



Congregational Vitality

A DISCERNMENT TOOL FOR SESSION AND STAFF

The questions that follow were designed to guide a discussion on congregational vitality during a session and/or staff meeting. We encourage you to send your people these questions about one week before the meeting, to allow them time to individually and prayerfully reflect on the questions in advance. Then, when you come together as a group, spend time considering each of the seven marks separately. If you have enough people, you could divide into seven groups and have each group discuss a single mark, then reconvene to share thoughts.

LIFELONG DISCIPLESHIP FORMATION

Does your church prioritize faith formation and disciple making?

1. Are members growing in their faith through participation in the activities of this congregation?
2. Would you say the following are emphasized in your church?
 - Bible study
 - Christian education for adults
 - Christian education for children
 - Prayer circles, prayer chains, prayer partners, prayer walks, etc.
 - Teaching or practicing stewardship throughout the year
 - Other activities to engage in or learn about spiritual disciplines
3. Does this church....?
 - Challenge its members to become more Christ-like
 - Emphasize Sabbath keeping as a priority
 - Have a strong culture of generosity
 - Help members apply their faith to everyday life

INTENTIONAL AUTHENTIC EVANGELISM

Does your church engage in evangelism?

1. Does your church encourage members to...?
 - Be open about being Christian when they engage in mission
 - Engage in theological discussions of truth and meaning with those outside church
 - Invite others to worship or other church activities, including mission
 - Make specific efforts to form relationships with people who are not Christian



- Make specific efforts to reach out to people who are in a different demographic than that of existing members
 - Openly share their faith
2. How often does the leadership of your church talk about evangelism in worship?
 3. How true are the following statements?
 - Our outward communications make it clear that all are welcome regardless of who they are or what they have done
 - This church equips members to welcome all people (Matthew 5:46-48)
 - This church invites people being served by the church into the life of the congregation

OUTWARD INCARNATIONAL FOCUS

Does your church help others outside the church?

1. How true are the following statements?
 - We equip members for ministry wherever they are (community, school, hobby, work)
 - People in this community would not notice if our church closed
 - People in our community know our church leaders
2. Would you say that this church....?
 - Is a prophetic voice in our community
 - Responds to the needs of people in the local community or beyond
 - Promotes social righteousness issues within our community (Book of Order F-10304)
 - Teaches that being the church is more important than being at church
 - Emphasizes mission over self-preservation

EMPOWER SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Does your church foster servant leadership within the church?

1. How true are the following statements?
 - Sometimes we have a hard time finding people to volunteer to serve
 - We encourage members to identify and use their spiritual gifts (Romans 12:6-8)
 - Staff and other leaders here model humility
2. Would you say that this church....?
 - Involves members in the planning of activities and worship
 - Equips its members to make disciples (Matthew 28:19)
 - Is good at finding and nurturing potential leaders
 - Emphasizes the importance of mentoring and spiritual direction



SPIRIT-INSPIRED WORSHIP

Does your church lead inspiring worship?

1. How well do the following terms describe worship services at this congregation?
 - Boring
 - Filled with a sense of God's presence
 - Filled with wonder
 - Frustrating
 - Inspirational
 - Joyful
 - Renewing
 - Thought-provoking
2. Would you say that worship services at this church are designed to...?
 - Allow time and space to communicate directly with God
 - Challenge participants' assumptions and convictions
 - Help participants love God (Mark 12:30)
 - Help participants love their neighbor (Mark 12:31)
 - Help participants understand scripture
 - Encourage participants to take action

CARING RELATIONSHIPS

Does your church love and care for one another?

1. How true are the following statements?
 - I am aware of serious conflict among members
 - I know there are members who have been and are still hurt by this church
 - I observe cliques that are difficult to break into
 - I observe people warmly greeting one another before or after worship and at other events
 - We take care of members who are sick, grieving, or otherwise need support
 - We reach out to people who have not been to church in a while
 - We encourage small groups and/or fellowship groups so that caring relationships happen

ECCLESIAL HEALTH



Presbyterian Mission
Research Services

Does your church maintain healthy systems that allow the church to live into its mission?

1. How true are the following statements?
 - Our congregation manages conflict well
 - We share our church financial picture, including sources and use of funds, with members
 - Our members can articulate our mission/purpose
 - This church has an intentional plan to help new members become and remain connected
 - Our members are hopeful or excited about this church's future
 - People here are nostalgic about this church's past
 - Decisions in this congregation are mainly made by staff/pastoral leadership rather than by session
 - People expect leadership to do everything
2. Would you say that this church....?
 - Is willing to change to meet new challenges
 - Has clearly stated beliefs and values
 - Has a healthy sense of mission/purpose
 - Is open to new ideas
 - Helps its leaders avoid burnout
 - Has unresolved issues of scandal or drastic painful change
3. How often does the leadership of your church do the following?
 - Gather in prayer and discernment around God's mission
 - Evaluate programs and/or ministries
 - Evaluate staff

