

## 7 Steps to Church Failure

It only takes a 30-second internet search to find blog after blog listing the top 10 things your church must do to be successful, transform lives, and generally be a wonderful, fantastic place. The myriad of blogs on the subject are both helpful and informative. As I read them, I find myself aspiring to be a better leader.

What seems to be missing are the steps to ensure your church's failure. You may be asking, "Why would anyone write that blog?" The success of your church is not only about aiming at the right targets, but also about avoiding the pitfalls that can damage your ministry. Unless we are careful, we may be sending messages about the value of people that are not what we intend. These unintended messages can do measurable harm to your ministry and keep people from engaging.

Here are **seven unintended messages** that can close your doors:

1. **If they signed up for the email list, they want to hear from you.** Contact them as often as you want. I'm sure Mr. Davis is interested in the women's prayer breakfast.
2. **Don't sweat it if the bathrooms are dirty or the coffee runs out.** This isn't a coffee shop, and no one really means it when they say 'it was clean enough to eat off the floor'.
3. **So what if your small groups seem like a clique?** There is nothing that makes people want to be on the inside of community like feeling excluded!
4. **We need tithes to run this place.** Ask first, get to know them later. And don't forget to use guilt frequently.
5. **Relationships are messy and hard.** Instead of investing in someone's life, let's just plug them in to a program — the more programs the better.
6. **If people want to get connected, they will keep trying.** The connections cards we printed are expensive and that's why we call back almost half of the people who fill it out.
7. **We are in need of some volunteers.** Who cares if it's not their gifting or interest? We have real needs **right now!**

While no church leader begins with the attitudes above, **without the right systems and processes in place, they can begin to creep into your ministry.** It only takes one or two of these attitudes to do long-term damage to your ministry.

Here are a few resources that can help prevent these attitudes from creeping into your ministry:

1. An **effective communications strategy** can help you connect, engage, and inform your people. Done poorly, it can simply become noise. Here are a few communications strategies to help [cut through the noise](#).
2. The **first impression** a visitor gets is not a worship song or a sermon. It starts in the parking lot and stretches into the atrium as they find their way into services. Creating space that is welcoming and easy to navigate is important. Here are a few tips on

[optimizing your space.](#)

3. **Moving people** from casual attenders to engaged members doesn't happen by accident. It requires a process and an invitation. Here is how to move people from the [observer to participant](#).
4. While the financial needs of the church are very real, **the act of tithing** is a function of discipleship and obedience to Scripture. Here are a few ways to [cultivate generosity](#).
5. **Transformation happens** in the context of community. The tendency to limiting engagement to being involved in a program can actually interfere with creating healthy community. Even though [relationships are messy](#), they're worth the effort.
6. Your **connection card** may be the most important piece of paper in your church. Don't miss out on the value to [connect with visitors](#).
7. One of the best ways to **retain volunteers** is to plug them into roles that are a good fit for their gifts. Leading volunteers doesn't have to be a challenge. Here are seven ways to [boost your volunteer engagement](#).

**How are you preventing these attitudes from affecting your Church?**

[Read more from Steve here.](#)