

Adding A Second Worship Service

One of the most significant times in the history of a local church—and one of the most important to manage correctly—is consideration of a second worship service. Why? Because if this critical step in the growth of a church is mishandled, it will inhibit subsequent growth for three to five years.

Following are some ideas for making the move to a second service successful:

- ★ If your church has a mission or purpose statement that includes reaching and ministering to people, give it visibility prior to discussing a second service. A second service should then be introduced as a means to that end.
- ★ Determine if your second service will be identical to the first (with the understanding that your present worship is appropriate and you simply need more room to accommodate the people or a different style of service (meaning that you intend to reach a different type or group of people). Adding a different style of service will require more research on the group you are trying to reach and planning for the appropriate worship style to reach them.
- ★ In evaluating the option of a second service, discuss it as an addition to what the church is already doing, not a change from what it is doing.
- ★ Introduce the second service as an experiment, rather than a new policy. Select a three- to four-month period that is already high in attendance (such as September-December or February-April), and run the second service during that period. Keep careful records both before and after the move to two services.
- ★ Spend at least six weeks prior to the first Sunday promoting the new service. If the second service will be a different style than the first, highlight the difference.
- ★ Make a special effort to communicate the new service to less-active members and visitors who attend only periodically. Nonactive people more often will come to a new church activity than to an existing one. If the second service is a different style of worship, identify the group most likely to be attracted to it and direct special communication to this group.

- ★ Analyze the results toward the conclusion of the experiment. The decision to implement or conclude the experiment will be much easier after you determine whether the second service did, in fact, result in additional attendance. If it did, the decision to continue will be easier. If it did not, you should examine other reasons worship attendance is not growing.

The most frequently raised objection to a second service is, “We will lose our fellowship and community.”

Responses could include:

- ★ Church members seldom know more than 40-50 people in church regardless of membership size or number of services.
- ★ Fellowship and community are more important to the vitality and growth of classes and groups than the worship service.
- ★ “Community” must never become more important to the church than reaching newcomers and outsiders.
- ★ Isn’t it wonderful that God is blessing our church with new people when 85 percent of the churches in the United States either are plateaued or in decline!

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