**Church Check-up**

#5 Discover Our Vision/Mission

*Quotations taken from Thom Rainer’s books “Autopsy of a Deceased Church” and “Breakout Churches” for discussion.*

**Homework from Lesson #4: Learn from the Past, but Look to the Future**

Letting go of the past can be hard, but it enables us to look to the future, and that can be a lot of fun! Complete the sentence with at least two answers. I would be really excited if St. John’s…

**Introduction**



1. “If you aim at nothing, that’s exactly what you’ll hit.” What are some ways that is true in regard to a church’s ministry?

*Busyness does not equal effectiveness / You can only do a few things well / multitasking doesn’t really work / a church needs to have a focus for how it’s going to proclaim the gospel*

**Consider**

*“When I interviewed former members of the deceased churches, they referred to their last years in sad and similar ways:*

* *‘We were going through the motions.’*
* *‘Everything we did seemed to be like we were in a rut or bad routine.’*
* *‘We became more attached to our ways of doing church than we did asking the Lord what he wanted us to do.’*
* *‘We were playing a game called church. We had no idea what we were really supposed to be doing.’*
* *We stopped asking what we should be doing for fear that it would require too much effort or change.’*

*Do you get the picture? The church was not really a church. It had no purpose. None of the members talked about fulfilling the Great Commission. None of the members spoke about carrying out the Great Commandment of the Church. None ever came close to speaking with burning passion about making a difference in the community. The churches were purposeless. They were engaged in an activity called, ‘This is the way we’ve always done it.’ None of the members asked what they should be doing; they were too busy doing what they’ve always done.” (Autopsy of a Deceased Church p. 73-74)*

*“People want to have purpose in their lives. They want their churches to have purpose as well. Life is just too short to wander and go through the motions every day.” (Breakout Churches p. 108)*

1. Discuss the above quotes with the people around you. Do you see anything in them that applies to St. John’s? Explain.

*In many ways we’ve been “doing church” at St. John’s, but not really doing ministry. We have been working really hard to keep doing everything we used to do, but haven’t been asking the right questions like “why?” or “should we be doing this?”.*

1. Organizations generally find it helpful to summarize their purpose with a vision or mission statement. What is the mission statement of our church? What about our school?

*If we don’t know, that’s a problem!*

Church: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What are some problems that can arise when many members don’t know what their congregation’s vision/mission is?

*stagnation / lack of unity / lack of passion / frustration / shortage of passionate people / congregation starts dying*

**A Distinction to Keep in Mind**

(Some information taken from https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/inspiring-company-mission-statements)

* “Vision” and “mission” statements are often used interchangeably, but they actually are two different things.
  + A vision statement describes what an organization aspires to be in the future. (What will the world around us look like if/when we achieve our mission?)
    - Examples:
      * Alzheimer's Association: A world without Alzheimer's disease.
      * Teach for America: One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.
      * Microsoft (at its founding): A computer on every desk and in every home.
      * Australia Department of Health: Better health and wellbeing for all Australians, now and for future generations.
  + A mission statement describes an organization’s purpose in the present. (What are we doing right now to accomplish our vision?)
    - Examples:
      * Sweetgreen: To inspire healthier communities by connecting people to real food.
      * IKEA: To create a better everyday life for the many people.
      * Nordstrom: To give customers the most compelling shopping experience possible.
      * Cradles to Crayons: Provides children from birth through age 12, living in homeless or low-income situations, with the essential items they need to thrive – at home, at school and at play.

**Matthew 28:18-20**

*18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

**1 Corinthians 12:4-11**

*4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.*

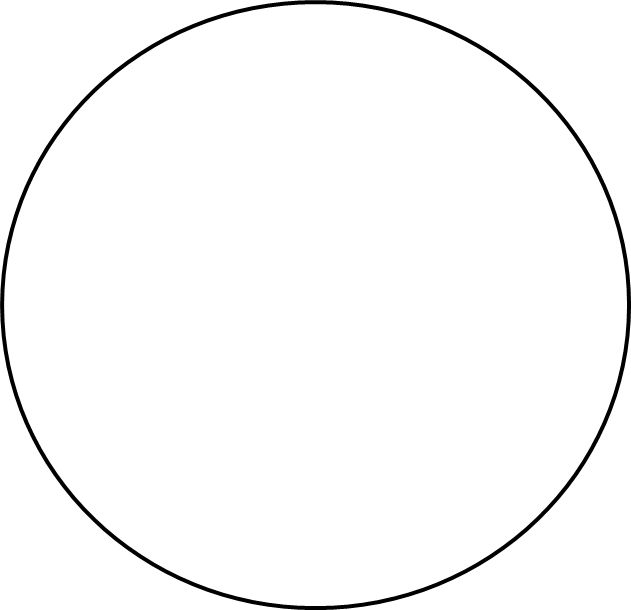
*7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.*

1. What insights do these passages offer to Christian churches about their vision and mission?

*God has given us all the same vision, but different ways to carry it out / gospel must be at the heart of what we do / “each one” everyone has been given some gifts and needs to use those gifts for the common good*

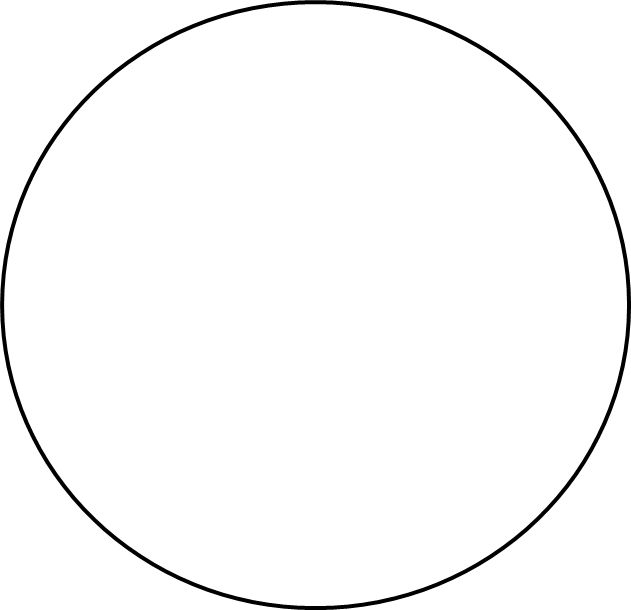
**Find our Mission**

In many ways, Jesus has already given us our vision at St. John’s. “Disciples of all nations following the Triune God.” What we really need to discover is our mission (What our congregation is going to do right now to achieve our God-given vision.) Thom Rainier offers a simple method in his book *Breakout Churches* for how a congregation can find its mission called the Vision Intersection Profile (VIP).



**Passion/Gifts of Pastor**

*Preaching and teaching / children and youth / talking with people / Bible study / outreach / organization and planning / friendliness / energetic / unifying / humility*



*Veterans project / endowment fund / facilities / school and preschool / dedicated core / assisting members in need / love for this church and school / relatable / loyalty / music / meals*

*Quality education / financial help / homelessness / veterans / family (a place to be welcomed and supported) / need for the gospel / childcare (summer)*

**Needs of the Community**

**Passion/Gifts of Congregation**

**Mission**

1. Take some time with the people around you to fill in the three circles. Try and write at least five items for each circle. (Right now, don’t worry about trying to fill in the overlapping sections.)
2. Let’s fill out our lists for each circle. Then we’ll talk about potential overlaps between the three categories to try to find what our mission at St. John’s should be.

Passion/Gifts of Pastor Passion/Gifts of Congregation Needs of Community

Potential Overlaps (Possible Missions)

*School and preschool / Veterans’ project / youth and childcare*

1. There are several possible missions we could adopt here at St. John’s. What are some reasons we should limit ourselves to only one?

*Unity and focus / can only do one thing well / limited time and resources / serves as a measure to keep us on track / other organizations are handling some of these areas*

1. Which mission should we pick? Discuss the following questions with the people around you:

* Which mission best suits the passions, gifts, and resources we have right now?
* Which mission gives us the best opportunities to engage people with God’s Word?
* Which mission, if any, have we had some success with in the past?
* Which mission is going to excite and engage the largest amount of our members?

I think St. John’s mission should be *focusing on outreach through our school and preschool\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*

1. Obviously, this is a Bible Study, not a Council or Voters Meeting, which means we probably shouldn’t decree right now what the new mission of St. John’s is going to be. It will be helpful for the future discussion of those groups, though, if we can offer them a suggestion. So let’s do an informal vote on which mission we think St. John’s should adopt.

*School and preschool seemed to have the most support*

**2 Corinthians 5:14-15**

*4 For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

1. Having a mission helps us to stay focused on the “what” of ministry. (What are we going to do to serve God?) What are some things these verses help us remember about the “why” of ministry? (Why are we going to do this to serve God?)

*We aren’t doing this for ourselves, but for God / Christ’s love compels us / Jesus died for ALL*

**Homework**

Spend some time trying to craft what the new mission statement of St. John’s should be. Try to keep it to one sentence which states our congregation’s purpose in a clear and compelling way. (Look back at pages 2-3 for help.) Feel free to come up with several options.

E.G. Providing excellent education to God’s children for this life and the next.

Also give some thought to how you would complete the following statement: In order for our new mission to be successful I think we need to…

*Cut down on the many different things we are doing at St. John’s (apply our mission) / Get as many members as possible behind the mission / create a harvest strategy (plan of outreach) for the school and preschool*