

The reason

Isaiah 61, Matthew 28:18-20

What needs to be done?

What can I do?

Luke 5:17-26

Q: Why expand?

A: Why? Isn't that the best question? Expanding is part of God's plan for His church to continue to reach people. I believe that everyone's life would be immeasurably better if they could come into a real relationship with Jesus Christ. This is what we are called to.

Isaiah says:

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners. **(61:1-3)**

We are specially called and set apart to do this in our community. It is what we have been doing and God has done the miraculous in our midst. But we are only just getting started! So many more need to hear the truth.

Q: Are we really over capacity? I see empty seats.

A: The answer is yes! We can seat 119 people in our current setting each service. It may be hard to believe, but people feel the room is full at 75 percent of capacity. After that point, they feel like a room is too crowded. That means that when we have 89 people in each service, we are full!

Over the past two years, we have watched attendance climb, bump up against this 75% barrier, and fall back. We have seen it time and time again, even just in the last few months. All the studies say this: 75% is a real barrier, and our own experience confirms it.

Q: Why not just add another service?

A: A third service is part of our continued expansion plans, but it won't be easy. In order to have a successful third service, we need to grow in our volunteers - it takes 20 people to staff a service. We also need a critical mass of worshippers to create the environment that is conducive to worship and teaching. You are the most important part of every service. We may be uncomfortably full at 75%, but having a too-empty service is just as bad. We need to work up to having a third service to ensure it's executed well and full of worshippers who feel welcome.

Q: So what have you been working on all this time?

A: When we started the Expansion Project at the beginning of the year, we had been working on solutions for many months. We have explored

many alternatives and will continue to do so. One option we explored was merging with another church that had a large building, but very few people. We believed we could do more together than apart. After months of working in that direction, it appears that door of opportunity has been closed to us.

Q: What can we do now?

A: We start by making the most of what we have been given for today! With new staging, sound, lighting, and chairs, we can increase our capacity from 119 to 190. That's 71 new seats each service, 142 each Sunday! Imagine that with these simple changes, we could potentially introduce 142 new people to Christ every week.

Q: What else are we planning?

A: Improving our current layout is only one step of many we will be taking. We want to have a mindset of continued growth and responsiveness to the opportunities God gives us. We will be having regular Vision Nights to share future plans as they are developed. These are a great opportunity for you to ask questions and give input into the process.

Q: Can we remodel the church?

A: We sure can! Some barriers to overcome are:

Time: It will take 6-9 months to get permitting and draw up plans. Add construction time and we're looking at a total of 18-24 months.

Cost: We'd need to retrofit the building with fire protection systems and air exchange, plus work on water retention in the parking lot, which adds up to an estimated cost of \$125,000. New building would cost around \$100 per square foot. All in all, it'll require a large capital investment.

These are all things that we can overcome, but we need to grow now in order to reach these steps, which is why we're taking small steps, like adding chairs, to start that process.

Q: So what's our end goal?

A: The goal is that we make room for new people to meet Christ. Our goal isn't specifically to get a new box, or improve our box, or make our box bigger: it's to provide a space to develop relationships with Christ. Period. As long as we're flexible and open to the possibilities God has in mind for us, we'll accomplish that goal.

PRAYER TIPS:

Use these prayer tips to talk it over with God:

- Father help me to make room in my heart and life to be used by you. Give me compassion for people who are seeking you right now. Help me to be a doorway for your love and grace to enter people's lives.
- Father I ask that you would bless Real Life Church. Give us everything we need to fulfill your calling on our lives. Help us to be a people of vision and courage.