

Habits of Healthy Churches

Summaries for Newsletters/Bulletins

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Habit 1: Healthy Churches are Praying Churches

Prayer is the foundation of a thriving church. While it may seem obvious, many churches struggle to make prayer a true priority. A healthy church doesn't just have prayer ministries or occasional moments of prayer—it fosters a culture where prayer is woven into everything it does.

A praying church empowers and celebrates its prayer warriors—those deeply committed to a life of prayer. It also emphasizes prayer in worship, leadership, and daily life, ensuring that prayer is not just a routine but a vital connection with God. Seasons of prayer, such as a dedicated week or 40 days of focused prayer, help unite the church and refocus its mission. When we pray, we invite God's wisdom into our lives and our church.

Ultimately, we pray for what we love, and we love what we pray for. If we truly love our church, prayer must be at the center of its life. Healthy churches are praying churches—seeking God's will in all they do.

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Habit 1: Healthy Churches do Conflict Well

Conflict kills more churches than anything else, yet it does not have to be so destructive. Jesus knew we'd face conflict in the church, which is why He gave us a clear, step-by-step process in Matthew 18:15-20. If we actually followed His instructions, most church conflicts would be resolved before they ever had a chance to grow toxic.

The first step is simple: go directly to the person you have an issue with. No gossip, no triangulation—just an honest conversation. If that doesn't work, bring in a third party to help. If the issue still isn't resolved, involve church leadership. The goal isn't to pick sides or declare winners; it's to restore relationships, because the church is about people, not power struggles.

Jesus wasn't afraid of conflict—He flipped tables in the temple and called out hypocrisy. Yet, His approach was always rooted in love and redemption. Healthy churches don't avoid conflict; they handle it well. If we want to be imitators of Christ, we need to do the same.

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Habit 3: Healthy Churches Make Decisions in a Healthy Way

Churches are notorious for making decisions reactively rather than intentionally. Too often, policies and practices emerge as knee-jerk reactions to past situations instead of thoughtful, mission-driven choices. It's a common pattern: an emotional decision gets made, logic is backfilled, and Scripture is cherry-picked to justify it. But healthy churches don't function this way.

Churches are not businesses, nor are they democracies. While we can apply useful principles from both, the church is first and foremost the body of Christ—a living, breathing organism shaped by the Gospel. Decision-making should reflect this reality. That means prioritizing mission over method, people over policies, and intentionality over reaction.

At the heart of it all is the "why." When churches make decisions with a clear sense of purpose—rooted in the Gospel, guided by the Holy Spirit, and aligned with their mission—healthy outcomes follow. Healthy churches make decisions in a healthy way. That's not just good leadership; it's faithfulness.

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Habit 4: Healthy Churches Focus more on those Outside the church than those Inside the church

In today's culture, it's easy to approach church with a consumer mindset—thinking about what we get rather than what we give. But the church isn't a spiritual fast-food restaurant where we can "have it our way." Instead, it exists to serve others, particularly those outside its walls. The church is the only institution in the history of the world that exists primarily for those outside of it.

Jesus modeled this outward focus throughout His ministry, prioritizing those who didn't yet know Him. Likewise, healthy churches devote most of their energy and resources to reaching new people while still caring for those within. This isn't about ignoring the needs of the congregation; rather, it's about remembering that our faith calls us to sacrifice, serve, and put others first.

If we want our churches to thrive for future generations, we must be willing to embrace change and set aside personal preferences. The church is not about us—it's about Jesus and His mission. A healthy church remembers that and lives out the great commission every day.

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Habit 5: Healthy Churches value Process

In a culture obsessed with results, it's easy to overlook the importance of process. But as we've seen in many churches, when character, integrity, and biblical principles are sacrificed for success, the consequences can be devastating. Healthy churches understand that process matters. It allows us to slow down, reflect, and listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit rather than reacting impulsively or making decisions based on convenience.

Unfortunately, churches often struggle with process—either overcomplicating minor issues or completely avoiding difficult conversations. Whether it's church governance, staff hiring, or conflict resolution, a clear, healthy process protects the church, fosters wisdom, and ensures we stay mission-focused rather than personality-driven. Jesus himself modeled thoughtful, intentional decision-making, and we should follow His example.

When churches embrace process, they gain clarity, accountability, and the ability to make Spirit-led decisions. It isn't about bureaucracy or control; it's about stewarding God's church with wisdom and care. Let's be a church that values process—one that seeks to honor God not just in our outcomes but in how we get there.

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Habit 6: Healthy Churches Choose Adoption over Assimilation

Many churches unknowingly operate under a model of assimilation—welcoming people only if they first believe, behave, and conform to a certain way of thinking. While this approach may seem harmless, it often becomes exclusionary, focusing on modifying behavior rather than extending grace. Assimilation says, "Come and be like us," but Jesus' message is different.

Healthy churches embrace an adoption mindset. Adoption says, "You belong first, just as you are." It's an approach rooted in love, where people are welcomed into the family of faith not because they fit a mold, but because they are beloved children of God. Faith grows in the context of belonging, and it is the Holy Spirit—not us—who transforms hearts and lives.

Jesus modeled adoption in His ministry, inviting people to follow Him before they had everything figured out. Baptism itself is a sign of this adoption, reminding us that our identity is first and foremost as God's

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beloved children. Healthy churches prioritize belonging, trusting that belief and transformation will follow in God's time.

As a church, let's be intentional about reflecting the Gospel's message of adoption, embracing others as they are, and allowing God's grace to do the rest.

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Habit 7: Healthy Churches are not Territorial

One of the biggest challenges churches face is territorialism—the tendency for people, groups, or ministries to claim ownership over spaces, furniture, or even small resources. This behavior, while often well-intentioned, can create unnecessary conflicts, distract from the mission, and divide the church community.

While good stewardship is essential, territorialism is not the same thing. It can lead to competition, resentment, and even idolatry—where people become more attached to objects or traditions than to God's work. Churches are meant to be places of unity and shared purpose, not battlegrounds over mini-fridges, clocks, or plaques.

At the heart of a healthy church is the understanding that everything we have belongs to God. Instead of guarding possessions with a mindset of scarcity, we are called to embrace a spirit of generosity and cooperation. As the saying goes, "Sharing is caring." Let's remember that the church is not about things—it's about people, relationships, and the mission of Christ. Healthy churches are not territorial, but open-handed, trusting God to provide as we work together for His kingdom.