
Church Revitalization: Practical Ideas for Getting Started

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Create (Early) Wins

Paul Borden interviewed pastors who had lead revitalization in their churches, and asked them what they did when they first came to the church. From these interviews, he suggests thirteen areas where a pastor can have some early wins. Although many of us are not in our first year at a church, we can still learn from Borden's list.

Let's spend some time discussing these areas together:

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| 1. Learn the congregation | <i>Stats, personal contacts, previous pastors</i> |
| 2. Learn the community | <i>Stats, personal contacts, walk/drive around</i> |
| 3. Develop a first-year plan | <i>Include some of items 1-13 in your plan</i> |
| 4. Gather people | <i>Who? How?</i> |
| 5. Create big events | <i>Pre-evangelism and evangelism events</i> |
| 6. Improve curb appeal | <i>What? How? \$?</i> |
| 7. Energize worship | <i>Preaching, worship, service order, other</i> |
| 8. Communicate (Vision) | <i>Preaching, one-on-one, groups</i> |
| 9. Recruit leaders | <i>Who? How?</i> |
| 10. Be present in the community | <i>Connect in positive ways</i> |
| 11. Evangelize | <i>Who? How?</i> |
| 12. Address Money | <i>Money issues – systems, reports, spending</i> |
| 13. Pray ¹ | <i>Prayer for the church's vision</i> |

Borden notes that a pastor should **“select three, four, or five things to do, driven by the ministry context in which you find yourself.”**² The pastor will need to choose the areas that are most needed, and most attainable.

However, Borden reports that, “In all the interviews pastors identified one common denominator during their first year: building congregational attendance.” Focussing on a few of the fifteen areas listed above can help you achieve this goal of building congregational attendance.

Additional Note: Charles Stone's book *Every Pastor's First 180 Days* is filled with practical leadership principles that will help a pastor get started in revitalization. I highly recommend it!

¹ James Kouzes and Barry Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2007), 52-70.

² Paul Borden, *Make or Break Your Church in 365 Days* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012), 52.