

Using the Life Cycle to Prepare for Planning



Determining where your church is in its life cycle will help you get a better sense of your starting point and what needs to come next in your planning. It will also help you determine what kind of planning process is right for your church.

Part 1: Looking at the Life Cycle

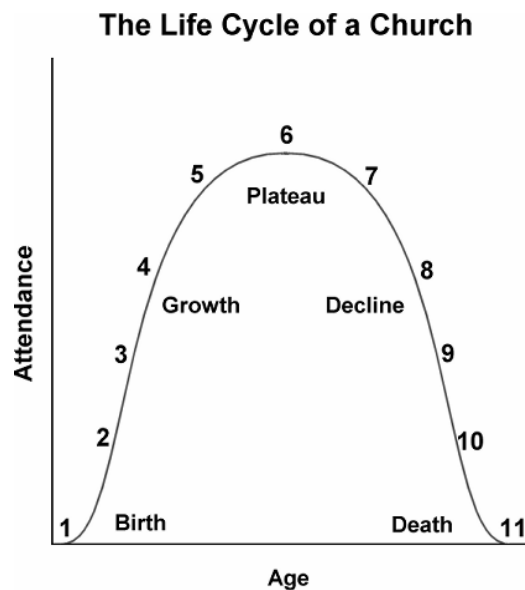
Circle the number that represents where you feel your church is right now. Once you've done that, add the numbers of each person in your group or team and divide by those present for your average score. The result will be the group's estimate of whether the church is growing, plateaued, or declining.

My score = _____ Group average = _____

Possible discussion questions:

What do you notice as you plot yourself on the curve?

What might that mean for how you'll need to approach change and planning?



Part 2: Determining what type of planning you need to engage in.

After scoring yourself on the life cycle, this chart helps you see the kind of planning you need to engage in and the kind of questions you need to be asking.

Life Cycle Location	Planning Type	Needed when...	Goals	Key ?'s
1-2	Vision Doing (seeking a clear vision for your church and putting it into action)	You are starting a church.	To determine mission, values and goals. To determine vision and a plan.	"Who are we?" "What are we called to do?" "Who is our neighbor?"
4-6	Vision Reviewing (taking the vision you have and breathing new life into it).	Things are going well. What you're doing is effective. You are quite healthy but need greater vision ownership & a ministry plan for the next chapter.	To determine next steps. To build on what is going well.	"What's next?" "What do we do now?"
6-9	Vision Renewing (forming a fresh vision out of your mission, values and unique calling)	Things are not working. What we're doing is not fruitful or effective. It's time for a fresh start.	To revisit purpose, values and calling. To develop a renewed vision and ministry plan.	"Who are we?" "What are we called to do?" "Who is our neighbor?"

Discussion question: Which type of planning do we need to experience and what are some of the reasons for that choice?

