



“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. I therefore... urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and

one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift... for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” Ephesians 3-4

Churchleadership.org: 4000 churches close each year in the USA.

Lifeway Research 2016: Almost 58 percent of U.S. churches don't reach triple digits on the weekend.

Christianity Today 2019: A new study from Exponential found 6 in 10 Protestant churches are plateaued or declining in attendance and more than half saw fewer than 10 people become new Christians in the past 12 months.

Gallup 2019: The rate of U.S. church membership has declined sharply in the past two decades after being relatively stable in the six decades before that.

Healthy churches value:

- flexibility over rigidity
- effectiveness over efficiency
- people over projects
- outsiders over insiders
- disciples over crowds
- sacrifice over comfort
- simplicity over complexity
- risk and failure over the status quo
- authenticity over pretense
- sending over keeping
- generosity over selfishness
- “can do!” over “why me?”

Churches that die:

- rely on programs and personalities
- turn inward
- avoid the truth about the health of their organization
- foster ministries that ignore the community
- get frustrated with each other
- get frustrated with their community
- have misplaced their joy in the Gospel
- value the process of decisions more than the outcomes

- value their own preferences over the needs of the unreached
- display an inability to pass leadership to the next generation
- cease (often gradually) to be a part of the fabric of the community
- blame and resist the community for not responding to them
- focus on activities instead of results
- maintain outdated structure
- worship past success
- confuse caring for buildings and infrastructure with caring for the church and the community
- think the community exists to support the church (instead of the church for the community)
- refuse to make new mistakes
- fail to equip God's people
- continue to do what they've always done and expect new results
- hold onto everything they have rather than giving it away
- abandon serving for the desire to thrive or to survive

Churches that truly live:

- abandon the desire to thrive or survive for the desire to serve
- foster a growing strategy for fervent, focused, consistent prayer
- help young leaders grow and gain responsibility and authority over time
- provide good “on ramps” and “off ramps” for leadership
- concentrate on community rather than commuting
- lay down anything that brings comfort that is not the cross of Christ
- recognize that any idols sap the joy of the gospel
- are the most generous people in their community (imaging God's generosity in grace)
- love their church members and warm their hearts to the gospel
- embrace the reality that ministry will be messy
- simplify the path to ministry
- intentionally develop young men into leaders
- empower leaders to accomplish ministry without always having to get permission
- recognize the three keys to leadership: Flexibility, Adaptability, & Ambiguity
- value sending over keeping
- value disciples over crowds
- mobilize many people rather than leaning on a select handful of talented individuals
- cultivate service to the community
- help their people see their career as their mission field and themselves as ministers
- create opportunities for their people to go on missions
- attempt many small changes and aren't afraid to back up and try something else
- simplify their strategy: Worship, Discipleship, Serving
- make disciples who make disciples who make their community noticeably better



To continue the conversation, email
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