

Ten Commandments for New Pastors

Let me give you some steps I share with every new pastor of an older congregation. – Larry Wynn

1. Take the first year to learn the people and find practical ways to love the people. Do life with them. Spend time on their turf. A year seems like a long time, but you need this time to build trust. "Willingness to change is always in direct proportion to the level of trust people have in their leader." People buy into the leader before they buy into the leader's vision.
2. At the same time begin to personally connect with people who do not attend the church. Be visible in the community. One pastor I know asks this question, "Do you attend church in the area?" When the reply is no, he says to them, "Then I am your pastor. Please contact me if I can help you in any way. You do not have to attend my church for me to be your pastor." He has increased from 9 to 80 in the first year.
3. As you do life with the people begin to develop a clear, compelling and attainable vision.
4. Assess the people's strengths, gifts, points of resistance, and willingness to grow and change. Identify the patriarch and or matriarch of the church. Attempt to get buy in from them if possible.
5. Find the people of peace in the church. These are the people who are ready to grow and are willing to make necessary changes for growth to take place. It's the 80/20 principle. Spend lots of time with these folks. In normal conversations share with them your vision for the church that you have been developing. At the same time listen to their vision and how it fits with the vision God is giving you.
6. Commit long term to the church. Almost without fail, churches that change and grow are led by pastors with tenure.
7. Have meetings before the meeting. When preparing to present something to the church that requires changes, be sure you have talked with key leaders and have them on board before the meeting ever takes place.
8. Connect with other pastors who are in situations similar to yours and have experienced success. (I can personally connect you with these pastors.)
9. Learn the history of the church. How does that history aid or potentially hinder what you feel God wants to accomplish?
10. Enjoy the process.