

16. The congregation is willing to make any changes necessary to align itself with what it perceives God is calling it to be.
17. People (lay and clergy) have a common language to express why Jesus is important to them and can tell others lovingly and respectfully.
18. Prayer becomes a necessity for a congregation and not just something else to do.
19. In a congregation where the average number of adults in worship on an average Sunday is 100; if there are seven people who are passionate about the future of the church along with 14 leaders of position willing to advocate for the future of the church, and another 42 people willing to participate, then there will be a critical mass for transformation (a total of 63 percent). The seven people of passion and the 14 leaders (21 percent) will usually form the tipping point for transformation. For a congregation with less than or more than 100 adults, change the numbers to percentages: Seven percent, 14 percent and 63 percent. (This insight from George Bullard.)
20. The explicit goal of the church is not just “more people in the seats” but measurable change in the social, economic, and spiritual conditions in the community around the church.

“Gleaned from the collective wisdom of your Disciples colleagues working in congregational transformation.”

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Best Practices

for

Congregational Transformation

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Congregational Transformation

A congregation has the best chance of transforming when:

1. The presence of conflict is low (or, we could say, the congregation's threshold for conflict is very high).
2. The pastor's ego and control needs are kept in check.
3. The congregation has discerned its identity in core values, purpose, and mission.
4. Worship, in whatever form or genre, engages people in praising a living and present God.
5. People have discovered and are using their spiritual gifts in meaningful ministry.
6. We think less like a "congregation" and more like a religious order—having greater clarity about the particular gifts we bring to the Body as it is locally and otherwise created. Many congregations are more like clubs than movements.
7. We believe—really believe—that our best years are before us and that (to Christ at least) who we are and what we do is essential in helping to build the reign of God, not only here and now but there and then, and that we do this with true humility and deep appreciation for others having done the same long before us.
8. We are clear about the centrality of Christ in Christian life and ministry.
9. Each Christian adult takes *adult* responsibility for a life of faithful and effective discipleship and gives up the "high chair" of consumer Christianity. We are not toddlers. The Body of Christ has matured over the centuries—and not just the clergy and the academics. Just as we are letting go of claiming that physicians are in charge of our good health, there is no compelling reason to hand over responsibility for our covenantal future to those employed or called exclusively for that ministry.
10. The congregants are focused on being true disciples of Christ, true followers, with all the requisite joys and responsibilities, rather than members who have privileges as being part of a club.
11. Congregational leadership is keenly aware that it is part of a movement of transformation within the larger church.
12. The pastor is engaged daily in her or his own transformation through regular spiritual practices or disciplines.
13. Openness as a relational value is practiced by the congregation.
14. The congregation has a constant awareness that God is among them doing something. (They know they are not left to their own devices.)
15. There is a good fit between the pastor and the congregation.