The Acts 2 Church Survey

Christian Assembly

Provided by

The Acts 2 Journey Team

September 1, 2017

Welcome to the Acts 2 Church Survey!

In 2013, Alton Garrison, Director of the *Church Transformation Initiative* (CTI) commissioned Dr. Mike Clarensau, then director of the *Healthy Church Network*, to initiate the development of a fully-validated church health survey for Spirit-empowered local churches. After years of working with congregations through the Acts 2 Journey—a one-year strategic process for next-level effectiveness—it was clear that an effective assessment was needed. With the input of the Acts 2 Journey team, the contributions of a team of research specialists, and the help of more than 40 "pilot" churches, the Acts 2 Church Survey was completed in 2017. Its goal is to help Spirit-empowered churches identify their church health strengths and challenges in order to pursue the best paths to greater ministry effectiveness.

While there are many elements that a church survey can pursue, the Acts 2 Church Survey unapologetically focuses on the missional effectiveness of the local congregation. Every selected factor is included due to its connection to Christ's assignment to make disciples of all nations. This is the Church's "main thing" and the principle reason that the power of the Holy Spirit was and is given. Real Spirit-empowered church health can only exist where that core mission is being pursued with great priority.

There are various assessment tools available to pastors and church leaders, and each bring a level of value to the ministries they assess. Alongside such tools, the Acts 2 Survey targets a unique purpose with its focus on Spirit-empowerment. Given the ongoing growth of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in the United States and around the world, it's evident that such unique focus is necessary for these churches to gain the assessment help that truly fits their ministries.

After much study and years of consulting with hundreds of Spirit-empowered congregations this survey was assembled. The subsequent testing and validation of the survey brought twelve church health factors to the forefront for healthy churches. Each of these factors is discussed in the pages of your report and a stanine ranking that described the relative strength of this factor in your church is provided. Additionally, various steps and ideas are provided in the commentary that can help you and your local church rise to a new level, whether the factor currently proved to be a strength or a weakness for your church.

Among the twelve factors, four clearly have risen above the rest. These "big four" repeatedly demonstrated the strongest connection to Spirit-empowered church health to such a significant degree that it seems unlikely for a church that struggles in these areas to be considered healthy. For that reason, the Acts 2 Church Survey focuses its greatest attention on these "big four."

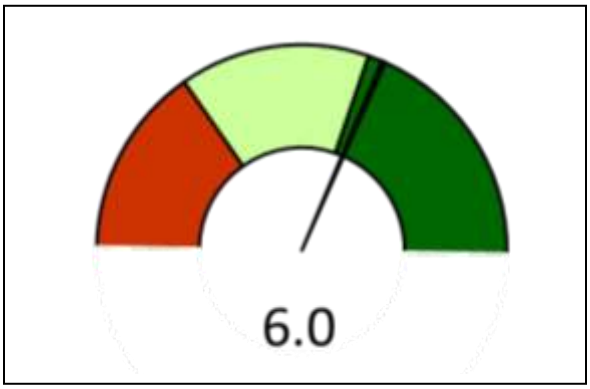
- Serve/Go: Community Engagement – the most critical factor!
- Church Conflict
- Worship
- Go: Spirit-Empowered

These and the other eight church health factors are defined and discussed in greater detail in the pages that follow. Each of the twelve contribute to at least one the church's five Acts 2 functions (connect, grow, serve, go, worship) as you'll see in their respective labels. While these pages of results are the information you're most interested in from the Acts 2 Survey, we've also gathered your congregation's responses to various biblical and doctrinal teachings that show their level of acceptance of the important truths that drive your pursuit of Christ's mission. Demographic data of those from your church who participated and a review of your congregation's church health metrics complete this report.

So, again, welcome to the Acts 2 Church Survey. We're confident that the next few pages will provide the insights you need for reaching a new level of effectiveness in your church's pursuit of Christ's mission.

Your friends at the Church Transformation Initiative

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RATINGS



In the pages that follow, the 12 factors that make up Spirit-empowered church health will be discussed in detail and your church will receive a stanine or percentile-type rating. A stanine or "standard nine" score is a way to scale scores on a nine-point scale.

This rating identifies how your congregation's responses compare with the other churches that have engaged the Acts 2 Church Survey. With each factor, then, church responses are divided into nine stanine levels. The "speedometer" at the left, shows a rating of "6.0" and can be interpreted as the sixth stanine out of nine.

SURVEY PARTICIPATION

Any time you begin to look at the results of a survey, one of the questions you'll naturally need to ask is "Did we ask enough people?" The validity of a survey effort is affected by the number of people participating. While we'd love to ask every adult in your church to respond to our 75 questions, such a level of penetration is highly unlikely.

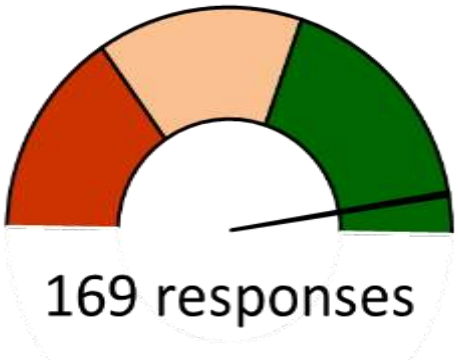
The minimum target number of responses for a congregation of any size is 30. This is the number of responses that is widely accepted by researchers as needed to provide an accurate view of the entire group. Of course, the more responses we gain, the more accurate their collective effort will be in understanding your local church, but our confidence threshold of 30 proves valid, as long as we didn't only include certain types of people (i.e., people of one age group, one ethnic group, etc.). In most cases, the 30 will speak for the whole with remarkable accuracy.

Toward the end of this report, you can review the demographic makeup of your survey participants, but first lets establish the reliability of our confidence threshold.

YOUR RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHICS

First, thirty or more people from your congregation completed the Acts 2 Church Survey. Congratulations! That means we can view the survey results with confidence that they reflect your congregational health accurately.



1 – SERVE/GO: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Everything about the Church begins with mission. From its earliest beginnings where a small band of Jesus followers embraced a worldwide commission, the Church has been defined by its pursuit of proclaiming Christ's Gospel and making disciples. Even its label, *the Church* emerges from the Greek word *Ecclesia* which means "called out ones" or those set apart for a purpose. Its earliest leaders were *apostles* or messengers, called to action by an extraordinary mission. And the incredible moment of the Church's initial empowering—the Day of Pentecost—shared this same priority as Jesus promised "you shall receive power…and be my witnesses."

For years we have insisted that the local church's outward focus is the key to its health and that too heavy an inward focus is at the core of many churches in decline. So it hardly surprises us that the Acts 2 Church Survey has shown that our mission-focused activity is the most significant component of Spirit-empowered church health. Many a pastor has discovered that a missions-focused church also seems to find success throughout its other ministry efforts. As Jesus encouraged in Matthew 6, "Seek first the kingdom of God…and all things will be added unto you."

Now, outward focus encompasses many possible efforts from missionary giving and sending to neighborhood block parties. We could say that any time we spend ourselves for the needs of someone else, we are living in an outward focused manner. But, the research demonstrates clearly that the efforts of outward focus that will most generate a healthy church happen within our own community in ways that involve me and the other members of my local church directly. Look at some of the questions that comprise this portion of the survey and you'll see the type of outward focus we're seeking:

- Our church is making a difference in our community in many ways.
- At our church, we are enthusiastic about serving our community.
- Our church looks for ways to reach out to people.
- The people of our community know that we are a church that loves them.
- Our church reaches out to people from every group (i.e., social class, ethnicity, etc.) in our community.
- Our classes and groups participate in serving projects together.
- Our Sunday school classes/small groups reach out to people outside their group.
- Our church provides adequate training for personal evangelism.
- We are an outward-focused church.

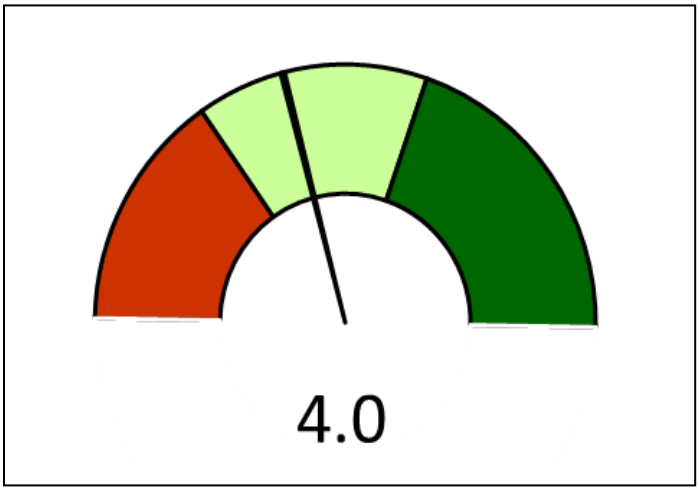
Such efforts draw me into the very essence of being a disciple. Jesus said that such love would be the proof that we are His disciples. He also made it clear that the primary commands of loving God and loving others would define His Church. In fact, His first disciples understood and wrote that loving others was the essential way we would demonstrate our love for God.

Those who lead Spirit-empowered congregations need to understand the central role that *Serve/Go: Community Engagement* plays in a church's health. There is simply no other factor that impacts that health as fully as this one, so one could conclude that every such opportunity that a pastor or leadership team can offer has the potential to help their church and each individual disciple gain greater spiritual health and vitality.

YOUR RESULTS

1 SERVE/GO: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

RATING: 4.0



Community Engagement is the single most critical factor in a healthy Spirit-Empowered local church. The Acts 2 Survey has demonstrated that while you have some success in this essential area, there is room to grow as well.

The goal of this church health factor is to help your congregation engage their community in significant ways. The more effectively you can communicate your church's vision for ministry impact and then give them opportunities to live out that vision, the more likely your passion for ministry will begin to spread within your church. When your people know this is a priority in your church and many begin to catch that vision in ever-increasing ways, your church's outward focus will begin to grow more rapidly. An outward-focused church tends to be healthy because of the questions it most naturally confronts—questions like, How can we reach people more effectively? How can we make a difference in our community? How can I reach my friends for Christ? Outward focus will ultimately force out self-focus and bring greater church health.

If you are faithfully communicating a clear sense of vision to your church, keep it up! If not, this is your starting point. Help your people understand what kind of place we want our church to be. Use Christ's missional commands of love God and love others as a catalyst to shaping this core direction.

Look for additional ways to help your people encounter the needs and the people of your community. Likely you have people that are already engaged in such experiences, but there appears to be many others who are not. The number one emotional need of adults is significance. Help your people find ways to make a difference in the lives of others and this need for meaningful life will be met along the way.

It may help to provide some relationship training too. Many people in today's world lack the social comfort and skill to engage new friends effectively. Consider ways to equip your people in "friend-making" skills. The more adept they are at connecting with new people in their neighborhoods and workplaces, the easier it will be to engage them in efforts to minister to the community (and it will help them be friendlier at church too).

Your church's rating shows some success in this area. Review those successful areas and look for ways to maximize them.

Ultimately, the greatest health for your local church will be reached when your people are living outward-focused lives without you. In other words, there is a "tipping point" that comes when your people begin living daily the vision and values you proclaim, even independent of church programs and ministries. Their Monday-Saturday impact will propel your church to its greatest potential effectiveness.

2 – CHURCH CONFLICT

When pastors and other church leaders consider the question of church health, one of the first issues to come into view is conflict. In many unhealthy congregations, a long history of trouble and damaged relationships is evident. When a congregation or the community around them says "that church has problems" they are usually referencing some inability to deal with internal conflict.

Any collection of people will confront the inevitability of conflict. The ability to navigate those moments effectively and stay on mission mark the capacity of the healthy church. Sadly, those congregations that have become focused inward find conflict both frequent and difficult to manage. In truth, an outward focused congregation more easily looks beyond one another's weaknesses as their desire for the mission leaves little room for pettiness. When we're about "them" rather than "us" selfishness has little room to flourish. Many inward focused churches, conversely, can be unaware of the full impact their struggles with each other are having on their potential for turnaround.

Olfactory fatigue occurs when one has smelled something for so long that he no longer perceives the odor. This happens in congregations where conflict has become a "normal" part of church life. The people know that one family dislikes another or that this leader has unresolved issues with the pastor. We just get accustomed to and accept the difficulty as a part of our church's reality. But to those that are new to our environment, the smell of such problems can be overwhelming.

The Acts 2 Survey has demonstrated a direct relationship between the belief that our church is healthy and the absence of such conflict difficulties. Simply put, where conflict dominates, people know their church isn't healthy. But when conflict is handled well or takes a backseat to our pursuit of our mission, people sense the health of their local church.

Much of this assessment area proves to be perception. Look at a few of the questions that comprise this portion of the survey and you'll see that at issue is more my perception than any awareness of a conflict management strategy:

- There is very little conflict between people in our church.
- I am aware of unresolved conflict between people in our church.
- People enjoy serving in our church.

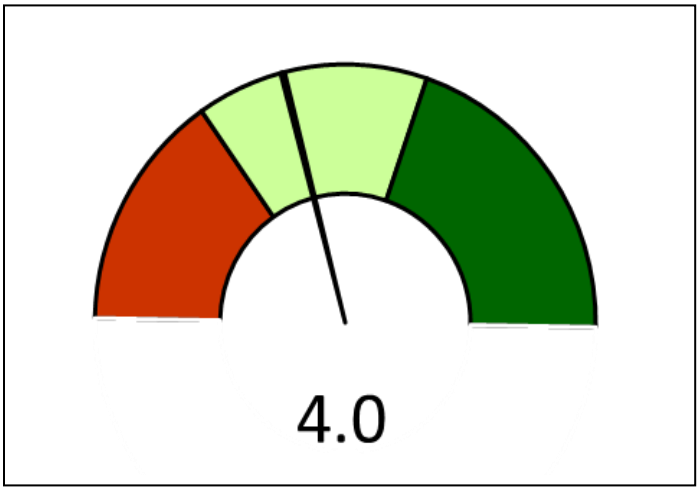
The simple truth is that people define church health as being together and working together in a positive, affirming, and enjoyable manner. Conflict is rare and doesn't take center stage.

Of course, those who lead Spirit-empowered congregations know that such an environment requires effective conflict management and the courage to address such issues when they arise. The survey demonstrates clearly that every effort a pastor or leadership team makes to address moments of conflict in an effective manner (i.e., putting the mission ahead of myself) opens the way to greater church health.

YOUR RESULTS

2 CHURCH CONFLICT

RATING: 4.0



Your rating in the area of Church Conflict indicates that conflict likely isn't derailing your church's pursuit of health, but that this isn't an arena of unquestioned strength either. It's certainly good to discover that issues of interpersonal conflict are not deeply troubling your congregation. As one of the "big four" factors in measuring church health, conflict can define a church, destroy momentum, and singlehandedly keep your church from being healthy.

Your moderate rating means your congregation is likely managing conflict reasonably well, but your people are also aware that there are some challenges in this area. A moderate rating can either indicate that there are a few visible relationship struggles in your church, that serving in the church isn't always a pleasant relational experience, that some people simply don't have close relationships among their church community, or that some are not emotionally-invested in the church to a degree that could generate much conflict.

One place to begin looking for improvement would be among the ministry teams in your church. How are they functioning relationally? Are people enjoying serving or are they nearing burnout? Do they enjoy being together or do they find their most significant friendships in places other than their church?

Of course, the leadership group needs a close review as well. You likely have a leadership group that generally works well together, but there may be a leader or two that are less connected than the others. Are friendships strong in this group? Does mutual respect govern these relationships? Creating some additional relational opportunities for leaders may help. Be sure to maintain the health of these relationships by refusing to allow unresolved conflict among leaders. As pastor, you cannot possibly engage every conflict in the church (and you wouldn't want to), but you can't afford to let conflict among your leaders fester in any way. It's wise to include the priority of working through our conflicts as a part of your annual effort to equip leaders.

A moderate rating in this factor could also occur if the congregation is large enough that people aren't aware of struggles or that people in the congregation are not emotionally invested to the point that conflict is likely to occur.

No matter how high this rating might get, it cannot ever guarantee that no conflict exists or that your congregation has learned to practice healthy conflict resolution. It's wise to regular invest in your congregation's personal relationships by providing equipping for biblical conflict resolution. Jesus, himself, offered some good counsel in this important area (Matthew 18), and such wisdom is regularly taught in a healthy church. Healthy churches produce healthy people. When you help people manage their personal conflicts more effectively, you can significantly improve their quality of life.

Much that makes a church healthy in the arena of conflict management comes from expectations and modeling. When leaders communicate an expectation that we work through our difficulties and they also model and wisely teach from their own experiences, our Savior's challenge to "love one another" comes more clearly into view.

As an important step toward strengthening your congregation's conflict management capacity, reflect on some of the reasons you think your church scored moderately in this area. Then, based on such reflections, consider ways you can target more specific ways to invest in this strength.

3 – WORSHIP

Those who lead the Spirit-empowered local church desire the presence and life-changing power of God among the people more than anything else. No amount of human-generated excitement or consumer-tailored programming can possibly replace the impact even a single moment with God can produce. Even those currently beyond the church's walls are in a search for meaning that can only be satisfied by a genuine encounter with the Creator who loves them. That's why worship—those moments we intentionally seek to connect with and honor God—play such an important part in the healthy Spirit-empowered church.

In truth, the healthiest and most enduring local church growth is generated by the impact experienced and the value congregation members place on their participation in their worship community. One whose life has been greatly affected by his church experience can hardly keep quiet when among weekday friends in search of hope. When you find a vibrant and growing congregation, you will almost always find a group of people genuinely excited about their church and how their lives are being significantly changed.

The Acts 2 Survey has demonstrated a strong belief that God is present in our worship and the perception that ours is a healthy church. We should note that the awareness of God with us differs sharply from consideration of music quality or any brand of performance excellence. There's a big difference between expecting a quality presentation and expecting to actually meet with God. While certainly we want to give our best in worship to God, the pastor and leadership team of the Spirit-empowered church know that our excellence may bring a larger crowd, but only God's true presence can bring the life-altering impact that make us a true expression of His Church. The healthiest churches aren't always those with the most resources or gifted people. They're the ones that demonstrate a genuine hunger to encounter the Holy Spirit, knowing only He has the power to change lives and bring lasting hope. And when He does, few people can remain silent about it.

Look at a few of the questions that comprise this portion of the survey and you'll see the priority given to truly encountering the Holy Spirit in our worship:

- The Holy Spirit guides us in worship.
- Others say that they really sense God's presence in our worship services.
- Those who lead our worship services are truly led by God's Spirit.
- I look forward to our worship services.
- Gifts of the Spirit are expressed in our worship services.
- I feel like God speaks to me when I attend our worship services.

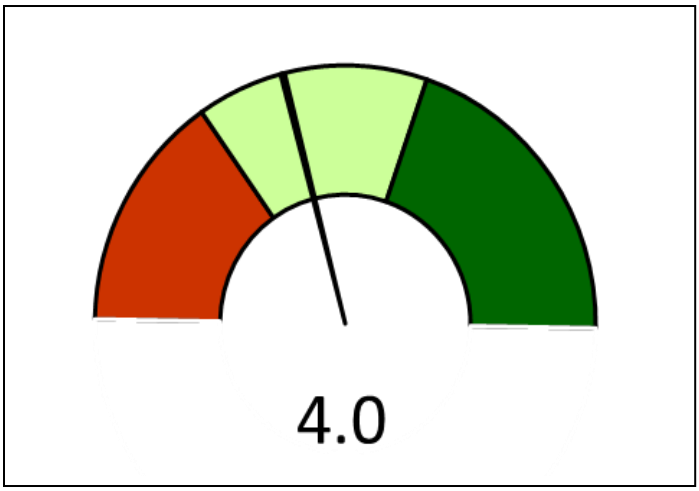
According to various studies, when most people come to a church, they're looking for friends. But when they encounter God in their local church, a new priority begins to dominate their lives.

Of course, those who lead Spirit-empowered congregations know that their own pursuit of God's presence is essential for the capacity to lead others. So the pursuit of greater church health demands greater pursuit of God. Given that Jesus established Himself as the Head of the Church, such a necessity seems a given. Unfortunately, the temptation to pursue or rely on our own talents and even giftings push many leaders toward an unhealthy dependence on remarkable, but unsatisfactory, abilities.

YOUR RESULTS

3 WORSHIP

RATING: 4.0



The Acts 2 Church Survey shows that among your congregation there is some experience of God's presence and guidance in your times of worship as a local church. This is an important discovery as Worship is one of the "Big Four" factors in determining church health. How people feel about their church is greatly affected by their personal experience in the church's worship setting.

So what does this mean? When you look at the questions that comprise this part of the survey, you notice that no mention is made of excellence in performance or any other aspect of individual ability. Because there is much that's encouraging about this result, we can generally assume that at the very least, those who lead your church in worship demonstrate a desire for God's presence and demonstrate their gifts and abilities in ways that do not significantly distract from the individual's experience. There is a hunger for experiencing God's presence, and the kind of life-changing encounter one would expect from truly engaging His Holy Spirit.

But there is also room for improvement. First, because worship is such an important function in the life of the local church, it is essential for the pastor, worship leader, and all those engaged in leading such a ministry to make this a high priority. What steps can we take to cultivate an even higher desire for God's presence among our people? What steps might be needed to help our worship leaders guide us to such focus more effectively?

Sometimes, a church will struggle in their worship because they may be trying to be something they are not. Worship styles and methods have a way of trending that causes some to believe their pursuit of the latest approaches is key to their effectiveness. The Spirit-empowered church prioritizes the presence of God and the people's ability to engage God in a meaningful way. If we're struggling through methods that don't connect with our hearts, we may need to take a step back.

Employing the adage, "you get what you reward," likely has value here. Be sure to continue encouraging your worship leaders and congregation in the healthiest focus for their efforts. Guard microphones from the self-indulgent. Prioritize the daily pursuit of God that you've come to expect of those who lead the church in such important moments.

One step you can take or continue to follow would be to never let a microphone ministry become someone's first place of service. Ministering in more hidden ways allows for the development and revelation of values that can give you greater confidence when you extend more visible ministry opportunities. If someone won't serve in unseen places, they likely won't have the right heart for visible places.

In those areas where you excel, be sure to maintain a sharp focus. The Bible and Church history are filled with stories of sincere worshipers who later lost such focus and allowed their pride and desire for attention to begin dominating what had once been effective ministry. As you see greater strength beginning to emerge in this area, don't assume the healthy component will continue without ongoing intentional investment.

Always prioritize heart over talent. Currently you may not have to choose between the two as your congregation offers some good affirmation of their worship experience. But you must continue to implement the values that have driven you to this point. Don't just "keep doing what you're doing," but continue focusing on why you do it.

Help your congregation to pursue greater expression of spiritual gifts, not just in worship settings, but especially in the other places of their lives. While a few such gifts are tailor-made for the corporate worship setting, most find their greatest expression in the marketplace. The more your people seek and demonstrate such gifts in their daily lives, the more likely their use in the worship setting will continue to be healthy. You'll also need to continue strong teaching and encouragement of the use of these gifts. And you'll need to provide healthy and encouraging guidance in those moments of misuse.

This factor also contributes greatly to people's desire to invite friends and family to your worship services. When I am excited about what I experience, I am more likely to want my friends to experience those same meaningful moments.

As an important step toward strengthening your congregation's meaningful expressions of worship, reflect on some of the reasons you think your church responded as they did in this area. Then, based on such reflections, consider ways you can begin helping them pursue greater engagement in worship.

4 – GO: SPIRIT-EMPOWERED

The fourth of the "inner circle" factors of Spirit-empowered church health brings us back to the Church's mission of outward focus and the part I am to play in its supernatural fulfillment. The essence of the "Go: Spirit-Empowered" reality of the local church insists that every individual has a significant place in Christ's mission and that place will be greater than one can achieve on his or her own.

Just as the desert journeys of Moses and the Israelites were far too challenging for their own limited capacities, people in healthy Spirit-empowered churches know that God's purpose for their lives is greater than their abilities as well. Jesus' name *Immanuel* underscores the beautiful message of the Incarnation that He is God with us—a promise He underscored after giving His disciples their overwhelming mission (Matthew 28:20). Since He is with us, it makes sense that what He desires to do through us would require Him too—and that has a way of keeping us dependent on His presence, direction and power.

The Acts 2 Survey has demonstrated a clear and firm relationship between church health and an individual's awareness that God has a plan for his or her life. In such churches, the mission of God takes center stage and great emphasis is given to the church community's collective pursuit of that mission and the role each individual has in maximizing God's work in our community. Spectator life is not normal church life in such congregations. Leaders serve, people discover their gifts and are empowered to use them, both within the local church and especially in their Monday- Saturday lives.

You can see the real nature of this component by reviewing a few of the questions that comprise this portion of the survey. Notice the focus isn't aimed at all we can accomplish together as much as highlighting the purpose God has for each individual's life:

- I believe God's plan for my life is bigger than I can fully imagine.
- God wants people to step beyond their "comfort zones."
- Every individual has gifts and abilities that can be used to serve the church.

The Go: Spirit-empowered factor places great emphasis on the word "Go." While discovering places to serve in the local church's ministries begins to feed this element of church health, such serving is seen more as a means to a greater end. One could almost say that my ministry at my local church is practice for the real game that begins each time I leave the church's property. As we often say, Sunday isn't intended to be the greatest day of a local church's impact. The most powerful days for any group of believers should be Monday thru Saturday,

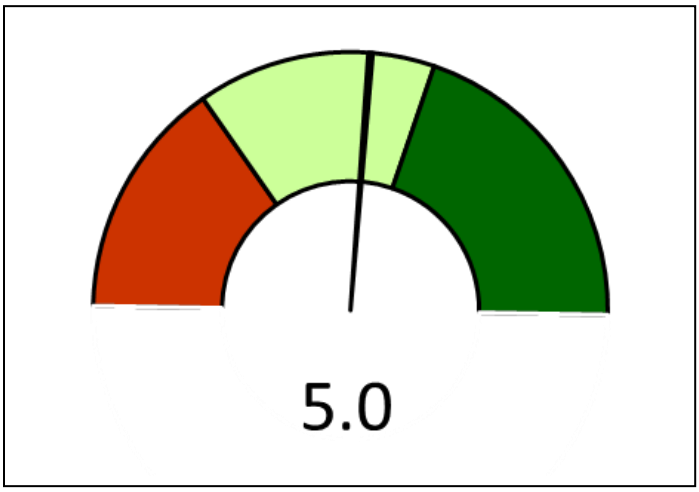
when we find ourselves scattered through our community. Sunday then becomes the day for both celebrating what God has done through us and equipping ourselves for the new opportunities ahead.

Those who lead Spirit-empowered congregations invest in this church health factor through both expectation, priority, and investment. People in their churches must be consistently challenged toward discovery and pursuit of their God-designed purpose. They come to believe such purpose is possible because of the clear confidence and encouragement demonstrated by their leaders. Those leaders often find themselves shifting their own focus from "doing ministry" to equipping and empowering their people for the work God has designed them to engage.

YOUR RESULTS

4 GO: SPIRIT-EMPOWERED

RATING: 5.0



The Acts 2 Church Survey reveals that the people in your congregation likely understand that God has supernatural plans for their lives, even if they're a bit uncertain in their current steps toward them. For the healthy Spirit-empowered church, this factor—Go: Spirit-Empowered—is one of the "Big Four" elements in determining church health. Here, we not only take a look at the congregation's sense of possibility, but reveal the degree of their sense of responsibility for fulfilling Christ's mission.

So what does this mean? The questions that make up this part of the survey indicate whether or not individuals expect to be called beyond their comfort zone into service for their Savior that may require his supernatural aide. So, a moderate rating here indicates some level of expectation and desire for such moments.

This rating also means that your people likely know that every individual has a valued role in God's eternal purpose, even if they've not yet put that knowledge into practice. They would affirm that each person should find their part in Christ's mission and there is good reason to increase your efforts to mobilize them in that direction. Since yours is a moderate rating, likely there are some who will be resistant to such ideas, but don't let their reluctance keep you from needed action.

Affirming, activating, and maintaining this belief becomes your challenge. To grow an attitude of serving, you must continue seeking ways to encourage your people in Kingdom service. As in other areas, employing the adage, "you get what you reward," likely has value here.

Another key step is to give high priority to helping individuals discover their gifts and their God-given purpose. Remember that spiritual gifts are given by God and shouldn't be equated with natural abilities. Watch for what God is doing in people's lives and then invite them to step out in the direction He is showing.

Additionally, recognizing those who already serve with the right Spirit will likely produce similar involvement from others. These "models" of Spirit-empowered servants can serve as excellent catalysts for others who need to get involved.

Continually look for meaningful opportunities and projects for your people to engage. Underscore the spiritual preparation for ministry service through prayer and pursuit of spiritual gifts. Your people are "wired" to make a difference, so help put them in places where that difference is possible.

Additionally, don't be reluctant to tackle great challenges. There are people in your congregation who are growing in their confidence in God's supernatural help. Let that faith have expression in the significant, and sometimes overwhelming needs of your community. Consider engaging missions projects both at home and in distant places.

You'll want to give even greater priority to the pursuit of Spirit-baptism in your congregation. In Acts 1:5, Jesus insisted this outpouring would be necessary for those who would fulfill His Commission. Nothing about that thought has changed.

So rejoice that there are those in your congregation who have embraced a sense of God's purpose and a desire to fulfill it. But don't celebrate too long. Mobilize these full of faith friends and help them reach toward the extraordinary journey God has for their lives.

5 – CONNECT: GUEST WELCOMING

While your church's passion and ability to connect with outsiders didn't quite make the top four "inner circle" factors of Spirit-empowered church health, there's no denying its central importance in demonstrating a true missional mindset. If we don't love those who are different from us, we fail to reveal the supernatural nature of our worship community. Any organization can collect people of homogenous backgrounds or life experiences, but only the Church can embrace "every tribe and tongue" and fully weave them together. The Connect: Guest Welcoming factor seeks to measure our potential for effectively doing just that.

Unfortunately, many churches find such openness to be elusive. People most naturally find comfort among those of similar culture and economic status. "Like us" means "with us" in just about every other arena of life. But the healthy Spirit-empowered church has begun to discover the extraordinary dynamic that diversity can bring.

Most church folks are convinced that their church is a "friendly" church. In truth, however, what they actually mean is that their own friends are there. They feel welcome and at home so they see little reason for others to feel differently. But what if our visitors were the only ones we let vote on our friendliness? How would we fare if only outsiders decided if we were truly open and inviting?

As you can see from the list of questions serving this factor, we're measuring how willingly we move toward people who are different from us. Do we avoid such people, extend a handshake, or actually welcome them into our worlds? Which people groups dominate our church and how open are they to those from outside their ranks?

- Our church shows love to people regardless of their background.
- Our church welcomes people who are not like us.
- Our church doors are truly open to anyone.
- People of all demographic groups (e.g., income, gender, ethnicity, age, etc.) are equally valued at our church.
- My non-Christian friends would be welcomed at our church.
- Our congregation is friendly to those who visit our worship services.

Whether or not those perceived as "outsiders" are truly desired will say a lot about who your people will be willing to invite to church. So, in some situations, this factor proves to be self-fulfilling. If we don't think our church will accept people that aren't like us, then we won't choose to not invite such people from among our weekday friends to attend church with us, which further reinforces the limits we have built for our church

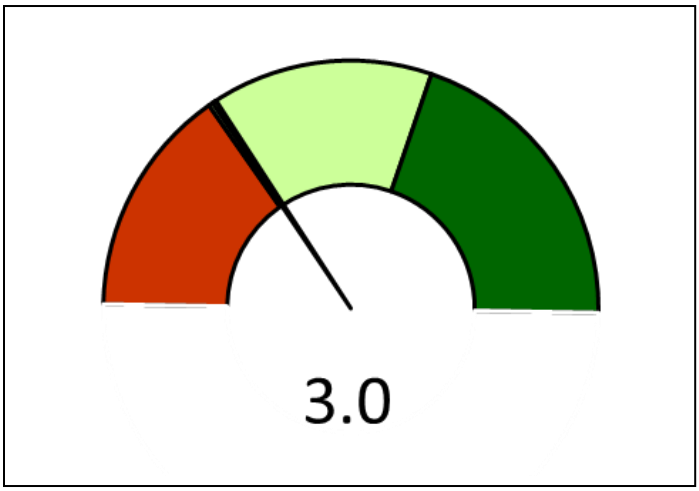
community. Before long, we're like us, even if our weekday lives or the community around our church is vastly different.

Now, there are certainly important steps to be taken in hospitality, guest follow-up, and assimilation efforts that continue a new friend's journey toward full engagement in our church family, but none of that can reach its best potential if there's not an openness and enthusiasm toward welcoming new people among the entire congregation. It has been wisely noted that a church is "only as friendly as the guy next to me." This is why how each of us treat new people, especially those from different backgrounds and experiences, goes a long way in determining our church's true health.

YOUR RESULTS

5 CONNECT: GUEST WELCOMING

RATING: 3.0



According to the Acts 2 Church Survey, welcoming new people, especially those who might be different from us in some way is currently an area that needs to be addressed in your church. The people of your congregation have told us that the openness to those who are different from them is lacking and isn't as strong as they believe it should be. Likely, your congregation has seen or heard of moments where outsiders were resisted or they have yet to see different groups fully engaging each other in life-sharing ways.

Because this is an "us" question, we don't have the necessary information to indicate an individual's attitude toward those who are different. Still, because a weaker rating has emerged, we can reasonably assume that those completing the survey believe we should be doing a bit better than we are, even if they've yet to get involved themselves.

Who is the key group(s) in your congregation? Does their dominance match the weekday communities where we live and work? Do we see the same variety of economic situations that are common to our town or city or are their noticeable differences? Reflecting on these kinds of questions and the reasons for our answers can help us begin to shape new strategies.

Look closely at your church's fellowship events. Do people connect with others beyond their long-time friends? It seems likely that if we struggle to accept those who are different from us, we may have similar struggles even with those who are like us. While another part of the survey will address internal relationships, we generally don't treat outsiders differently or even as well as those we've known for a while.

Let's start with our hospitality team. Often churches that struggle in their welcoming efforts need to add some people to this effort. Are our "greeters" the friendliest people in our church or just the ones that have been doing this for years? Who's making the church's first impression and are they influencing the rest of us toward friendliness? It may be that your hospitality efforts could use some new leadership. Why not find a couple of people who love welcoming people into their homes (usually women) and let them lead you to a new day?

We can assume some degree of weakness here in our motivation. Often people who resist those who are different just haven't engaged the opportunity to learn about the lives and cultures of others. Consider some

steps to bridge these gaps. The Bible clearly celebrates the diversity of Christ's Church. This may need to be emphasized more clearly in your congregation.

Keep in mind that this openness to others is a vital part of your church's missional mindset. You cannot expect such a spirit to grow or continue long-term if you don't model it, affirm it, and encourage it today. Don't assume that even the best values that might be driving a few like-minded people today will continue on their own. Affirming and investing in such a spirit must be ongoing.

You may also have to bring some corrective measures to missteps in this area. Don't allow any mistreatment or failure to include people to go unaddressed. Though difficult, this area of weakness is likely really limiting your church's potential. Lovingly, but firmly, call your people to a new day and a new mindset.

Continually look for meaningful opportunities to help your congregation engage outsiders. Consider missional efforts toward those who "no one else is loving." Faithfully proclaim the clear invitation the Gospel makes to all who would believe and guide your church in celebrating its impact.

6 CONNECT: INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

In the healthy Spirit-empowered local church, the quality of relationships within the congregation is highly significant. At first glance, one might underestimate this factor as deep and growing friendships may not be as visible when the congregation gathers to worship. But, the absence of such relationships begins to come into view the longer one participates with that local church. While pastors and musicians may be able to provide quality experiences that keep people coming back for a time, the day soon comes where one's relationships within the church and one's personal involvement take over as the driving force of participation. Of course, when relationships within the congregation are unhealthy, it's difficult to think of one's church as healthy.

Given the transitional nature of modern life in the western world, the need for growing relationships takes on an increasing dynamic. If someone will spend significant time and energy in something like regular church attendance, that person will likely expect to find meaningful relationships, just as they do in their workplace. Some will be content with a spectator-approach to their church life, having compartmentalized their religious life into a Sunday-only habit, but the rising generation typically finds this less satisfying than their parents did. Today, we want, need, and have now come to expect to find life-sharing relationships before we commit to your church being "our" church.

Only a couple of questions provide this portion of the survey, but they speak volumes concerning assimilation, discipleship participation, and missional engagement in the local church. A healthy spirit-empowered local church is comprised of people who are fully connected and deeply vested in their spiritual life, in a way only achieved through deepening personal relationships:

- I have many friends at church.
- I have close friendships at church.

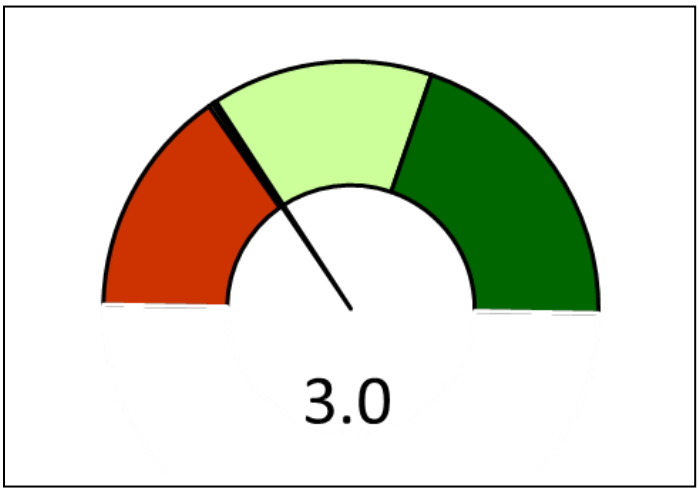
In this factor, one must understand that local churches where disconnected spectators randomly stop in for some spiritual meaning and insight may not be moving closer to true congregational health. Numbers may be increasing, but such people tend to pass through as quickly as they stopped by. Only the pursuit of real relationships can take those spectators into the life-changing experience of the Church's true mission.

Some of the elements that fuel this factor include modeled relationships between leaders, priority given throughout church programming to building healthy relationships, and opportunities to engage my own relationships within the life of the church

YOUR RESULTS

6 CONNECT: INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

RATING: 3.0



The Acts 2 Survey has revealed that a lack of healthy friendships is a trouble spot for your congregation. Such a rating may result if yours is a new congregation where relationships have yet to get started, but more likely shows some unfortunate history between people that has caused them to look elsewhere for their friends. At first, this rating will likely feel a bit discouraging, but likely hasn't surprised you. It's not difficult for a leader to sense when people are connecting with one another and its even easier to know when they are not.

As we have seen, the relevant questions seek only to identify friendships and close friendships in the local church. A weaker score likely means that at this point, people find most of their significant friendships elsewhere.

The question is why.

We might want to hope that this could indicate a majority of friendships are occurring outside the congregation, where evangelism efforts could benefit. But it is far more likely that we're simply not connecting with each other for a number of possible reasons. People who are building healthy friendships outside of the church can be expected to do the same within the congregation without much difficulty. So a lower rating means something is likely hindering.

Are there reasons people are looking elsewhere for friends? The first place to look might be in the box of unresolved conflicts. Where conflict has occurred, wounds have a way of teaching new and more cautious behaviors. Don't ignore this if it exists as history is still showing that the impact of these past struggles hasn't disappeared. Be sure to regularly teach biblical skills for conflict resolution. Even the deepest and most meaningful friendships will have their difficult moments. For strong friendships to form and endure, people need to know the best ways to handle their differences.

If you determine that unhealthy friendships are at the core of this factor's rating, you can be sure that more than just those involved are being affected. Church consultants will often insist that the first thing people are looking for when visiting a new church is friends. For some, there's a need for a new set of friends as they desire to bring changes to their own lives. For others, a long history of meaningful relationships in a previous church has underscored their pursuit in their new place. The desire, and often the expectation, is that my church is a place where I will find significant and healthy relationships. So the condition and climate of friendships within the church comes into focus for those in transition. If they don't see such friendships in action, why would they suppose their experience in this church will be different?

Churches that have chosen a more attractional ministry model typically spend more energy and more resources connecting people to the church than to each other. The result can be a larger congregation that loves the church's ministries but lacks the kind of relationships most would hope for. If people are not building meaningful relationships, then ministry efforts other than the big events (like Sunday worship, all-church activities, etc.) are likely struggling. Relationships drive participation in smaller events like small group ministries and other discipleship efforts. In these kinds of places, relationships are lacking because we haven't built them yet. If this

were the case in your church, we would expect this factor's rating to be a bit higher. At this level, it is more likely that people are choosing not to engage each other for specific reasons that need to be researched.

The healing of relationships may need some focus in preaching and teaching ministries. Jesus had a lot to say about the important of loving one another and a quality review of His priority will be worth the effort. Jesus clearly made our connection to one another important in describing His vision for His Church.

A low rating here could also be addressed by providing your people with more opportunities and encouragement toward building friendships. We all know that it takes years to build the most important friendships and people are often reluctant to try opening that door to others, especially when their current circle of friends seems satisfactorily full.

Also, since your church needs greater success with its internal relationships, maximize this move by considering how to align your ministry efforts. Let relationships play a greater part in driving your church events, even your outreach strategies. In everything you do, consider how relationships can be encouraged.

As a leadership team, reflect on the ways your church helps people build relationships and look to do more. It could be that some of your ministry approaches actually hinder or at least fail to provide opportunity in this area. Your church may be having some limited success in this area, but there's clearly room and need for even more.

7 CONNECT: SMALL GROUPS

While a local church's small group ministries can provide effective opportunities to deliver biblical content or achieve other congregational purposes, personal connection and meaningful relationships remain the greatest contribution made by these groups to the life of the local church. As church size increases, connection to the whole becomes more difficult. But small group ministries open the way to the kind of meaningful connections that most people long for in their church experience.

Some studies are beginning to demonstrate that the congregation's window for "keeping people" by connecting them to such ministries is narrowing. Small groups have long been an important means of assimilating new friends. By many estimates, such participation will likely need to occur within the first 6-10 weeks of one's initial church visit or the risk of drifting away begins to escalate.

Unfortunately, most churches find that participation in small group ministries doesn't typically occur at the levels of previous decades. Ministry programs like Sunday school once enjoyed 80% congregational participation or even higher in some places while small group ministries hover closer to half of that level. Growing worship numbers coupled with the continued acceleration of life's busyness means more people to engage and fewer hours available for that engagement.

Still, healthy Spirit-empowered churches tend to be those with effective small group ministries. Both for relationships and discipleship, these groups help fulfill the critical elements of Christ's mission. In this part of the survey questions focus on the individual's full experience of these groups, often as the centerpiece of their sense of church life:

- I feel connected to the people who attend my small group or Bible study group.
- My small group or Bible study group is important to my spiritual growth.
- I actively participate in a small group or Bible study group.
- Our small group or Bible study group helps care for the personal needs within the group.

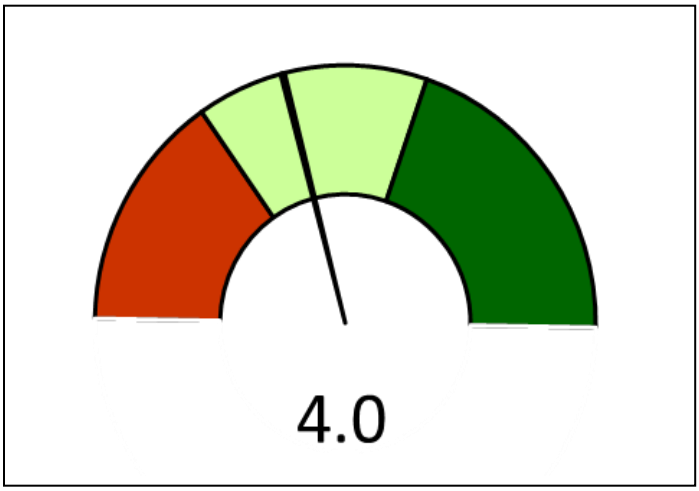
It's been wisely observed that discipleship is the hardest work of the local church. Both its "cradle-to-grave" target audience and its lifelong-learner mentality mean the job is truly never done until the casket lid is closed. Still, such ministries comprise a "have-to" for the local church if the mission of Christ is to be significantly accomplished. Technologies have altered our sense of relationship building, but can never fully replace our need to live the life of a disciple together.

Here again strategy is necessary for the leadership group's success with this factor. How do we deliver God's truth in real-life settings? When and where can we most effectively achieve such goals? What leadership needs will such efforts demand and how will we equip those who help us? These questions, and perhaps dozens more, must be confronted by those who would lead healthy Spirit-empowered churches.

YOUR RESULTS

7 CONNECT: SMALL GROUPS

RATING: 4.0



Small groups target multiple purposes (discipleship, relationship, serving teams, pastoral care, etc.) but their most measurable contribution to church health focuses on connecting people to one another. Not only does such connection provide desired friendships, it opens the door to life-sharing discipleship, genuine care, and every other good thing that effective small groups can achieve together. You could say that connection is the first door small groups must open and from there, a great journey can commence.

The Acts 2 Church Survey completed by your congregation demonstrates that you are finding some success in this first priority for small groups, but have a bit more work to do. The kind of relationship-building you're hoping for in small groups is happening for some, but hasn't hit its full stride yet. Yours is a moderate rating, so what does this mean?

First, this isn't a grade for the overall effectiveness of your small group ministry. Additional factors, like the percentage of our church participating, the quality of our leaders, and other components would need to be reviewed before concluding a true review of these efforts. In fact, it's possible that your current small groups are succeeding in relationship building, but your level of participation lowered your overall rating in this factor.

What the Acts 2 Church Survey does show is that some of your people are finding the experience meaningful, especially in their efforts to find and build friendships. Since this is the critical ingredient to every other goal for small group ministry, much can be gained by maximizing this effort and engaging more people in the experience. What we know is that the ability of small groups to help us connect is the component of such ministry that's most connected to church health. If people are connecting to those in their small group in meaningful ways—and some of your people are—then good things are able to follow.

First, consider a review of all your groups to verify that these relational goals are clearly in focus. Some leaders may try to align their groups around their own personal strengths or desires, functionally putting relationships on the back burner—like the guy who wants everyone to benefit from his in-depth Bible study so he neglects a focus on connecting. Make sure every leader understands that all other goals flow from this one.

Of course, your ongoing investment in those leading your groups will never stop being important. Remember that most of the reasons for small group failure come from a lost sense of the "why" of these groups. Keep the clear vision for these efforts in the forefront for all of your leaders, especially those who may be less "relationally-focused" in nature.

Look for strong relationally-focused people to serve as small group leaders. People who do well at bringing others together have the greatest potential for this kind of leadership. At the same time, guard your leadership slots from those who lack this focus. Other agendas will work against you over the long haul. It's far better to say "no" on the front end to those who lack this capacity than to subject a group to anticipated failure and, thus, hinder their future involvement in other groups.

Since the data reports that you're experiencing some success in this first goal, it's important to begin evaluating the secondary goals you are targeting. Where people are connecting well, are our discipleship goals also being accomplished? Are these friends also stepping up to care for each other in times of difficulty? You have the foundation in place, so make sure that something is getting built.

As a leadership team, reflect on what is working and why. Interview your successful leaders and those who are struggling to learn the reasons for their different experiences. List the ways your church helps people build relationships through small groups so you can spread and reproduce the effectiveness. Your church isn't far from beginning to experience real success in this critical effort so do all you can to nurture and maximize that reality.

8 CONNECT: SOCIAL FLEXBILITY

The final of four "connect" factors that drive the healthy Spirit-empowered church forward seeks to identify the depth to which Christ's missional ideals have affected the individual. With "Connect: Social flexibility, we measure the degree to which the people of the local church have engaged meaningful connections across ethnic and socio-economic lines. As we've seen before, human organizations tend to run along homogenous relationships, but the Church is defined by its embrace of every people, regardless of language, color, and resources. When business leaders and hourly workers build meaningful friendships, they've been deeply influenced by the values of a healthy Spirit-empowered church. When diversity is embraced and our personal lives blend colors and cultures together in joyful celebration, something has happened that only the Spirit of God can generate.

While its common sense to understand that 100% of the numerical growth potential of your local church hinges on or will be greatly affected by your effectiveness in welcoming new people. When congregation members are convinced that their weekday friends would be treated well among their Sunday friends, they are much more likely to invite them. Of course, those that visit churches on their own are looking for that same kind of willing inclusion. Many studies demonstrate that their primary desire when walking through a new church door is to find friends.

A new generation is rising in the western world that treasures relationship authenticity and abhors the historic barriers that have devalued others and divided them from us. While this generation's ability to maintain such a spirit remains to be seen, there is little doubt that such a mindset governs the Spirit-empowered. These who have embraced a worldwide sense of purpose and meaning know that any and every individual deserves love and has something of value to offer. Add the thrill of sharing new cultural experiences and you have the makings of a real friendship.

The questions used to discern this factor among the congregation use the idea of "close friend" as the indicator of social flexibility. Many of us have acquaintances, coworkers, and even relatives that come from different economics or cultures, but close friendship demonstrates a greater degree of choice and acceptance:

- I have a close friend who is from a different socio-economic group.
- I have a close friend who is from a different ethnic group.

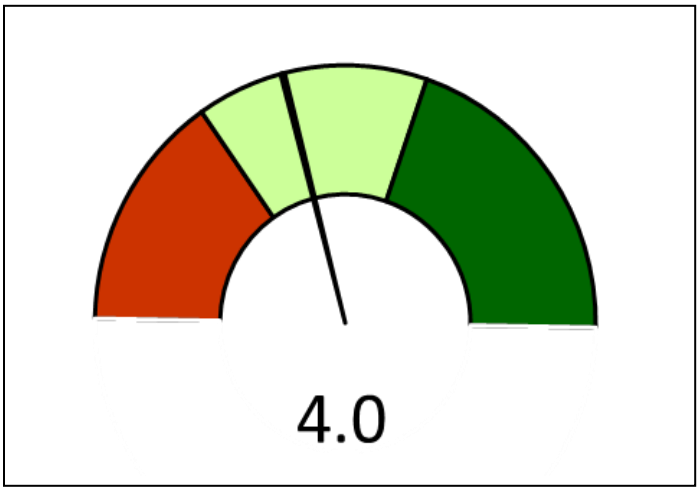
Ethnic and economic diversity do not guarantee the flexibility envisioned. There may be many local churches that welcome numerous nationalities to worship each week, but this factor focuses on the degree to which those individuals engage people outside their shared heritage. In the same way, most churches have a varied economic strata, but are those with less truly a part of the lives of those with more or do they continue to be primarily the targets of our ministry. Simply put, the wealthy can share resources without sharing friendship.

Pastors and other local church leaders may discover that they alone are attuned to this factor within the congregation. After all, most people are content with real friendships and have little concern with their variety. But the research demonstrates that our social flexibility contributes significantly to our church health. If we don't have personal friends outside our familiar circles, can we be expected to really welcome new friends when they are different from us? As leaders, we must become strategic with our connection efforts and the subsequent paragraphs will offer some ideas.

YOUR RESULTS

8 CONNECT: SOCIAL FLEXIBILITY

RATING: 4.0



As mentioned, one of the unique discoveries of the Acts 2 Church Survey is the important relationship between church health and the degree to which members of the congregation engage diversity in their midst. The Acts 2 Church Survey completed by your congregation demonstrates that your congregation is having some success in this area, though more is possible and needs to be accomplished.

Building friendships with those who are different from me requires opportunity, encouragement, and my own desire. It's likely that at least one of these is evident in your congregation, so the best plan would be to target whatever piece is missing. While many churches welcome a diverse group of people to weekend worship, often the groups remain isolated from one another. This can be true whether the divide between them is cultural, racial, or economic. People naturally gravitate toward those who are like them, even when the opportunities to engage those who are different are readily available.

If your church has such diversity, this factor in the Acts 2 Church Survey tells us how well your people are engaging that diversity as individuals. They have indicated some friendships have formed with those from different backgrounds or people groups, but those friendships may be remaining at a surface level. For some, their openness to others may come from a worldview or diverse experiences that has always been a part of their lives. For others, this step requires new efforts and experiences and will mark a great step of personal growth.

When we speak of diversity, we most often think of racial or cultural groups. But integrating people of differing economic situations is equally important, especially in the Church. Both Paul and James, apostles of the Early Church, had to confront such dividing issues and it's likely that humanity still maintains some of the attitudes of their first-century audiences. Celebrating diversity and offering opportunities to connect with those from different backgrounds will help what we call "social flexibility" to grow stronger in your church.

One strategic way to encourage the forming of relationships between different groups of people is to provide opportunities to serve the community (or the church) together. Serving side-by-side has proven to be one of the most effective catalysts to developing friendships. Such efforts have a way of equalizing differences as we do the same work together for others in need.

This factor demonstrates a set of values that need to be continually taught and guarded. Every church is just one Sunday from the injection of new or different ideas from those who don't know our hearts. Affirm the healthy attitude and loving spirit among those that demonstrate it today, especially among your leaders. You'll need their help in continuing to spread and guard a healthy mindset throughout the congregation.

As a leadership team, it's always good to reflect on what is working and why. What are some of the ways your church has contributed to this reality? What additional steps could be taken? What people groups, whether cultural or economic are not represented in our leadership? Even if the existing diversity that is occurring among your people has happened "naturally," there are important strategic efforts that can preserve and continue producing this environment in ever-increasing ways.

9 GROW: SPIRITUAL VITALITY

While the Acts 2 Survey demonstrates four unique elements within the "Connect" function of the local church, the "Grow" function is captured in a single idea—spiritual vitality. Discipleship, by its true nature, encompasses a variety of focus areas—enhanced Bible knowledge, spiritual disciplines, prayer, etc.—but cannot be fully defined by any of them. At its core, discipleship combines all of these efforts and experiences into a dynamic result—life change.

True discipleship is more than the habits that produce it or the outcomes that might indicate it. For the Spirit-empowered believer, there is a living element that cannot be captured in a checklist. The presence of God's Spirit takes what may otherwise look routine and gives it power. For example, some people find great vibrancy as they read the Bible while others have yet to experience such results in their effort with the same habit. We've labeled this qualitative difference that produces the energy for real life change "spiritual vitality."

Another word that begins to capture this factor could be "hunger." The questions that feed this portion of the survey reflect one who enthusiastically engages their spiritual growth. For them there's rarely any sense of mundane routine. But vitality goes even further, inferring that the hunger is also being fed, the longing is being satisfied by meaningful encounters with God. Many discipleship studies note how even a majority of Christians can find their spiritual life becoming stagnant after a few years. In such cases, usually inward focus has drained the sense of want and need from the believer's life. Spiritual vitality describes the opposite experience.

The questions that comprise this factor among the congregation seek to identify the "want to" demonstrated by the individual in their pursuit of spiritual growth:

- I intentionally listen for God's direction in my daily life.
- I regularly spend time reflecting on my faith throughout the week.
- The Holy Spirit helps me to live according to the Bible's teaching.

- I am growing in my relationship with Christ.
- I think I could help someone else grow in their faith.
- I study the Bible regularly on my own.
- I am involved in helping someone else grow in their faith.
- Someone could learn about following Christ by watching me.

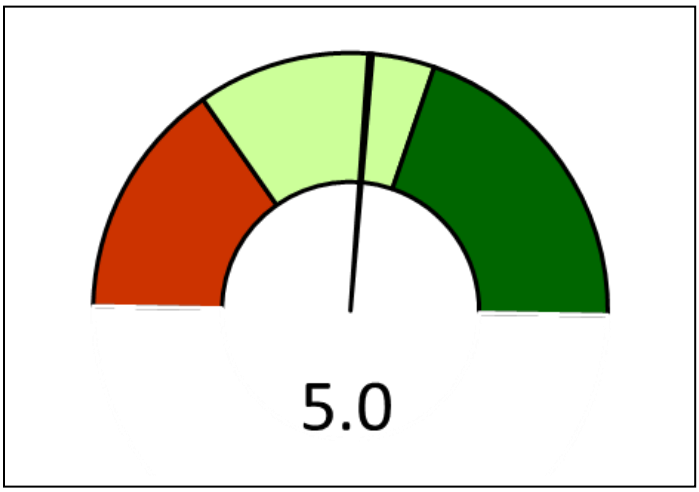
Most local churches find themselves drifting toward a programmatic posture toward discipleship. Now programs are indeed a primary means of delivering the Bible's teaching and the relational environment where its truth can be fleshed out, but programs can only be the tool, not the product we desire to produce. It's the passion to grow, the vision of spiritual vibrancy, that gives the tool its reason-for-being. Leaders who pursue greater Spirit-empowered health for their congregations know that cultivating that passion through expectation and vision bring both life to their ministries and a desire from the people to engage them.

While enlarging attendance numbers in worship services may not always signal church health, the same measures within discipleship settings can be a reasonable indicator of spiritual vitality. People commit to what they value and regular participation in discipleship practices can demonstrate their view that the experiences are profitable.

YOUR RESULTS

9 GROW: SPIRITUAL VITALITY

RATING: 5.0



Discipleship is both the most important and the most difficult work of the local church. The Acts 2 Church Survey has revealed some good success in your efforts here and some real room for continued growth. Your congregation has indicated a moderate sense of spiritual vitality in their own discipleship experience. Some of your people feel they are growing in their journey with Christ and believe their efforts to pursue their life of faith are proving fruitful. But it also appears that some are not.

As mentioned, the questions that feed this factor in our survey focus on the "want to" in someone's pursuit of spiritual growth. Your congregation shows moderate energy here. Discipleship surveys such as the REVEAL study have shown that after a handful of initial years of following Christ, people must begin regularly investing in their own spiritual growth beyond the church's ministries if they will keep growing in their walk with Christ. It seems likely that some of the people in your congregation have done so while others continue to expect their growth to be generated by the efforts of their local church. For these, only their own intentional engagement of the Bible, prayer, and other spiritual disciplines will bring the kind of results they long to see.

We recommend a concerted effort to help people initiate their own regular times of engaging God and His Word. Prayer initiatives and practices can also make a difference. Leaders should let people see their own habits in action so they can build similar approaches. Usually when people indicate a lack of vibrancy in their spiritual practices, it's an indicator that they are not actually doing such things.

Since yours is a moderate rating in this factor, it's important to compare this score with other factors such as "Serve: Personal Involvement" and "Serve/Go: Community Engagement." Sometimes people can engage the practices of spiritual growth without pursuing the deeper purpose of being mobilized toward others. Spiritual disciplines can offer meaningful experiences and great personal value, but they aren't the end in themselves. A life of impact and making disciples of others form the greater goal.

If your church demonstrates stronger ratings in these other two factors, then the personal growth efforts of your congregation need to be engaged to avoid weakening ministry efforts or burnout. If we're doing but not growing, things will reach an unhealthy place.

If the other two factors aren't as strong as this one, then mobilizing your growing people needs attention. In our individualistic western culture, it shouldn't be surprising to see people targeting spiritual growth primarily for their own benefit. Help these friends understand that Christ's kingdom is about "Him and Them." Only when we give our best to loving God and loving others will we experience God's true plan for us.

If the ratings for these other two are similar, know that when one improves, the others should as well. Growing and serving go hand-in-hand in a healthy local church, because growing equips us for serving and serving generates our own growth.

As a leadership team, it's always good to reflect on what is working and why. What are some of the ways your church has helped people find vibrancy in their spiritual lives? What additional steps could be taken? How can we better connect the dots between personal growth and Kingdom service? Be intentional in your efforts here and continue working diligently to see this vibrancy spread throughout your congregation.

10 SERVE: PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

In the healthy Spirit-empowered local church, people serve. They engage the idea that the Spirit has gifted them for service and Christ's mission requires their contribution. Over time, their efforts move beyond willingness or the desire to "help out" and begin to take more of a missional quality. Like the original band of disciples, their experiences coagulate into a life-giving identity. They simply "find themselves" in the purposes God has designed for their lives, discovering meaning and significance in His eternal work.

The acts of serving produces impact on multiple levels. First, there is the participation in the local church's ministry. In the healthy Spirit-empowered church, people engage opportunities to serve that enhance the congregation's effectiveness and reach. While the average congregation sees about one in four people step up to these opportunities, healthy Spirit-empowered churches create an expectation and enthusiasm for serving as excitement toward vision fulfillment is contagious.

But serving can never be limited to an "indoor" event in the healthy church. In fact, it's true focus centers on the "out there" arena of my life. It's my acts of service in my community and my world that most likely reveal my piece of Christ's mission. Serving on Sundays helps me discover and practice my giftings and nurtures the kingdom values that must drive me. Then the greater arena of Monday-Saturday living opens the door for the fullest expressions of God's purposes for my life.

There's also an inward benefit to serving. Frankly, it is only as I serve that I find the spiritual growth I long for. After all, you can't really be following a Servant if you're not serving—a point Jesus sought to drive home with His disciples on multiple occasions. In the healthy Spirit-empowered local church, people come to view serving and loving others as primary expressions of worship to God.

As you can imagine, the questions used to measure this factor are heavily focused to personal involvement. Some survey instruments measure what the church is doing in this arena, but we've found the greater story is how those efforts are engaged:

- I regularly give my time to serve in the ministry of my church.
- I am currently serving in at least one of the ministry opportunities at my church.
- I am currently highly involved in serving others through our church.
- I know how God has gifted me to serve my local church.
- I use my gifts to serve others.
- The Holy Spirit has called me to specific acts of service.

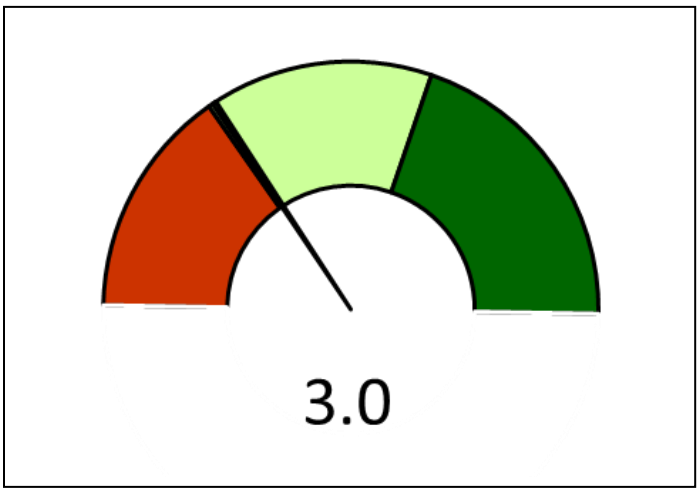
Armed with the "real story" of individual participation in serving and the mindset that currently drives it, the pastor or local church leader is now better equipped to strategize how to nurture that involvement in a stronger direction. For those who see struggles with this factor, the survey will provide more information than just whether or not people are serving. Is the issue self-doubt or a need for discerning what my gifts might be? Is the issue selfishness or an over-committed life? Perhaps a connection between this factor and "Grow: Spiritual Vitality" can help shape steps forward.

Pastors and other local church leaders must view an individual's personal involvement in serving as a missional response and not simply a needed cog for the machinery of local church ministry. Often growing ministries and the need for volunteers can begin to block our view of true Kingdom service as missional and outward-focused. If the idea people have of serving God becomes too Sunday-focused, we will not produce a truly healthy Spirit-empowered local church. Instead, we can realize that people who look to serve others all week long are more likely to bring that same mentality to their Sundays as well.

YOUR RESULTS

10 SERVE: PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

RATING: 3.0



The Acts 2 Church Survey has revealed a lower rating in the Serve: Personal Involvement factor. Your people have indicated that they are not significantly involved in what they see as serving in the ministries of the church. Since most surveys of pastors tell us that the struggle to get people to volunteer for ministry responsibility is a pastor's greatest source of frustration, our first observation is that you're not alone in this struggle. This also means that even successful small steps in this area can help you take giant strides forward toward becoming a healthier congregation.

It's important to see here is that this part of the survey measures what "I" am doing—personal involvement. It's not a perception of what others might be doing. The belief that God has a purpose for my life and I have a part in His Commission is foundational to a Spirit-empowered life. When this becomes more of the common experience of a congregation, remarkable things can happen. As stated previously, most churches demonstrate a 25-30% level of ministry participation among their congregation. Likely your ratio is within that boundary or just below, meaning your people have yet to grasp their potential for Christ's kingdom.

It's important to compare this score with other factors, especially “Grow: Spiritual Vitality.” If the rating for a Serve factor is significantly lower than the spiritual vitality that undergirds it, people may be seeking their own personal development and benefit in their ideas of relationship with Christ and missing at least half of the picture. As stated above, you can’t really be following a Servant if you’re not serving!

If both ratings are low, the problem is likely one of personal engagement in all the church is trying to achieve in the lives of its people. In such cases, evaluate your current discipleship ministries and make sure that everything you do provides both an opportunity for personal growth in Christ and an opportunity to engage acts of service. You can tackle both ends of this challenge simultaneously, and probably shouldn’t spend time or resources in any ministry area that doesn’t do both. So add serving efforts to your Sunday school or small group efforts and add teaching/learning moments to every effort of serving.

Healthy churches create an expectation of serving as normal Christian conduct and don’t use guilt as a motivator. Guilt sounds like, “Well someone needs to do this…” or “If we don’t find someone to lead this ministry, we won’t be able to continue.” Instead of these common scenarios, motivate your people to see that serving others is a great, and biblical, way to demonstrate their love for Christ. After all, loving others has always been a primary means for us to express our love for God. Since many of your people aren’t yet engaged in serving, you can establish this motivation as a key focus at the beginning of their serving experience in your local church. Guide them in seeing their efforts as acts of worship and help them sense the joy of participating in eternal purpose. When motives remain healthy, so will ministry service.

Also, be sure to paint a picture of what serving beyond the church walls might look like. How can we make a difference in our neighborhoods, workplaces, or city? Too often churches of all sizes fall into the trap of seeing ministry service through the Sunday lens alone. Help people identify community opportunities they can engage. Not only will you be developing their gifts and attitudes toward ministry, you’ll also be helping them engage the unchurched in moments of potential impact.

One familiar culprit that undermines the level of personal involvement in serving can be our approach to “recruiting” people for ministry. General appeals are seldom the best way to do this as you often get the willing, but the wrong people for the assignment. Target your recruiting with personal and direct invitation to individuals based on the gifts or abilities you’ve observed and the passions that are evident. Taking time to recruit well ends up saving you lots of time in people management efforts later.

Often, the missing piece in a church’s effort to “equip the saints” is the actual equipping. Many churches invest little time in training their volunteers. The result is that those who serve often lack the true values of the congregation and may simply be repeating methods and mindsets they’ve seen in others—whether ideal or not.

As a leadership team, reflect on each part of your mobilizing effort. How do we help people discover the best places to get involved? What recruiting methods have proven most effective for our congregation? How do we most effectively equip people for their ministry efforts? What systems of accountability and ongoing encouragement are in place? As we have seen, outward focus is the key catalyst to health for a local church. It’s also the path to spiritual health for every individual, not just the few who are sharing the load today.

11 WORSHIP: STEWARDSHIP

While the life impact of our “Worship” proved the be one of the four most influential factors in our local church’s health, the Acts 2 Survey shows that another worship element—Stewardship—plays an important role as well.

Use of time and resources demonstrate one's heart, especially in a western culture where "value" determines personal engagement. So, it makes sense that in a healthy Spirit-empowered community of believers who are committed to Christ's mission, that commitment would be demonstrated in their use of personal resources.

According to various studies, Spirit-empowered churches demonstrated higher levels of per capita giving than in other local churches. Since Christ's mission is job one for us, it makes sense that high priority would be given to missional purposes both at home and around the world.

Of course, everything begins with the mindset one holds concerning those resources. When we see ourselves as stewards rather than owners, the justification for selfish use of our resources no longer makes sense. When we know that God has entrusted us with what we have, giving to Him is a much shorter step. When we come to believe that He has blessed us so we can invest in His purposes, those steps break into a full sprint.

The questions that bring focus to this factor seem rather straightforward. They seek to uncover personal practices with resources of both time and money:

- I often give of my resources to help those in need.
- I pray for missionaries regularly.
- I give 10% of my income to the ministry of my church.
- I give money regularly to missions efforts.

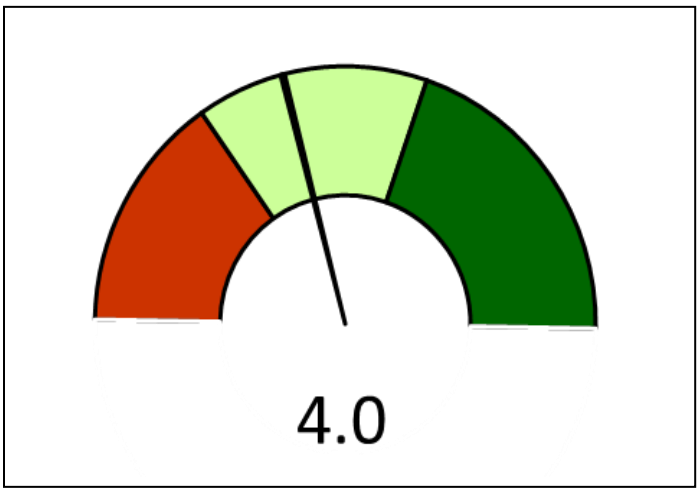
One rising reality that the pastor or leader will want to keep in focus is the emerging generation's passion to be involved with and connected to where they invest their resources. The idea of missions as "sending rather than going" is now giving way to the desire to feel like a part of the going. Writing a check can't satisfy the one who wants to connect their heart to Christ's mission. So while the action may even be the same (writing the check), the hunger to engage runs deeper.

Also, keep in mind that local expressions of compassion are rising in focus, sometimes at the expense of more distant efforts. These close-up moments more easily demonstrate who we are rather than simply what we do—a near definition of the authenticity that is deeply valued by a new generation. So, strategies that provide involvement in localized missions efforts may provide more immediate impact for church health.

YOUR RESULTS

11 WORSHIP: STEWARDSHIP

RATING: 4.0



It's good to see that your local church is demonstrating many of the behaviors of a giving church. While there's still some improvement that can occur, your moderate rating in this factor indicates that many of your people understand and practice the behaviors of biblical stewardship. The Acts 2 Church Survey shows us evidence of a commitment to giving resources and time to the ministry and missions efforts your congregation has engaged. As you continue to become a giving church, you'll see that such churches are generally characterized by strong commitment to ministry as one's money tends to follow where one's heart chooses to go.

The heart element is an important piece of this factor. Your people demonstrate some personal commitment to prayer for the missionaries they've helped launch, but this isn't yet as widespread throughout the congregation as you would like. Some of your people are vitally interested and feel a high level of connection to even the most distant efforts they're giving to, while there are likely others who have yet to embrace a lifestyle of praying and giving for more than what they can see and touch.

This moderate rating also indicates that some of your people are committed to tithing from the income God provides them. The efforts you (and perhaps others) have made to teach this biblical principle have helped these friends build an important worship habit. It would be wise to compare this result to the Grow: Spiritual Vitality factor to be certain that your congregation's faithfulness in giving is paired with meaningful spiritual growth. Those who give out of compulsion or a sense of "have to" may lack the desired vitality and become discouraged in their giving. If your rating in the Grow: Spiritual Vitality factor is markedly lower than the rating here, you'll want to be aggressive in addressing deficiencies in that area.

A moderate rating in the Worship: Stewardship factor can be bolstered by targeting a specific mindset in discipleship. To pray and to give to reach people one may never meet shows a level of personal sacrifice and commitment to Christ's mission that is to be admired. Such attitudes overcome the more common self-focused ideals of western culture. Continue challenging your people to look beyond themselves and give themselves and their resources to the greater purposes of God's plan.

While your church may also involve all ages in stewardship, including children and youth, don't underestimate the importance of these efforts to producing the system of values you'll need for a stronger future. Be careful not to judge such efforts solely on amounts given, but look for demonstrations of commitment that reveal one's true heart. Jesus identified a poor widow as the greatest giver in a much wealthier crowd because she gave all she had. Often children will make some of the greatest sacrifices, even if adults have much greater amounts to give.

Strong giving churches tend to be older and more established due to life stages that have greater resources and generations with values systems more prone toward giving. If this is true of your church, be alert to the shifting of values as today's young adults encounter your teaching on stewardship. Former generations (Builders and Baby Boomers) have been more prone to give to larger causes (like missions) while younger generations place higher value on being able to connect to the projects and efforts they're supporting. These younger adults live in a "smaller" world where seeing the missions settings firsthand or maintaining regular communication with supported missionaries and ministries is both possible and desired.

As a leadership team, reflect on the ways your local church currently encourages participation in giving. How do we teach and model important stewardship principles most effectively? How do we help people connect the dots between their giving of time and money and their understanding of worship? What steps can we take to help our people recognize the impact of their faithfulness? What missions opportunities might be within more immediate reach to encourage the involvement of younger disciples?

Consider more regular teaching of biblical stewardship and perhaps other strong efforts to cultivate a giving heart among your people. Previous efforts have brought some response, but continued growth in this area will give your church a boost in its pursuit of health.

12 SPIRIT-EMPOWERED

One of the unique elements and reasons-for-being of the Acts 2 Church Survey is to help the local church measure its congregational experience of Spirit-empowerment. More than simply raw numbers of those who've

experienced various encounters with God, this factor seeks to identify expectation, attitude, and desire, in addition to experience.

As said previously, Christ's mission is greater than us. Certainly the extraordinary life of those first disciples and the Early Church we long to emulate reveal a life that cannot be lived in our capacity alone. Miracles, healings, even the occasional raising the dead dotted their experiences, not to mention a boldness in their message that overcame heavy persecution. The life of Spirit-empowerment isn't just the life we want. It's the life we absolutely must have if we will successfully fulfill the mission we've been given.

Unfortunately for some, the idea of a Spirit-filled congregation has diminished or been diluted down to a few weakened and misunderstood experiences. For some, this confusing identity has been rejected in favor of the seemingly more stable and manageable approaches of those who neglect the power of the Holy Spirit. But, the mission hasn't shifted and its challenge hasn't come any closer to being achievable by our own abilities. The healthy Spirit-empowered local church knows its need to be just that—a Spirit-empowered church that's healthy.

The questions that reveal this factor seek to determine both experience and expectation. Frankly, the experiences of God's power are directly tied to one's recognition of the need for that power and the subsequent pursuit:

- God has done something supernatural for others through me.
- God has helped me lead someone to faith in Him.
- I have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues.
- The purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is to empower Christians to be witnesses.

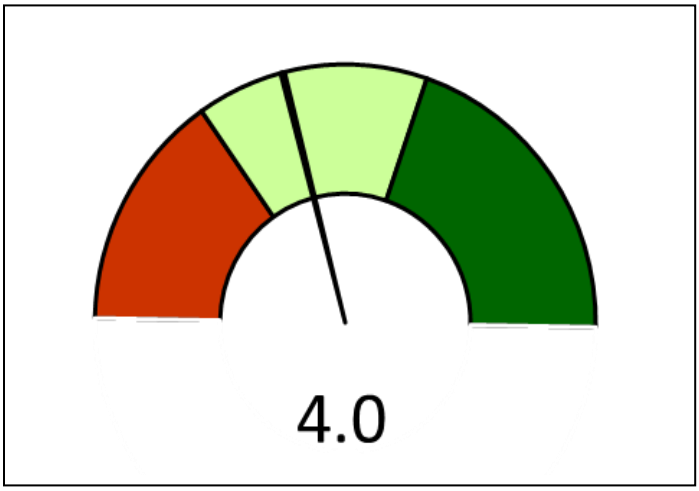
At first, some may wonder at the question concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Is this a doctrinal question, or even a litmus test for leadership qualification? The truth is neither. According to the early chapters of the Book of Acts, the experience of Spirit baptism is directly related to Christ's mission—providing the necessary empowering for fulfilling such an assignment. Jesus prioritized this experience such that one shouldn't attempt the mission without it (Acts 1:5) and we can certainly see a difference in the disciples (especially Simon Peter) after this encounter with God.

Pastors and local church leaders that seek greater health for their congregation must nurture an awareness that God's purposes for our individual lives exceed our abilities. We simply can't do his work without His strong help. That awareness provides the healthiest reasons for pursuing God's presence and power. Then we must willingly receive and embrace the manner in which God delivers on His promise. As we do, the health of our Spirit-empowered local church will begin to rise.

YOUR RESULTS

12 SPIRIT EMPOWERED

RATING: 4.0



The Acts 2 Church Survey has shown a moderate rating in the Spirit-empowered factor. Measuring such a factor is one of the unique targets of this assessment tool. Though other similar tools don't address this area of the local church, true Spirit-empowered church health can hardly be achieved without measuring your congregation's personal experience of the Holy Spirit.

It seems evident that many in your congregation recognize the need for the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the purposes God has for their lives and several have experienced this empowering. The awareness of need is the best possible motivation for pursuing the Spirit's power in one's life. It's this kind of hunger that will drive your congregation to fulfill Christ's mission.

A moderate rating means that while your church demonstrates some focus in this factor, there are many who have yet to engage such moments with God. Actually, your score offers motivation to increase such focus. The most attractive component of the Early Church to all of us who long to be like them is the life-changing and world-changing power they demonstrated as they chased God's full purpose. Your survey result shows that some of your congregation is aligning itself toward that same passion, while others need to be challenged in this area.

Beware of ministry models and modern ideas that could draw your focus in other directions. Being a Spirit-empowered local church certainly requires the presence of the Holy Spirit, but it also requires a leadership commitment to maintain that focus. Churches that drift from their dependence on the Holy Spirit rarely do so overnight. Instead, a slow shift in focus has led many congregations to diminished passion for God's supernatural work among them.

The teaching ministries of your church can and should be a key catalyst for presenting Spirit baptism as God's plan for every believer. Keep in mind that many churches are experiencing a decline in participation in some of their teaching settings, and instead have seen larger growth in their worship settings. Be sure the pursuit of God's Spirit is presented clearly in your worship settings so those who attend nothing else will be exposed to such teaching.

Also, make sure that your Sunday school classes, small groups, or other teaching environments use curriculum and study materials that promote Spirit-empowered experience. Teaching and key leadership roles should require such experience as well. Don't expect Spirit-empowered experience to remain a priority in your church if you're not intentional in demonstrating that priority in everything you do.

As a leadership team, reflect on the ways your local church encourages the pursuit of the Holy Spirit. How do we teach and model this hunger most effectively? When do we provide opportunity for seeking the power of the Holy Spirit and how do we encourage people to engage those opportunities? What steps can we take to better communicate each individual's need for the Spirit's power? Is our focus in spiritual things aiming at Christ's mission or do some of our people desire experiences of God's power more for their self-benefit? There are many questions to keep asking ourselves and the healthy Spirit-empowered local church will keep asking them.

DOCTRINE

The Acts 2 Survey is not intended to provide an in-depth view of the doctrinal beliefs of your congregation, but we did include some doctrinal questions to provide you with a few insights into what your people believe. Many of these questions aim specifically at the values system necessary to support the pursuit of Christ's mission. For example, when individuals respond to statements like *The miracle stories in the Bible demonstrate God's supernatural intervention into people's lives,* we can discover if your people believe in God's supernatural activity. If they don't, then we've discovered a core challenge to the idea of God supernaturally using them.

In order to provide the most complete information possible, we are providing you with the data for each of the doctrine questions individually. That way you can identify specific issues where your congregation seems to hold a strong biblical position, and those that might be a bit weaker. These are the questions we asked:

- The Bible has the right to command us in what we believe and do.
- The miracle stories in the Bible demonstrate God's supernatural intervention into people's lives.
- In the future, there will be a new heaven and a new earth.
- Miraculous healing from sickness is possible through prayer.
- Moments like the supernatural events described in the Bible still occur today.
- God is the Creator of the Universe.
- Jesus will literally return to earth again.
- At some point, the Church will be suddenly taken from this earth in an event many call "the Rapture."
- One day, all those who have died will be physically resurrected to face judgment.
- Every person (except Jesus Christ) is a sinner and needs a Savior.
- God wants every believer to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- Only people who believe in Jesus Christ will go to Heaven.

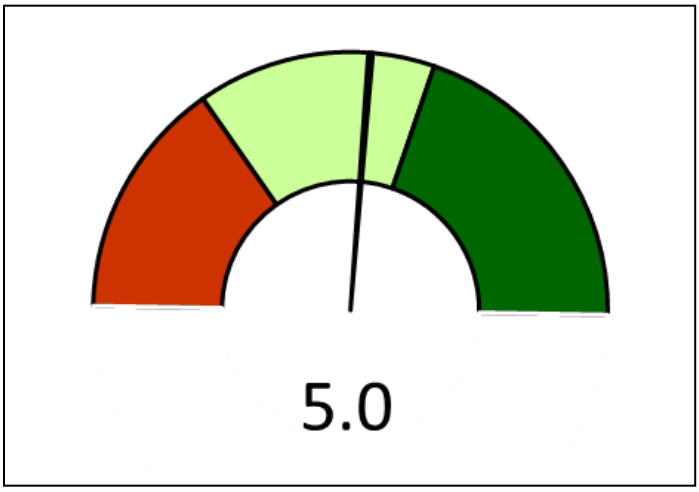
We have also provided you with an overall stanine ranking in the survey area of "Doctrine," similar to what you've seen with the 12 Spirit-empowered church health factors. This score will allow you to see how your congregation's overall doctrinal understanding compares with other local churches pursuing Spirit-empowered health.

Our recommendation is to view this information as a major part of your foundational work in church health. Ultimately, people must believe truth before they can be expected to put it into practice consistently and on their own.

YOUR RESULTS

13 DOCTRINE

RATING: 5.0



When we consider together the various doctrine questions of the Acts 2 Church Survey, your congregation moderately affirms that their personal beliefs coincide with these statements. Such a result can be influenced by several possible factors:

1. The doctrinally-focused teaching ministries of your church play a key role in the level of your congregation's doctrinal affirmation. Greater emphasis may need to be given to doctrinal matters and the church's stance on key social issues.
2. The age of your congregation may be a factor as older congregants seem more likely to align with the church's views and Scriptural interpretations. Conversely, younger congregants who have been raised in a more secular society often lack the same connection to the views long-held and taught by the church, whether in Scriptural authority or social issues.
3. The length of time people have been a part of your congregation can also be a factor. In churches where most of us have been here a while, we are far more likely to know and align ourselves with the church's teaching. Conversely, congregations dominated by newer attenders are less likely to achieve such alignment.

Clear teaching is the church's most evident path toward maintaining and improving the doctrinal understanding of its people. For many churches, the settings for such teaching are narrowing (fewer services and meeting times, less or more brief teaching segments) giving less opportunity to communicate long-held truths.

Be aware that younger adults are slower to embrace doctrinal ideas than were those of their parent's generation. Today's young adults typically don't want to be told what to think and they don't accept "easy" answers to their life challenges. Instead, they want to be loved and included while they engage their own search for such things. Those who love them in that journey then earn the right to influence the conclusions they reach.

Don't fall into the trap of thinking that less doctrinal emphasis will bring healthy church growth. It won't. The growth it may bring will ultimately melt when the congregation's lack of shared values are revealed in conflict. Churches that fail to speak clearly to one's beliefs seldom can achieve enduring missional effectiveness.

YOUR RESULTS

13 DOCTRINE

Below you will find your congregation's responses to each of the twelve doctrine questions. Their responses used the following scale:

5.0 – Strongly Agree
4.0 – Agree
3.0 – Neither Agree nor Disagree
2.0 – Disagree
1.0 – Strongly Disagree

With each of these questions, we show you the average score of your congregation and you can compare it the overall average score of those who have taken the Acts 2 Survey.

Question	Church Score *(out of possible 5.0)*	Overall Score *(out of possible 5.0)*
The Bible has the right to command us in what we believe and do.	4.80	4.68
The miracle stories in the Bible demonstrate God's supernatural intervention into people's lives.	4.86	4.82
In the future, there will be a new heaven and a new earth.	4.77	4.68
Miraculous healing from sickness is possible through prayer.	4.86	4.85
Moments like the supernatural events described in the Bible still occur today.	4.63	4.64
God is the Creator of the Universe.	4.96	4.93
Jesus will literally return to earth again.	4.83	4.82
At some point, the Church will be suddenly taken from this earth in an event many call "the Rapture."	4.69	4.76
One day, all those who have died will be physically resurrected to face judgment.	4.67	4.57
Every person (except Jesus Christ) is a sinner and needs a Savior.	4.94	4.88
God wants every believer to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.	4.78	4.75
Only people who believe in Jesus Christ will go to Heaven.	4.64	4.69

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics can certainly impact a survey's results. When someone tells you something about your congregation, it's only natural to wonder, "*Who did you ask?"* That question then leaves us, the surveyors, wondering, "*Did we ask the right people?"*

The following paragraphs will provide you with brief summaries of this information.

- Age
- Gender
- Years attending this church
- Race
- First language
- Involvement level at this church

While we desire a fair cross-section of your church to participate in the survey, in order to gain a complete picture, we recognize that levels of participation among various groups will…vary. In many churches, those most involved in the church will be more likely to participate often yielding scores that might be a bit brighter than reality. Conversely, if a high percentage of a congregation's less active people respond, the resulting scores could be a bit lower than a more involved group would provide, especially if the number of respondents was below the minimum target (see below). This second scenario is the less likely of the two, but it underscores the challenge of properly interpreting survey results.

Here's the demographic information provided by those who participated:

QUESTION: What is your sex?

Male	65
Female	104
TOTAL	169

QUESTION: What is your age?

Number of participants	169
Youngest participant	18
Median (middle person)	58
Oldest participant	85
Range	67
Mean (average)	54.6

QUESTION: What is your race?

Other (please specify)	4
African American	2
Asian	8
Hispanic	2
Native American	1
Pacific Islander	0
White/Caucasian	151
TOTAL	168

QUESTION: What is your first language?

Other (please specify)	1
English	163
American Sign Language	0
Arabic	0
French	0
German	0
Spanish	0
Tagalog	2
Tamil	3
TOTAL	169

QUESTION: What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Less than high school degree	1
High school graduate *(high school diploma or equivalent including GED)*	26
Some college but no degree	38
Associate degree in college (2-year)	25
Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)	55
Master's degree	22
Doctoral degree	2
Professional degree (JD, MD	0
TOTAL	169

QUESTION: How long have you attended your current church?

Less than one month	0
1-6 months	11
7-12 months	4
1-3 years	31
4-6 years	16
7-10 years	18
Over 10 years	89
TOTAL	169

QUESTION: Which of the following categories best describes your current involvement at you current church?

Other (please specify)	5
Attend occasionally	9
Attend regularly (not in ministry leadership)	102
Involved in ministry leadership	20
Sunday school teacher or Small group leader	20
Church Board Member	7
Church Employee (Support Staff)	6
TOTAL	169

CHURCH HEALTH METRICS

Another group of measures that we've incorporated into the Acts 2 Church Survey are six metrics that provide indicators of church health. Church health is certainly more than a matter of numbers or "nickels and noses" kinds of measures. It's almost as foolhardy to assume that the biggest churches are the healthiest as it is to assume that the biggest people are the healthiest.

But numbers can help us understand church health, especially when we combine them into metric-type measures that reveal our effectiveness. So, the Acts 2 Survey asked the pastor to provide annual data of the average Sunday worship attendance, total conversions, total water baptisms, total Spirit baptisms, and total Volunteers for the previous three years. These five data elements then produce the following six church health metrics:

1. MISSIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: the AC ratio

The **AC** measures our annual average worship attendance against the number of conversions or salvation decisions our efforts produce. This ratio demonstrates the local church's missional effectiveness. Rather than measuring attendance alone, the **AC** reveals the degree to which our efforts to connect with people and lead them to faith in Christ are being effective by calculating *how many of us it takes to produce a new believer each year*. In a healthy church, the **AC** will likely be 5.0 or lower. '

YOUR RATING: 9.7

When comparing your rating to the **AC** target of 5.0 consider the following:

- If you're **AC** rating is higher than 5.0, you'll want to look for ways to increase your congregation's ability to connect with new, and preferably unchurched, people. An **AC** above 10.0 means you're church is not reaching enough people to maintain its current level of attendance. Plateau and decline are likely, if they haven't already begun
- If you're **AC** rating is lower than 5.0, congratulations! Your congregation is connecting with and leading people to Christ at a very healthy rate. However, to progress effectively in the healthiest manner, be sure your system for counting conversions opens the way for discipleship follow-up. Because our mission is to make disciples, it's best to count a conversion only when you have the individual's name and/or contact information or some other means to follow up personally with that individual.

2. ASSIMILATION: the CW ratio

The **CW** identifies the salvation decisions solidified by the follow-up act of water baptism by taking the total number of conversions for the year and comparing that number with the water baptisms reported that same year. A **CW** of 1.0 would mean that we baptized the same number of people as made conversion decisions. The **CW** can be used to help us measure the health of our assimilation efforts. A low (better) **CW** indicates that the church is *maintaining connection to its converts* long enough to guide them toward the choice to be baptized. A high **CW** indicates that we aren't baptizing a good percentage of our converts. In a healthy church the **CW** will likely be 3.0 or lower.

YOUR RATING: 4.0

When comparing your rating to the **CW** target of 3.0 consider the following:

- If you're **CW** rating is higher than 3.0, you'll want to look for more effective ways of guiding new believers toward water baptism. Perhaps there's a need to offer more opportunities or more teaching concerning the importance of this act of obedience. Of course, if you're including people in your reported conversions that you are unable to contact directly, communicating this important discipleship step will be more difficult.
- If you're **CW** rating is lower than 3.0, congratulations! Your congregation is engaging and connecting with new believers in a consistent way and helping them find their way to the important step of water baptism. Clearly, water baptism is a priority, especially if your **AC** score (see above) is also healthy. Sometimes churches with a healthy **CW** score succeed in baptizing a high percentage of their converts because they don't report many conversions. Be sure this isn't the reason for your healthy **CW** score.

3. GROWTH: the AW ratio

The **AW** measures our average worship attendance against the number of water baptisms in that same year. Since most of our churches require new members to be converted and baptized, this ratio can help us see our potential for membership growth. Yes, transfer growth can give us new members and not positively affect this ratio, but the **AW** demonstrates *a local church's actual contribution to kingdom growth*. In a healthy church, the **AW** will likely be 15.0 or lower, since the **AW** combines the previous two metrics.

YOUR RATING: 38.8

When comparing your rating to the **AW** target of 15.0 consider the following:

- If you're **AW** rating is higher than 15.0, you'll need to take stronger steps in your efforts to connect with new people. An **AW** rating above 20.0 may mean there aren't enough people entering your church to compensate for the number that are leaving through the kind of transitions that are normal to church life. As stated above, the AW reveals the number of baptized new converts your church is "producing." This is your healthiest growth so if this number is too high, it means that it's requiring too many of us to produce one such individual each year.
- If you're **AW** rating is lower than 15.0, that's very good news! Your congregation is seeing new converts and water baptisms at a rate that should be exceeding members in normal transition, thus allowing your church to grow. Of course, reaching people and celebrating their baptism are some of the healthiest and most wonderful moments in the life of a local church as well. These are the joyous rewards of your congregation's outward focus and will make a great difference in both the real and the perceived health of your church.

4. DISCIPLESHIP & MOBILIZATION: the CS ratio

A **CS** ratio compares conversions with Spirit baptisms and *can help us measure both discipleship effectiveness and our efforts to mobilize our Spirit-filled saints*. It would seem that a healthy **CS** should be 4.0 or less since that would mean ¼ of our converts are being baptized in the Holy Spirit. At the same time, a **CS** below 3.0 would indicate that we are struggling to mobilize the Spirit-filled people in our church. So for a healthy Spirit-empowered church, a healthy **CS** would likely fall between 3.0 and 4.0. If our numbers are outside those parameters, we can identify whether we have a discipleship problem (>4.0) or a mobilization problem (<3.0).

YOUR RATING: 4.4

When comparing your rating to the **CS** target of between 3.0 and 4.0 consider the following:

- If you're **CS** rating is higher than 4.0, you'll need to look for ways to increase your congregation's hunger for and pursuit of Spirit baptism. As stated, this is a discipleship issue as Spirit baptism is intended for every believer. If the reported conversions too far exceed our Spirit baptisms, it means many of our recent converts (and others) aren't receiving this essential empowering for the work God has for them to do. As we saw with the **CW** rating, including people in your reported conversions that you are unable to contact directly makes guiding them to this subsequent experience more difficult.
- If you're **CS** rating is lower than 3.0, then the number of Spirit baptisms occurring in your congregation is surprisingly close to the number of conversions. The important question is why. Since Spirit baptism is given to empower us for Christ's mission, the more people we see Spirit-baptized, the more people we should be reaching with the Gospel. If people are experiencing Spirit baptism but not engaging Christ's mission, then we have a mobilization problem. Review all you've seen in this survey about outward focus—it's the key catalyst to greater church health. Look for ways to aim your Spirit-empowered congregation into the community around you and beyond. This is the "why" of their empowering experience.
- If your **CS** rating lands between 3.0 and 4.0, that's good news! Such a rating indicates that there's good balance between your discipleship efforts and the need to mobilize those empowered by the Spirit. Continue strengthening your emphasis on Spirit baptism and encouraging your people as they engage the community around you. You're local church is on a good path and every step they take will make your church even stronger.

5. REPRODUCTION: the AS ratio

As we did with water baptism, we can combine average worship attendance and Spirit baptism numbers in an **AS** ratio. By measuring average worship attendance against Spirit baptism, we can measure the reproduction of Spirit-filled disciples taking place in the congregation. Our collective *efforts to continue pursuing Christ's worldwide harvest in the future* hinge on the continued reproduction of Spirit-filled believers. In a healthy, Spirit-empowered church, the **AS** ratio will likely fall between 15.0 and 20.0. (Note: The **AS** ratio combines the healthy **AC** ratio of 5.0 and healthy **CS** ratio between 3.0 and 4.0.)

YOUR RATING: 43.1

- If you're **AS** rating is higher than 20.0, you should already know why. Since the **AS** combines rates of reported conversions and Spirit baptisms, an **AS** that's too high means one or both of these are too high as well. Since this metric shows how we're producing disciples who can fully engage the mission, our efforts here are a great priority.
- If you're **AS** rating is lower than 15.0, then, again, you should know why. Likely this is resulting from a very low **AC** rating or the need to better mobilize those receiving Spirit-baptism. An **AS** rating that's too low means there's so much more growth that could be happening in our church. When we get our Spirit-baptized people affecting their communities as Christ intends, greater things will begin to occur. So look closely at this measure and determine what needs your close attention.
- If your **AS** rating lands between 15.0 and 20.0, that should be good news. Such a rating usually indicates that you're reaching people with the Gospel at a healthy rate and that there's good balance between your discipleship efforts and the need to mobilize those empowered by the Spirit. Of course, a good rating could also result if one of these ratings (the **AC** or **CS**) is too high and the other too low, since we

combine them for the **AS** rating. Verify that this isn't the case before you consider this rating to be healthy. If, instead, this good rating comes from strong **AC** and **CS** ratings, then you're in a great place to keep producing Spirit-empowered disciples.

6. MINISTRY INVOLVEMENT: the MI percentage

The "Ministry Involvement" or the **MI** percentage is calculated by comparing average worship attendance and the number of unpaid volunteers that are regularly serving in our congregation. In a survey of more than 10,000 churches, the average **MI** percentage was around 28%. We would expect that for a healthy church, the **MI** percentage will likely be at least 30%, but there are other factors to be considered that affect this percentage. So, at this point let's target 30%, but the after you've monitored this metric for a while, you'll be able to set a target that seems to indicate greater health for your congregation.

That same survey (mentioned above) showed that in growing churches, the **MI** percentage tended to be lower than in plateaued and declining churches. We can assume this would occur when we're connecting with new people far more rapidly than we can connect them to ministry. This unique data could also indicate that the plateaued and declining church may actually have a higher percentage of people engaged in ministry, but their efforts aren't focused outward enough to bring the expected and desired growth.

YOUR PERCENTAGE: 42.5%

When comparing your rating to the **MI** percentage to the current target of at least 30%, consider the following:

- If you're **MI** percentage is greater than 30%, that should be good news! This indicates that nearly a third or more of your people have already engaged ministry involvement. Of course, we'd love to see everyone involved in ministry, but learning to serve is a part of the discipleship journey. There will always be those who engage the church at a consumer level, more focused on receiving than giving. That's just the nature of our ministry. We minister to needs both among those in the congregation and those throughout our communities. So when you set a goal for this percentage, keep in mind that the more people who get involved, the more people you'll be able to reach. If your **MI** percentage rises too high, it may indicate that while people are getting involved, the involvement they've engaged isn't outward focused in a way that will produce growth.
- If you're **MI** percentage is lower than 30%, look for effective ways to engage your congregation in ministry involvement. Revisit the Serve factors of the Acts 2 Church Survey and follow the recommendations you find there for greater church health. But a low **MI** percentage may not indicate things are unhealthy. If your ministry efforts are significantly outward focused, your church may be growing more rapidly than your ability to get people started in serving. A low MI coupled with growth should be very motivating since the more people we can get involved, the more people we'll likely be able to reach.

Our intent isn't to make this metric too complicated. We know that key steps in discipleship occur only when people are loving and serving others. That IS the necessary path for every individual in your congregation.

Thank you for participating in…

The Acts 2 Church Survey