

# GROWTH POINTS

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## Add a Second Service

It is well known that most churches in the United States average less than 200 people at worship on Sunday. One of the main reasons for this is the lack of available seating in a church's worship center. For a church to average 200 people in a single worship service, it must have 250 usable seats. Unfortunately, many churches have auditoriums that seat less than that, which places a cap on attendance.

There are several ways to increase seating capacity, for example, a church might remodel, relocate, or add an additional worship service off site. However, the easiest and least costly way is to add a second worship service.

## Why Add a Second Service

The primary reason for adding a second worship service is to fulfill the Great Commission. To make disciples, a church must evangelize others, add them to the body (local church), and teach them to obey all that Christ commanded. If this is to happen, and keep happening, a church must make room for new people.

Lack of space is a second reason to add another worship service. A church

needs space to grow. If space is not available for newcomers, it dampens people's desire to invite others.

A third reason is to provide an opportunity for evangelism. The human body grows as cells divide, and so does the church body. By adding a second worship service, a church creates another cell which attracts new people.

## When to Add a Second Service

Church architects used to provide seating for people using an 18-inch rule for each seat. While that may have been good years ago, architects today use a 24-inch rule. When a church auditorium reaches 70% full, the tendency is for attendance to start leveling off. Once a church reaches 80% capacity, normal growth stops, except for traditionally large holidays. Therefore, leaders should begin planning on a second worship service when their churches reach 70% capacity, and actually start the second service when they reach 80%.

For a second service to be successful, there must be a critical mass of at least 50 people in the new worship service. This means that a church should move to two services only if it is averaging between 125-175 in attendance in one service. The best time is in the fall or early winter so the church has time to grow into the two services.

## How to Add a Second Service

Each church has different ways of making decisions. Therefore, a pastor or other church leader must adapt these ideas to their own church governance model.

First, discuss the need for an additional service with key leaders. Be sure to talk with informal leaders, as well as formal ones.

Second, visit other churches that have two worship services. Observe both services, interview people, watch traffic flow, and note if the services are the same or different. Talk with your leaders to determine what might work in your church.

Third, inform the congregation of the possibility of two services. Develop three possible configurations of time for the services, and use a survey to ask people which of the three times they would prefer, as well as which of the two services they would likely attend.

Fourth, preach about the need for innovation, and address potential fears members of the congregation may have with going to two services. The congregation will know that their leaders understand the issues, and have selected the right approach.

Fifth, call the new service an

experiment. Offer the new service schedule for three months and then evaluate it. Let the congregation know if it does not work, you will cancel it and try again another time.

Sixth, determine the support needs, such as, ushers, childcare, connection team, parking team, etc. Identify some active members to seed the new service. Recruit support team members from this group, and begin the new service with people from this committed core.

Seventh, advertise the new service and time schedule to (1) fringe members who are not regular attenders at your main worship service; (2) guests who attended once or twice but did not return; and (3) unchurched people within a 10-mile radius of your campus.

Eighth, recruit members to pray for the new service to reach new people. Ask people to join a united prayer team to pray one hour each week for twelve weeks.

Ninth, launch the new service in the early fall (September or October) or in winter (January or February). This will give you time to grow the service before the traditional summer drop-off.

Tenth, evaluate the new service and schedule. If attendance justifies continuing, do so. However, if it does not, do not fear returning to the old schedule. Remind the congregation it was only an experiment. Then wait a year and try it again. It will not hurt your credibility, and people will be less resistant the second time around.

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