

Measurement can tell a story

Have you ever wondered how to tell if your church is effective? When it's time to talk about supporting the church, have you ever been caught off guard by the question, "How well does this church do its mission?" The time tested methods used in businesses to measure how well they are doing seem so, well, unspiritual. We believe it is not unspiritual to measure your church's effectiveness, knowing that what we focus on grows. Here, from *Effectiveness by the Numbers: Counting What Counts in the Church*, by William R. Hoyt, are adapted ideas about what to measure and how:

- New congregants—how many new congregants do we have in the last year? If your church has 100 congregants, and 10 of them came for the first time in the last year, then you have 10% new members. This is a good number to aim for every year. Think of it this way: the more attending, the greater the influence.
- Worship attendance & share—beyond just counting how many show up on a Sunday, you can also count your share of the your geographic area. If you have 100 in attendance, and your city has 1000 people, your impact on the community is greater than if you have 100 and your community is 1 million.
- Reflection of the community—how well does your church's makeup mirror that of the community? If the demographic makeup is very different from the city, the breadth of influence is smaller.
- Attendance as depth—by determining the % of time each person attends, you'll have an idea of the depth of commitment. If someone attends 90% of the worship services, they probably have a greater depth of commitment and growth than someone who is there 25% of the time. Divide your weekly attendance by the number of total congregants you have to determine this.
- Retention—First, you have to define what would mean retention. For example, statistics say that if a someone consistently attends for 3 months, and has made an additional connection outside of worship, they are likely to remain. If you had 10 first timers in one month, you might count how many of them are still there after 3 months, and how many have started to volunteer, attend a class, or some other activity. If 3 meet this criteria, you would consider them retained. This requires record keeping and vigilance. Hoyt recommends a goal of 30% retention.
- Ministry involvement—track how many are serving in the ministry, as a % of the total congregation.

By choosing to measure and track these types of details, you can speak to the progress you are making, and celebrate your successes. Just think how powerful it can be for prospective members or givers, to be able to say that 80% of your congregation is in service to the community, or that you retain 30% of your guests. Numbers tell a story that can be very meaningful in demonstrating your success and mission.