

Mission Plan Guidelines

A thousand healthy churches in a generation



Introduction

This document is designed to help you develop a mission plan for your church plant. It will assist you in being both strategic and prayerful as you design and start your church. It will also be a resource you can go back to throughout the first stages of your church to refocus and reground your understanding of yourself, your church, and the context to which you have been sent.



The Mission Plan is built around four headings:

Who We Are
What We'll Do
What We'll See
How We'll Do It

By working through these sections, you will begin to develop a Mission Plan that outlines your values and identity as a leader and a church.

It will also help you recognise the values and identity of the context in which you are planting and people you are called to reach.

It will also help you develop a Mission and Vision Statement and begin to create a strategic plan to help see this become a reality.

Four headings explained

1

Who We Are

This section will help you answer some key questions about your values and identity. It will focus both on you as a church leader and your team. It will also help you articulate the specific people and context you are called to and the corporate values of your church plant. An understanding of yourself and your context will then empower you to be strategic in outlining your mission.

2

What We'll Do:

This is an opportunity to create vision statements for your church. This is what your values and mission look like in practice in community. It will also provide an opportunity to think about what fruitfulness looks like for the type of church you envision in the particular place you are seeking to plant.

3

What We'll See:

Here you will develop a specific mission statement. Why will your church exist? Why is it needed? This statement will be both a biblical and context specific outline of the reason for and purpose of your church.

4

How We'll Do It:

Here you will get specific. This is your strategy for achieving what you've envisioned above. What are your specific short and long term objectives and priorities? What plan and budget are needed to achieve these?

Before You Begin

Every church and every context are different. It is not the purpose of these guidelines to force you into a particular model or form of church. This isn't a cookie cutter.

Use this document to provoke and guide. Some parts may be more or less relevant to your church and context. Others - like budgets, unfortunately - are important for any new church. If you get stuck or hit a dead end, stop. Go for a walk and pray. Have something to eat. Or move onto another section. There is a logic to the order but don't let it constrain creativity and inspiration.

As you articulate your values and plan for your church it is also worth reminding yourself of the values and beliefs of the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT (www.nswactbaptists.org.au) and the Gen1K vision (www.gen1k.org.au).

You may also find it helpful for your thinking to articulate any key doctrinal beliefs that influence you and your church. Perhaps even try to word these in language that is understandable to those you have been called to.

It is worth considering the purpose of your Mission Plan as you begin to write it. Who is it for and why? It may be that you approach certain aspects differently depending on the audience that will be reading it. Would you articulate something different to a member of your planting team or a representative of the Baptist Association than you would to a perspective church member or non-Christian in your community? You may find these questions help you create a practical and actionable plan that is specific to your unique context.



1

Who We Are

This section will help you articulate the core values and identity that make up your church plant.

It may seem like just an About Us section, but these questions will be foundational to the rest of your Mission Plan. You can't be something you're not.

By articulating who you are, who you want your church to be, and who you're called to reach, you will be able to develop Mission and Vision statements and a corresponding strategy that are congruent with who God has made you and called you to be.

a. Who am I?

Write a brief personal profile of yourself. Consider including the following:

- Gifts and abilities
- Ministry experience
- Brief church history
- What sort of church do you want to be a part of
- Sense of calling
- Anything else that articulates why you want to start this church



b. Who is our team?

- Who makes up the core team of your church plant?
- What are their individual gifts and skills?
- What are their individual roles and responsibilities?
- What are the unique strengths of our team?
- Are there gaps in our team?

c. Who are we called to?

Go for a walk. Seriously.

Go for a long slow walk around the area in which you are planting and pray.

Take a spiritual dawdle.

Do it at different times of the day.

Observe.

Take notes. Take photos.

What did you see?

What did God point you to?

Research the history of the local Indigenous nations. Find out what Indigenous community groups are functioning in your local area and how you can build just, respectful and healing relationships with them.

Community profile

Create a community profile of your area. Start by considering the following questions about your area and the people who live there:

- Age?
- Relationship status?
- Profession?
- Education?
- Household makeup?
- Financial Status?
- What do people need?
- What do people want?
- What do people have?
- Aspirations?
- Fears?
- Where do people gather?
- Where do they work?
- How do people spend their spare time?
- What religion do people have?
- What beliefs do people hold?
- Political affiliations?
- Spiritual beliefs?
- Who is unreached?
- Who are the gatekeepers?
- Where are the gateways?
- Who do people trust?
- How do people meet each other?

Compare your own observations with other data. Look up the census data for your area, read the local paper, talk to others.



Map your community

Print out a map of the area you seek to reach and mark key locations. Include:

- Key places people gather for work, socialising, hobbies
- Places people loiter
- Core community or government services
- Libraries, pools, playgrounds
- Other churches in the area
- Key walkways or car routes.

Consider drawing your own map of the community. Don't look at another existing map, just draw from memory the neighbourhood and see how this corresponds with the work you've done above.

Now,

Who are you called to?

Be specific.

Who are the specific communities and

people God has put on your heart?

Who are we uniquely placed and gifted to reach?

Before moving onto the final question consider creating a relationship map of your team. What are the existing relationships within your team? What are the existing relationships you and your team have with the communities you are called to?

All of this will help you to answer the final question in this section:

d. What are the core values of our church?

You might like to start with dot points or have specific values with brief descriptions. Or prefer to write something more prosaic. Try and use language that is understandable to people without exposure to Christianity or church.

Be specific and concise. Be aspirational but don't overburden yourself. Your values should be your values, but they don't have to be unique or ground breaking.

Consider the following questions:

- How does who you are and who you are called to impact the values and identity you wish to instil in the church plant?
- What values are aligned with the way of Jesus?
- What do you hope a person formed and disciplined in your church will be like?
- What values are important for you as your church plant -
 - plans mission and community engagement?
 - makes key decisions?
 - plans worship services?
 - uses money?

Begin by aiming for four to six core values. You may choose to change or rearticulate these as you continue to work on the next three sections.

What We'll Do

Let's start broad

What is God's purpose for the Church (capital C)?

Start by reading Acts 2:1-47 and Ephesians 4:1-16. Though there are obviously plenty of other parts of scripture that will help answer this question.

How does the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) help answer this question?

Now, let's get specific

What is the purpose of your church plant?

Your answer to this question is the beginning of your Mission Statement.

A few more questions to consider:

- Why will our new church exist?
- What does God expect a church to do?
- What has God called our church to do?
- How is our church distinctive?
- What is the most important task of our church?
- What does God want to do in our context?

As you write your Mission Statement be as clear and concise as possible. Edit.

Delete unnecessary words. Try and summarise your answers into one (or two) sentences.

Clearly state your mission statement.

What We'll See

Now we will begin working on Vision Statements for your church plant.

This is an opportunity to use your imagination, lean into hope, and picture what God may well do through your church plant over the next five to ten years.

To develop these statements you are going to answer four main questions:

- a. What would our community look like if we lived out our values and mission?**
 - Read and pray through the values and mission statement you developed in the previous sections.
 - What are the natural implications of God working through your church to instil these values in:
 - An individual?
 - A small group?
 - A leadership team?
 - A congregation?
 - A community?
 - A neighbourhood?
- b. What does a fruitful church look like in your context?**
- c. How will we measure fruitfulness?**
- d. When and how will your church multiply/reproduce?**



b. What does a fruitful church look like in your context?

- Read Luke 6:43-45, John 15, and Galatians 5:22-25.
- Reread your answers to the questions in section 1, Who we are.
- Considering this, what does a fruitful church look like in your context?

Different contexts call for different types of churches. You will be tempted to measure your churches fruitfulness by the measures of others. Maybe it's attendance, budget, baptisms, the quality of your music or buildings. But you can't grow oranges on an apple tree.

c. How will we measure fruitfulness?

The success of a church is a hard thing to measure and it is easy to measure the wrong things. Often the things that are easiest to measure are not that important. Some things that are important for church sustainability (buildings, budget, attendance) are only tangentially related to mission of the church.

There is the risk the really important things are hard to assess beyond just 'reading the vibe' - meaning your assessment may be more reflective of your own optimism or pessimism than a measure of reality.

A church or community is more like a work of art or piece of music than it is a business. There are a few things that can make it obviously pretty bad, but you can also find yourself asking "but is it actually any good?" The answer is often "Who's asking?"

- Read back through your answers to questions a. and b. above?
- How would you measure the fruitfulness of any of these answers?
 - Numbers (people, frequency, dollars)?
 - Stories and testimonies?
 - Change (before and after)?
 - Consistency/faithfulness?
- How will you know if you are moving towards your vision over time?
 - What do your answers to questions a. and b. look like after 1 year, 3 years, 5 years, and 10 years.

d. When and how will your church multiply/reproduce?

Plan to reproduce early.

- When do you want to see a new community birthed out of your church plant?
- What are the steps that will lead to this?
- How are you forming leaders for this new thing?
- Describe what it will look like for your church to multiply or reproduce.

Don't let your Vision Statements be limited by your hopes for your church.

What are the broader kingdom implications of your church starting in your context?



4

How We'll Do It

You've got a vision.

You know where you want to be in five years' time.

How are you going to get there? What does your church need to do now, next year, and a year from then to achieve the vision?

Different churches in different contexts are going to need different strategies. Details that will be important for one model of church won't be as important for others.

The purpose of this section isn't to create a complete strategy that will serve every church but to help you begin highlighting strategic priorities and goals and an action plan and budget that will help you realise them.

As you work through this section it may be helpful to reflect on your above work using a SWOT Analysis. What are our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats?



Invest

- Where do you need to invest to see your above vision realised?
- What key people or areas will require specific focus?
- Try not to overexert yourself.
If you pick too many focus areas, you are unlikely to give any one enough attention.
- Consider how you might delegate focus areas to different members of your team.
- In each of these key areas what actions are required?
- Write down each focus area and under each heading write a list of specific strategic priorities:
 - What exactly needs to be done in this area to realise your vision?
 - Write down short, medium, and long-term goals.
 - How will you measure the success of these goals?
 - Ask and answer key questions for each area:
 - > Who and what is required?
 - > Where and when will it happen?
 - > How and Why will we do it?
- Write down additional focus areas as they come up.
You will almost certainly realise that every focus area brings with it additional areas that will require attention.

For example, your vision for people to be wholistic apprentices of Jesus may lead you to invest in individual and group spiritual formation. This area of focus includes how you structure your worship service. This then becomes an additional area of focus, parallel to the original strategic focus that will bring with it a variety of distinct strategic priorities.

You have begun to create an **Action Plan**.

As you develop this you will need to add additional information to your investment areas:

- Roles and Responsibilities – who will do what?
- Structures – legal, financial, facilities, relational, processes
- Communication and Marketing – what do people need to know and how will they know it
- Timeline – when will things happen? What are the key milestones and outcomes?




For now, don't get bogged down in too many details. An action plan is a tool to serve your mission don't let it become the mission.

Try and make sure your focus remains on key investment areas and what needs to be achieved in these to realise your vision. You don't need to know everything. What is the next step and the step after that?

Budget

In addition to your Action Plan you will need to develop a budget.

- Create a list of initial one off and short-term start-up costs.
- Create a one-year budget showing ongoing costs.
 - Make sure your budget serves your mission!
- Indicate where funding may come from.
 - Are you receiving any seed funding or grants?
 - How many church members will be contributing financially as you launch?
- Indicate when the church will be able to become self-sustaining.



**And whatever you do,
in word or deed,
do everything in the
name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the
Father through Him.**

—COLOSSIANS 3:17



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