



Session #6: Next Steps in Flourishing

Agenda, Discussion and Homework (Allow approximately one hour)

Goal: To create space for God together, to listen to the Spirit's leading through teaching, reflection and sharing with one another, and to act on what we hear about growing a Christ-centered flourishing church.

1. Prepare (5 minutes)

- Have each person offer a one-word check-in. (Think of one word that honestly describes how you feel right now. This is a way of connecting with each other and offering yourself to God.)
- Enter into a brief time of silence in order to still hearts, clear minds, and become attentive. Silence is a way of waiting, watching, and listening for the presence of God's Spirit in your midst. Meditate on Scripture:

Philippians 1:3-6 (MSG)

Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God. Each exclamation is a trigger to prayer. I find myself praying for you with a glad heart. I am so pleased that you have continued on in this with us, believing and proclaiming God's Message, from the day you heard it right up to the present. There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.

2. Listen (15 minute video) – Next Steps in Flourishing

3. Reflect on what we heard (3 minutes)



Facilitator Note: Make copies of the populated Excel spread sheet showing the results for the leaders to have in front of them

Reflect silently for a few moments on the compiled Church Health Survey results.

- What do you notice?
- Where does God stir your heart?
- Where do you sense He most wants your church to grow?

4. Share what we heard (25 minutes)

Discuss the following as a large group:

- A. Where on the survey do you score the highest? What can you celebrate as a church?
- B. Where do you score the lowest? Does this accurately reflect your church?
- C. Of the lowest scores, where do you sense God wants your church to grow?



Facilitator Note: It would be helpful to capture these responses on white board or a flipchart.

5. Decide together how we will act differently based on what we heard. (One Minute)

Read these instructions together

Homework:

Your final assignment of this series is to write a “Flourishing Plan” with the help of your ECO Liaison. This plan will set out a goal to grow in one of the competencies, to prepare a timeline for growth and help you decide what you will do to work towards that goal.

We suggest that 2-3 people take the Church Health Survey results and the sense of the Spirit’s leading from today’s discussion to your ECO liaison and to work together on outlining a “Becoming a Flourishing Church” plan”. That plan will be presented for discussion and approval at your next meeting.

Three questions that will form your Flourishing Plan:

- What is your main area of desired growth and why?
- What is your specific goal?
- What do you want to be true of your church that is not true now?

6. Pray as a group about becoming more mature disciples of Christ. (2 minutes)

Pray for those who will develop your churches flourishing plan.

Sample Plans for Flourishing Churches

The following Next Steps, are three sample plans taken from three different congregations. These are examples of what a church might come up with after they have gone through the “Becoming a Flourishing Church” material. The leadership of each church should determine their individual next steps after going through the material and talking with their ECO liaison. The ECO resource list on our website is also available to get ideas on how to grow in a specific area.

1. Where does your church need to grow in the coming year?

Church #1 – We have assumed that if people come to church on Sundays and are involved in a learning community such as a small group, that they will be growing as disciples. However, we’ve discovered that most of our leaders are stalled in their spiritual growth. Therefore, we can assume that most likely many others in our congregation are also stalled in their growth. We need to be more intentional about making disciples and creating a disciple-making culture.

Church #2 – We realize we have been living out of a purely attractional model of ministry where we have simply tried to get people to church. While we still want to be an “attractive” church, we want to put more energy into being missional. We want to begin to create missional communities that will seek to minister to their surrounding communities more authentically.

Church #3 – This process helped us realize that we have been pretty comfortable with the clergy and staff doing most of the ministry. Our laity is content, by and large, to sit on the sidelines. We want to be more intentional about having our staff and clergy equip others for ministry. This goal will take new learning on the part of the staff as well as the congregation.

What is your specific Goal? What do you want to be true of your church in a year that is not true now?

Church #1 – We want to accomplish the following in the next year:

- We want to train all of our small group leaders in the methodology associated with ECO’s discipleship initiative.
- We want to see all of the people in small groups or Sunday school develop and live out a personal plan for their own discipleship growth.
- We want to develop a long-range plan to move into a more intentional disciple-making culture. This plan may mean we need to eliminate some strategies that aren’t working currently.

Church #2 – We want to accomplish the following in the next year:

- We want to develop two missional communities and free the individuals involved from obligations within the church in order to pursue this vision.
- We want our congregation to understand the missional concepts that Jesus embodied. We would love to see at least 50% of our church take small steps toward missional engagement.

Church #3 – We want to accomplish the following in the next year:

- We want to see our program staff spend at least 1/3 of their time devoted to developing other leaders.
- We want to see our Session become a healthier community with greater intentional spiritual engagement and engage in greater trust and synergy with one another.
- We want to develop 5 spiritually mature lay leaders to be commissioned to celebrate the sacraments in micro-expressions of church (according to 2.0502 of ECO's polity).

3. How will we grow in this area? (What is our timeline and what resources do we need?)

Church #1

- We will engage in ECO's discipleship initiative in order to change our culture to be more of a discipleship culture.
- We will take time in every Session meeting to check in with each other's current individual disciple plan.
- In four months, we will begin to train our small group teachers in the model of discipleship presented in *Becoming a Flourishing Church*.

Church #2

- We will engage with Alex Absalom and Dandelion to train us in the development of missional communities and the transformation of our culture.
- We will spend the next 6 months preaching missional concepts.
- We will share stories monthly in worship of those who have taken missional steps.

Church #3

- We will engage in the *Flourishing Leader* material through ECO (This is the ECO specific version of *Elder Leadership Institute*.)
- We will create a six month process to develop and train lay leaders to celebrate the sacraments utilizing resources from ECO and our own material.
- We will take time in every Session meeting to check in with each other's current individual discipleship plan.