

Basics on how to develop a Mission and Vision statement for your church

By Jody Kilburn

Many books have been written to explain the importance of the mission and vision of a church. That is not the purpose of this worksheet. However, two **simple** statements set a **clear** direction, establish priorities and provide a filter for making decisions like no other. These two **brief** statements provide a church with clarity and allow them to focus their efforts. Additionally, these two statements produce momentum and help to eliminate non-essential tasks that rob a church of time and resources.

Sadly, many churches do not have these two statements to guide them. Many others have statements that long and complicated, i.e. no one can remember it, or they have these statements on paper only, the members have not embraced them. Neither will help a church but both will produce frustration. Knowing your church’s mission and the vision for accomplishing it are essential for every local church. Without knowledge of these two crucial guiding statements, as leaders we will fail to clearly articulate to our members what God has called our church to do. Additionally, when the mission and vision are rarely discussed in the course of making critical decisions, churches will easily get off track, experience “mission drift” and settle for good not great ministry ideas.

To briefly explain these two **God-given** statements, think of them in the following way:

* Mission is taught to people and Vision is caught by people.
* Mission informs people and Vision inspires people.
* “Mission is a clear, “broad, brief, biblical statement of what the ministry is supposed to be doing” - Aubrey Malphurs
* “Vision is a clear, exciting picture of God’s future for your ministry as you believe it can and must be.” - Aubrey Malphurs
* A church mission statement is a clear and direct way of talking about “why we are here” as a church. More specifically what a church is trying to do to fulfill the Great Commission.

Mission Statement (What You Do): A one-sentence (two max) statement describing the reason an organization or program exists and is used to help guide decisions about priorities, actions, and responsibilities.

Vision Statement (Desired End-State): A one-sentence (two max) statement describing the clear and inspirational long-term desired change resulting from an organization or program’s work.

Your statements should not contain long or run-on sentences. Not every church needs a slogan, but the slogan should come naturally from the mission statement. Try to keep only parts that are essential ideas, not specific projects or actions. “Love the poor” instead of “run a food bank” is a good example.

These worksheets will assist in development of your mission and vision statements.

**Key components of a Church Mission Statement**

According to the Malphurs Group, “Put simply, the Great Commission has two components: evangelism and edification—making and maturing followers of Jesus Christ”. Therefore, leaders must understand the Great commission and its components. There are two basic evangelism components of the Great Commission, they are the “GO” and “BE” statements.

“GO” and “BE” places a huge amount of emphasis on evangelism. The gospels tell us “GO make disciples”, “GO preach the Good News” and “BE witnesses”. Likewise, we are told to *TEACH* in the Matthew’s gospel. The combination of these three elements will produce disciples.

**About your mission statement…**

**Make it short and memorable.**

If your congregation can’t memorize it easily then it won’t become part of the culture.

**Use understandable terms.**

In fact, a good rule of thumb is to phrase your mission statement in a way that is designed for the least mature Christian in your church. If you stick to that rule, you won’t go wrong.

**Be clear and action oriented.**

Your statement should be a very clear call to action for your entire church. The making and maturing of disciples is a team sport, and everyone who calls Jesus their Savior is on the team and must get in the game.

**Let’s Get Started Discovering your Mission and Vision Statements…**

**Ask God to prepare your heart and open your eyes.**

*Write down your answers to the following questions on a separate piece of paper.*

**PHASE 1: (Value/Why)**

Step 1: Ask why did God call your founding members to start your church in the first place? (Was there a need for more biblical teaching? Sharing the gospel locally? Serving Christ through serving specific needs in the community?)

Step 2: Ask what is unique about your church? Why does your church exist?

Step 3: Ask what words would you use to describe your church?

Step 4: Why this church and not a different one?

**PHASE 2: (Inspiration/hope/Legacy)**

Step 1: What is the church supposed to do? (God has determined this for us, make disciples)

Step 2: Who will you serve? (Christ died for people; the church is to be people-oriented)

Step 3: How will we serve these people? (What does God want you to do for them? Their primary need is life transformation. Salvation for the unbeliever and sanctification for the believer.)

***This is an opportunity to inspire your congregation!***

**PHASE 3: (Reasonable/Plausible)**

Think out loud…

Step 1: Take your answers to the above questions and write them in a short and concise form, two to four words maximum for each answer. List them separately. What do you see?

Step 2: Using one of the sample formats below or one of your own write out the mission of your church.

Sample Formats:

The Mission of (name of church) is to…

Our mission is to …

(Name of Church) seeks to…

Step 3: Answer the questions below. If you answer no to any of the questions re-write your mission until you have answered yes to each one.

* Is it broad enough? (comprehensive, overarching yet reasonable) (Does is summarize all that you do?)
* Is it clear enough? (You may need to ask others what they think it means. If they answer wrong, it is not clear and needs to be reworded.)
* Is it brief and simple? (could you put it on a t-shirt?)
* Is it memorable? (People should be able to read it and then close their eyes and repeat it.)
* Does it call your entire church to action?

Step 4: Brainstorm, now you can get a bit more excited about the wording. You can begin to pinpoint who you want to reach. Are you hoping to be “welcoming” or maybe “reaching out?” Neither is wrong or right but they have a message. Additionally, remember to use dynamic, visual language.

**I finished writing it, what now?**

Try it out. If you are happy with it, show it to some people. Try to show it to people who are already aware and onboard with what makes your church special but also show it to those who don’t already know what you are trying to say. It may or may not even be worth showing to some non-Christian friends to learn their reaction.

Let a few days go by and ask those you have shown the statement to if they can remember it. If they can remember the basic components of the statement, even if it is not the exact wording, you are probably headed the right direction.

This will allow you to locate the holes in your mission statement. Hope fully you will not have any, but you want those who read it to understand it without assistance. Look especially for the elements you think are important, but they failed to remember. It maybe you are not making it clear enough and need to go back to drawing board to refine it.

Some will have difficulty understanding whatever your write. That is okay, it is a small percentage, but they need to be excited about it. If not, you may have a problem with by-in from those.

**PHASE 4: Live It Out!**

Go do it! God loves his creation, teach them, serve them, lead them and shepherd them. Understand and see your community both “in the pews” and “in the streets”. Spent time explaining it, flesh it out with verses, stories and examples. Begin to point out the consequences of not doing this mission statement, explaining clearly what happens if it is not lived out. Watch how it grow in your church and make sure your church is growing and moving toward the purpose of the mission statement.

**PHASE 5: Revisit it**

Your Mission Statement can (and should) grow with your church. If you are reaching people and deeply impacting their lives your mission statement will change as you better understand how to reach people.

As your church grows and changes, you will need to further develop your mission statement and have a healthy cycle of reevaluating it. The Great Commission never changes but every two to three years, make time to revisit your mission statement to ensure it is accurately expressing what your church is doing.

It may be good as it is. Do not change it for the sake of changing it. However, be aware of the progress you have made and be mindful of “mission drift.”

Remember, this is your church’s chance to tell the world what you are up to. A chance to clearly state the things you hope are being clearly lived out.

**About your vision statement…**

In all honesty, not much will happen at your church without an inspiring and compelling vision. The importance of vision cannot be underestimated. Vision energizes people and creates meaning in their lives. Vision produces a sense of purpose and a cause to belong to. It sustains ministries in the dry times, motivates leadership and assists giving to mention just a few.

**Vision provides a clear picture of a preferred future according to God’s will** for an individual, team or church. A vision statement is a clear mental picture of what your church will become in 5-10 years. If God could have his way, what would your church look like in 10 years from now? What would feel different? What would be different?

**Key components of a Church Vision Statement**

Think big, is it something only God can do? If you knew that you could not fail, what would you do for the glory of God and the growth of his kingdom?

What kinds of people would your church be reaching?

How would your church be impacting your community?

What is your primary goal for the members of the church?

What are the minimum expectations of each church member?

**Let’s Get Started…**

**Ask God to prepare your heart and open your eyes.**

*Write down your answers to the following questions on a separate piece of paper.*

**PHASE 1:**

Read Exodus 3:7-8 and Deuteronomy 8:7-10. What vision is God communicating to Moses?

Read Nehemiah chapters 1 and 2. With Jerusalem in ruins, what is Nehemiah’s vision in response to what he learned? What two actions by Nehemiah developed his vision?

Knowing God has plans for your church, after praying and fasting what has God told you regarding his preferred future for your church?

**PHASE 2:**

Write it down.

**PHASE 3:**

**Think out loud…**

Step 1: Answer the questions below. If you answer no to any of the questions re-write your mission until you have answered yes to each one.

Can you as a pastor, articulate God’s vision for your church? If not re-write until you can successfully do so.

Does it reflect the primary goals for each church member?

Does it describe the minimum expectations for each church member?

Is it Biblical?

Is it clear and concise?

Is it memorable?

Is it actionable?

Does it challenge us?

**About your vision statement…**

**Make it short and memorable.**

If your congregation can’t memorize it easily then it won’t become part of the culture.

**Use understandable terms.**

In fact, a good rule of thumb is to phrase your vision statement in a way that is designed for the least mature Christian in your church. If you stick to that rule, you won’t go wrong.

**Be clear and action oriented.**

Your statement should be a very clear mental picture of what your church will become in 5-10 years if they are faithful to accomplish the mission.

**POINTS TO PONDER…**

Do not expect your members to act or respond to information they do not understand. Your Mission and Vision statements will accomplish nothing if they are not understood.

Communicate your mission and vision regularly:

* Communicate it verbally
* Communicate it by example
* Be passionate about both
* Communicate both formally and informally
	+ Bulletins, bulletin boards, announcements, training materials, brochures, newsletters, videos, social media, skits, etc.