

stuff you wish they taught in seminary



6 Systems

**EVERY EXECUTIVE PASTOR NEEDS
TO EVALUATE THIS YEAR**

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Are you an executive pastor wondering where you should focus your time and energy?

Are you wondering exactly how things are really going at your church?

Are you a bit mystified about how to evaluate what's really happening under the hood of your church?

Executive pastors are an incredible gift to growing churches. The best executive pastors sit at the intersection of vision and reality. That is to say, they spend their time balancing the bright future of the church on one hand and the facts of where the church is today on the other. In order to move a church from where you are to where you believe God is leading you as a community, you need a series of robust systems. **Systems are simply repeatable processes that “Save You Stress, Time, Energy, and Money”.**

Executive pastors need to think about how these systems are performing across all areas of the church. In a very real way, the executive pastor is like a farmer cultivating a garden of systems by balancing each of the varying needs and requirements of the church against each other. An executive pastor should spend a considerable amount of time evaluating how well each of these systems performs and

adjusting them accordingly when they don't function the way they should.

This is a perfect time of year, the season of change, to build a plan for evaluation and adjust the systems required to help your church move forward. Here are six systems you should consider when leading as an executive pastor:

Outreach

How does your church attract people through a variety of channels?

Your church needs to have a consistent flow of new guests arriving on a regular basis. Churches that are healthy and growing consistently find ways to reach out to the world around them and invite new guests to join them.

If your church's ability to reach new people begins to slow, you'll eventually plateau and might even slip into decline. Evaluate your outreach efforts and how you use marketing and communications to increase your community's awareness and interest in your church. Keeping a close eye on the outreach efforts of your church needs to be a core function of every executive pastor.

Connection

How does your church move people from their first visit to feeling fully at home?

It's not enough for churches just to reach people in their community and have them come to church once. We also need to move people towards a deep sense of connection.

The healthiest and fastest growing churches in the country spend a tremendous amount of time and energy thinking through the exact next steps for transforming new visitors into plugged-in advocates of the church.

Deliberately measuring this process to see if your connection systems are performing at a high enough level is an important task of an executive pastor. This could be looking at the numbers for new-here guests, people joining groups, and those getting plugged into volunteer teams. The trick here is to test both the total number of people connected along with the velocity of people moving towards further connection with the community.

Service

How does your church mobilize people for volunteering and service within the church?

Above and beyond getting people connected, we need to find a way to see more people in your church serving others. The core message of the Gospel is that our lives are to be oriented around other people, and therefore the church needs to orient a tremendous amount of its effort and resources around serving.



Does your church have an adequate number of people serving? If not, what adjustments do you need to make as an executive pastor to ensure that more people are serving than ever before? Looking closely at the overall volunteer

experience to measure both the number of volunteers as well as the quality of their experience is a system that you should consider.

Giving

How does your church develop people that willingly give to the vision of the church?

Giving metrics continue to be an important part of testing the health of a church. When a person decides to give to the local church, that giving indicates a deep level of connection.

However, the goal here is not to leverage guilt against your community but to set up systems and approaches that keep the vision of the church in front of people in a way that compels them to give on a regular basis. Another part of this process is to study how people are moving from infrequent giving to regular giving to the radical generosity that we see modeled in the New Testament. A deepening sense of commitment to a church across a wide spectrum of individuals is a core issue that executive pastors need to be studying regularly.

Leadership

How does your church move people from places of serving into volunteer leadership?

It's not enough to just invite people to serve—aspects of the mission need to be handed over to be led by volunteers within the church. While this distinction might seem subtle, it is incredibly important to the future of your church. **Finding ways to evaluate where your church is developing new leaders is all about predicting the future health of your church.**

If your church stops developing or stops passing parts of the ministry off to new leaders, then you are essentially truncating the future development of the church.

Again, looking at the total number of new leaders is important, but also considering what aspects of the ministry are delegated to them is important for every executive pastor to consider. How your church identifies potential leaders and then applies effort and energy towards developing that leadership potential is a critical concern for every executive pastor wanting to translate vision into reality.

Planning

How does your church evaluate all the other systems in order to move towards constant improvement and growth?

Churches that make a difference are constantly asking the question, are we improving on what we've done recently? Rather than sticking to our current outlook, we need a process by which we can evaluate everything that we do.

In fact, everything begins to atrophy the day after the greatest success. That is to say, the decline of a church begins the day after the best things happen in its life, and it's at that moment that executive pastors need to ask the question, what do we need to change to get to the next level?



A regular planning regime needs to be asking, what got us to Point A that won't get us to Point B? How are you evaluating the systems you're developing to ensure that they're consistently improving and growing?

Which of these six systems do you need to improve on?

When you consider the above six areas of your church, which one jumps to mind as an area that you need to improve upon?

Are there aspects of your ministry that you don't apply enough time, effort, and energy towards?

Are there things happening in your church that you're not giving your leadership to?

Prevailing executive pastors that spend their time thinking through these six systems lead growing and healthy churches. As you consider

how to make changes in the above areas, I strongly encourage you to consider three aspects of systems that you may need to alter:

- **Schedule** // What is the schedule for evaluating and adjusting the systems?
- **Metrics** // What are the key metrics you need to consider on a regular basis to see whether this system is growing?
- **People** // Who is associated with a given system that you can meet with regularly to understand how that system is developing in the life of your church?

In February 2019, I will be offering a half-day workshop designed for new executive pastors at the XP Seminar in Dallas. The goal of this half-day event will be to deep dive into these six systems to help new executive pastors wrestle through how they can structure their time, effort, and energy to ensure their church is performing optimally in these six areas. This is the seminar that I wished existed when I started in new pastoral roles! I would love to meet with you in Dallas to help you think through how you could structure your time to be the most effective for the life of your church. [Click here](#) to learn more about this event and to register.

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