

GROUND RULES FOR EFFECTIVE PLANNING

Follow a systematic course in determining how to begin, how to proceed, and how to measure the effectiveness of the church's mission. Following are some basic ground rules for keeping your approach to evangelism fresh and relevant:

1. Review what other churches of like size and situation are doing to reach people but also be creative and original. An evangelistic strategy that is effective in one church may not be effective in another. Some churches grow because of a strong emphasis on visitation. Others grow because of ministry evangelism or a preaching ministry. Your program must be directly related to your community and church needs.
2. Design effective outreach activities. Churches do not grow because of busy church bulletins or because the church is open every night of the week. Activity may be the result of growth, but it does not cause growth.
3. Plan programs that will enrich a Christian's spiritual life. People need Christ, not gimmicks or showmanship. There are no magic formulas or short cuts to an effective evangelism program.
4. Aim for changed lives, not numerical growth. The presence of people and money should not be the ultimate goal. The primary objective of growth is changed lives.
5. Plan for more than minimal growth. Even if other churches in your area are not growing, do not accept the same fate. Find creative ways to remedy your situation.
6. Remain open to change. Although change alone does not produce growth, finding new ways to do things and new ways to reach people can add excitement to your efforts.
7. Give attention to details. No matter how small, all parts of a program are necessary. They must be brought together or the result may be much wasted effort.
8. Discover needs, take surveys, and conduct research to determine the needs of your community. Do not assume your church already knows them. Effective ministry is based on needs.
9. Develop a real desire for evangelistic growth. The most important factor in a church's evangelistic growth is a sincere desire for growth.