

A banner with a green and yellow background featuring a field of grass. The text is centered and reads: DR. LAMAR E. SMITH CENTER FOR EVANGELISM & CHURCH GROWTH.

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It seems people head out the back door faster than we can get them through the front door. This is especially frustrating and has been for a long time, and it seems to be getting worse as the church competes with a very consuming culture and world.

What can we do?

Worship: Help people connect to God. I believe this moment we are in is the engine of the church. It is here where people often connect and stay connected with God, the pastor/preacher and the church. It is here where they give, are inspired, challenged and comforted. It is here where the vision is cast. It is here where churches succeed or fail. Worship services should be running on all cylinders, summertime, winter, holidays, etc. Preaching, worship music and prayers, from the welcome to the dismissal, worship should touch the hearts of the people and the people have a chance to touch the heart of God.

Relationships: New groups for new people. Small groups of almost any type where people can connect with Bible studies, mission groups, running and exercise groups and outreach teams. Any area where people can connect to each other and build relationships. These opportunities must continue to start and restart to help people connect best with new groups and new people.

Discipleship: Modeling and teaching how to follow Jesus Christ. People want to grow in their faith. The journey in following Christ is a lifelong experience. It's the narrative of a successful Christian life. One of the tasks of the church is to assist people in growing their relationship with Christ and creating a partnership with the church.

Mission and Outreach: Typically people who spend time in the church will desire to do things that are meaningful and that make a difference. The church can offer this opportunity by building mission teams, outreach teams and partnerships between people who will make a difference in the world. These can be small things or they can be big things. New things attract your newer people.

Pastoral Care: In any size church, there will be times of crisis or difficulty where people will need the church and the church will need to be there for them. If not, they often leave. I don't believe we can ever neglect this in any size church.

Membership Class: A place to share the vision, the narrative, the heart of the church and what is expected of those who partner with it. This can be done before people unite with the church, with people who never officially unite or after they unite. People need to know the story they are becoming a part of, the pastor and people they will partner with and the story being written that they will be a part of. This vision should be compelling, exciting and meaningful.

Communication: Stay connected to everyone by email, social media, mailings or whatever that looks like for your church. The first few months someone starts visiting a church, they should receive special communication from the pastor or other teams in the church. This often helps people integrate into the life of the church as we offer encouragement and opportunities.