

Staying in Focus

Part Two: Ways to Become a Focused Church or Individual

In part one of this article the characteristics of an unfocused church were outlined and described. Many individuals and their churches are reaping the discouraging results of being unfocused and wandering about being "faithful" to traditions and programs that seem to no longer produce fruit for God. But it is possible to see clearly and channel our energy and resources toward achieving what should be accomplished. This brings satisfaction and excitement to a life or church. Part two of "Staying in Focus" outlines the steps for becoming focused.

Focus - *Decide What is Important (or Should Be) to You*

What we value becomes a motivator and measuring stick that helps us decide how to spend our time, energy, and finances. It is easier to focus on something we know is important and we really want to/need to see happen. A biblical focus starts with God...What does He say is important to focus on?

While there are several things we could find in Scripture, one with almost universal agreement would be "Witnessing" - sharing the Gospel and seeing people come to faith in Christ is a truly important focus for the individual or church to have. Hell is a horrible place to spend eternity and Heaven will be wonderful.

Focus - *Clarify Your Mission or Purpose in Life*

"If hell is a horrible place and heaven is where I want people to spend eternity, then what does God have me here on earth to accomplish?" The obvious response would be that I (and my church) should be characterized by trying to help people come to know Christ and become believers. Some churches have stated it this way, "Our purpose is to produce more and better disciples for Christ". Another describes their purpose as, "Being a Great Commission Church". Our activities and priorities then can be brought into harmony with this purpose which is important to God and should be to us.

Focus - *Select Ways to Achieve Our Purpose*

A focused individual or church continually explores ways to be successfully engaged in achieving what he/it is focused on within the purpose. Activities, methods, and programs are evaluated in view of how well they fit the focus and will allow the purpose to be accomplished. This cuts down on distractions and wasted time, energy, or finances.

When our focus is upon witnessing, we will try to spend our time, energy, prayers, and funds on activities that improve and make our witness more effective and successful. Consequently, there will be days when we pass up on opportunity for more fellowship with Christians in order to spend time building a friendship with a spiritually lost person that God may bring to faith through us.

When our church has had a steady diet of worship, Bible study fellowship, and church potlucks, and God gives us a new focus on witnessing, we may decide to do less of these in order to find time for ministering to lost people. Focus can help us stay balanced. Our worship services, activities, and music could look different if we were focused on witness.

Focus - *Lead in a Way That Helps People Focus*

In Part One of this two part series on Staying in Focus, it was stated, "Often, the unfocused church is actually focused on a ministry philosophy without realizing it. The general mission becomes to hold and run church events and participate in a variety of program ministries. The definition of "success" for the church becomes the fact that "We do these events and a sufficient number of people participate in them."

On the other hand, "Being focused is seeing clearly and channeling all of our energy and resources toward achieving what we are trying to accomplish." When an individual or church is focused on what is important to God, success will be much clearer and more easily achieved. The following are some brief ways to keep a church's focus before the people and increase their clarity of purpose:

- Write and utilize clear, brief, measurable goals to focus on.
- Place these goals and purpose statements in emails and electronic communications as well as church bulletins and church documents.
- Utilize a list of "core partners in ministry" that receive more personal communications and prayer requests than the new-comers and guests.
- Keep the focus in prayer bulletins, sheets, email lists, etc. Focused prayer for specific ways to achieve God's purposes is much more motivating and easy to engage with.
- Be sure to provide opportunities for daily and weekly updates and progress reports.
- Include the focus in sermon and lesson applications as appropriate and to illustrate from Scripture.
- Video clips and personal testimonies from others who are successfully keeping their focus and achieving their goals always encourage others to try as well.

This has been a very brief treatment of a very important leadership concept. The times and multitude of opportunities dictate that we need to get in and stay in FOCUS. We cannot afford the unfocused luxury of a shotgun approach. Now is the time to focus on our targets with rifle precision, to the glory of God in the New Year.

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