

2 Leading your Church into Growth

initial review

Opening prayer



God of mission,
Who alone brings growth to your Church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give
Vision to our planning,
Wisdom to our actions,
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
In spiritual commitment to you,
And in service to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Bible



¹ *In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."*

⁵ *This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶ They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.*

⁷ *So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.*

Acts 6:1-7 (NIV)

As the early church experienced growth it encountered a problem with the distribution of food and took the following steps:

- Consideration (v1)
- Communication (v2-4)
- Consultation (v5)
- Choice (v5)
- Commissioning (v6)
- Change (v7)

Discuss, in groups of four people, the six steps above.

- Why did the church in Acts respond in this way?
- Can you see how this story from Acts fits in with your LYCiG journey?
- How do you feel about being the people called to lead your journey into growth?
- Are these six steps part of your church's preparation for growth?

LSM2-2

Exercise: Group feedback



Spend some time reviewing the feedback response sheets given to you by the group leaders from the three previous sessions.

- What are your reactions to the feedback?
- Are you able to identify some common themes and concerns?

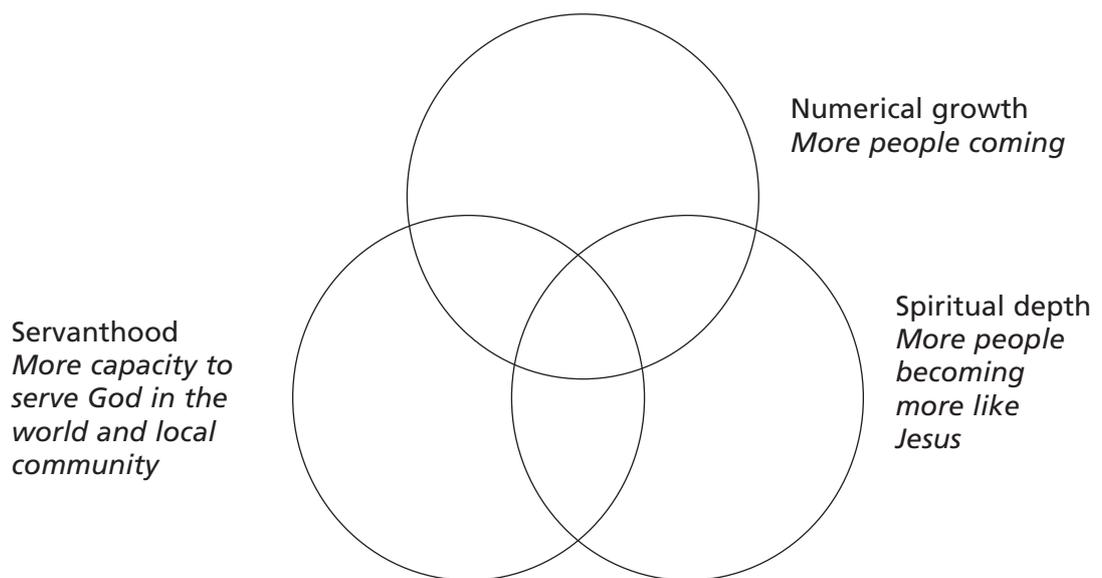
Work in groups of four or five to identify some initial congregational priorities.

You could record people's suggestions in the box below and also on a sheet of flipchart paper.

If you have a church vision statement it will be helpful to compare the priorities against your church vision statement. Then work as a whole leadership team to agree possible priorities that could form part of your new or revised Church Mission Action Plan. Identify any decisions/actions which could be acted on quickly and plan out a programme to act on these immediate priorities over the next 3 to 6 months. You could record some possible initial action below.

LSM2-3

Put each suggestion from the members' feedback forms into the diagram, deciding which aspects of growth it addresses. Each one could belong in just one circle or in a place where two or three overlap.



Reflection and prayer



⁵ *What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe – as the Lord has assigned to each his task.*

⁶ *I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.* ⁷ *So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.* ⁸ *The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labour.* ⁹ *For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.*

¹⁰ *By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care.* ¹¹ *For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

1 Corinthians 3:5-11 (NIV)