

# GUIDELINES FOR A CHURCH SWOT ANALYSIS

The use of a SWOT analysis (**Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats**) can assist your church with planning and development. Information gathered from church leadership can be used to assess and develop ways to better serve your community.

Your leadership team has a good idea of how your church is doing in various areas. Such conversations occur frequently when they fellowship with others. Ask your leaders to share insights with you in a SWOT Analysis based on the four categories of feedback described above.

The SWOT analysis was developed in the 1960s by a man named Albert S. Humphrey. When applied properly, it can serve two specific purposes: 1) Use the information obtained to provide a quick analysis of your church; 2) This information can serve as a starting point to develop short and long term strategies. As you engage in the SWOT process, it is important that your participants work from the same general perspective.

1. **Strengths** are the characteristics, attitudes, actions, and activities that identify your church and are foundational to who you are, what you do, and what you accomplish. Strengths also include resources, skills, core values, and competencies that help you realize your mission.

Several questions will help determine your strengths. (This is not a definitive list; add your own questions that best fit your situation.)

- What do you hear people saying about your church that is positive?
- What are the outstanding characteristics of your church?
- What are you seeing happen that gets people excited about your church?

2. **Weaknesses** include factors that damage and hinder your church. Questions such as the following apply in this area:

- Is our financial situation stable?
- Do we have unity in our church?

3. **Opportunities** refer to favorable conditions, trends, strategic moves, or previously untapped potential avenues of action that will enhance your church. Sample questions regarding opportunities include:

- What changes [demographic, economic, religious, etc.] are taking place that could prove to be advantageous to our church?
- Are there emerging trends that we need to identify and embrace?
- What appeals to young people that will engage them in the church?

4. **Threats** are the factors that can directly or indirectly have a negative effect on your church. They can be internal or external factors and may or may not be beyond our control. We must make every effort to identify these threats and deal with them according to our abilities, resources, and opportunity.

- What is the number one factor that could hinder your church?
- Are there trends within or outside your church that can greatly hinder you?
- What is the greatest obstacle to your church being effective?

**With this SWOT context, ask your leaders to answer the following:**

- What do you perceive to be the strengths of our church?
- What do you see as the weaknesses of our church?
- What, in your opinion, are the opportunities the church should seize?
- What do you consider as the major threats we are facing as a church?

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