

Timeline and Program for Mission Planning

As you begin thinking about your mission plan you may have an urge to complete it as quickly as possible. It is important however to take the time needed to allow church members to participate, contribute, reflect on information and to pray and listen to God.

The amount of time needed might vary from church to church. It is important to take the time to consult widely and get strong support for the plan. This could take up to six months or longer. Below are some guidelines for how long each step might take.

It is advisable that you appoint a suitable facilitator and a small working group (5-7 people) to oversee the process and ensure it stays on track. You may want to ensure you have some diversity in the group in order to get a range of perspectives.

1. Prepare: What do we need to do to begin?

The time needed for 'Prepare' will depend entirely on how members of the church feel about mission planning and whether it is felt that some time is needed to explore its purpose and value in depth. This could include a period of intentional preaching and teaching on mission in the lead up to making a decision or beginning the process.

Task timeline:

- Explore with Parish Council why mission planning is beneficial and make the decision to start.
- Prepare a timeline and program for the work ahead.
 - *Allow 1-2 Parish Council meetings.*
- Inform church members that you are beginning a process of mission planning and recruit them to the process.
 - *Allow up to four Sundays of communication in order to share with all the members of the church. Other means of communication might also be used.*
- Engage church members in prayer, preaching, Bible study and worship focussed on mission and the work ahead.
 - *Allow for a period of 6-8 weeks for this work. Other work might occur during this activity.*

Timeline and Program for Mission Planning *(continued)*

2. Explore: Where are we starting from?

The length of the 'Explore' phase will depend on the depth of consultation needed. The first three elements listed below could be completed concurrently. It is also advised that a day or part of a day be set aside for exploring information collected and for church members to learn and contribute.

Task timeline:

- Gather information about the church, its members and activities.
 - *Gather information about the local community.*
 - *Learn what research says about church growth and health.*
 - *Allow 1-3 months for these first three tasks. Time will be needed to collect information and also to meet for a day.*
- Meet with church members to share information collected and contribute to creating a church/community profile together.
 - *Allow ½–1 day.*
- Have a small working group draw together the information into a church/community profile.
 - *Allow for the group to meet 1-3 times over a month.*
- Share the profile with church members, allowing for feedback.
 - *Allow enough time for information to be shared adequately with all members.*

3. Envision: Where do we want to get to?

The 'Envision' phase requires church members to share their dreams for the church through discerning what they believe God is calling the church to be and to do. Once they have considered the information gathered in the 'Explore' phase, a meeting to share their vision ideas could be arranged. Other methods might be used to collect people's ideas such as surveys.

- Provide church members with an opportunity to share their vision for the church.
 - *Ideally this would occur at a day or part day meeting. Other methods might also be used and time should be allowed for people to respond.*
- Prepare a draft church vision.
 - *Allow 1-3 meetings with a small working group.*
- Share the draft vision with the Parish Council, church members and wider community, allowing for feedback.
 - *Allow enough time for information to be shared adequately with all stakeholders.*

Timeline and Program for Mission Planning *(continued)*

4. Plan: What's the best way to get there?

By the time you have reached the 'Plan' phase, you should have enough information for a working group to prepare a mission plan.

Task timeline:

- Gather a small team to prepare a mission plan.
- Prepare a mission plan.
 - *Allow for the team to meet a couple of times.*
- Seek feedback on the plan from Parish Council.
- Seek feedback on the plan from church members.
- Finalise and publish the church vision and mission plan.
 - *Allow enough time for information to be shared adequately with all stakeholders.*

5. Implement: What is the next thing we need to do?

The 'Implement' phase is where the rubber hits the road. The mission plan is launched and the ongoing work of implementation begins.

Task timeline:

- Launch the church vision and mission plan.
 - *Allow for a launch event.*
- Engage intentionally with those responsible for realising goals.
 - *Allow for communication and follow-up with each person on a recurring basis e.g. monthly.*
- Review the progress of the plan.
 - *Allow for review at every Parish Council meeting.*

Timeline for Mission Planning

1.

Prepare

1–2 Parish Council meetings — Explore and make a decision.

Up to four Sundays — Inform church members.

6–8 weeks — Prayer, preaching, Bible study and worship (may occur before decision, after it and during other phases in the timeline).

2.

Explore

1–3 months — Gather information about the church and local community.

½–1 day — Meet with church members to share information collected and contribute to creating a church/community profile together.

1–3 meetings — Working group creates church/community profile.

Allow time to share the profile with church members and receive feedback.

3.

Envision

½–1 day — Provide church members with an opportunity to share their vision for the church (if using other methods allow time for people to contribute).

1–3 meetings — Working group prepares draft church vision.

Allow time to share the vision with church members and receive feedback.

4.

Plan

1–3 meetings — Working group prepares plan.

Allow time to share the profile with Parish Council and church members and seek feedback.

5.

Implement

1 event – Launch the plan.

Every Parish Council meeting – Review progress.

Ongoing – Communication and follow-up with those responsible for realising goals.