

Seven Reasons Church Revitalization Begins with Me as a Church Leader

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Most churches in North America need revitalization. Our Church Answers team seeks to offer support, encouragement, resources, and conversations to help church leaders move in that direction. At the same time, though, any true revitalization begins with those of us who lead those churches. Here's why:

1. Even the strongest, most faithful leaders sometimes need renewal. Church work can become tedious and tiresome for even the best leaders. Our spiritual walk can almost inadvertently become stale. Daily renewal through God's Word and His Spirit is essential if we want to lead churches toward revitalization.

2. Revitalization is both an individual and a corporate matter. We all realize that churches are made up of people—of individuals and families. We don't usually think that way about revitalization, however. We somehow assume corporate change will happen without individual change—but it doesn't happen that way.

3. Genuine revitalization is a work of God, and that work depends on godly leaders seeking Him personally. We might, in our own efforts, increase the crowd in attendance, but we won't see genuinely changed churches apart from prayer. What we leaders do in the privacy of our prayer closet really does matter.

4. Pastors who are weary and discouraged (as so many of them are in tough churches) will struggle leading toward revitalization. They want things to change for the positive, but they often have little energy and hope left to lead very far. Revitalization must begin in their own hearts.

5. A vision for revitalization begins with leaders. It's generally the leaders who "see" what the Lord might want to accomplish through a struggling church. Our job is to believe that vision, cast it, and keep pressing forward even when it's a struggle. If we give up early, others will, too.

6. Revitalization leaders must be invested where they are. An older, wise doctoral student of mine once told a class of younger leaders, "Too many pastors are trying to pastor three churches: the one they never got over, the one they're currently pastoring, and the one they want to pastor." Revitalization, though, begins with leaders whose feet are solidly in their current ministry.

7. Revitalization leaders must model faith. It may be, in fact, that the pastor is one of the few members who truly believe God is up to something in the church; only he and a few others might be convinced of things not yet seen (Heb 11:1). His persistence and trust will challenge others to see the same.

So, as a church leader, I ask myself today:

In what ways do I need renewal personally?

Do I daily seek Him and His power for revitalization?

Have I allowed discouragement to grip me?

Do I have a vision for what God wants to do in the church?

Am I invested deeply in my current role?

Do I truly believe God can and will revitalize the church?