

Prayer Triad #6

Scripture: Acts 6:1-6

Scripture Question: Very early the church found the need to organize its ministries. What does this scripture suggest about the ordering and structuring of the life of the church today?

- From an historical perspective, the church divides the duties among the faithful. In order to get the work of the church accomplished, order is needed. Some churches need the delegation of duties, but some do not. Perhaps more delegation is needed for larger churches. Some of the structure may be indirectly influenced by the Regional and National model.
- We have structure in our church today – different people perform different services. We need structure to perform our duties.
- The scripture implies that every church leader (or member) doesn't need to focus on the same task. The needy may be left out if all the church leaders are performing the same job.
- The church needs to organize its ministries, but does the kind of organization in our church promote or hold back our ministries?

Question 1: Do we have in place the teams, committees, boards and leadership we need to empower the future direction of the church?

- Committees are in place, but are not necessarily functioning. Perhaps the committees will do better when the future of the church is decided. We need to make church a priority over all other activities in our personal lives.
- Yes
- Yes – committees make suggestions to the Board and Diaconate makes the decisions with the Board. We're waiting for triad input to find out about the future.
- We use a representative committee structure to guide the church. The guiding committee is the Board while ad hoc standing committees work toward specific purposes (like the vision team, worship committee, youth committee, etc...). The structure seems flexible enough to accomplish any of our goals. Sometimes we may not pay attention to all the needs of our congregation or community because we have delegated the guidance by a committee, making the individual feel less empowered to act.
- We have in place teams, boards, committees and leadership but we don't know if the correct people are in the correct jobs to empower the future of our church. And until we figure out the direction of our church we don't know if we have the right committees and the leadership that we need.
- They have become stagnant and need new input. We need to find a way to involve everyone and not just a limited few with a timely turnover.
- We must know what the future direction of the church is in order to know if we are able to take people there. Our church has many committees and groups but are they groups relevant to our current culture? In past times, the church wasn't just a place that people went to feel restored. People in need went to church in order to survive. The church literally fed the hungry. Now there are government programs that do that. Perhaps in order to make it to the future we need to re-examine the past. What do we do for people in need? Are there people in our church suffering either emotionally or physically – if so, what do we do for them and are we even

aware of their needs? How can we reach people in need both in our church and in the wider community? Is this the sole responsibility of the minister or the elders? Do we need to organize a support group or should we provide more opportunities to be together informally so that we can see the needs of others? How do other churches handle these needs?

- Our organization structure needs to be realigned to take advantage of individual talents and desires. One way to do it is to determine how to move from a traditional, formal committee structure to a non-traditional task or project oriented structure in which needs are identified as tasks or projects and are designed to solve the problem or accomplish the objective, using people who have the skills or knowledge required for that one task or project. It would require more active participation from the general board and the board of elders to identify needs.

Question 2: Is decision making open and responsive to congregational input?

- Decision making is not always open and responsive; however, in crises, people step up. The present church crisis is not really comprehended.
- Yes
- Hopefully so. Suggestions are always welcome.
- Our structure's ability for input is there. If someone is unhappy, then how is our structure responsive if they decide to leave? Most of the time we feel that the decision making is open for input.
- No, we don't think the congregation has much, if any, impact.
- We are going to find out.
- We don't think so.
- Probably not. Decision makers tend to think that everyone in the congregation will know what they are doing and so do not communicate to the congregation as a whole. On the other hand, if there were more participation in church life by members of the congregation, they would be more aware of issues and decisions to be made in the life of the church and could participate in decisions. It is apparent that we need better communication through Facebook and/or other social media, including a blogsite, to reach younger people and involve them in what the church is doing. All of us need to personally contact and reach out, both to others in the congregation and people outside of the congregation who don't experience the love and support the church can provide and who need to know about God. Not communicating or involving all members of the congregation in church life and decisions is evident in the makeup of the triads themselves: when the 25 people who formed the core group of those who believe we need transformation were asked to form triads that would involve all of the congregation, most instead formed triads among themselves. As a result, participation among all members of the congregation is less than it should have been.

Question 3: Are the administrative structures we have in place efficient and relevant or inefficient and outdated?

- We're not sure what the question is asking regarding administrative structures – the board and committees and relevant and efficient.
- Yes

- This is unfamiliar to most of us – structures, efficiency and relevance are answers we don't have. Renee is very organized and assembles the bulletin and keeps everyone on track. We could improve by emailing people more.
- Not especially efficient if all of the Diaconate and Elders are members of the Board. Most don't come to meetings and, if all came, then there would be a large body trying to make decisions.
- If administration structure means teams, committees, boards and leadership, then we may be outdated. We are still efficient in running the church now, but it may be outdated for future needs.
- Maybe both?
- We don't think so. Things are talked about but are not done. Perhaps committee members should have a term length so that different people can have a chance to serve on a committee. Committee members may be burnt out and uninspired. Maybe more people would be willing to take on committee challenges if they knew that their term had a specified end date. It seems like our church has a lot of meetings, but are they functional or just time wasters? Could we perhaps consolidate meetings? It seems like newer generations do not enjoy formal structured meetings nor have the time available to attend them.
- They are inefficient and outdated for the most part as are our forms of worship which are not designed to appeal to those in younger generations. There is a place for some traditional administrative structure, such as finance and budget committees, but a task or project oriented system might better involve more people in the congregation. Likewise, there is a place for traditional forms of worship, but different forms that appeal to a younger generation should be tried as well.

Question 4: Do our teams, committees, boards and leadership have a readiness for transition and change?

- We are open to guidance in transition.
- Yes
- We do not know what path we will take at this time, but everyone seems to be willing to change.
- Most of the time – if there's a recognized need a change can occur. More than not, a transition to a change depends on what is being asked to change. Some traditions would be hard-pressed to change. Woman elders – the precedent is there, but the practice is rare. Has this part of our structure inhibited growth? How can we have a better worship service? Could we have a discussion with the congregation and the diaconate/elders about what types of practices are inhibiting Bethany. Isn't that what this transformation process is doing?
- Based on the participation we have had for the triads and vision team, we believe the leadership is ready for transition and change.
- Many want the benefits that change could bring but are afraid of the actual changes.
- Maybe. People are willing to go through this process which indicates a willingness to change and an interest in change.
- Most do, but not all. Some of our leaders seem reluctant to commit to change.