, and so everything looks impossible to them. Their meetings are filled with excuses on why they can't do something.

If you serve in a dying church, there is hope. You may have forgotten God, but God has not forgotten you. The good news is the God we serve specializes in bringing the dead back to life, and that may be just what your church needs.

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