

Achieving Your Goals

You will know them (disciples) by their fruit.” (Matthew 7:16)

Achieving your goals will be challenging but it doesn't need to be complicated. Ideally we would like things to work like this:



We would like the movement toward accomplishing our goals to be a straight line - the shortest and most direct path to accomplish the goal. In reality, that rarely happens if it occurs at all. There are things we do not anticipate, things we learn along the way and challenges that we encounter that require us to turn and twist along the way. In reality, working to accomplish a goal looks like this.



In the church, there are a variety of levels of effectiveness in accomplishing goals and doing important ministry. Two churches can use the same program and one is successful and the other church is not successful. Churches that succeed generally follow these principles.

What helps a church to accomplish its goals?

1. **Pray** – The work/ministry of the church is a spiritual discipline. We are not a business or a secular organization. We are about seeking and understanding the movement of God and this begins with prayers of deep listening and petitioning God for strength, people, wisdom and spiritual depth to accomplish the church's goals.
2. **Measurable Goals** – The clearer and more measurable the goal is, the better the chance to reach your goal. For instance, a goal to increase stewardship is not a practical goal. Rather you might state it this way: *Increase the average giving per member by 4% or increase the number of people who pledge by 20%*. These are measurable and will help a congregation identify activities that help to accomplish the goal.
3. **Hold People Accountable** – If you believe your goals are a spiritual endeavor and if you believe they are what God wants for your church and community, then people should be accountable

for their ministry. Accountability doesn't need to be harsh or punitive but it does need to be clear and direct. When a goal is set, people should be assigned to the goal and the person should recruit others to work with him or her to accomplish the goal. A goal should not be assigned to a committee. You cannot hold a committee accountable. Also committees generally talk about ministry while individuals carry out ministry. By assigning a goal to a person and allowing that person to choose their team to work on the goal, you increase the opportunity to achieve the goal.

When holding people accountable, you assist them by setting benchmarks. A benchmark is marker along the way to indicate what will be done by when. This means developing a set of activities or actions to accomplish the goal and a set of deadlines for each activity. Assigning different activities to different people and each person knowing their activities and when they are completed gives direction to the team. Below you will find a team benchmark sheet that can help you organize your team and timeline.

The team leader, the person assigned to achieve the goal should regularly check in with each team member at least once a month and more often as necessary to ask the following questions:

- a. What have you done since the last time we talked?
- b. What roadblocks are you encountering and how are you overcoming them?
- c. Do you need any support or help? (Team leaders help people problem solve or help to recruit others that can help the person complete their tasks)
- d. Let's talk again in ___ weeks. What do you think you will be able to accomplish by then?

These questions can be asked following church, on the phone or in an email. Try not to use email too often. The more personal the contact, the more helpful a team leader will be.

A team should gather as often as necessary and for no more than an hour. Team meetings should be focused and offer an opportunity for people to report to one another on how they are doing and what support they need. Too many meetings and meetings that are more than an hour tend not to be productive and can lose focus. Check in meetings should begin and end with prayer.

When someone is not completing their tasks, let them know how important their work is to the project and the church and ask the individual: *When will you be able to accomplish your task?* If the person needs help, get them support. If a person cannot complete their work, assign the tasks to others. It may be a mismatch of tasks and an individual's gifts or the individual may not have the time. Thank them for trying and let them know why you will be inviting someone else to pick up their tasks. Encourage the individual and let them know there will be other opportunities.

There should be someone engaging the team leader as well. A church leader should ask these same questions of the team leader.

4. **Celebrate Small Victories Along the Way** – When someone accomplishes part of the goal, thank God and the individual and let the other team members know what has been accomplished. This will increase motivation within the team.
5. **Communicate Results to the Congregation** – Communicate to the congregation progress toward the goals and ask for their prayers, support and involvement. This will help the congregation to engage in the ministry and it will motivate others working on goals to accomplish their goals.
6. **Excellence** – God needs and wants our best. When we do not do ministry well, to the outsider, it is a reflection on the God we serve. *Good enough may not be God enough.* Excellence also attracts others to get involved.
7. **Evaluation** – Evaluate the teams work by asking:
 - a. What went well?
 - b. What did we learn?
 - c. What will we do differently in the future?Build on successes and improve upon future efforts.

The Essential Ingredients to Reaching Your Goals

There are three ingredients to reaching goals.

Gifts → Ministry → Fruit

Gifts – Gifts are the resources from God for your ministry. Ensuring you have the appropriate gift set is the most important part of achieving your goals. If you get this wrong it will be like pushing a rock up a hill and may make the difference between achieving your goals and not achieving your goals. There are three important gifts that are needed for success.

1. **Time** – Enough time and appropriate time. This begins first with God's timing. Is this the right time in your congregation's life to be working on the goal. Are people open to the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to work in your midst? Praying before you launch into your goals and seeking God's guidance about the right time to start working on the goal is essential. This might include things like there is sufficient energy within the congregation to work on the goal, your church calendar is not so filled with activities that people do not have time to work on the goals, you are not preparing for a major event, like a church anniversary that will sidetrack people from working on the goal. You must also provide the appropriate amount of time to

reach a goal. If you do not allow for challenges you may encounter along the way, you will frustrate people because they will feel rushed. You also do not want to provide too much time because people will let the work go if they feel they have plenty of time. Some sense of urgency is appropriate.

2. Money – Have you provided the team working on the goal with sufficient financial resources to accomplish the goal? Ministry requires financial support.
3. People – This is the most critical of all. In the church we are not always discerning of people’s gifts. We want to include everyone, even if they do not have the gifts for a particular project. If someone does not have the appropriate gifts, encourage them to engage in another ministry which is better suited for their gifts. They and you will be blessed by helping people to engage in the appropriate ministry. If people’s gifts are being matured, do not assign them more than they can do with excellence. You may also have them work with and be mentored by someone else. Growing leadership through smaller projects or by being mentored will be a gift to the individual and the future of the church.

Ministry – The activities you do to carry out your goals. The activities should clearly work together to reach a goal.

Fruit – The results of the gifts and ministry. Churches should evaluate progress based on the fruit. Many churches evaluate activity. We are good at activity, but it is the fruit that is essential. Jesus said, you will know *disciples* by their fruit. Measuring activity can make us feel good but it is the fruit that we are working to achieve. If you are not bearing the desired fruit, you should change either your gifts or ministry or both. Also recognize that sometimes it takes time for a ministry to achieve its desired effect. Do not change the ministry too quickly. A new worship service may take 2-3 years to catch on.

Working on and achieving goals can be a very rewarding experience and it will strengthen your ministry and your congregation. Everything will not go smoothly but learning and working on improving will continue to strengthen you church’s ministry.

You will also find best practices and resources for on the best practices tab for:

1. [Making new disciples](#)
2. [Improving and growing worship](#)
3. [Starting and leading small groups](#)
4. [Engaging people in community mission](#)
5. [Increasing your congregations mission giving](#)

Keep in mind, these resources are dependent on using the above approach to achieve your goals and ministry.

Goal Benchmark Chart		Team Leader:
Goal:		
Activity	Person Assigned	Due Date

1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					

Implementing the Drivers of Vitality

~~Will be available November 15, 2011.~~