# Simple Church = God’s Process for Making Disciples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Clarity</strong></th>
<th>Clarify in your mission statement what kind of disciples you wish to produce in your church—connected to God, to others, and to ministry.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement</strong></td>
<td>Move people from just attending worship, to small groups, to ministry teams. Do not let people fall through the cracks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment</strong></td>
<td>Align everything—worship, small groups, and ministry teams—to connect people to God, to others, and to ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Do not let good things get in the way of the best—making disciples that are connected to God, to others, and to ministry teams.</td>
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## Simple Church Secret to Disciple Making

Out of complexity find simplicity.

—Albert Einstein

Worship Service + Small Groups + Ministry Teams
### Simple Church Key to Disciple Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complex = Congestion</th>
<th>Simple = Great</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complexity creates confusion.</td>
<td>Simplicity creates clarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion creates congestion.</td>
<td>Clarity creates movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congestion creates gridlock.</td>
<td>Movement creates alignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misalignment creates competition.</td>
<td>Alignment creates focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex = Limited Results.</td>
<td>Focus = Great Results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Simple Church Process of Disciple Making

- **Clarity → Movement → Alignment → Focus**

### Simple Church = Worship Service + Small Groups + Ministry Teams

### Simple Church Promise

“Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell will not stand against it.” —Jesus

**Victory is guaranteed!**
Step 1. **Clarity of purpose**: Everyone should be encouraged to get involved in three things: (1) worship, (2) a small group, and (3) a ministry team. The best way to make disciples is to simplify the church calendar by eliminating good but nonessential programs.

Step 2. **Movement to commitment**: Everyone should be equipped to practice the spiritual disciplines in worship, a small group, and a ministry team. The best way to reach the unchurched is to free up busy church members to have more time to minister to the lost.

Step 3. **Alignment of all programs**: Every ministry should be aligned in urging everyone to be involved in worship, a small group, and a ministry team. The disciple-making process is all about loving God, loving others, and ministering to the unchurched community.

Step 4. **Focus on the best**: The focus of every ministry is to urge members to get involved in the worship service, to connect with a Sunday School class or small group, and to get involved in a ministry team. The best way to create alignment is to focus on the worship service, *small groups*, and ministry teams.
Churches reach the unchurched by simplifying their organizational approach and focusing on (1) spiritual disciplines/spiritual warfare, (2) team leadership development, (3) preaching and pastoral ministry skills, (4) mentoring parents and youth, and (5) equipping members for community ministry: at-risk youth, orphans, widows, schools, hospitals, hospice, AWANA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Scouts, renovating homes, community events, community clean-up, and mission trips.
Simple churches reach the lost through simplifying their organizational approach by focusing on three areas:

1. The worship service
2. Small groups
3. Ministry teams
Four Steps to a Simple Church

1. **Clarity**: Create a mission statement (ministry blueprint) built around the worship service, small groups, and community ministry teams.

2. **Movement**: Remove everything that does not lead to greater commitment and assimilation—love for God, love for others, and service to the world.

3. **Alignment**: Maximizing the energy of everyone by ensuring the entire church body is moving in the same direction and in the same manner.

4. **Focus**: Saying “no” to almost everything that falls outside of the simple disciple making process makes it possible to say “yes” to the best—making disciples.
Simple Church = Disciple Making

Simple Church = Worship Service + Small Groups + Ministry Teams

Disciple-Making = Loving God → Loving Others → Serving the World

Disciple Making = Love God → Love Others → Serve the World

A = Love God
B = Love other believers
C = Serve the community and the world

ABC = Disciple-Making Process
The first step in the process is to connect to God through weekend worship services. Through engaging worship and powerful expository preaching, people are thrust into an environment where a growing and intimate relationship with God is the primary concern. Many guests also attend the worship services each week, so it makes sense that this would be the first program in the process.

The second step in the process is to connect to others through small groups. People may go to a weekend service faithfully, but if they never connect to a small group, their spiritual growth will stagnate. Small groups can be offered on Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, and in homes during the week.

The third step in the process is to connect to ministry through ministry teams. People experience God working through them as they minister to others in tangible ways. People are challenged to join a ministry team that ministry they are passionate about and spiritually gifted for.
## Time Management Schedule for Church Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Spiritual disciplines</strong>: personal Bible study, prayer and fasting, worship, witness, meditation, reading, journaling, and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Quality family time</strong>: games, stories, talks, jokes, walks, hikes, dates, and having fun and teaching children (Deut 6:1-9). Your family is the foundation of your ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><strong>Sermon prep time</strong>: 10 hours per sermon finding unforgettable illustrations and life-changing applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><strong>Equipping ministry time</strong>: serving, planning, supervising, delegating, leading, relating, mentoring, training, teaching, counseling, referring, encouraging, debriefing, and visiting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Steps to Becoming a Simple Church**

**Step 1. Design a Simple Process. Clarity**—Make sure everyone understands the disciple-making process as stated in the mission statement: (1) worship services, (2) small groups, (3) community ministry teams and mission trips.

**Step 2. Place Your Key Programs along the Process. Movement**—Make sure everyone is moving from worship to small groups to ministry teams. A disciple-making coach oversees the assimilation process of all members. Determine how each key program contributes to the process of greater commitment and assimilation—love for God, love for others, and service to the world.

**Step 3. Unite All Ministries around the Process. Alignment**—Make sure everyone on staff single-mindedly supports the disciple-making process. Every leader knows how his or her ministry contributes to the overall process. Anyone who is more passionate for their area than for the church as a whole is replaced.

**Step 4. Gradually Eliminate Things outside the Process. Focus**—Make sure everything that does not contribute to the disciple-making process is abandoned. Say “yes” to the best (making disciples) and “no” to everything that distracts or dilutes the process.

While becoming a simple church is difficult, it is also worth it. The gates of hell are pushed back, dented, and damaged. The upcoming generations are exposed to the gospel and goodness of our God. And the people in your church are placed in the pathway of God’s transforming power.
| Simplify the discipleship process | Simplify, streamline, and monitor the disciple-making process.  
Focus on the worship service, small groups, and ministry teams.  
The mission statement should describe the discipleship process of worship, small groups, and ministry teams. |
| Deepen the preaching, Bible study, and prayer ministry | Deepen members’ knowledge of God’s Word and His truths through the preaching, small groups, and prayer teams.  
Encourage personal Bible study by providing resources.  
Encourage personal prayer by providing resources.  
Challenge members to read through the Bible each year by providing resources. |
| Expect members to minister and provide training | Expect members to be committed ministers and missionaries.  
Require a membership class and discipleship training.  
Preach about expectations and making a difference in the world.  
Challenge members to tithe and give sacrificially to reach the lost.  
When expectations are high, commitment is high. |
| Multiply the ministry outside the church buildings | Multiply the ministry of members spiritually through world missions and community ministry teams.  
Provide resources for members to invite others to worship and Bible study groups such as business card-like and postcard invitations.  
Organize community ministry opportunities: local schools, foster kids, orphans, widows, single moms, AWANA, Scouts, hospitals, and the less fortunate.  
Challenge members to pray around the world each year. Offer annual mission trips. |
Four Critical Areas of the Essential Church

1. Simplify—Get the structure right.
2. Deepen—Get the content right.
3. Expect—Get the attitude right.
4. Multiply—Get the action right.

Four Major Components of the Essential Church

1. **Simplify** programs into a streamlined, monitored disciple-making process.
2. **Deepen** members’ knowledge of God’s Word and His truths.
3. **Expect** much from members. When expectations are high, commitment is high.
4. **Multiply** spiritually through world missions and community ministry teams.
## Seven Essentials of Essential Churches

Essential churches are focused on winning the next generation for Christ through ministry that makes a difference.

### Essential #1. Doctrinal Emphasis

Essential churches understand that young adults who attend church want more doctrine, not less. In a relativistic world young adults are looking for absolutes they can count on and live by.

### Essential #2. Evangelistic Passion

Essential churches speak about Christ to the world. Young adults who attend church want to make a difference that matters for eternity. Young adults are involved in leadership and community outreach.

### Essential #3. Relevant Teaching

Essential churches know there is nothing more relevant to a lost world than the saving grace of Jesus Christ. The unchanging truths of Scripture will always contain the answer for those searching to fill the void of their lives. Essential churches find ways to relay this gospel message to the culture around them by asking, “How can we best relate the unchanging gospel to the shifting culture around us?”

### Essential #4. Outwardly Focused Ministries

“It’s not about me!” is the anthem of the essential church. As crucial as Bible studies and fellowship are, essential churches focus outreach in the surrounding communities, earnestly seeking ways to win the next soul for Jesus—by serving foster kids, the elderly, the fatherless, military families, cancer patients, at-risk youth, hospital volunteers, hospice, disaster relief, building or renovating houses, public school volunteers, AWANA, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Clubs, Scouts, youth camps, and community projects.

### Essential #5. Unity on the Essentials

Essential churches grasp the primacy of the gospel. Essential churches break through the quagmire of personal preference and unite the people around the common causes of spiritual growth and missions.

### Essential #6. Priority of Reaching the World

Essential churches are committed to reaching beyond the church buildings into a world full of specific and difficult needs. Essential churches hunker down and prepare to get uncomfortable in following God’s call to ministry and mission projects such as hunger relief, disaster relief, clean water projects, orphanages, helping widows, building homes, and mission trips.

### Essential #7. Biblical Literacy

Essential churches challenge young adults to read through the Bible each year as a church and in small groups. Essential churches offer seminary type courses on apologetics, Bible study, theology, and church planting.
Seven Sins of Dying Churches

If you are not moving forward, then you are moving backward. Stagnation equates to dying.

Sin 1. Doctrine Dilution

Watering down Scripture is not the answer to reaching a younger generation for Christ. Young adults who attend church want more doctrine, not less. In a relativistic world they are looking for absolutes.

Sin 2. Loss of Evangelistic Passion

Dying churches have little evangelistic passion. Dying churches stop speaking about Christ to the world. Young adults who attend church want to make a difference that matters.

Sin 3. Failure to Be Relevant

There is nothing more relevant to a lost world than the saving grace of Jesus Christ. The unchanging truths of Scripture will always contain the answer for those searching to fill the void of their lives. The church, however, must find ways to relay this gospel message to the culture around them. “How can we best relate the unchanging gospel to the shifting culture around us?”

Sin 4. Few Outwardly Focused Ministries

“It’s all about me!” is the anthem chant of the dying church. As crucial as Bible studies and fellowship are, dying churches gorge themselves on closed study groups and church-wide fellowship events while neglecting outreach in the community. Essential churches think outward into the surrounding communities and into the world, earnestly seeking ways to win the next soul for Jesus—by serving foster kids, orphans, widows, the elderly, military families, cancer patients, at-risk youth, Boys and Girls Clubs, Scouts, hunger relief, disaster relief, clean water projects, community ministry, and mission projects.

Sin 5. Conflict over Personal Preferences

Internal conflicts smother a church. When the church focuses on trivial matters, the greater gospel message is left on the sidelines. Essential churches grasp the primacy of the gospel. Languishing churches are mired in conflict over paltriness. The essential church breaks through the quagmire of personal preference and unites the people around the common causes of spiritual growth and missions.

Sin 6. The Priority of Comfort

Dying churches are comfortable with their ministries. People in dying churches choose their priority of comfort over reaching beyond the church bubble into a community full of specific and difficult needs. Essential churches hunker down and prepare to get uncomfortable in following God’s call to community ministry and mission projects.

Sin 7. Biblical Illiteracy

One of the major sins of a dying church is the neglect of theological teaching. Biblical illiteracy runs rampant in floundering churches. Young adults rise to the challenge of reading through the Bible each year as a church.
Five Essentials for Essential Youth Ministry

One of the biggest mission fields is the youth sitting in your church every week. Our nation’s youth are looking for ways to make a difference in the world.

Essential #1. Teens Are Looking for Relevant Ministry

The essential church recognizes that young adults are looking for a church that teaches them how to live life and how to make a difference in the world. As they enter young adulthood, church involvement that has made a difference in their lives gives them a powerful reason to keep attending. If we show these young adults that serving the church is more about using their God-given gifts and less about filling a spot in a program, they are more likely to want to be involved.

Essential #2. Teens Are Looking for Relationships

The essential church recognizes that one of the greatest needs within the young adult generation is building relationships and connecting with one another and adult mentors. This group is searching for the truth. They are seeking a challenge. And they value the journey of finding things out for themselves. Young adults connect to churches where the people are open, positive, and caring. The need to work together and belong to something bigger than themselves is very strong.

Essential #3. Teens Are Looking for Authenticity

The essential church recognizes that we are in a battle with the powers of darkness over the eternal destiny of lost souls. The apostle Paul states in Philippians 4:1 that we are called to stand firm. An essential church keeps a united front, everyone standing shoulder to shoulder, swords in hand, warriors ready to face the enemy. The body of believers needs those who will champion the gospel message, those who will share their faith unwaveringly, and those willing to stand firm. An essential church battles the dark powers for the hearts and minds of the lost.

Essential #4. Teens Are Looking for Connection

The essential church recognizes that the better a pastor connects with young adults through his sermons, the more likely they are to stay in the church. Research illuminates the need for pastors to reach out intentionally to the under-twenty-two age bracket. So the surprising insight here shouldn’t be all that surprising: biblical truth must be conveyed to all age groups in the church, not just the adults. It is the pastor’s responsibility to communicate this truth in his sermons, even if it means taking a portion of the sermon time to address specific age groups during the service. It is vital to speak directly to the youth in sermons.

Essential #5. Teens Are Looking to Their Parents

The essential church equips parents to be authentic in their faith—this is the number one responsibility of youth ministers. The parents play a critical role in the assimilation of teens and college-age young adults. The combined power of parents with the pastor and others in the church can make a big difference in the life of someone under twenty-two. A church is not the assembly of perfect people; church is the assembly of authentic people worshipping a perfect Savior. Parents in an essential church lay it all on the Lord’s altar. Their children see their example. Though life may not be perfect, though the world may throw some nasty curveballs, parents in an essential church lovingly guide and discipline their children to be active participants in their church without playing the “perfect church life” game.
What Attracts Young Adults To Essential Church

1. When the church has a sense of **genuine community** = Belongingness
2. When the church has a **Third Place area** = Facilitates relational interaction like a Starbucks
3. When the church **family and friends** are equipped with the tools to encourage young adults to come with them to church = Invited

The unchurched are primarily motivated to go to church due to a feeling of void in their lives and the simple fact that someone invited them.

Essential churches create an essential community where the essential truth of Jesus is experienced—a community where Jesus lives.

**Essential Church = Essential Community**

Ten Reasons Why Young Adults Stop Attending Church

1. Wanted a break from boring church.
2. Church members seemed judgmental or hypocritical.
3. Moved away for college.
4. Work responsibilities.
5. Moved too far away from a good church.
7. Didn’t feel connected.
8. Disagreed with the church’s stance on political or social issues.
9. Chose to spend more time with unchurched friends.
10. Was only going to church to please others.

Young adult dropouts did not consider their church to be essential or relevant.

The first thing churches must do is become essential.
## Youth Ministry Priorities in Essential Church

1. The #1 job of a youth minister is to invest half his time equipping parents in the church-wide disciple-making process.

2. Equipping parents as disciple-makers is essential to keeping teens in church.

3. Essential youth ministry starts at birth.

4. Equipping parents to read to infants, to read with young children, and to study the Bible with teens are key components of an effective disciple-making strategy.

### Youth Ministry = Equipping Parents + Equipping Youth

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## What Young Adults Crave in Essential Churches

1. **Engaged pastors** who spend time with them.

2. **Guidance** from the church about spiritual disciplines.

3. **Empowerment** to serve in meaningful ways.

4. **Engagement** in the disciple-making process.

5. **Training** as radical champions and heroes for Christ.

6. **Servant leaders** who meet them where they are.

7. **Relevant sermons** to their life stage and challenges.

8. **Transparent mentors** who will admit mistakes.
How Essential Churches Close the Back Door

1. **Connect young adults** with young and older adults in the church.

2. **Move young people into small groups**, Sunday School classes, and ministry teams.

3. **Help young people develop spiritually** through spiritual disciplines, mentoring, and social networking.

4. **Deepen the teaching and preaching** through application and calling for commitment.

5. **Focus on community service ministry teams**, outreach, and mission trips.

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**Definition of a Simple-Essential Church**

A simple-essential church is designed around a straightforward disciple-making process that moves people through the stages of spiritual growth through the worship service, small groups, and ministry teams.

Disciple-making focuses on loving God, loving others, and ministering to the community and the world.