

9 Ways to Correct Mission Drift in a Church

By Chuck Lawless on Apr 16, 2021 01:00 am

Today, I respond to previous posts about [signs](#) and causes of mission drift in a church. Maybe one of these ideas will help you influence your church in the right direction:

1. **Prioritize prayer for God's power and direction.** I've read a number of works on mission drift, and few raise the importance of praying for a congregation to regain its mission. Because so *much* can easily distract us from the mission, however, we need the work of the Spirit in our individual and congregational lives to turn our attention back to the mission.
2. **Get the right leaders on board, even if you do it one person and position at a time.** The ship won't turn around apart from leaders with vision and backbone. Prayerfully choose the right ones.
3. **Re-teach the church's mission, and then re-teach it again. And again. And again.** Teach it until the congregation knows, understands, and buys into the mission. Then, teach it clearly to every potential new member who attends.
4. **Build a supportive team, and make hard calls as needed to get back to the mission.** It's much, much easier to make these calls when you know you're not standing alone. Having somebody guarding your back is important.
5. **Do the heavy work of evaluating if/how each ministry contributes to the mission.** This work can be difficult—and divisive at times—but it's necessary. If the task feels too risky to you, begin with a less critical ministry to evaluate. Revising or ending that kind of ministry may be less costly.
6. **DO simple ministry in the community.** Using ideas like those in resources like Steve Sjogren's [101 Ways to Reach Your Community](#), get a few people in your congregation to get outside the walls of the building. Simple, reproducible acts of Christian kindness can help believers see the mission again.
7. **Celebrate the wins—particularly the wins of changed lives.** I wish I could adequately describe for you the response we've received after telling the story of my mom's recent conversion. Thousands have read her story, and many have written to me to tell me how encouraged they were. Victories renew our passion for the work.
8. **Don't miss opportunities to remove obstacles to the mission.** Here, I'm primarily talking about sacred cows and ineffective programs. Frankly, COVID has given us opportunity to determine what really matters as a church; I just pray we don't go backwards when this crisis is past.
9. **Make sure someone or some team is assigned to keep the church's eyes on the mission in the future.** Whoever that person is would understand the possibility of mission drift, recognize its signs, and help the church avoid it. When no one has this task, drift is much more likely.

What would you add to this list?