

HABITS OF HEALTHY CHURCHES

Discussion Guide





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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marcus is a follower of Jesus, husband, and father whose personal mission is to help people experience transformation through Jesus Christ. Marcus' professional mission is to help leaders and churches experience transformative health.

Rev. Dr. Marcus J. Carlson is an ordained pastor, professor, consultant, author, speaker, spiritual director, and business owner. His primary work is leading Preparing for Amazement Ministries whose mission is to build and revitalize the global church as they empower and equip churches and leaders to create lasting and transformational health.

Marcus has served in a variety of roles in the church and in the community.

Dr. Marcus J. Carlson (revdrorange.com) is a non-profit leader, social scientist, speaker, pastor, professor, spiritual director, writer, and consultant. He has brought transformation to the communities he has served around the world for the past 24 years.



Habits of Healthy Churches:

7 Practices to Transform Your
Church Culture



Marcus J. Carlson

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

1. Recommended Group Size:

This discussion guide is designed for groups ranging from **small study groups to larger church gatherings**. Consider forming **groups of 5-15 participants** to facilitate meaningful discussions and interactions.

2. Timeline for Leaders:

Leaders are encouraged to allocate **approximately 1-2 sessions per chapter** for thorough discussion and reflection. However, feel free to adjust the timeline based on the depth of conversations and the availability of group members.

3. Recommended Number of Chapters to Work Through Together:

Given the depth of content in each chapter, it is recommended to **cover 1 chapter per session** to allow for in-depth exploration and reflection. However, **leaders can adapt the pace based on the group's preferences and availability**.

4. Participant Recommendations:

Participants are encouraged to **actively engage in discussions by sharing their perspectives, experiences, and insights** related to the questions provided in each chapter.

Consider **setting personal goals or intentions for each session** to maximize learning and growth.

Reflect on key takeaways from each chapter and **explore practical ways to apply them** within the context of your church community.

Collaborate with other group members to support and encourage each other throughout the discussion process.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

5. Additional Resources:

Supplemental materials such as **relevant scriptures, news articles, or stories may enhance the depth of discussions** and provide additional insights into the topics covered in each chapter.

6. Flexibility and Adaptation:

Recognize that **each group is unique**, so it's important to **adapt the discussion guide to suit the specific dynamics** and needs of your group.

Encourage open dialogue and flexibility in exploring topics that resonate most with the group members.

7. Feedback and Evaluation:

Leaders and participants are encouraged to **provide feedback on the effectiveness of the discussion guide**, including suggestions for improvement or additional topics to explore.

Regularly evaluate the impact of the discussions on individual growth and the overall health of the church community.

8. Support and Assistance:

Leaders should be available to provide support, guidance, and clarification as needed throughout the discussion sessions.

Encourage participants to reach out for additional assistance or resources if they encounter challenges or have questions related to the content.

9. Conclusion:

Embrace the journey of exploring the habits of healthy churches as a means of fostering growth, unity, and transformation within your church community. Remember that **the ultimate goal is not just to discuss these habits but to embody them in our daily lives and interactions within the church family.**

SUGGESTED

SCHEDULES

Week	Session
One	Intro
Two	Habit 1
Three	Habit 2
Four	Habit 3
Five	Habit 4
Six	Habit 5
Seven	Habit 6
Eight	Habit 7

Week	Chapter
One	1,2,3
Two	4,5
Three	6
Four	7,8
Five	9,10
Six	11,12
Seven	13,14
Eight	15

1

HEALTH TRUMPS ALL

How would you define culture?

How would you describe a healthy church culture?

How do we practically pay attention to church culture with intentionality?

A WORD ABOUT DISCIPLESHIP

What are markers of healthy churches?

What are realistic expectations as a healthy way of life together as a church family?

2

3

TIME TO GET UPSTREAM

What hinders us from being proactive towards sustaining healthy culture?

What questions can help us begin reflecting on the current state of our church family's culture?

HABITS OF HEALTHY CHURCHES

What is your reaction to the quote, "We become what we repeatedly do."? (Sean Covey p. 67)

Considering the spectrum of healthy church culture, which of the 10 signs of toxicity listed on page 68 do we identify with?

How would you rate the health of our church family's culture at this time?

4

5

HABIT 1: PRAY

In what ways are we a praying church?

In what ways is prayer an opportunity for growth in our church family?

HABIT 2: DO CONFLICT WELL

What are your personal tendencies when conflict arises?

What new insights about conflict have you gained?

How does the way we engage in conflict either devalue or show value to people and relationships?

6

HABIT 3: HEALTHY DECISION MAKING

7

How have you seen churches be reactionary?

Do you tend to resist change or are you drawn to it?

How can we practically go about arriving at a clear why in decisions to ease anxiety around change?

HABIT 4: OUTWARD FOCUSED

How do we know as a church whether we are focusing more on ourselves or on those outside the church?

What are the marks of Christian maturity?

8

HABIT 5: VALUE PROCESS

9

What character virtues must we adopt individually and collectively to be able to value process over results?

What beauty and transformation can be found in valuing the journey of process over an end goal?

HABIT 6: FOCUS ON ADOPTION

What is the difference between adoption and assimilation?

What does assimilation feel like to an individual or group? What does adoption feel like to an individual or group?

How open are you to feedback on the nature of our church family's culture on the spectrum toward adoption or assimilation?

10

11

HABIT 7: SHARE SPACE & RESOURCES

What hinders us from sharing space and things?

How can we practically shift away from being territorial?

HOPE ABOUND (ANYONE CAN DO HEALTH)

How would you rate our church family's culture on each of the habits of healthy churches?

What are our strengths?

What are our greatest opportunities for growth?

12

A WORD ABOUT REVITALIZATION

13

In what ways does our church family reflect the Acts church in our context

In what ways do we need to experience new life and transformation?

A WORD ABOUT BELONGING

In what ways have you experienced belonging?

How can our church family be better at creating safe spaces of belonging?

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WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

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What patterns of unhealth are evident in our church family's culture?

Who is responsible for the health of our church family's culture?

What is my (our) next step?

HABITS



CONTACT US



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MORE RESOURCES



[amazed15.org](https://www.amazed15.org)



Habits of Healthy Churches Sermon Series



Habits of Healthy Churches blog



[Revdorange.com](https://www.revdorange.com)



<https://www.tablegroup.com/product/the-advantage/>

Voices in the Wilderness Podcast



TAKE NOTES