Welcome to the ultimate guide on how to grow your church. We believe this is a challenge every church faces, whether a small rural church or one in a large city. In order to understand how best to grow your church, the first step taken should always be to understand why it isn’t currently growing.

Sadly, many out there focus on trying fancy new ideas or believe it costs too much to grow a church and this is simply the wrong approach. There are so many reasons why a church isn’t growing and if you don’t tackle these, then pouring money into random solutions won’t be effective. Take the sensible, logical approach and you will be in a much better position to share the word of God with more people and help greater numbers of your community.

Reasons that your church isn't growing

You will discover below, a list of reasons why your church may not be growing. Some of them may be very familiar and some may make you realise what you’ve been missing. No matter what, take the time to consider carefully and honestly if your church is suffering from any of these problems.

1) Being stuck in the past

Tradition can be a magical idea full of memories and ceremony, bringing a comforting feeling to many in the church. However, tradition should not cause you to be stuck in the past and when a church fails to think about more than the past then it can harm their efforts to grow.

We have seen countless church leaders reject the use of technology, fail to embrace modern ideas or changes to demographics. The idea of growing a church means moving forward in a whole host of ways.
2) A lack of focus on the people that matter

There are too many churches out there that focus on the attitudes and ideas of their staff, such as church leaders. In reality, the people that truly matter are the members of your community that attend church and the events run by the church. It can sometimes cause new and existing members to feel unwelcome or unimportant and counteract attempts to grow a church.

Everyone matters, no matter their role and for those churches who lose sight of this then we would expect to see drops in congregation levels. Embrace the idea and celebrate the contribution of everyone and you will see your church transform.

3) Not wanting to embrace new cultures and ideas

An issue very much linked to the first two points and that is why it is so prevalent in churches across the United States. Culture is a constantly changing and evolving concept and along with changes in culture comes changes in ideas. Many leaders feel that these ideas are entirely against the ideas and principles of Christianity and have no place in their church.

Having such a single-minded, narrow view of the world means you instantly lose a large section of society and lose those existing members who embrace new ideas. Engage with those in your community and look to understand their ideas and you will very quickly notice that new cultures and new ideas don’t simply mean anti-Christian.

4) Conflicts within the church

We are all human beings and naturally, there will be conflicts between internal stakeholders due to a difference of opinion. When church leaders argue between themselves in public or have a conflict with members of the congregation then this can really put people off attending the church. It is impossible to avoid but being aware of the effect it can have is absolutely vital to maintaining and growing the church.

If you can understand why the conflict is there, be open and embrace discussions about topics then you can prevent a lot, resolve even more and help prevent divisive issues.
5) Not part of the community

As a church leader, you may feel that being located within the community means you are automatically part of it. Sadly this isn't the case because those who fail to engage, embrace and stay part of the community will lose touch with those around them. All of this leads to losing members and not growing your church.

Do you engage with the local community at regular events, special events and festivals? Or do you simply organise a sermon once or twice a week? You have so many opportunities to be part of the community and those that make the most of these advantages are the ones who grow their church.

6) Not enough staff

With funds under pressure, historical systems and buildings costing money it can be tough to afford more staff. However, it is really important to realise that without the right amount of staff, in the right roles then you cannot hope to engage with your congregation and attract new members of the community.

When a church loses sight of the most important job - sharing the word of God, because all of the other tasks need to be done, it can come across as being disinterested. Once more, this may lead to people searching for a new church that better represents what they want. When it comes to admin and finance tasks, use a system like Church Helper to manage this side of the church and focus on what matters most.

7) Financial challenges

In a similar vein as the previous issue of not enough staff, financial challenges can not only have an impact on maintaining the status quo but will almost entirely rule out the chance of growing your church. You need to manage your existing resources and congregation in the right way before even attempting to spend funds on growing your church.

If you can become more efficient and start to run fundraising events, then you will be able to explore opportunities to grow your church via new technology, new events and repairs to the church itself.
How you can grow your church

Now that you have thought about why your church isn’t growing, you will have a list of issues to tackle. Taking the time to resolve these issues, will link very closely to ways to grow your church as you will discover below.

1) Show value in growth

So many of us are resistant to change, worrying that new ideas or changing what isn’t broken may make life worse. The church is no different and a fantastic way to tackle this when trying to grow your church is to engage your congregation in the process.

Ask your church team, your congregation and your community what they think of your ideas, whilst also asking them to present their own ideas on what can be improved or introduced. If they feel part of the process, they will more likely be on board with the new ideas that will help grow the church because they will sell it to those around them.

2) Use technology to your advantage

We live in a time of incredible advancements in technology and the role it plays in our lives. The first thing a church must do in order to grow is to see this as a positive, an opportunity and not as an attack on traditional methods. Once you have done this then you have a wealth of options to help grow.

Firstly, with modern society being more mobile you can utilise streaming services to share your message and events with those who physically cannot attend. Furthermore, you can be more efficient at the administrative side of running a church which allows for more time spent interacting with the community.

3) Modernise sermons
If you want to grow your church by attracting new members from the community, then you clearly can’t just stick to the same old messages and stories. If they worked, then you wouldn’t be reading this article, would you! One of the most important roles as a leader is communicating with your congregation, embracing faith with them.

As a result, if you start to try and modernise sermons by thinking about who your demographic is, what is going on in the world and what your congregation needs then you are far more likely to touch on those modern-day issues and ideas that will attract new people.

4) Consider your demographic

When thinking about growing your church, immediately you should be thinking about who the people are that you are trying to attract. Understanding the demographic you’re targeting means truly understanding the people, the community, the attitudes, what is important to them and what they need from a church.

Let’s think of some examples. Firstly, if you’re located in an area with an ageing population, then your focus will be on very different requirements to a more modern, youth-orientated demographic. Take the time to venture into the community and get to know people and see what they need and how you can provide that.

5) Host events for younger people

Even if your church is located in an area with a primarily older location, you cannot rely on this alone to grow your church. You must think about younger people and how to attract them to your church. By connecting to as many age groups as possible, particularly younger ones then you can engage them early on, building bonds that can last a long time.

Take the time to run events for the younger generation, such as summer BBQs or youth clubs. These can easily be run and monitored through the church engaging with the young people whilst also raising funds for important work that the church does. Church Helper provides all the systems you need to do this efficiently.
6) Get feedback from your community

Do you ever ask your community how they feel about the church? Do they get a chance to express their opinion on church matters? If not, then you will find it difficult to grow your church because you won’t truly understand what needs to change to keep members and attract new ones.

One of the best ways to obtain feedback on what needs to change or improve is to hold engaging events within your local community. This may be a fundraising event, summer celebration or Christmas sermon and anything in between. When you run these events, take the time to talk to the people attending about what is important to them and what they would like to see change. If you can mix this in with sharing your own messages then even better.

7) Run fundraising events

One of the biggest factors in growing a church is the funds available to help with your growth plans. How can you run events, purchase new technology or relocate if you cannot afford to do so? Starting to run effective and efficient fundraising events will transform your ability to grow.

There are many opportunities to raise funds during the year, with regular coffee mornings combined with special events around holidays and festivals. Talk to members of your congregation and the local community that attend and find out what they want, and it will become much easier to generate funds at these events. You can even utilise helpful software like Church Helper to manage these events and run reports on their effectiveness. It will lead to growing faster and more efficiently.

Summary

We put this article together with the aim of tackling the issue of growing your church in the most efficient way. Firstly, it is about understanding why your church isn’t growing and the issues to deal with and create an action plan for dealing with these. It is our belief that without tackling this first phase, then you will have minimal success with growing your church and there is no point focusing on the next phase.
Once you have analysed and begun to tackle the issues that are affecting your church, you can explore the many wonderful opportunities to grow your church and engage with more people in the community. It can be those little changes or significant actions that transform your church.