

PRUNING & PRIORITIZING

Ministry Evaluation

Introduction

For ministry and ministry leaders to remain healthy, taking the time to stop and evaluate is a must. Why? Because the natural trajectory of ministry isn't toward simplicity and narrowed focus, but instead addition and complexity. When left unchecked and in the background, this "scope creep" can begin to silently but effectively choke out health.

When everything is important, nothing is important.

Conversely, when we as ministry leaders give ourselves some time (and permission!) to evaluate all of what we're doing in our ministry areas, we'll discover that we need to re-prioritize some things back to the top of our list—as well as to de-prioritize and even prune others.

Pruning isn't just a leader's obligation; it's their opportunity—to regain their effectiveness, vibrancy, and momentum.

Exercise 1 – Ministry Programming

List "all of the things."

Sit down and discipline yourself to write all of what it means to participate in the area of ministry that you lead. This isn't everything *you're* doing, but everything you're inviting *your* people to do. Think:

- Programming
- Events
- Gatherings
- Trainings
- Groups
- Classes
- Communications
- Activities
- Calls to action
- Readings/resources

Exercise 2 – Ministry Evaluation

Now, take the list you made in the Ministry Programming chart and plot each item in one of the quadrants on the Ministry Evaluation chart. Here's how:

For each of your ministry program items, ask: "Does this **require** a low or high amount of **investment**?"

By "investment," you could mean:

- Time
- Money
- Planning
- Mental, emotional, or relational energy
- Attention/focus
- Credibility
- Work/life balance

Then, ask: "Has this proven to **result** in low or high amount of **life change**?" By "life change," you could mean:

- Reaching new people who don't know Jesus/our mission field—and inspiring our people to do the same
- Helping people move down our Discipleship Path instead of just serving them in a specific stage
- Inspiring significantly deeper levels of engagement, service, generosity, and/or character transformation with Jesus and our church
- Creating a measurable impact and better reputation in our community
- Potential to reach a large amount of people as opposed to a smaller group

Once you ask those two questions for each of your ministry program items, plot each of them the ministry evaluation chart accordingly.

Once everything is in its quadrant, use these labels to discern what to do next with each:

1. LOW INV/HIGH LC: **Protect & Promote**
2. LOW INV/LOW LC: **Pause**
3. HIGH INV/HIGH LC: **Plan & Execute**
4. HIGH INV/LOW LC: **Prune**

Quadrant 1: Protect & Promote

Since these items don't require a lot of effort or investment but provide a great return, make sure they're protected from other things that compete for their attention with your people—and make sure your people are aware of them!

Quadrant 2: Pause

Not everything is a homerun in ministry—and that's ok. But there's probably a lot that we're doing that is just "fine." Consider hitting pause on some of these things. Temporarily stopping some of them to see if they're really missed is a great experiment. You may discover that they actually need to be moved into quadrant 1 or 4.

Quadrant 3: Plan & Execute

If this quadrant is by far the most packed with programming items, you've likely overestimated a few of them—because most of these require a lot of planning and effort on the front end to pull off. But for the few that truly land here, discipline yourself to pick the best, and get to planning/doing.

Quadrant 4: Prune

The most difficult thing about this category is admitting that a lot of the things we or our people like, feel a history with, or have a sense of ownership and even sacredness around are also things that just don't produce a lot of life change. It doesn't make them "bad" or "wrong," but it does label them as competition to what is better or more important.

MINISTRY EVALUATION

