
GROWTH POINTS

With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

Leadership's Seven Deadly Sins

Attendance is good; You may be setting new records. Your church is holding it's own in today's changing environment. Everything seems to be moving along well. But is it?

Today, pastors and other church leaders get surprised by challenges that threaten their continued success, or even continuation of ministry.

Danger signals go unnoticed, or ignored, because they appear in subtle ways rather than in drastic form that garners attention.

What are some of these common leadership pitfalls? Research has found several common obstacles. Let's call them "Leadership's Seven Deadly Sins."

1. A Lack of Direction

Where is your church heading? Is there a clear understanding of your mission and how to get there? When you and other church leaders take a

hard look at your basic model of ministry, ask yourself how long has it been since our systems and procedures were reviewed to see if they mesh with the overall mission?

2. A Lack of Follow Through

If your church has a solid mission and direction, great! Now, how well are you following through on implementing it? It takes more than a nice sounding mission statement to see growth in a church; it takes application - action.

3. A lack of Assimilation

Church leaders rejoice in the large number of guests who attend worship services. Guests are good, of course. But, are they returning? Are they staying? Are they getting connected? Is your welcome system working?

4. A lack of Communication

All too often, church leaders assume that everyone else in the church operates from the same dedication, commitment, and knowledge. They are shocked to discover that such an assumption isn't correct.

Communication of the church's mission, overall direction, and goals, is a never ending job. They must be declared weekly before all people in the congregation begin to understand . . . believe . . . and embrace them.

5. A lack of Delegation

The teaching on spiritual gifts, as well as the believers duty to minister, is common in most churches. What, though, is the reality? Is the work of ministry being shared with others? Are you doing things that others could do better? Are new leaders allowed to emerge?

6. A lack of Smart Work

It's not about working harder. Pastors, on average, work over 60 hours a week. The issue is learning to work smarter. Where do you put your time? Is it productive? Are you working from your strengths or out of your weaknesses?

7. A lack of Dissatisfaction

It's important to always have some dissatisfaction. Complacency is the biggest danger in a church that appears to be doing well.

Once all the major challenges and goals are addressed, people tend to sit back and rest. This leads to rearranging tasks and priorities to just get by. Opportunities for new growth and outreach are ignored. Fresh challenges are neglected. What are the signs of the sin of complacency?

- Leaders feel comfortable and demonstrate less willingness to take appropriate risks.
- A lack of interest in what's really happening in the various fields of church ministry.
- A feeling that "We tried that before and it didn't work. It won't work now either."
- A realization that everyone is thinking alike or, even worse, that no one is thinking at all.
- An inward focus that neglects evangelism and outreach into the community.

Which of these deadly sins do you see in your church?

Pick one and work on it this year.



Growth Points is published twelve times a year. Subscription price is \$29 (US Funds) per year. Permission is granted for use in a local church. For other reprint usage, advance permission must be obtained.

Copyrighted 2023 ISSN 1520-5096