

PASTORPEDIA™

Cutting Edge Conversations for Pastors and Church Leaders

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How should we assess our effectiveness?

The angels are meeting in awards mode

This particular committee must pick “church of the year” in your state. You can listen in if you like.

“Look at this one—they have four services every weekend, and three of them are almost full!”

“Wait, look at this one—they were 30% over budget in giving last year and gave 29% for outside their walls!”

Not many of us think that is really the way the discussion up there would go, but the way we spend energy or use brain power may seem as if it were so. Surely there are deeper criteria for the awards of heaven.

“Here’s one where the people really love each other and build each other in the faith, and they’re doing so much to reach people who have no faith at all.”

“Look how the people worship at this church. They come early to sit toward the front instead of the back and they actually think and pray while they sing. I change my nomination!”

“Take a look at this one—talk about love for Christ and learning to pray and connect with an unbeliever....”

Enough of that. You may know that we’re just making this up. ☺ They do not use recording appliances in heaven, we understand. But we must all decide how we will measure our success every day and every year.

And that happens to be our subject for this month. Surprise! We hope it makes you think, pray, and assess.

You may notice we do not emphasize the same issues, or always agree. That’s one of the reasons there are three of us. ☺

Hoping to help,

Knute, with Jeff and Jim

What about the old standard, “bodies and bucks”?

Jeff Bogue

- That old standard has become very inaccurate. The new standard is what we’re calling “engagement.” We’re finding that we must take a holistic look at someone’s tie to church as well as their discipleship progress.

Jim Brown

- It does measure something but it is not the only measure.
- Numbers matter because they represent people.
- In most other areas in our world attendance indicates growth and is the measure that is used—such as sporting events, businesses, personal goals, etc.
- In order for Christ-followers to grow they should be producing other disciples. If there has been no growth for a long period, this is an issue that needs attention.

Knute Larson

- It is really not a bad way to measure growth! I mean, we do like more people to come to services and to be generous in giving.
Even people who say they do not use this method anymore know about how many were there last Sunday or last weekend!
- Many have added other good numerical ways to measure progress, and that's understandable in light of the way attendance and giving habits have changed the last couple of decades. This is good, as long as we don't kid ourselves about how attendance is going and how people are voting with their offering envelopes!
- Of course we would rather be able to measure spirit and closeness to God, obedience and love for others, and evangelism. But these are mostly guesses on our part, judged by outward appearances and a few statistics.
- Church coaches used to say, “When a person joins a group, he or she joins the church.” Others said that when you have a job or bring a casserole, you start to call it my church instead of your church. There is something to that, and it argues at least that we should measure this, and also that we should have them bring a casserole to the first meeting of a new members’ class, and take a job in the church that is feasible for a new person at the last meeting of that members’ class.
- You can smile or even laugh when I say this, but I think a pastor can catch a feel of a church just by the mood, the way people sing and listen, how they smile, and how they greet. It's not so giant but it's real.

When should we feel good about what is happening, no matter what size?

Jeff Bogue

- When we’re seeing people come to know Christ, when people are passionate about God, and when they’re buying into the vision and the plan.

- We should also set metrics for these priorities so that we don't gauge health with anecdotes only; we must gauge it with facts.

Jim Brown

- When worship is thriving.
- When there are new babies being born.
- When people are sharing their faith.
- When Jesus is the Hero and He is central to everything.
- When pure and faultless religion is on the forefront.
- When your church is a mooring point of hope for the community and people would miss you if you packed everything up and moved away.
- When people are serving and growing in their love for others.
- When God-sightings are everywhere.
- When people have an appetite for God's Word and purity.
- When grace and truth are coming from the pulpit.

Knute Larson

- When our Lord is glorified and people are loving each other and caring about outsiders.
- When the color, average age, and cultural backgrounds are changing a bit.
- When people are being honest in community or life groups—actually joining and attending in the first place—and the staff and some of the main leaders are working to lead a true discipleship/accountability group. (We have excellent Bible texts and discussion questions for these groups—love to share them!)
- When people would say that the Sunday service was a “good meal.” It doesn't have to be spectacular—not every evening meal is at home! But Sunday service nourishes, is enjoyable, and edifying. It points to Jesus Christ and the cross, preaching the gospel.

What do you think pastoral and church faithfulness looks like to our Lord?

Jeff Bogue

- Faithfulness looks a lot like courage—doing what's right and leading boldly.
- It looks like a love of Christ and His people, laying our lives down for the people around us.
- It looks a lot like leadership—not being passive but leading, and leading in strong ways.
- Striving to do better... *I want to do this more and more.*

Jim Brown

- I hope and pray that the Lord finds me faithful and is pleased with how I lead Grace Community Church. It would break my heart if He weren't. This keeps me humble and committed to my Savior!

- I believe the true test of my leadership-faithfulness-effectiveness will be when I am gone. My hope is that people continue to chase after Jesus far beyond me.
- I firmly believe that we must lead from faith, be willing to take risks, and willing to do whatever it takes to reach lost people.
- The true measure comes when you live for the applause of God and not man!
- Lastly, our lives should demonstrate what we believe and show that we are willing to live out our faith as much with our actions as we do our words!

Knute Larson

- Winning the district Sunday school attendance contest, and getting to cut off the tie of one of the pastors who lost. (Forgive me, I just have such vivid memories and embarrassment! But you probably were not even alive then.)
- When the Word is preached to the best of our ability. When we keep getting better at this. When we connect with real life and touch their hearts. When people say in their hearts, I want that, and not just, he's good or that was okay and true.

Somewhere our Lord did call us to preach His Word and not self-help or good books.

- When the people of the church know very well that we love the "little people," though we would never call them that, as well as the leaders and the winners. See James 2:1-7.
- When grace and truth with love are very present.
- When people can tell that we love our Lord, our families, and them, not just the spotlight.

Pastorpedia is a resource provided to you by CE National, a church effectiveness ministry. Please contact us at cenational@cenational.org or 574.267.6622 if we may be of any help to you or your ministry!

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