

10 Things I Have Learned Along The Way

1. You must have an unshakeable **Faith**, that God desires **Growth** and **Prosperity** for your congregation.

Nehemiah 4:6 – “So we rebuilt the wall, and all the wall was joined together to half its height; for the people had a mind to work.”

a. Don't let anyone define your future for you.

b. Don't listen to the Tobiahs and Sanballats.

c. Mess happens, don't start, stir or sit in the mess, help clean the mess.

d. Roll up your sleeves and get to work!

10 Things I Have Learned

2. Learn to **Bloom** where you are **Planted** and **Plant** so you may continue to **Bloom**. **Jeremiah 29:5 – “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.”**
 - a. Don't wait for someone to prepare your blessing.
 - b. Stop complaining about your present condition.

3. Tend to the **Root** and you'll produce better **Fruit**. **Psalm 1:3 – “They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither, in all they do, they prosper.**

10 Things I Have Learned

4. “You must know and implement God’s call to your congregation.

Jeremiah 29:11 – “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

- a. You must discern where God is calling the congregation.
- b. Know your core values, what is non-negotiable.
- c. Everything you do must be governed and directed by God’s call.
- d. Let your values guide the use of your money and make sure money bows to and serves the call.

10 Things I Have Learned

5. There must be a Consistent, Dedicated, Fasting and Prayer ministry within the church.

I Thessalonians 5:15-17 – “See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.”

a. A congregation that does not pray with power cannot serve with power.

b. Prayer changes the attitude of the prayers.

10 Things I Have Learned

6. Worship must be Dynamic, Transformative, Inviting.

Psalm 100: 1-2 – “Make a joyful noise to the Lord, in all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing... Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name.”

- a. People are looking for a vital encounter with God!
- b. Everything in worship must be done with excellence and precision and yet open to the movement of the Holy Spirit.
- c. Keep it real, be genuine.

10 Things I Have Learned

7. There must be a strong **Pastoral** and **Lay** leadership.

Jeremiah 3:15 – “I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Exodus 18:17-18 – Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “what you are doing is not good. You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.”

10 Things I Have Learned

8. Provide a variety of **Ministry** opportunities within and outside the church.

Ephesians 2:10 – “No, we neither make nor save ourselves, God does both the making and saving. He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.”

10 Things I Have Learned

- a. Every member must find his or her place in ministry.
- b. Help people discover their spiritual gifts.
- c. Pay attention to the ministry needs outside of the local congregation.
- d. Put into place infrastructure that will allow the church to do the ministry.
- e. “The more people you have rowing the boat – the fewer you have rocking the boat!”

THE ROLE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

The role of the people in church growth is more important than the role of the pastor. People unite with a community a faith not with a pastor. When a local congregation determines mind, heart and spirit to grow, as God would have them, I am convinced that growth is inevitable. In order to do this, the people must understand their role in church growth are roles that when understood and implemented by God's people will help the local church grow and prosper.

THE ROLE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

1. THE PEOPLE MUST BE KINGDOM SEEKERS. People are seeking an experience now with the Kingdom of God and they want to join where others share the same desire.

Matthew 6:32-33, “For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well”.

THE ROLE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

- a. Don't focus on filling the pews and numerical growth. Focus on making disciples of Jesus Christ. Hunger and thirst for the things of God
- b. No one wants to join a social club disguised as a church.
- c. Work on the spiritual health of your church.
- d. Don't build your kingdom, help build God's Kingdom.
- e. Be open to what God is doing now. You can think about the past, learn from and honor the past but you cannot grow today living in yesterday.

THE ROLE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

2.THE PEOPLE MUST COUNT THE COST OF GROWTH. It is a fatal fallacy to believe that numerical growth is a panacea.

Luke 14:28, “For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not estimate the cost, to see whether you have enough to complete it.”

a. Anticipate growth pains.

b. Growth brings change. Do you really want to change?

c. New people will want and expect full participation.

d. Are you willing to give away power?

e. Don't be afraid to evangelize, it is our core business.

THE ROLE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

3. THE PEOPLE MUST BE WILLING TO WORK. There is absolutely no substitute for the hard work of making the church the kind of community that attracts the lost and the unchurched. **Nehemiah 4:6, “so we rebuilt the wall, and all the wall was joined together to half its height; for the people had a mind to work.”**

THE ROLE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

- a. Decide together what needs to be done and get after it.
- b. Work together children, work together.
- c. Work with what you have until you receive what you need.
- d. It is your attitude about what you have that makes the difference.
- e. Start working now while it is day, the night cometh, the harvest is plentiful.

THE ROLE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH (con't)

4. THE PEOPLE MUST HAVE OWNERSHIP OF THE VISION.

The church belongs to God. We now have the awesome task of believing God's Kingdom is here now and that we are called as co-laborers with Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to expand the Kingdom. **Joel 2:28 "then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, the old shall dream dreams and the young shall dream."**

A person is kneeling on a sandy beach, facing a large, dark cross. The scene is set against a bright, hazy sunset sky with soft clouds. The person's shadow is cast on the sand, and the overall atmosphere is one of quiet reflection and faith.

THE ROLE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH (con't)

- a. Keep your faith in God and not the preacher.
- b. Would you want to attend your church if you were not vested in it?
- c. It is your dream; how will it turn out?

THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

The role of the pastor is indispensable in igniting the fire of growth. If the pastor does not understand his/her role and embrace the call of God to build the Kingdom where they serve, then there is little hope for the local congregation to thrive. There is absolutely no reason your church cannot grow holistically.

Here are the three roles I believe every pastor must embrace and grow in.

THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

1. THE PASTOR MUST BE ABLE TO PREACH. People come to “hear a relevant word from the Lord”. No one comes to church to hear your tweets.

a. God has chosen preaching to invite people into a transformed relationship with God and humanity.

Romans 10:14 “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without some one preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?”

THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

- b. You have been sent to preach. There is no substitute for effective preaching.
- c. If the church is dry, dead and dull, start preaching, keep preaching, preach some more.
- d. Preach with passion and enthusiasm, no one wants to hear a sermon you are not excited about.
- e. Preach a biblically based relevant message.
- f. Use illustrations, tell stories, Jesus did.
- g. If preaching is not what you do well, get some help.

THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

2. THE PASTOR MUST BE PROPHETIC. The pastor has to have some vision of how things ought to be.

- a. Find out what your church needs to fully be the people of God.
- b. Find out what your community needs to bring about the Peaceable Kingdom of God.

Isaiah 65:17-25

- a. Lead your congregation in acts of justice and mercy.
- b. Help the congregation scratch where they itch and itch in new places.

THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

- 3. THE PASTOR MUST HAVE A PASTOR'S HEART.** The pastor must have a pastor's heart for his/her congregation and God's people.
- a. The pastor must remember the church and pastor belong to God. The pastor is God's steward, who will be held accountable for the welfare of the church. **Ezekiel 34**
 - b. The pastor must have a servant mentality and attitude. Jesus came to serve and not be served.
 - c. The Pastor can never have disdain for the congregation.
 - d. The Pastor cannot pastor with his/her heart in another place.
 - e. The Pastor must take care of his/her self, a weak, dying or dead shepherd cannot tend the flock.

Final Thoughts

- **I have learned you don't get what you expect, you get what you inspect and invest.**
- **I have learned to live unashamed of the gospel.**
- **I have learned to serve Jesus in all things.**
- **I have learned to trust in Jesus.**
- **I have learned to trust more in Jesus.**
- **I have learned to trust in Jesus, and again I say, trust in Jesus.**