

**Omega Course:
Practical Church Planter Training**

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ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

This curriculum has been prepared by *The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting* in cooperation with Project 250 of Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries. *The Alliance* is a partnership of churches and mission agencies committed to mobilizing believers to saturate each country in Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union with evangelical churches. Saturation Church Planting is a strategy that seeks to establish local churches in every town, village and neighborhood so that those who accept Christ will have a local fellowship in which to grow in Christ and be equipped for ministry. *The Alliance* is built on the premise that joining forces will increase effectiveness, reduce duplication, and demonstrate unity within the body of Christ.

WHAT WE BELIEVE:

- The local church is God's primary tool for evangelism and discipleship.
- Partnership with churches and mission organizations is crucial for the multiplication of local churches and the development of saturation church planting movements.
- Training leaders is essential to church planting and church growth.
- The Lausanne Covenant is the statement of faith for *The Alliance*.

WHAT WE DO:

Church Planter Training and Mentoring

The Alliance provides skill-based training in seminar fashion with practical ministry assignments geared towards starting reproducing churches.

Information Gathering

Accurate information leads to good decisions in the church planting task. *The Alliance* can help with training and consultation for your information gathering needs in the areas of church planting and church growth.

Prayer Movement Consulting

A church planting movement starts with vision, which is discovered and refined through seeking God's heart in prayer. *The Alliance* can help you better understand the role of prayer movements in the church planting task, and how you can facilitate a prayer movement in your region.

Vision Casting

What does God want for your country? He wants churches everywhere! *The Alliance* can help foster a vision for new churches with conceptual seminars on the principles of saturation church planting.

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Introduction to Stewardship

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the significance of our stewardship before God. All that we have is His. Therefore we are not merely required to give a portion back to Him, but rather to use all that we have for His work and glory.

☞ Main Points

- The key issue in stewardship is our faithfulness.
- Stewardship extends far beyond our money to include our possessions, our time, our spiritual gifts, etc.

☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Know the principle of being a steward of God's possessions for Him.
- Understand that values are foundational to stewardship.

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Begin the session by asking trainees what things God has given to them. List these things on a chalkboard or overhead transparency.

I. What Is Stewardship?

Stewardship is the term used to describe the activity of a steward. A steward was one who controlled the possessions of his master. His role was a very responsible one, and it was vital that he be a person of honest character. The possibilities for theft or misuse of his master's possessions were great.

As we look at the principles concerning the steward we will see that true stewardship involves how we deal with the resources God has entrusted to us. This includes our:

- money
- time
- possessions
- bodies
- families
- ministry

II. Why Talk About Stewardship? - Two Issues

A. The Issue of Faithfulness

Stewardship is being responsible with what God has given us. From man's first day on earth, we have been stewards of God. Man was created to have dominion over creation (Ge 1:28). The Lord placed Adam in the garden to till and to keep it for Him (Ge 2:15). Although man usually does

not understand that he is simply a steward of the Lord's creation, the Scriptures clearly state that the earth and everything in it belongs to God (1Co 10:26). Whatever we possess is given to us by God to use for His glory. He is watching our faithfulness, and will reward us accordingly.

B. The Issue of Values

How people relate to the items listed before (in point I) shows where their heart is. As Jesus said "Where your treasure is there will be your heart also." In other words you can tell a lot about a person's heart by the way he treats his money or his valuable things.

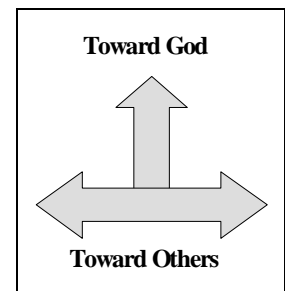
Our values are the ideals or things that we think are important in life. Some people value possessions or comfort. Others value family or service to the community. We literally spend our life and our time on those things that seem essential and vital to us personally. In Matthew 22:37-39 we find what is sometimes called the 'Great Commandment', in which Jesus summarized all of the Bible's values in a two-part statement.

1. Our Highest Value Concerns Relationships with God - "Love the Lord Your God"

Vertically speaking, we are to serve God. Loving and relating to God is our highest value. Since it is natural for us to spend time with those we love, each believer should spend personal time in study of God's Word and prayer. When we lose personal intimacy with the Lord, we miss God's blessing and lack power in ministry.

Serving God with all our ability is not an emotion for the moment, but a daily decision that involves all our resources. The more efficiently a believer utilizes his time, and possessions, etc., the more effective he is in serving his Lord. Personal time with the Lord is something that needs to be planned into a church planter's busy schedule or it just won't happen. A healthy relationship with God is an essential prerequisite before moving on to serving others.

Fig. 1.1



2. Our Other Values Concern Relationships with Others - "Love Your Neighbor As Yourself"

Horizontally, we are to serve others. The relationship of love we have with God should spill over into love for others. 'Others' includes our families, co-workers, members of the church we belong to, and the lost with whom we share Christ. As stewards we should manage resources so that the needs of these 'others', those God has put in our care, are met.

Church planters are some of the busiest people in a community. Properly managing time, money and other resources will help a church planter be a better servant to others, by enabling purposeful ministry instead of allowing circumstances to control progress.

Before we can discuss stewardship in any more detail, we must check our values. The Great Commandment should be our guide concerning our values and priorities. Are you a person who loves God with all your heart and also loves others as yourself? If this is so, your stewardship should give evidence to that.

III. Stewardship Principles In The Bible

There are many examples of stewards in the Bible. Most of the wealthy people had stewards. Rather than personally concern themselves with administering their daily affairs they would hire a reliable, capable man as steward. The steward did not have his own possessions. Rather, he was permitted to live in the master's house, eat at his master's table, and clothe himself from his master's possessions. Rather than have his own possessions, the steward had access to all the wealth of his master.

A. The Meaning of Stewardship

Several words are used in the Bible for the concept of stewardship. Translations vary, but the general meaning is still clear. Some of the terms used are as follows:

1. Steward (oikonomos¹)

This is the most specific word for one who acted as a steward. He was responsible for the administration of his master's wealth. He had great authority in the household. The root of the word 'steward' is the same as the root of 'household.' This person was normally a slave, but was considered reliable enough to be chosen for this important task. This word is used in Luke 12:42, Luke 16:1-3, and 1 Corinthians 4:1.

2. Overseer (epitropos²)

This term seems to be used when the person is in a position of authority over other people. In Matthew 20:8 he is the paymaster for the workers. In Galatians 4:2 it refers to one who was responsible to tutor a child to maturity.

3. Slave (doulos³)

The slave belonged to another person. The steward was usually a slave, but not all slaves were called stewards. The slave did not necessarily have any authority over other slaves or over his master's wealth. If he did have this authority, the term 'steward' was appropriate. Examples of slaves who functioned as stewards are found in Matthew 24:45 and Matthew 25:14.

4. Servant (doulos)

In many translations, the same word is rendered as both 'slave' and 'servant.' It can carry both meanings. In the Bible times, there were slaves who existed in abject poverty and misery, and there were also servants who led a much better life. However, both belonged to another person, and so the same word was used.

5. Stewardship (oikonomia⁴)

Stewardship is the office or function of the steward, rather than the person. When we speak of our stewardship, we are referring to our responsibility to administrate something. Examples of this word are found in Luke 16:2, 1 Corinthians 9:17 and Ephesians 3:2.

From the usage of these words, we can form a reasonable picture of what stewardship means. The steward was normally a slave who was entrusted with the authority to administrate and care for his master's wealth, household, fields, business, other servants, or even to tutor his son.

B. Joseph - An Example of Stewardship

Joseph may be the best example of a good steward. He first managed the household of Potiphar, the Egyptian official who had purchased him as a slave (Ge 39). Although Potiphar was not a believer, he soon saw that God was with Joseph and prospered all that he did. Therefore Potiphar committed all that he had into Joseph's hands, except for his wife (Ge 39:9).

As the steward of Potiphar, Joseph was able to feed and clothe himself from his master's goods. He lived in Potiphar's house and directed both Potiphar's household and his fields. But the story of his temptation by Potiphar's wife clearly shows that Joseph never forgot that all these things

¹ οικονομοῦ

² επιτροποῦ

³ δούλοῦ

⁴ οικονομία

belonged to his master and that there were limits to what he could do. He could enjoy the fruits of his labor as long as his master was pleased with his stewardship, and as long as he did not sin against Potiphar.

Later, Joseph again was made a steward, first of the jailer and then of Pharaoh himself. As steward of Pharaoh, he was the wealthiest man in Egypt after Pharaoh. However his position depended on his faithfulness to administrate the affairs of Pharaoh in a manner that pleased Pharaoh.

C. Stewardship in Parables

Because the steward was so common in biblical times, Jesus used parables about stewards to convey truth about the believer's relationship to God. What is the truth that Jesus wants to communicate to us through the image of the steward?

1. The Good Steward Is Faithful

In Luke 12:42-48 Jesus teaches that a steward must be faithful even when his master is not present. If his master returns suddenly to find him occupied with his master's business, he will be rewarded. But if he is not prepared for his master's return, he will be dealt with severely. This parallels the situation of the believer. Our Lord is gone, and will return suddenly. We need to be faithful in His absence.

2. The Shrewd Steward Uses His Position to Prepare for the Future

Jesus told another stewardship parable in Luke 16:1-12. This parable is a bit surprising, since the steward is praised for cheating his master. The parable certainly is not intended to promote dishonesty. Rather, it teaches a very clear message about the wisdom of using the things in our possession now to prepare for the future. The wicked steward realizes that his position is temporary, as is our life on this earth. He decides to use everything in his power to prepare for a good reception for himself when his job is over. Jesus said that he acted more wisely than we often do. We should be using all we have on earth to lay up treasure in heaven.

3. Stewards Will Be Evaluated According to Their Ability

The parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 is very familiar to us. Each servant is entrusted with money while his master is gone. They are therefore stewards of those talents. However, they are not given equal amounts. Rather, each one received according to his master's evaluation of his ability. When the master returned, he rewarded each one for his faithfulness. The one who was given two talents received exactly the same praise as the one who received five. Only the one who squandered his talent was judged. The key issue was the steward's faithfulness and not the amount of things that he was given.

D. The Accounting

The Apostle Paul also clearly taught that we are stewards of Christ. Church planters and leaders are especially responsible to minister the mysteries of God (1Co 4:1-2; Eph 3:2; Tit 1:7). He also taught that our master is coming back suddenly, at a time when we do not expect him (1Th 5:2). When Jesus returns for His church, He will judge whether we have been faithful in our service for Him (Ro 14:4-12; 2Co 5:10). Each of these passages is specifically addressed to Christians. The fact that Jesus will judge believers is even more clear in 1Corinthians 3:10-15. In that text, Paul describes how fire will test our works, and we will either receive a reward or suffer loss, depending on how we have served. This obviously refers to believers, since even the one who has nothing worthy of reward will be saved (v. 15).

IV. Our Stewardship

A. Our Money

Most believers know that they should give a portion of their money to the Lord. However, a true understanding of stewardship results in a different attitude. Not only should we give, but we should not waste money nor should we spend it on things that are not pleasing to God. After all, it is His money. We do not have any money. We only have God's money entrusted to us. Either by giving it to the church or by spending it on the things that would please Him, we in essence give it back to God.

B. Our Time

Our time is perhaps our most precious possession because there is no way we can increase it. We all have a certain number of days which have been given to us by God (Ps 139:16). He expects us to use them for His glory. When Jesus was taken up, the angels rebuked the disciples for standing around looking at the sky (Ac 1:11). They were to get busy with keeping His command to wait for the Holy Spirit and then to take the Gospel to all nations. Paul reminds us to be diligent to live godly lives, as the day of our salvation is drawing near (Ro 13:11-14). He also tells us to make use of every opportunity in these evil days (Eph 5:15-17). God has appointed tasks for each of us to do, and given us a limited time in which to accomplish them (Eph 2:10). We must carefully evaluate how we spend our time to make sure we do all that He desires for us to do.

C. Our Possessions

Even sincere believers often neglect this area. They may think that God wants a portion of their money, but that is all. If they have a very small monetary income, they may feel they need not give. In reality, the Bible never limits our giving to our money. The Old Testament tithe was normally given from the increase in livestock or crops. A large portion of the sustenance of the New Testament believers would also have been in a form other than cash. God desires for us to give a portion of *whatever* we receive. It may be a salary, potatoes from our garden, milk from our cow, or some other kind of income. The source is not important. God is the ultimate source of all we have, and He expects us to remember that and to honor Him from it.

A large portion of the sustenance of the NT believers would also have been in a form other than cash

Are you willing to use the possessions God has entrusted to you to please Him and minister to others? The members of the Jerusalem church sold the things they possessed in order to be able to give to those in need (Ac 2:44). We are first introduced to Barnabas in Scripture when he sells his land to give its value to the church (Ac 4:36-37). God richly blessed him and chose him as the companion for the Apostle Paul.

D. Our Bodies

Few Christians think about this responsibility, but it is important. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Co 6:19), and are for God's glory. Even though the Bible does not prohibit drinking alcohol, smoking or taking drugs, these things can damage that temple and hinder our ability to serve the Lord. Stewardship of this temple requires that we be careful to avoid that which is harmful to our health. This would also include lack of exercise or sleep, poor diet, or anything else that is harmful.

E. Our Families

Our families are our greatest gifts from God. If we cannot manage our families well, then we are not qualified to manage the church (1Ti 3:4-5). Our families do not interfere with our ministry. They are to be a part of it, and our family life should prepare us to minister effectively. As we grow in our ability to care for our families and lovingly instruct them in the Word, we learn to more effectively care for and instruct our brothers and sisters in Christ.

F. Our Ministry

1 Peter 4:10 tells us that all believers are to be faithful stewards of the grace of God by using their spiritual gifts to minister to others. A proper view of ministry will lift a burden from the shoulders of most church leaders. The ministry is God's ministry. It is His work and not ours. We are merely His servants, using His resources to complete the task. If we lack resources, He will supply them. If we are faithful, we will accomplish all that God desires. We need not feel a crushing burden if things are difficult. Rather, we need to wait on the Lord for His direction and strength.

It is imperative that we spend time with God each day. When we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading, we will make better choices, and the ministry will be more effective. Even Jesus felt the need to commune with the Father for wisdom. This is especially evident when He had a major decision to make, such as where to work (Lk 4:42-44) or who to choose as a disciple (Lk 6:12-16). We need the same wisdom. If we never forget that we are merely servants doing God's will, we will listen to Him often.

V. Stewardship And The Church Planter

Good stewardship is extremely important for church planters. They will need to use all their gifts, possessions, time and money well in order to plant a new church. They will also need to understand their responsibilities to care for their bodies and families as they balance them with ministry. They must apply stewardship principles to themselves and teach them to others.

A. Applied to Themselves

Church planters face a difficult task. They must rescue captives from the hand of a powerful unseen enemy and establish new strongholds for the Lord. They are not capable of such things in their own strength. But they are God's servants using His resources that He has provided for them to accomplish His work. He will provide all that is needed. Their responsibility is to use it carefully. Everything that they do, from giving to use of time, should be weighed in light of their need for His blessing and their role as His stewards.

If you have difficulty with stewardship it may be due to a lack of focus. Checking values can help bring focus to life in ministry. Are you characterized as a person who loves God and others? (Mt 22:37-39). Is the way you treat your time, possessions, body, family, ministry, etc. in harmony with this?

B. Taught to Others

Effective church planting requires the involvement of each member. From the time of their conversion, we need to teach each new Christian about his responsibility as a steward before God. Do not assume that others will learn to be good stewards on their own. **Our example** and **consistent teaching** will help new believers understand how to be good stewards.

Specifically, new believers should be taught to:

- Give generously from their money and other possessions.
- Find and use their spiritual gifts in ministry to build up the church.
- Give of their time for the ministry to believers and unbelievers alike.
- Care for their families in order to know how to care for other believers.

CONCLUSION

The Christian is a steward whether he knows it or not. All that we have is the Lord's and we are expected to use it for His glory. This principle applies to all believers - not just to church planters. But church planters have a special responsibility because we are the ones who must demonstrate this principle in our lives and teach it to others. To whom much is given, much will be required.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are the resources that God has supplied for you? List them.
- What areas described in point IV are the hardest to manage? Why?
- Can a poor person really give to the Lord? Should he or she? How much?
- What should new Christians be taught concerning stewardship?
- How are values important in the discussion of stewardship?

Financial Stewardship

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to show how sacrificial giving and self-supporting churches can enhance church planting success.

☞ Main Points

- God desires that we have the faith to give sacrificially to His work.
- Self-supporting churches grow faster than others.

☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should

- Understand how being self-supporting helps a church grow and mature.
- Participate in giving to a greater degree, and teach others to do the same.

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Try to avoid a heated debate on the issue of tithing. The main point of this lesson is that we are responsible to use money for God's glory. Focus on that issue, which is relevant no matter what someone believes concerning tithing.

Be alert in the event that some in the training have experience in budgeting and could share it with others.

I. Exploring The Bible

The Bible has a lot to say about money. We have selected the following passages to help us understand God's mind concerning our financial giving.

A. Tithing in The Old Testament Law

The people of Israel were required to give a tithe, or ten percent of their produce, to the Lord and His work (Lev 27:30-32; Nu 18:23-24). In addition to these required tithes, there were also many other offerings and taxes that are called tithes. So that a serious Old Testament believer who attempted to keep the Law probably gave somewhere around 28 percent of his income back to God. This consisted mainly of livestock and produce from his fields.

Technical aspects of Old Testament tithing aside, the tithe was a personal spiritual discipline that God promised to respond to. Failure to give the tithe was considered by God to be robbery, since it belonged to Him. God challenged the Israelites to test Him on this, promising to pour out His blessing on those who brought the whole tithe to Him (Mal 3:8-12).

B. The Free-Will Offering for the Tabernacle

The tithe was by no means the only method for collecting funds in the Old Testament. During the wandering in the wilderness, God instructed Moses to collect a free-will offering from the people to build the tabernacle (Ex 25:1-8). The people gave of their livestock, their personal things, and even their labor in response to this call (Ex 35:4-29). They were not compelled to give but gave willingly. In fact, they gave far more than was necessary, so that Moses had to ask people to stop giving! (Ex 36:4-7).

C. David Models Giving for the Building of the Temple

David understood sacrificial giving. So much so that he refused to give to God that which cost him “nothing” (1Ch 21:24). King David sacrificially gave of his riches so the temple of the Lord could later be built by his son Solomon (1Ch 29:1-5). David’s giving was an inspiring example to others, and after him the leaders of Israel gave (1Ch 29:6-9). David’s prayer following this offering indicates his attitude about giving (1Ch 29:10-20). We learn that David gave with a spirit of praise and thanksgiving unto God. David also indicates that riches and wealth - everything belongs to the Lord (1Ch 29:16). Giving is simply an opportunity to return to God a small portion of what He has given. David even wonders out loud how God could allow him such a privilege as giving (1Ch 29:14).

D. Giving Out of Poverty

Jesus praised the widow who gave a tiny amount (Lk 21:1-4). He did this because her two small coins amounted to one hundred percent of her wealth. This event occurred before the church was established at Pentecost. Therefore even before the church age, when there is no question that God required a tithe, the Lord was pleased when believers freely offered more than that amount. It is also clear that He is interested and is watching to see how much we give.

There is another clear principle in this passage. The temple was an expensive building covered with gold (Mk 13:1; Mt 23:16). Certainly the temple did not need the poor widow’s money. But Jesus was pleased that she gave it anyway because He considered that she gave it to God rather than to the temple. It did not matter that the religious rulers were hypocrites, or that He knew the Romans would destroy the temple in a few years. We give to God rather than to man. But we give to God through the church.

F. The Financing of New Testament Church Leaders

Spiritual leaders in the New Testament were supported in a variety of means. Jesus and the disciples were supported, in part at least, by the women who traveled with them (Lk 8:1-3). When Jesus sent his disciples to preach the Gospel in Galilee He instructed them to expect to be provided for by those to whom they would minister (Mt 10:10; Lk 10:5-8). As a servant of God, the Apostle Paul had the right to be supported financially by those among whom he ministered just as the Old Testament priests were supported (1Co 9:4-14). Here and elsewhere (1Ti 5:18). Paul encourages churches to support those who minister to them. For his own reasons, Paul did not always exercise his right to receive financial support from those to whom he ministered. For example, Paul received no financial support from the Corinthians, even though he could have requested it (1Co 9:12). Instead, Paul mostly supported himself through tentmaking in order to not be a burden on the church (Ac 8:2,3; 1Co 4:12).

We learn as well that the Philippians gave to Paul’s ministry (Php 4:15-20). It is interesting to note that the often repeated phrase “*my God will meet all your needs*” is found in the context of Paul congratulating the Philippians for their giving. Paul knew that God would supply all the needs of the Philippians because they had given generously to his ministry. In other words, God will supply when we have faithfully given.

G. The Collection for the Jerusalem Saints

Paul set out to collect a special offering for the needy saints in Jerusalem who were experiencing a famine. In his first letter to the Corinthian believers he described exactly how the offering should be collected (1Co 16:1-2). He expected every believer to give willingly on the first day of each week (Sunday). No exact percentage was stated. Rather Paul asked for an amount “in keeping with their income.”

In Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians he again taught on this offering. Second Corinthians 8:1-6 and 9:6-11 contain perhaps the most challenging principles on giving in the New Testament. Paul begins by using the example of the giving of the Macedonian churches (2Co 8:1-6). They gave generously out of poverty, even more than they could humanly give (trusting God). The Macedonians were inspired by the fact that they had first given themselves to God.

Those who give this way enjoy a wonderful promise from God that He will reward them in proportion to their giving. Indeed, God will generously provide for our needs if we have the faith to give generously to Him (2Co 9:6-11; Lk 6:38).

II. Personal GIVING

There is an important spiritual principle that runs through the Bible that every Christian should learn. The principle is very simple. In God's economy the ability to give and receive is not restricted to the available resources. In other words every believer, no matter how poor, should give. As explained in the treatment of many passages above, poverty is no excuse. Everyone is to give to God. Furthermore, when God's people give all they can in faith, it is always enough. God uses these gifts in miraculous ways multiplying them several times over. This is illustrated in the story of the widow of Zarephath (1Ki 17:7-16) and in the feeding of the 5,000 (Mk 6:30-44). In both cases, what was given was not much but it was all there was - and that was enough when in God's hands.

Giving to God's work should be a regular practice of every believer's life. While most Christians are aware of this responsibility, opinions vary as to how much should be given. Is the tithe still required in the church age? If not, how much should we give? Many believe that tithing was a practice prescribed in the Mosaic law which, like the dietary laws, was not carried over to the New Testament (Ro 10:4; Gal 3:25). Others believe that since tithing pre-dated the Mosaic Law (Ge 14:19-20) and Jesus affirmed the practice, though showed concern about the motivation (Mt 23:23), that God expects us to observe the practice today.

All believers who have studied the New Testament passages on giving would probably agree that ten percent, a tithe, might be a good minimum for our giving to the Lord. It would seem that if a percentage was required in the Old Testament, the New Testament believer with his greater understanding of salvation might want to give more.

Regardless of the percentage of income that a believer decides to give, it is important to realize that income does not consist only of cash that is received as wages or salary. If all that we have belongs to the Lord, then a tithe should be given also for other types of income such as crops, livestock, etc. If a person receives little or no cash income, this does not mean that he is somehow exempt from tithing. He has other means by which he lives, and these resources should also be taken into consideration when he brings his tithe to the Lord.

The following principles guide giving for believers:

- Every believer should give.
- Our giving should be in proportion to our income, both cash and non-cash. Imagine if God made your income proportional to your giving!
- We are to give even in our poverty.
- We are to give with generosity and because we desire to – not because someone forces us. Giving must be from a willing heart in order to please God.
- We are to give more than we are able (trusting God).
- Our financial giving should follow the giving of ourselves to God. Giving is a demonstration of devotion to the Lord.
- God rewards us in proportion to our giving. God promises to generously provide for our needs if we have the faith to give generously to Him.

In Malachi, God promised the Israelites that He would open the storehouses of heaven and pour out His blessing if they gave. Today we have the same kind of promise. Stewardship means that all resources that have been entrusted to us belong to God. If we are faithful to give back to Him, then He will bless us beyond our need. If we forget to whom it belongs, and are stingy with Him, we will miss out on blessings from God. We have no guarantee that the blessing from God will be financial. God may bless the giver spiritually.

III. Local Church Finances

One of the responsibilities of the church is to handle the tithes and offerings of God's people with care and integrity.

A. Self-Supporting Churches

The tithe in the Old Testament enabled the temple, and later the synagogues, to support themselves financially. When all households gave 10% then, even with as few as 10 families, a new household, the household of God, could be established. With this in mind, it has been a Jewish custom to build a synagogue in any city that has 10 or more Jewish families.

Whatever one believes about tithing in the New Testament, the principle behind tithing, that a church can and should support itself, remains true. With the exception of the offering to Jerusalem due to a famine, it was normal in the New Testament for each church to take care of its own financial needs. For example, Paul told the Galatians to support their own teachers (Gal 6:6). He told Timothy to teach churches to care for their poor and widows (1Ti 5:3-10), and to pay their teachers of God's word (1Ti 5:18).

Research will show that churches who take the responsibility to support themselves tend to grow and multiply faster than those which do not. There are several advantages to self support:

1. Self Support Develops Maturity

Dependency on others outside the local church can lead to a poor sense of dignity and lack of opportunity to develop. However, when a church supports its own ministry and manages its finances, it develops maturity through the decisions that come with such a responsibility.

2. Self Support Builds Responsibility

It is common for a worker who receives funds from another church or agency to feel more responsible to those who pay his salary than to the church he ministers to. In such a situation, needs can go unmet as the leader focuses on the needs of his "employer" rather than the needs of the flock. The opposite is likely to be true as well. Church members may not feel responsible for the needs of their leaders and may take the leaders for granted. For whatever reason, givers tend to feel a sense of ownership for the things they give to (Mt 6:19-21). In other words, people highly value what they invest in. It is essential that local people own the ministry of the church for it to flourish in their community.

3. Self Support Exercises Faith

Self-support may bring many trials and difficulties. However, the trials are opportunities to grow in faith (1Pe 1:6-7, Jas 1:3-4). Self-support really is a faith issue. The absence of self-support is often not due to poverty, but is due to lack of faith. There are examples of both poor people who are able to support their own churches, as well as people with riches who expect outsiders to support their church. The question is "*Will God provide for His people or won't He?*" People of faith will answer that affirmatively. Is it wise to pray for God's provision and not be willing to be the answer to that request? Obviously it is not wise. To do so would be "faith without works." However, when God's people give sacrificially and with faith, believing that God is faithful, God gives back in ways that they could not have imagined.

4. Self Support Improves Testimony to the Lost

When a church is supported by foreign funds then the perception is that the faith proclaimed by the church is a foreign faith. This often hinders the community witness. This is especially true for salaries. When people receive salaries from a foreign source they may be considered hired salesmen instead of true believers with an authentic faith. On the other hand, when members of the church support the ministry sacrificially there can be little doubt about their loyalty.

If a church expects outsiders to pay the bills, will they also expect outsiders to evangelize the community?

5. Self Support Allows for Unlimited Growth

When funds come from an outside source then there is nearly always a limit to the funds. Often the system requires investing resources to promote the ministry to potential supporters. In other words, it costs money to receive money. There is also the fear that funds could be cut off at any time. The result is that there is a limit to how much money can be received, and the church does not grow. On the other hand, in a self-supporting church where people are taught to give, funds will increase as new people are won to Christ and incorporated into the church. As the church grows the giving increases so that there is no limit on what can be done.

When a butterfly is born it must endure a great struggle to escape from the cocoon. A well meaning observer may wish to help the butterfly out of the cocoon. But if he does, he actually hinders the growth and development of the butterfly so that the butterfly is likely to die soon after emerging from the cocoon. According to God's design, the exercise of climbing out of the cocoon is just the exercise needed to develop the strength necessary for life as a butterfly.

The same can be true of a new church. If it does not learn to support itself early on, it may remain dysfunctional forever, never learning the joy and strength of self-support. Each new church should have the opportunity to mature in its own faith and follow God's plan of support and growth.

B. Managing Church Finances

Managing finances in the church must be seen not as normal business or administration, but as a spiritual ministry.

1. Teach Systematic Giving

Whatever you believe about tithing, emphasize the joy of giving, not the law of tithing! Biblical giving, whether a tithe or not, is an act of faith, a symbol that all one has belongs to God. When people give willingly they often give more and receive a greater blessing.

Leaders should give as an example to others. Recall how King David's giving was an example to other leaders and to the whole nation of Israel (1Ch 29:1-20). The pastor or church planter who does not emphasize giving in order not to appear greedy does not do others any favor. He deprives his people of the privilege of participating in the ministry, and the church loses the resources that God in His wisdom has provided.

Lack of stewardship can also hinder the planting of other churches. Small groups of even ten families who are giving ten percent or more of their income can easily support a pastor at the same level at which they live. However, if they do not understand their responsibility to give, the church planter will need to find resources elsewhere that could be used to plant another new church. It should be clear that this is not pleasing to the Lord, who wants us to saturate our countries with churches and disciples and thus fulfill the Great Commission.

2. Develop an Acceptable System for Expenses

Christians around the world have different methods for managing church finances. Regardless of the method, it is important that Church leaders estimate the cost (Lk 14:28-30) in planning for ministry. Many churches, taking this responsibility seriously, write a budget which is simply an estimate of how much money will be needed for a certain period of time. A budget might include expected expenses for the following:

- Administration/planning
- Charitable ministries
- Discipleship/training ministries
- Evangelism

- Facilities/equipment
- Missions
- Salaries
- Worship

Budgets may be written (perhaps annually) by those who handle the finances (finance committee) but should be approved by the spiritual leaders of the fellowship. Budgets should be written prayerfully with ministry goals in focus.

3. Train and Release the Church Treasurer

People will hesitate to give if they feel that the money will not be managed well. The guidelines in (Figure 2.1) are suggestions for managing finances in a responsible, honest fashion.

In your ministry you may or may not choose to write a budget. You may not choose to use the guidelines suggested. The important thing is not the form, but the function. A system for collecting and distributing funds should include: several people, prayerful planning, accountability, regular collecting, careful record keeping, and regular reporting.

IV. Financing And Church Planting Movements

Church planting movements normally require finances to support ministry at a variety of levels, from the local mobilization level to the infrastructure at the highest levels. People must be trained and mobilized, material must be produced and disseminated, leaders must meet to pray and sharpen vision, research must be done, churches must be planted. All this requires finances. Where do these finances come from?

Since the advance of the Gospel requires funding, giving is an important component of church planting movements. A movement is driven by faith, and people of faith give or their faith is dead. Jesus described a spiritual mystery related to financial giving when he said, *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”* (Mt 6:21). As a person gives financially and substantially *according to one’s means*, the person becomes committed in the heart to their investment. If someone saves money and pours it into a house, or a car, or education - whatever they paid for—this is what they will treasure and love. The same will happen if someone gives to advance the Gospel from a heart of love for Jesus. Giving to God’s work increases a person’s interest in it *from the heart*, transforming them inwardly and outwardly.

Those who are involved in a movement must be willing to give sacrificially to it, or the movement has no heart-felt following. Something very powerful happens when people decide that a ministry or program is *theirs* and that its success or failure depends on God’s work through them alone. Foreign financial support can help church planting movements, but in the long run foreign support means the agenda is set by outsiders. In essence then it belongs to someone else. This can kill a movement.

Figure 2.1 Guidelines for Managing Tithes and Offerings

- Offerings should be received and accounted for by at least two members of the church.
- Accurate records should be kept detailing the amounts given at all offerings.
- All persons who count offerings should sign their names, indicating that the amount is correct.
- A finance committee of at least three members should be responsible for overseeing the disbursements of the offerings according to the guidelines established by the official church leaders.
- A treasurer should be appointed from the membership to keep a careful record of all church funds. The treasurer should keep church money in a safe place for future use.
- Offerings that are given for specific purposes should be used for only that purpose.
- Annual financial reports showing what was received and how it was disbursed should be made available to all members.

Is it possible for movements to be sustained by local financial support? The answer, as you might expect, is “Yes, *it is possible.*” Where people have a burning vision and driving faith for church planting movements, God provides the resources, as can be testified to by believers around the world. India, one of the poorest nations in the world by most economic standards has several examples. The Friends Missionary Prayer Band is an indigenous movement that supports 1,000 Indian missionaries and has 30,000 prayer supporters. The ministry operates without outside funding. Instead, 10 members of a prayer band support their own evangelist.

CONCLUSION

In God’s design, individuals as well as churches are to develop in maturity and faithfulness before God. Remaining in a state of dependency does not promote the maturity and faith that is necessary for the mission God has given to us. Many believers find it difficult to trust God with financial matters. But God invites us to put Him to the test in this area. If you find it difficult to give to God’s work then bring that before the Lord. He will prove faithful.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Are you willing to give above your means, like the Macedonians?
- What should new Christians be taught concerning giving?
- Do you determine the amount of your tithe based on your cash income only, or also on other resources with which God has blessed you?
- How would you explain giving to a non-Christian who thinks that churches only ask for money?
- What effect does outside funding have on a local church?

ACTION PLAN

- Record your income from all sources (including non-cash) and your giving for a week or a month. This is between you and God. Calculate what percentage you give to Him. Are you pleased with this? Is He?
- Divide your church’s total offerings for a month by the number of adults represented to find the average monthly giving per adult. Multiply that figure by ten to see how much each adult would have to live on each month if their giving really represented a tithe. How do you think your church is doing? Do they need more instruction in this area? If so, develop a plan to teach them. Remember that the purpose of this is to help them understand stewardship, and not to enact a legalistic requirement of giving which you will enforce. God loves those who give freely.

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Time Management

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to demonstrate the importance and wise use of time from a biblical standpoint and to acquaint church planters with basic principles for using their time effectively.

Main Points

- Keeping a time log can help the church planter wisely evaluate the use of his most precious asset—his time.
- Writing a schedule is another helpful time management technique.

Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should

- Understand the biblical principles regarding time management.
- Know the principle of the importance of time and the need to take steps to use time wisely in all areas of life.
- Participate in using a tool that can help the church planter make better use of time.

Suggestions to Trainers

It is highly recommended that the trainer begin preparing for this lesson far enough in advance in order to go through the “Practical Implementation” section himself. In short this lesson will take on much more significance if the trainer has personal and practical experience with this exercise. Take time to share your experience of successes/failures in tabulating and analyzing your schedule, as well as your goal setting, plus any new daily schedules that result from your working through this exercise. The more personal you can make this lesson the more impact it will have on those you are training.

INTRODUCTION

There doesn't seem to be enough time in a day to accomplish all that is demanded. Your spouse says you need to spend more time at home with the children. New believers need some quality time to be discipled. A future leader of a cell group needs to see you. There are always those who are sick and need a visit. And don't forget about preparation time for the Bible studies and the Sunday sermons. The list of tasks, those time consumers, goes on and on. And don't forget about time for God. And what about time for yourself? You need time to contemplate your walk with God, your goals in life, your ministry and where it is headed. You also need time to rest.

TIME: A gift that God has given to each of us. It is a valuable resource; once it has been spent it is unredeemable. As a resource, time needs to be used wisely with a constant view to eternity. Proper time management can help you (with the Lord's help) control your time rather than time controlling you. We recognize that most research on time management is done from a Western perspective, and all the practices may not be able to be applied in your culture. But, to the extent that you can apply them, we believe you will find them helpful. This lesson will provide guidelines as to where you should spend your time and offer a practical way to manage your time in a way that honors God.

I. Establishing Priorities - Learning How To Manage Time

Time management is largely an issue of values or, more specifically, *priorities*. Clearly understood priorities should be the basis for organizing time. *Priorities enable life and ministry to have purpose instead of a situation where circumstances control progress*. In essence, this lesson is all about establishing priorities in life and ministry.

A. Biblical Principles for Managing Time

- Your life belongs to God; make Him the Master of your time (Ps 24:1; Jos 24:15).
- Time is a limited resource - use it wisely (Eph 5:15-17). Serve with a sense of urgency and with an awareness that your life may end at any moment (Ps 39:4-5).
- Set priorities and make time commitments based upon your God-given talents and gifts (1Pe 4:10; Pr 16:3). Time should be used appropriately (Ecc 3:1-8).
- Genuine stewardship of time results in bountiful blessings from the Lord (Mt 6:20; Ps 37:23-24).
- Use of time communicates a clear message about your real values (Eph 5:15-17).

B. Priorities for the Church Planter

Time management is, in part, an issue of commitment. How one treats his time shows what he is committed to—even what he loves. If your schedule is such that you cannot spend time with people who need you, then it may show a lack of commitment to them. Commitment to others should be evident in the way we spend time.

Our love for God and others (Mt 22:37-39) should affect our time management. Specifically the following four priorities can be used to guide our time management.

1. Daily Time of Devotion and Prayer with God

Fellowship with God should be your number one priority. Serving others in a right way is impossible without God's presence and power that comes from personal time with Him.

2. Time with the Family (1Ti 3:4-5; Tit 1:6)

Time spent with family is valuable time. The quality of a church planter's family is directly related to his qualifications for ministry in the context of a church. Make family time a priority.

3. Ministry Activities Related to a Church Planting Ministry (Eph 4:11-13)

You have a responsibility to evangelize, disciple, train and release others. The key to all these activities is developing relationships, which requires time. You will also need to prioritize time for Bible studies, sermon preparation, office administration, counseling, etc.

4. Ministry within the Community or Community Outreach (Mt 28:19-20, Ac 1:8)

Church planting is an evangelistic activity. You must be out in the community among those you are evangelizing.

II. Practical Implementation

A. Log Your Current Use of Time

The most practical way to schedule your time is to first record how you spend your time each day over the period of one week. What do you do with your time? Use the table (Figure 3.1) following to write down, hour by hour, everything you do each day. This will help you determine your priorities. This is not an exercise to do everyday of your life, but rather is a tool to determine whether your actual use of time matches your priorities.

Figure 3.1 Time Log

TIME LOG

Instructions: *This log helps you to evaluate how you spend your time each day. Keep this log with you and write down how you spend each hour for an entire week. This will give you a factual picture of how you **actually** spend your time versus how you **would like** to use your time for God's purposes for you.*

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00							
13:00							
14:00							
15:00							
16:00							
17:00							
18:00							
19:00							
20:00							
21:00							
22:00							
23:00							
24:00							

After filling out the time log in figure 3.1, categorize your activities. Use the table in figure 3.2 as a guide. Note that the list in this table is not exhaustive. You may want to develop your own categories that are appropriate to your own lifestyle.

Figure 3.2 Use of Time Analysis

USE OF TIME ANALYSIS

Instructions: Based on the information you recorded on the time log, group your time usage into several main categories. Record the total number of hours spent for each category.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Total hours</i>
1. <i>Morning routine.</i> Note how much time it takes to get dressed, eat, etc.	
2. <i>Daily devotions.</i> Note when and how much time you spend in daily devotions.	
3. <i>Spouse.</i> How much time do you spend with your mate? (for example: spending quality, one-on-one time reading together, praying together, etc.)	
4. <i>Family.</i> How much time you spend with your family (family devotions, helping children with homework, playing games, walking, etc.).	
5. <i>Ministry.</i> How you spend your day at your office or church (sermon preparation, phone calls, meetings, home, hospital visitation, etc.)	
6. <i>Meals.</i> When and where you have your meals and with whom.	
7. <i>Evening routine.</i> What you do each evening (Bible studies, evangelistic campaigns, hobbies, etc.)	
8. <i>Sleep.</i> When you retire for bed. Do you get enough sleep each night?	
9. <i>Other.</i>	

B. Analyze Your Use of Time

Now that you can see clearly how you spend your time, your priorities will become evident. There is not a direct proportion between the measure of priorities and the amount of time spent, but there is a general correspondence. For example, if your spouse is a high priority and you do not spend any special time with him or her, then time needs to be rearranged to be sure that your relationship is a real commitment.

Ways to improve the use of your time should now be more obvious. Look at your time log (figure 3.1) and your time usage analysis (figure 3.2) and answer the following questions to identify patterns:

- What activities do you do repeatedly?
- Are you giving priority to the most important areas of your life?
- Are there any consistent blocks of wasted time?
- What specific changes would you like to make in your schedule?

You should be able to identify your current priorities: in other words, the major roles and responsibilities in your life. List the things that are most important to you in the following space:

Does your analysis of your use of time reflect these priorities? What adjustments would you like to make?

C. Write a Realistic Schedule

Using the Time Log (figure 3.1) again plan your schedule for the next week, based on your priorities as well as what you have learned from the prior week's observations. If you feel that there were certain elements missing from your activities, then make time for them. It would be best to make changes to your normal schedule in small increments.

1. Choose at least one priority and schedule specific time to meet that priority. Note these examples.

Example #1

PRIORITY: *My relationship with the Lord.*

GOAL: *Arise one hour early three mornings each week to pray. This may mean going to bed one hour earlier to ensure the proper amount of sleep.*

Example #2

PRIORITY: *My relationship with my spouse.*

GOAL: *Arrange a special time every week devoted exclusively to one another.*

2. Eliminate those things which are not an efficient use of time or a priority.

Are you doing things that other people in the church are both more qualified and willing to do? Learn to disciple people and delegate responsibility to them. Help others discover and use their spiritual and natural giftedness. Guide them in their ongoing development as leaders. Delegating tasks to those under your leadership will not only save you time, but will help them mature in their Christian life.

3 Schedule family time.

Time spent with your family is very valuable. The quality of a church planter's family is directly related to his qualifications for ministry in the context of a church (1Ti 3:4-5).

4. Schedule ministry activity

This includes time for study, evangelistic outreach, church administration, discipleship, leadership training, prayer events, visitation, etc.

5. Schedule a rest time.

Keep in mind that you are not wasting time when you are resting. Rest will ensure better health and more energetic ministry throughout the entire day. You may need to take a nap in the middle of the day to have energy for a ministry that often ends late in the evening. You also need to prayerfully and carefully consider scriptural commands to have a day of rest. As a church planter your Sunday (the typical "day of rest") will be a very intense day for you. Many pastors who face the same dilemma choose a different day, such as Monday, as their "day of rest."

6. Strive for balance in your week.

If you have a heavy schedule one day, schedule a lighter day the next day.

D. Review Your Progress

Your skill in making better use of time will improve as you practice these steps. You may want to make yourself accountable to someone regarding the goals you have set. If you really want to learn to manage your time in order to be a better steward, then you will take whatever steps are necessary to bring about the desired change. Consider placing in your schedule a regular time with someone whom you respect and who has agreed to make himself available to you. Mutual accountability and fellowship will be very valuable to your entire life.

CONCLUSION

It is not a sin to plan, to manage your time, to schedule your day, week, year and even your life. In fact, it is just the opposite. Proper time management can increase ministry effectiveness and honor the Lord. The potential for sin is there if we minimize the importance of relationships in our managing of time. Time is a resource but an unhealthy focus on time can destroy relationships rather than build them. Be careful of extremes. Seek to be balanced in this area.

You are well aware that church planters, by the very nature of their work, are very busy people. Time management will help you, as a church planter, to be more effective. There is an old proverb that can sum up the subject of time management: "IF WE FAIL TO PLAN, WE PLAN TO FAIL!" Periodically evaluating your use of time, using the exercises in this lesson, can help you make sure that you are using your time wisely.

We all want to hear from our Lord one day, "Well done, good and faithful servant." It is our hope that this lesson will assist you to achieve the "well done" in your life and ministry.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Read Luke 10:38-42. Note the priorities of Mary and Martha. How do these verses relate to this lesson? Which of these people are you most like?
- Read Luke 4,6,9,11. Note how Jesus set aside time to pray. Do you do this as well? Do you pray with your spouse on a regular basis regarding your life and ministry?
- A careful reading of Luke 9:51-62 shows that Jesus had a certain task that he had to accomplish within a certain period of time. What was that task? Did the importance of this task have any effect on his relationship with people? Do you think that he purposely planned for extra time in this task so that he could continue to focus on relationships?
- Read Exodus 18 and note how Moses solved his time management problem.
- Read the parable of the talents found in Matthew 25:14-30. Replace the word "talent" with the word "years" and your name for that of the first servant who received five talents. You have received five years from the Lord. Share how you have invested the Lord's time for which He praises you and that ultimately brings Him glory.

ACTION PLAN

- Read the book of Nehemiah and look for instances where Nehemiah demonstrated any elements of time management which have been brought out in this lesson.

- Begin to tabulate your daily activities for one week. Analyze the results and then set a goal to implement a change in time usage. Tell either your spouse or a close friend what your goal is and keep that person updated on your progress in achieving your goal.
- Develop a plan to decrease your time involvement in some aspect of your ministry by delegating it to others. Share this goal with someone and keep them updated on your progress.

Strategic Planning Process

Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to introduce trainees to a practical method of strategic planning which can be used for any phase of ministry and will allow them to prioritize and link ministry activities to their ministry purpose.

Main Points

- Strategic planning is a process.
- Strategic planning is a tool to help you stay focused on your ministry purpose.
- If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should

- Understand how to develop a strategic plan for a church planting ministry.
- Know how to define objectives and set measurable goals.
- Participate in the process of preparing a strategic plan for a church-planting ministry.

I. What Is Strategic Planning?

Strategic planning is a means to help the church planting team be most efficient and effective in their work of church planting. It is a process by which church planting team members link themselves, their families, their ministries – everything – to the strategic “Z” that they have identified for their church planting ministry. After working through a strategic plan, the church planting team should be able to understand and differentiate between “best” activities – those which will take saturation church planting work farther, faster – and “good” activities – those activities which have a place in church life but do not rapidly bring an entire region to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Strategic planning helps the team to define its direction, its organization and its resources to accomplish specific activities toward reaching “Z.” Strategic planning is not about being better organized; it is about living purposefully, focusing our time and energy on the “best” activities of what God is calling us to do: to see our regions filled with living churches.

Biblical Examples of Strategic Planning

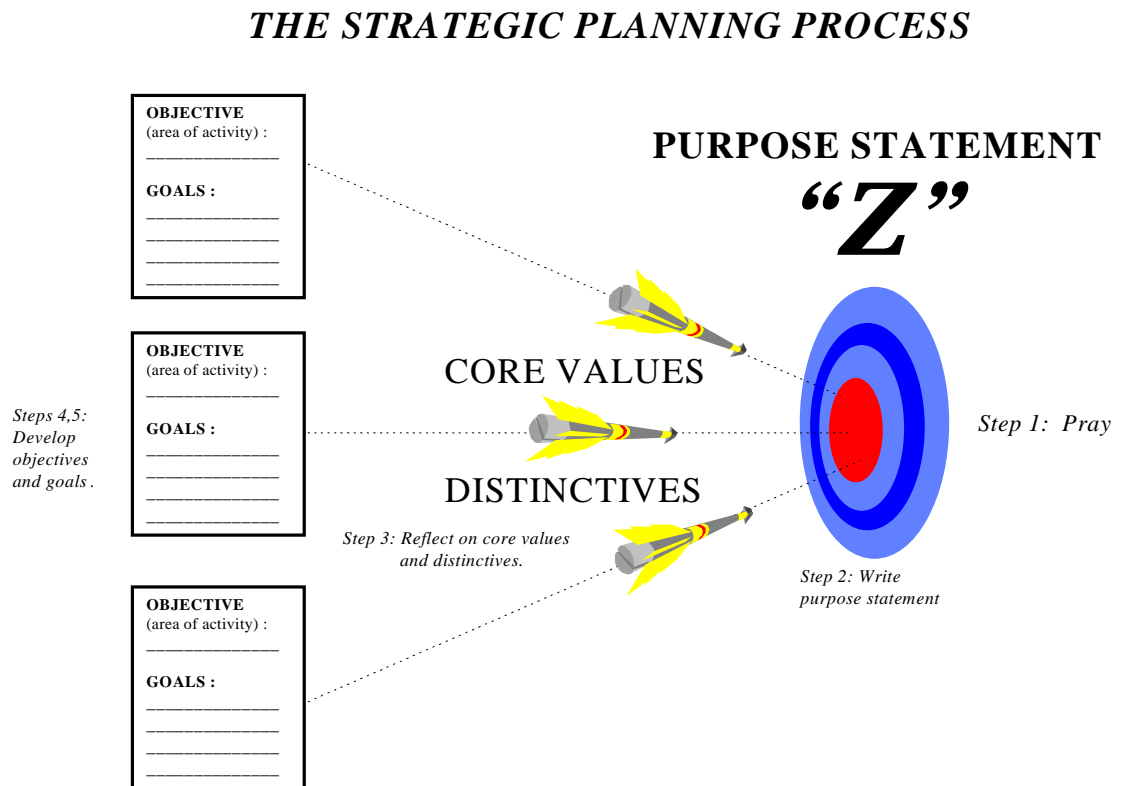
In both the Old Testament and New Testament, strategic planning is evident.

- Joseph, with God-given wisdom, developed and implemented a plan to save the Egyptians and surrounding nations from starvation during seven years of famine (Ge 41).
- Nehemiah surveyed the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and developed and implemented a plan for rebuilding the city wall in spite of many obstacles and risks.
- Jesus’ life and ministry reflect that He had a very definite purpose and definite means to fulfill that purpose. For example, Jesus confidently directed His steps toward the cross (Mt 16:21-23). He focused His ministry on the 12 disciples and among the Jewish people.

II. The Strategic Planning Process

Strategic planning is a multi-step process and contains five major components: purpose statement, core values, distinctives, objectives and goals. Together they comprise a strategic plan. This plan is developed and updated regularly according to the process outlined below. Planning should not be done without much prayer before and during the planning process. Church planting is spiritual work and so requires a dependency on God for wisdom and to have the mind of Christ (Jas 1:5-7; 1Co 2:16). The strategic planning process is best done at least by two persons.

Figure 4.1 The Strategic Planning Process



It is important to remember that the resulting strategic plans are not unchangeable. Rather, they are a working plan of what you and your team see as the best activities to do, at this moment in time, in order to progress towards your strategic “Z.” As you begin to implement the activities identified in your plan, you may recognize other issues or concerns which might cause a modification to your strategic plan. That is why it is important to review your strategic plan on a regular basis. A plan is only useful if it helps you to live more purposefully and keep your ministry focused on the most important activities.

A. Step 1: Pray

With your church planting team, pray for wisdom and clarity of vision from God. Ask God to guide and direct your planning time, to help you to listen to one another, and to have the “mind of Christ” in your planning. In addition, enlist several friends to pray for your team as you work through the process.

B. Step 2: Reflect on Core Values and Distinctives

Core values are the fundamental, biblically based concepts that you are committed to and highly esteem. As you and your team determine what your core values are, the only way to be on safe ground is to base each value on Scripture. These values will help you clarify what you do and what you do not do. Any strategies which you develop that are not in line with your core values are either likely to fail or to be destructive.

Some examples of core values are:

- *Local Church:* We believe that the local church is God's primary instrument for evangelism and nurture, i.e. the main method He uses for doing His work.
- *Multiplication:* A multiplication model, rather than an addition model, is the only church-reproducing model which can ever reach the goal of whole-nation disciple-making.
- *Servant-Leadership:* We believe servant-leadership should be developed by empowering and releasing gifted people.
- *Accountability:* As a team we believe we must be mutually accountable to each other, to a local church, and to our leaders. We believe that through our accountability to these groups, we can maintain a close relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- *Integrity:* We are committed to the following ethical values as we conduct ourselves in this work: excellence, honesty, integrity in finances.....

Distinctives are the things that make you unique. They help to define your identity. They reveal what you are known for and how you relate to others. They may provide boundaries that affect cooperation with others, positively or negatively. They should protect you from going off in directions away from your purpose.

Some examples of distinctives are:

- We work only among Muslim people.
- We focus our efforts on training trainers of church planters.
- We seek to cooperate with all evangelical denominations and organizations working in our target area.

Identify the core values and distinctives of your ministry team. This is a good activity for brainstorming. Have team members say what they think are the values and distinctives of the team. The recorder should write down every idea that is shared. Next, take a look at the list. Evaluate the values and distinctives which were named during the brainstorming activity. Do they reflect biblical values? Does the team agree that this is a value or distinctive of your team? Cross out or rework any values or distinctives which are not representative of your team. Have the recorder write out a finalized list of core values and distinctives on large paper so that they can be kept in mind during the rest of the strategic planning process.

C. Step 3: Write or Review Your Purpose Statement

The purpose statement is the foundation of your planning. Review the region you have targeted for your ministry, whether a neighborhood, a village, a city, a county, or a country. Review also the kind of ministry which God has called you to do – church planting, prayer mobilization, literature distribution - based on your targeted region and your ministry.

Review the purpose statement you prepared earlier for your ministry. If you haven't done this yet, then write your purpose statement. Your purpose statement should be only one or two sentences and should answer the question, "Why does our team (or group) exist?" and should reflect both your target region and your ministry.

Some examples of purpose statements are:

- This team exists to enable evangelicals to fill Romania with reproducing congregations. (National church planting facilitation team).
- This team exists to fill this county with reproducing churches. (Church planting team).

- This team exists to assist local prayer ministries in this city to pray together and to more prayerfully support the work of church planting in the city. (Prayer team).

Have the recorder write the purpose statement on the chalkboard (or paper) so that you can look at it collectively. With your team take time to review this purpose statement and ask yourself the following questions:

- Does this statement still reflect our purpose, or has it changed?
- Is this statement in agreement with our core values and distinctives? If not, what do we need to change to make it agree?
- Is the purpose statement clear and concise?
- Does the purpose statement define our “Z” – the target region or people group we are trying to reach and the type of ministry we are called to do?

If necessary, make changes to your purpose statement in answer to the above questions. Keep the finalized purpose statement in front of the team to refer to during the rest of the planning process.

D. Step 4: Identify Your Objectives

Once you have identified your purpose, your core values and distinctives, the next step is to identify your objectives. Objectives answer the general question, “What will you do?” What are the major thrusts of your ministry? What are the general directions in which your team will direct its efforts? Objectives are the general categories of activities you will be involved in as you work toward fulfilling your purpose. Some examples of objectives for a church planting ministry are:

- Research the target region and people
- Mobilize prayer for church planting
- Evangelize
- Train and mentor leaders for the emerging church
- Train and mentor other church planters
- Develop reproducing cell groups
- Mobilize other churches in the region for church planting

This is a good activity for brainstorming as follows:

- Ask the team, “What areas will we continue to concentrate our energies on over the next three years?”
- Have team members say what they think the team’s objectives are. The recorder should write down every idea that is shared.
- Next, take a look at the list. Evaluate the objectives which were named during the brainstorming activity. Do they agree with your purpose statement, core values and distinctives? Cross out or rework any objectives which do not help you fulfill your purpose statement or are not reflective of your values and distinctives.
- Prioritize this list and cut it down to no more than seven objectives. Most teams or individuals usually cannot work on more than seven different objectives at a time.
- Have the recorder write out a finalized list of objectives on large paper with space so that goals can be added.

E. Step 5: Set Goals

In goal setting, you actually define the specific steps you will take in a specified time period (three months, six months, one year....) to achieve your objectives. While objectives are general in nature, goals are specific in nature. Goal-setting helps you move from fire fighting to fire prevention – from simply responding to the urgent to managing the important. Defining specific, clear, measurable goals will allow you to think through the steps, A, B, C...which eventually reach

“Z,” your purpose. A goal that is well written can be taken by any person and explained perfectly to someone else, even though that person had nothing to do with the writing of the goal. Good goals have the following characteristics:

- **Time Limit.** A good goal needs to have a definite time limit for its completion. The amount of time will depend on what you consider necessary for finishing the task. If you are doing strategic planning on an annual basis, the maximum time limit for completing your goals should be within the next year. EXAMPLE: By the END OF JUNE....
- **Able to be Accomplished.** A good goal will make the person “stretch” in order to accomplish the task. At the same time it will not put the task outside the reach of the person. If goals are unattainable, there will always be a hesitancy to even try to accomplish the goal. EXAMPLE: PREPARE THREE INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDIES.....
- **Measurable.** A good goal will include a way to measure as to whether or not the goal has been reached. There are many ways to measure: by writing, by speaking, by performing some task, by observing certain things....If you do not have a measuring device, then there is no way to know if or when the goal is attained. EXAMPLE: LEAD THE PREPARED STUDIES IN MY CELL GROUP.....
- **Clear Language.** A good goal will use clear, precise language to communicate what is the precise task to be accomplished. Many times words like “know” and “understand” are used in writing goals, but these words are open to many interpretations. For example, how many ways are there to “know” something? We know things by our senses, so there are at least 5 ways to “know.” If “knowing” is qualified by “how,” then it might be permissible to use. Again, how can you measure “understanding”? Words need to be chosen carefully to make sure they convey what was intended.

Example Goal

By the end of June I will prepare and lead a series of three inductive Bible studies in my cell group on the theme of “The Great Commission and Church Planting in our City.”

It is quite common for there to be several specific goals for each objective. While your team might decide on four or five main objectives, you might end up with ten or more specific goals that will help you reach your objectives. You will need to determine how many goals need to be set for each one of your objectives to be effectively met. You should answer the following questions as you work on your goals:

- What measurable thing(s) will we do this year toward accomplishing this objective?
- How will we accomplish these things?
- How will we measure our success?
- What will happen if this goal is not reached? (This will help you evaluate the priority of the goal.)
- What advice, resources, or training do we need to accomplish this goal?
- What obstacles or problems need to be overcome to achieve this goal? (This will help you to evaluate how realistic is your goal.)
- Who will work on this goal? When should it be finished? How will you know when you have accomplished this goal? (Unless someone takes responsibility for the goal, it will not get implemented.)
- Who can help us to be accountable for our goals?

The recorder should write down the team goals for each objective along with the projected completion date and the responsible party.

When you have completed the above exercise, you will have finished the strategic planning process. You now have in your possession a ministry purpose statement, a listing of your core values and distinctives, your overall objectives, and your specific goals. Use this “document” as a starting point for future strategic planning sessions with your team (group).

CONCLUSION

- A strategic plan is useful only if it is seen as a working document and reviewed on a periodic basis. If you have goals which have short deadlines, you may want to review your strategic plan quarterly. but definitely semi-annually or annually. Usually your purpose statement, core values, and distinctives do not change. They are the foundations of what God has called you and your team to do. Until that purpose is fulfilled, it remains the same. However, as you continue to work towards your purpose, and your understanding of it grows, you may find yourself refining your purpose.
- The objectives and the goals are tools to help you keep focused on achieving your purpose. They help you to prioritize your work, to concentrate on the important activities God has called you to do, and to think through practically what must be done in order to achieve your purpose.
- Finally, you must remember that no plan is perfect. It is a guide to help you stay on the right track. The best-laid plans are nothing if the Lord is not in your work. As the writer of Proverbs reminds us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Pr 3:5-6).

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What is the difference between strategic planning and being well organized?
- Can you think of other areas of life in which strategic planning may apply?
- What are some other examples from Scripture, or from your own life, in which you have seen effective planning lead to effective results?
- How would you respond to the statement, "Hazy goals result in, at best, hazy results"?
- What are ways in which people in your culture brainstorm about ideas to solve problems?

ACTION PLAN

Do strategic planning with your church planting team or the leadership of your emerging church. Be prepared to share your strategic plan at the next training session.

Strategic Planning Process Workshop

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to provide practice for the trainees in carrying out a strategic planning session in a team setting.

☞ Main Points

- Strategic planning is critical to church planting ministry.
- Strategic planning is not a difficult task.

☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Know how to carry out a strategic planning session in a team context.
- Be more confident about how to do strategic planning.
- Be committed to doing strategic planning with the church-planting team.

During this hour we will put into practice the concepts we learned in the previous lesson about strategic planning. You will be formed into groups of four or five persons each and will work as if you were a church-planting team. Because of time constraints, we are assuming that your “team” has already developed its ministry purpose statement and decided upon its core values and distinctives.

As a team you have set as a ministry objective to have a weekend youth retreat. The task now is to develop the following types of goals using as a model the characteristics studied in the previous lesson.

- Develop a general goal for the weekend retreat.
- Develop a goal for a specific activity during the retreat.

Be sure to check your goals against the characteristics presented in the last lesson to make sure they meet the qualifications of good goals.

You have thirty minutes to work on this activity. At the end of this time we will let each group share its goals for review and evaluation by the class.