

25 Key Questions

Sometimes questions are more important than answers. The following is a collection of questions that healthy, missional churches tend to ask themselves on a regular basis. Our desire is that every Covenant church become a healthy, missional church. By "healthy" we mean *pursing Christ*. By "missional" we mean *pursing Christ's priorities in the world*.

These questions are meant to start conversations, not wars. It is strongly recommended that the church develops a behavioral covenant prior to asking these questions. Churches need to be equipped on how to have conversations that are civil, compassionate and Christ honoring. For more on a behavioral covenant, please read *Behavioral Covenants in Congregations*, by Gil Rendle (published by Alban Institute).

The first three questions are applications of Jesus' parable on the talents (Matthew 25:14-30).

1. How are we becoming a church that God can entrust with even more?
2. How do we use what Jesus has given us right now and multiply it for the glory of God and for the good of our neighbor?
3. In what ways have we played it safe?
4. How do we view and handle conflict that will inevitably arise due to various "differences" we bring to the table? What are the unwritten rules in our church and what happens to the people who defy conventionality for the sake of mission?
5. What needs to die in order for us to live? What programs or ideas were effective in the past but are now limiting the health and growth of our congregation?
6. Do we see the church as a safe haven from change or as a change agent in the world?
7. Does our church view the changing culture as a problem to be solved or as an opportunity to be had?
8. How has the community around our church changed in the last five years and how have we changed or not changed with it? What must we learn and unlearn to be effective missionaries in our own culture?
9. If our church ceased to exist, would the surrounding community weep? Would anyone even notice? Would any one even care?
10. What is it about our experience with Jesus that our surrounding community can not live without?
11. Where is the Lord in all of this? What Biblical story most closely describes what is happening in our church right now?
12. What are the critical areas in which our church can be more dependent on the Spirit of God? As a church, how do we continually challenge ourselves to move forward into God's future?
13. Are the leaders in our church mostly catalyzers or stabilizers or a good mixture of both?
14. What is the difference between "doing" church and "being" church?
15. What is the level of spiritual hunger and thirst in our church?
16. What sins does our church need to repent of?

17. What are the normal and natural ways people come to Christ, grow in Christ and discover and deploy their spiritual gifts?
18. Do I believe God's best blessings are before us or behind us?
19. Do I trust what my friends would experience at a worship service? Do I feel confident inviting my friends to church?
20. Do the people believe in the leaders and do the leaders believe in the people?
21. What are the radical living giving stories from our history – and how can we build on the past without getting stuck in the past?
22. When is the last time someone gave their life to Christ through the ministry of our church? Am I developing any relationships with people who are far from God?
23. When is the last time someone said, "We've never done it that way before?"
24. Why are new programs not the answer?
25. What is the level of our congregational harmony and transparency to even ask and answer these kinds of questions in a truthful and gracious manner?

BONUS QUESTION:

Are we fully aware of our congregation's attendance trends over the last ten years? What are the implications of these trends for how we do ministry in the future? What will happen if we don't change?