

Having #2020 Vision: A Growing Congregation

Welcome/Prayer

Foreword

In 2014, we developed a 2020 Vision that will help our congregation chart a course from now until the year, 2020; that is, simply put, to be “a fruitful congregation for Christ” by changing lives, changing our community and changing the world for His sake. For this message/discussion guide, we’re looking at the fruitful practice of Passionate Worship and Intentional Faith Development that make us a growing congregation so that we can, individually and collectively, become more like Christ.

Introduction

Jesus’ life and ministry changed the world. Yet, before He could fulfill His God-given mission, Christ had to grow. When people come to Christ and receive Him as Savior and Lord, they experience a “new birth,” spiritually speaking. If we are going to fulfill our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ who seek to change our community and world, we have to grow in spiritual maturity.

1. What do you think contributed to Jesus' emotional and spiritual growth?
2. Why is spiritual growth so important for believers?

Preparation

Read the following text related to today’s message:

Luke 2:39-40 (CEV)

³⁹ After Joseph and Mary had done everything that the Law of the Lord commands, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. ⁴⁰ The child Jesus grew. He became strong and wise, and God blessed him.

Break it Down

Christians can look to Jesus’ life as a model of how to grow spiritually.

Followers of Jesus grow through...

Celebration

It was Jesus’ custom to go to a house of worship each week (Luke 4:16). We grow to be like Christ when we join in regular celebrations of worship, worship that connects people to God and to one another; worship that is authentic, alive, creative, and comprehensible; where the people experience the life-changing presence of God in the presence of others.” Quality and diverse worship experiences give us a unique opportunity to grow spiritually.

1. How has participation in worship enabled you to grow spiritually?
2. What elements in worship aid in your spiritual development?
3. What is your preferred style of worship and why?
4. Have you ever experienced God's power and presence in a service that is outside your normal "comfort zone?"
5. What type of worship celebrations could the Lynn Haven Church offer to reach the under-churched in our community? Style, time, location, etc.

Cell

After celebration, growth comes through participation in a cell, or small group. A cell is a smaller group in a larger body or organization. Jesus invested a tremendous amount of time in relationships with other people, most notably with His apostles (Luke 6:13). He traveled with them, ate with them, prayed with them, and studied with them. They did life together, thereby allowing His apostles to grow and develop spiritually both as individuals, and as a community. In the Early Church, this practice was continued as believers regularly met together (Acts 2:42). If we want to grow spiritually as a congregation, we need “cells” or “life groups” to provide the opportunity for that growth (e.g., Bible study classes, prayer groups, ministry teams, Sunday School forums, support groups, social/recreational groups). Growth occurs best in the active process of *doing*, rather than the passive posture of listening.

1. Have you ever participated in a life group? If so, share your experience and how your group has helped you grow spiritually.
2. What type of cells could the Lynn Haven Church offer to help people grow spiritually? (e.g., format, topic, location, time, etc.)
3. Why do you think many Christians are content to sit in a classroom and learn about the faith rather than practice it?

Call

After Jesus was gone, the Early Church carried on His ministry by responding to the Lord’s call on their lives (Acts 4:33). As followers of Christ, we grow to become like Him when we respond to His call to go out, serve, and minister in His name. We become the people God wants us to be when we do what He wants us to do...when we answer His call on our lives.

1. How have you served and ministered? How have these activities aided your spiritual growth?
2. Describe a time you answered God’s call on your life.

Conclusion

How do we effectively transform people into authentic followers of Christ?—we need to be a growing congregation of believers...through attending regular, worshipful celebration services; participating in or leading cells; and answering God’s call to serve and minister in Jesus’ name.

1. What commitment(s) are you willing to make in terms of your participation in a worship celebration? A cell group? A call to ministry?
2. Write down your goal(s) or idea(s), and make it(them) happen.

Close in Prayer