

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

How to Find & Measure Leaders in Your Church - Episode 222

Healthy Church by the Numbers (Part 3)

In the final part of our series on healthy church numbers and metrics, Tony and Amy are explaining how you can **identify, measure, and empower leaders in your church**.

But first, a **quick note on church governance**: Churches in decline tend to have more people sitting in committee and board meetings talking *about* ministry. Healthy churches, on the other hand, tend to mobilize more people in serving roles actually *doing* ministry.

So the first step to making positive change in your church may be to [clarify the role and purpose of your church board](#). Now, let's jump into leadership.

Defining and Measuring Leadership

A leader is anyone in a role where they're actually leading other people. Seems obvious, right? But the distinction there is that while someone may hold a *position* of leadership, such as a board member or elder, they may not be actively participating and leading others in ministry.

So we should start tracking the number of people that are leading by having influence on other people's spiritual journeys. The key here is to only count volunteer leaders. Not staff.

Why does tracking volunteer leaders matter? In our experience, this benchmark (the number of volunteer leaders that we have at our church) may be **one of the biggest differentiators between healthy and stuck churches**.

*Healthy churches have about **one lay leader (team or group leader) for every 10 people in attendance**. Declining churches have about **one lay leader (team or group leader) for every 20 people in attendance**. So, healthy churches have about twice as many lay leaders.*

This is one of the primary reasons why large churches tend to get stuck: rather than hiring high-capacity leaders who know how to identify, equip and empower other leaders, they hire more and more staff to assume leadership roles that previously were handled by lay people.

“It’s always easier to hire people to do ministry than it is to build volunteer teams to do ministry.”

For this benchmark to help you, you need to know how many leaders are leading other people at your church:

- Track it in your database
- Track teams and groups
 - Track roles: leader or member?

Monitor it like you monitor your giving. Because the data indicates **there’s a stronger correlation between the number of lay leaders you empower and the overall health of the church than there is between giving and church health.**

Next Steps for Empowering Leaders

1. **Hire leaders who know how to find more leaders.** When we do hire, we need to focus on hiring staff that know how to identify, equip, and empower other volunteer leaders.
2. **Get leaders around other leaders.** Real leadership development happens in the context of relationships.
3. **Let leaders learn through leading.** We need to empower leaders by giving them opportunities to lead. It might be messy and come with mistakes along the way, but we need to begin by giving leadership away.
4. **Skip the bulletin and platform announcement.** Potential leaders need a face-to-face challenge—so help them connect their leadership responsibility to the mission and vision of the church.
5. **Give leaders a problem to solve.** Leaders are problem solvers and they love a new challenge. Rather than describing a position, we should go to them explaining a challenge we're facing and ask them to help us solve it.

“If you can get someone to join you in solving a problem, that’s going to increase the odds that they’ll also want to help you execute the solution. And that often includes leading a team of people to see that solution implemented.”

Take the Free Vital Signs Assessment

Over the last decade, the Vital Signs Assessment has provided thousands of churches with a picture of their overall health by looking at key metrics, and how those metrics compare to other churches. [Take the assessment \(typically \\$49\) for free here.](#)

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