

5 Prep Questions for a New Year

2019 is a month old!

- Is your direction clear?
- Are your plans complete?
- Is your lead team onboard?

5 Strategic Questions:

1) What is God saying to you?

God wants your church to thrive. It's His church! No one cares more than He does. Don't race ahead with your plans without asking God what He wants specifically for your church.

You may not be the senior pastor, but this is still relevant to you. Maybe you're on staff leading a department or a volunteer leader of a small group, what is God saying to you? That may be the most important question you can ask as a leader.

This requires time from your busy schedule; a quiet cup of coffee or several cups over many days. And have a notepad or your laptop handy. What do you sense that God wants? What direction does He want you to take?

2) What changes are you making?

If there are no changes, no innovation, nothing new or next planned for 2019, you may be in for a year that looks a lot like 2018.

That may be a good thing, except for one crucial factor. It's highly likely that you successfully led some smart changes more than a year ago that helped this year be a great one.

There is no way for a healthy and productive ministry to escape change. Nothing stays the same. The key is to make the right moves. Not change for the sake of change but make things better.

It's usually not the best strategy to change everything all at once, instead, be selective. Focus on implementation. Do it right.

Cool and creative may be fun, but if it doesn't work, it doesn't matter. It has to actually work. Then *while* the new is working, start talking about what's next. Don't wait until the new and cool no longer works. If that happens, you *can* fix it, but it's much more work.

3) How is your staff preparing?

Your church may be large with a big staff or a small start-up with volunteer staff, either way,

your team has to be out in front of the change.

First, this means they need to have ownership and buy-in of a clear vision. Second, the strategy needs to be clear and quickly make sense to anyone on the team who sees it. And last, each person needs to have clear expectations about their responsibilities.

Equally important, your staff needs to be simultaneously working on their leadership development to shore up any skill gaps required to achieve the new and next for your church.

4) How will you measure success?

Measuring success in a spiritual realm can seem impossible, but it's not. The subjective element of life-change isn't the real issue of difficulty. The real challenge in measuring success is the lack of clarity in a goal and being consistent in the measurement of that goal.

The process of deciding *how* you will measure success, meaning specifically what you will measure, is more difficult than knowing if you achieved it or not.

This process of deciding what and how you will measure begins with being clear and honest about your vision. What are you measuring? Are you making progress? How? In what way? Do you change the goals to line up with what's happening? That's like when Charlie Brown shoots an arrow and then walks up and draws the target around the arrow. Draw the target first.

If you have missed the mark this year, don't beat yourself up. Learn from your mistakes and move on. Focus on the new year.

5) Are you enthusiastic about your plans?

As the leader of the church or a leader in the church, no one will be excited if you aren't. You can't fake enthusiasm for long, the people will read right through that. If you and your key leaders believe in the direction and plan to get there, the congregation will too.

The plans don't have to be perfect, but they must be clear and demonstrate forward motion. You can't generate momentum if there is no sense of movement. If you are stuck and not sure what to do, go for small wins to start.

Genuine enthusiasm is birthed in your heart. It carries great emotion, but it's not emotional. It's strong and sure. It develops confidence and conviction. Genuine enthusiasm is contagious!

To summarize, Talk to God, be clear about what changes you are making, help the staff prepare, measure your results, and be enthusiastic about your plans.

> [Read more from Dan.](#)

