

Ten Keys to Starting a Saturday Night Service

Many churches have discovered that beginning a worship service held at a time other than Sunday morning is an effective way to reach unchurched people. While Saturday night seems to be the most popular time for an alternative service, there are churches with services on Thursday and Friday night as well. Lake Pointe Baptist Church in Rockwall, Texas, began a Saturday night service nine years ago which now averages over 1,000 in attendance. The following ten keys are the result of their experience and are provided courtesy of Senior Pastor Steve Stroope.

1. Have at least one good reason to start the service.

The need for more worship space, to reach a new niche of the community, to provide a service for those who cannot attend Sunday morning or provide people with more choices of worship styles and/or service times are all valid reasons. The more reasons the better but "Willowcreek wantabe" doesn't count.

2. Connect the service to the church's vision and mission.

If a connection cannot be made, then the church should not be starting the service.

3. Lead the service with the "first string".

This includes music as well as preaching. The quality must be as good or better than Sunday morning for the Saturday night service to get off to a good start.

4. Secure a written commitment from a critical mass of people to attend for the first year.

The "ya'll come" approach will work for only a couple of months. With signed commitments, a church will know something of the regular attendance before it begins. Critical mass requirements will vary based on the size of the worship space.

5. Understand that for the most part, people move as groups not as individuals.

This is especially true if a church has an on site Sunday School or Bible study format for their small groups. Recruit some of your best classes to volunteer to move as a group to Saturday night.

6. Communicate any style or format differences when recruiting the critical mass.

People do not like surprises.

7. Provide equal access to small groups.

If all the small groups are held in homes, this is not a major issue. But if Sunday School or Bible study is held on campus, a fully graded Saturday School must also be provided.

8. Schedule the service so it does not conflict with typical Saturday night events.

Usually a 6:00 P.M. time will allow visitors to attend and still make other commitments later the same evening.

9. Provide proper staff support.

Additional personnel, full or part time, may be necessary to help cover existing responsibilities so staff can handle the new work load.

10. Prepare a written plan.

The plan should allow ample time to communicate the change to the church, secure commitments, recruit and train new teams, and publicize the service to the community. A suggested time frame is six months minimum.

For additional ideas on alternative worship schedules, contact Church Architecture at 214.828.5125.

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