

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

# Simple Shifts: Strategies - Episode 242

## *Simple Shifts (Part 4)*

In [part one](#) of this series, we spent time talking about what *doesn't* need to change. Then in [part two](#), we acknowledged that while God is constant, he is also a God of new things—so we explored some potential shifts related to our mission, mission field, and vision that we may need to consider in this season. In [part three](#), we moved on to our structure, asking: How do we structure our staff and ministry teams to be effective for the new normal?

In this final episode of our Simple Shifts series, Tony and Amy are discussing shifts related to our strategies, including our Sunday services, sermons, and multi-generational ministries.

## *Strategies: Simple Shifts to Our Ministry*

**Problem #1:** We're still not seeing many people come back to our Sunday services since the pandemic began. And if we're honest, attendance at our services was in decline before Covid.

**Shift #1:** Rather than assuming new people will just show up for church, we need to be more intentional about encouraging new people to attend our Sunday services.

**New people have to attend your church if you want attendance to grow.** If you want to experience attendance growth, at a minimum, you need the same number of first-time guests to attend your Sunday services, at least once in the next 12 months, as your current average attendance.

**For example:** With a 20% new-guest retention rate and a 15% overall attrition rate, if your current average attendance is 1,000 people, you need 1,000 first-time guests/new people to attend your Sunday services sometime in the next 12 months to grow.

If Sundays at your church are designed only for believers and attendance is declining or not recovering as fast as you would have hoped, the two basic questions you need to be asking are:

1. Why don't believers at our church see Sunday mornings as part of their spiritual formation journey? Why don't they value our Sunday teaching and worship experience? What would have to change to encourage believers at our church to show up for Sunday services?
2. Why is our reach strategy not making new disciples of Jesus so that we have more new believers showing up for Sunday services?

For churches that also view Sundays as part of their reach strategy, there are several strategies to consider to help you increase the number of first-time guests:

1. **Expect new guests.** Pay attention to your hospitality, guest services, welcome, and connections after the service. Even if there aren't any guests at first, your church will start to catch on that inviting new people is encouraged—and that you're prepared when their friends do show up.
2. **Encourage people to invite friends.** In conversation, watch out for the 3 NOTs: when someone mentions they are NOT in church, things are NOT going well, or say "I'm not NOT prepared for \_\_\_." Those are invitations to say, "come to church with me."
3. **Create "invite-able" services.** Why aren't people inviting their friends now? Invite-able services are excellent and relevant—consistently. What would have to change about your Sunday services for them to become more "invite-able"?
4. **Create intentional Sundays and series to encourage people to invite their friends.** What would it look like for you to have at least one intentional "invite a friend Sunday" every quarter?
5. **Determine how your Sunday services fit into a broader reach strategy.** How do our services fit into our content strategy, digital strategy, and our personal evangelism strategy? Sunday services can't be the only part of our reach strategy.

**Problem #2:** We have designed our ministry strategy to encourage most people to consume biblical teaching rather than equipping people to engage in the Kingdom mission.

**Shift #2:** If we want our congregation to engage God's Word and then put that biblical wisdom into action, we need to finish every message with one, clear next step.

It's easy to tell people, "This is what the Bible says." It's much harder to help people put themselves into God's story and discover what God wants them to do next as they engage in His mission.

"This is what the Bible says" teaching delivers *information*. "Let me help you discover your God-given mission" teaching leads to *transformation*. If you want to embrace this simple shift, here are some practical recommendations for you to consider:

1. **Commit to investing more time in your message.** Biblical teaching is one of the four roles that Senior Pastors can't delegate to anyone else. If you don't own this, no one will own it.

What can you give away to another staff person or volunteer so that you have more time to focus on study, crafting, and delivering messages that help people put faith into action?

2. **Build a team to help you make this shift.** Although you are the main teacher, you don't have to prepare messages alone.
3. **Watch TED Talks.** Many of these presenters are not professional communicators, but they craft messages that both inspire and challenge people to take action.

**Problem #3:** We were effectively engaging the previous generation, but those ministry strategies aren't working as we try to reach the next generation.

**Shift #3:** We need to become a church that's designed to reach and minister to young adults.

You can't program your way to success when it comes to reaching the next generation. This shift involves considerations like this:

- What would have to change so all generations are in the same style of worship services, rather than being segregated by generations in different styles of worship services?
- What would have to change so that all generations are in the same classes and home groups, rather than being segregated by generations in different classes and home groups?
- What would have to change so that our entire team is focused on reaching young adults who are outside the faith and outside the church?
- What would have to change so that our teaching is engaging all generations, rather than just the needs of the older generations?
- What would have to change so that we prioritize our financial investments in ministry environments and programming for our kids and grandkids, over the ministry environments and programming for older adults?

Rather than creating separate programs for separate generations, we need to become a multi-generational church that's focused on reaching the next generations.

## *Next Steps*

We've talked about 9 simple shifts over the last few weeks. Now, sit down with your ministry team and engage in this important discussion. Bring your Bibles. Bring the knowledge and understanding that God is revealing to you in this new normal. Make a list that answers two simple questions:

1. What *does not* need to change?
2. What *must* change in order to fulfill our mission? What are the simple shifts we must embrace?

Any one of these simple shifts could have a significant impact on your church's mission.

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For more than a decade, we've helped **500+ churches of all sizes** clarify their vision (where they believe God's called them to go) and their strategies (how they are going to get there). In everything that we do, our priority is to help churches help people **meet and follow Jesus**.

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