

Simple Church

Encouraging a Culture of Discipleship

Simple Church defined:

New Highland is in the midst of God's blessings as we grow. In the midst of this growth New Highland is looking to find a simplified process that will develop a **culture of discipleship** that will lead each person to Know Christ, Grow in Christ, and Serve Christ.

The **Culture of Discipleship** is a clear process for moving a person from salvation to spiritual maturity to significant ministry.

What Simple Church is not:

1. Another program or "vision/mission" statement.
2. Another church model.
3. A schizophrenic plan of many models confusing all involved.

What Simple Church is:

1. A simpler, NOT EASIER, way of intentionally focusing our church on building disciples.
2. Centralized way of leading our church
3. Emphasis on forward movement
4. Always encouraging individuals to move from salvation, to spiritual maturity, to significant ministry.
5. Simplified schedule.
6. Streamlined look at our programs that are focused on the process

Simple Church is for New Highland a process to lead people to:

KNOW CHRIST –

John 3:16, *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

John 14:6, *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

GROW IN CHRIST –

Hebrews 11:1, *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*

1 Peter 5:6 *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*

SERVE CHRIST –

Matthew 28:18-20, *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Philippians 4:13 *I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

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Your committee/organization is being asked to **FOCUS**. Focus on what is essential and will be the heart of helping create a **culture of discipleship** at New Highland. Focus will demand that your committee/organization find a few areas that are most essential and that you give your energy and resources to those things. What this means for the committees/organizations of New Highland Baptist is to work through these questions, as New Highland strives for a more vibrant **culture of discipleship**.

1. What is the purpose of your committee? _____

2. What resources does your committee have or require:
 - a. Personnel – how many people? _____
How much time do you ask of each person? (Monthly) _____ (Weekly) _____
 - b. Physical – the space or thing(s) that you use to accomplish this ministry? _____

 - c. Fiscal – What is the dollar cost? _____
Where does the money come from? Budget _____ Participants _____ Fundraising _____
OR express as (%) Budget _____ Participants _____ Fundraising _____

3. As you think about the idea of simple church, and that the target is to minimize programs, consider your current programs and evaluate which programs are essential to develop a **culture of discipleship** and which programs are not essential?
Essential: _____

Not essential: _____

4. Are there other committees or organizations at New Highland that are doing something similar to what your committee is, or wants to do? _____
Can these programs be combined to minimize impact on our combined resources (personnel, physical and fiscal)? _____

5. Considering the essential programs that help create a **culture of discipleship**, how do they help someone **Know Christ, Grow in Christ, or Serve Christ**? _____

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Thinking through the Program Planning

Two examples:

These examples are part of the process to consider new programs or events your committee may want to plan. We list them in two categories.

Example One: Your committee decides they would like to do a program that they have not done before that is in the typical planning area for your committee. (I.e. youth committee planning a parent workshop, example follows steps in [brackets])

1. **Does this program fit in the purpose of your committee?** [Yes, part of the youth committee's purpose is to help parents develop and become stronger parents]
2. **Is this a new option or a new program?** A new option is an extension of an existing program. A new option might be starting a new Sunday School class which is an extension of the current Sunday School program. A new program is a special event or program that is not part of an existing program. [the parent workshop would be a new program]
3. **What resources will be needed to support this program?**
 - a. Personnel – What volunteers will be needed, and is this the best use of limited volunteer time?
 - b. Physical space needed – is it available?
 - c. Fiscal – what will it cost the participants and what will it cost the church, is it in the budget? [The parent workshop would need to consider each of these areas and understand the actual cost]
4. **Is there another group in the church that is doing a program like this?** Can we include another group in what we are planning? [In our example of a parent workshop, the youth committee could also include the children's committee and even the nursery committee]
5. **Will this program help develop a culture of discipleship and help people Know, Grow, and Serve?** [The workshop will help GROW parents in their Godly role of parenting and how they can encourage their children to Know and Grow in Christ]
6. **Is this an essential program?** Can this event be combined with an essential program? [No, this workshop is not an essential program. Since this workshop is not an essential program, the youth committee should consider if it can be combined with one of the essential programs, such as Sunday night GO! Time or a youth weekend retreat, where the parents come and attend their workshop while the youth attend their activities. Even holding a non-essential program/event must carefully be considered.]
7. **Make a decision to do the program or not.** This decision will require Focus on the above questions and will require the committee to make the best decision for all involved. [The youth committee could decide to hold the parent workshop in conjunction with a weekend retreat for parents and youth.]

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Thinking through the Program Planning

Two examples:

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Example Two: A committee wants to plan a program that will have a church wide impact or a small group or individual wants to start a new program or ministry at New Highland. (I.e. youth committee planning a Parent's Night Out, example follows steps in [brackets])

1. **Consider the purpose of the program.** Does it fit with the purpose of New Highland and does it help build a **culture of discipleship**? [Yes, it will help youth develop their ability to Serve Christ and will encourage parents to have some time for themselves]
2. **Is this a new option or a new program?** A new option is an extension of an existing program. A new program is a special event or program that is not part of an existing program. New options are often needed and vital to sustain growth. [For the youth ministry this is a new program because they do not do this type of event, even though the children's ministry does this would be a NEW program for the youth ministry]
3. **Consider resources.** Personnel, Physical, Fiscal [the parent's night out would need to consider each of these areas and understand the actual cost]
4. **Decide if this fits with another committee or group at New Highland?** Can the program funnel into an existing program? Can the program combine with an existing program? [The parent's night out does fit with another existing program that is being done by another committee. The children's committee already does a parent's night out]
5. **Is this an essential program?** Can this event be combined with an essential program? [No, the Parent's night out is not an essential program or event for the youth ministry.]
6. **Write up plan.**
 - a. Description of program
 - b. Purpose of program
 - c. Goals of program
 - d. Answer if this is part of the essential ministries of New Highland
 - e. Resources needed to support program
 - f. How will this program help people Know, Grow, and Serve
7. **Present to staff.** This step needs to be taken if the program is new and not coming from a committee.
8. **Present to church council for approval.** [The parent's night out by the youth committee should not be done because it is a program that is already offered by the children's committee. The resources and planning would be better used to cooperate with the children's committee to help them in their PNO rather than start a new one. This event should not be done by the youth committee and the church council can help them connect with the committee that is currently doing this event.]