

Why do Mission Planning?

This resource is a short exercise to help your Parish Council explore the relevance and importance of mission planning. It may be the first step in a deeper conversation and further exploration.

Further resources for prayer, study, reflection and worship can be found in *Resource D* and may be useful in encouraging your whole church to reflect on mission and mission planning.

'How to do Mission Action Planning' by Mike Chew and Mark Ireland is an excellent book to read if you want a deeper grounding in mission and mission planning before you begin.

Many Church of England Dioceses have developed their own 'Mission Action Plan' resources. Reviewing these resources can provide further insight into the mission planning process. The resources can best be found by searching online.

A Mission Planning Exploration Exercise

1. Mission: What is Christian mission?

Understanding Mission

Complete the following questions/activities (allow 2-3 minutes for each).

- Discuss the following quote:
*"our mission... means our committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation."*¹
- What does the following passage tell us about the foundation of Christian mission?
"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." 1 Peter 2:9
- How does 'the church' fit in to God's mission (see passage below)?
"For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." Romans 12:4-5
- How does your local church fit in to God's mission?

¹ Wright, C. *The Mission of God*, 2006. 22-23.

Why do Mission Planning? *(continued)*

Anglican Identity

Discuss the *Five Marks of Mission* in the Anglican Communion:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland also considers the following as *Marks of Mission*:

6. To worship and celebrate the grace of God
7. To live as one holy catholic and apostolic Church

How do each of the *Marks of Mission* contribute to the definition of mission provided by Wright? *(see page 1)*

2. Planning: What is mission planning?

Consider these definitions:

Definition 1

Mission planning is a tool that help churches and other organisations to establish:

- **A Snapshot:** where they currently are and have been.
- **Goals:** where they want to be.
- **A Plan:** a strategy for realising the goals (including identifying processes, resources, and programs).

Definition 2

“God plans and implements. As Creator and Redeemer God’s visioning, planning and outworking is clearly evident. Godly leaders throughout Scripture reflected these characteristics. Moses sent the twelve scouts into Canaan with instructions to collect data so that the best strategies could be developed for the nation of Israel to enter the land. David made detailed preparation for the building of the Temple. Paul planned his mission trips for maximum impact to establish and encourage churches throughout the known world. In each case the leaders understood God’s vision for their tasks and aligned their actions accordingly.”²

² The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne. *Mission Action Plans: A way forward through Process, Vision and Strategy*

Why do Mission Planning? *(continued)*

Definition 3

Strategic planning usually has two purposes:

1. The activity of seeking God's Will for a ministry or church; and
2. The decision to act in faith on what has been discerned.³

Discuss each of these questions/points:

- Why is mission planning helpful?
- Where in your work/personal experience has strategic planning helped you to achieve goals?
- Consider these findings published in the report *Anecdote to Evidence*, produced by the Church Growth Research Program in the UK:
 - Of churches that had a clear mission/vision, 64% grew and 25% declined. Whereas, of churches that didn't have a clear vision, 26% grew and 52% declined.
 - Churches that were healthy demonstrated intentionality in prioritising growth, chosen style of worship and nurturing disciples.
 - While growth in numbers is not the sole objective of a mission plan, the evidence suggests that the benefits of having a mission plan far outweigh the costs of not proceeding with one.
- Do you have any questions or concerns about mission planning?

3. Local church: How are we going?

Thinking about the *Marks of Mission*:

- Briefly think of where your church is doing well.
- Think about where there is a lot of improvement needed.
- Consider how mission planning might help your church to reach goals.

³ Episcopal Church Foundation Tools for Churches. *Strategic Planning for Your Church*, viewed 17 June 2019, [https://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Strategic_Planning_\(1\).pdf](https://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Strategic_Planning_(1).pdf)