

4 Simple Rules About Where Your Church Meets

Pastor Rick Warren loves to tell the "moving" story of Saddleback - about how they moved so often in the early years of the church it became a standing puzzle on Sundays to figure out where they would meet the following week. Here's how he tells it:

If you've ever heard the story of Saddleback, you know we moved from one location to another for twelve years before moving onto our campus in 1992. We met in 67 locations in our first 15 years of existence — and broke every church-planting rule that says you must have a consistent meeting location! We grew to more than 10,000 in attendance before we had our first building.

So I've never believed that meeting locations are critical to a church fulfilling its mission.

But where you meet to worship is still an important ministry tool for your church. Here are **four simple rules** we've learned at Saddleback throughout the years.

- **Don't let the shoe tell the foot how big it can get** - Never be afraid to think outside the box when it comes to making the most out of your worship space. When your meeting space begins to limit your growth, then it is time to think creatively. Add another service. Find a different venue. Do whatever it takes.
- **Make sure you have enough space** - When your service is 80 percent filled, you need to start another service. This is one of the reasons many churches plateau. They don't believe they need to add another service because they have a few open seats available. When you run out of space, you experience what Pete Wagner calls "sociological strangulation!"
- **Make sure you don't have *too much* meeting space** - On the other hand, you can have *too much* space. Many churches have built a building far too large for them to fill. Too much space can *keep* a church from growing. If you have 200 people sitting in an auditorium that seats 750, it'll seem like no one is there. But if you have 90 people in a space that'll hold 100, it will seem as if your church is the place to be. It's almost impossible to create a feeling of warmth and intimacy when there are more empty chairs than people.
- **The smaller the crowd, the closer the speaker should be to them** - As your crowd grows larger, the lectern or pulpit can be moved farther back and raised on a higher stage. If you only have 50 people in a service, put a lectern just a few feet in front of your first row. Forget the stage.

Read more from Rick [here](#).