

# CHURCH. SUPPLEMENT 11

## [CHURCH BUILDING MINISTRY] MAKING GOOD PLANS

**Introduce.** The Christian Church is first of all a living organism that consists of people indwelt by God's Spirit. But this community should function as an orderly organisation (1 Corinthians 14:33,40). Therefore Christians should take matters as Planning, Organising, Leading and Evaluating (POLE) very seriously.

### A. GOOD PLANS

#### 1. Reasons for making good plans.

- Good plans lead to better results (Proverbs 21:5).
- Good plans lead to better relationships with other people (Proverbs 14:22).
- Good plans lead to a better relationship with God (Isaiah 30:1-2)!

#### 2. The requirements for making good plans.

(1) Making good plans requires hard work at the right time.

- Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. He who gathers crops in the summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during the harvest is a disgraceful son (Proverbs 10:4-5; 20:4; 28:19; 30:25).
- Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth (Proverbs 27:1).

(2) Planning involves good advisors.

- For lack of guidance (vision) a nation falls, but many advisors make victory sure (Proverbs 11:14).
- Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed (Proverbs 15:22).
- Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise (Proverbs 19:20).
- Make plans by seeking advice; if you wage war, obtain guidance (Proverbs 20:18).

(3) Planning involves prayer.

- Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed (Proverbs 16:3).
- Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you (Matthew 7:7).
- You do not have, because you do not ask God (James 4:2b).

(4) Planning involves submission to the sovereignty of God.

- In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps (Proverbs 16:9).
- There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death (Proverbs 16:25).
- Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails (Proverbs 19:21).
- The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD (Proverbs 21:31).

(5) Planning involves priorities.

- Finish your outdoor work and get your fields ready (the really important things, which cannot be postponed); after that, build your house (the less important things, because it can be postponed)(Proverbs 24:27).
- The wise heart will know the proper time and procedure. For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter (Ecclesiastes 8:5-6).
- Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these (Mark 12:30-31).

(6) Planning involves gathering facts.

- I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw (Proverbs 24:32).
- It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings (Proverbs 25:2).
- Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds (Proverbs 27:23).
- Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law (Proverbs 29:18).

(7) Planning involves faithfulness.

- He who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit, and he who looks after his master will be honoured (Proverbs 27:18).

(8) Planning involves order.

- Proverbs 28:2. When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers, but a man of understanding and knowledge maintains order.
- Proverbs 30:27. Locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks.
- 1 Corinthians 14:33. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.
- 1 Corinthians 14:40. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

### 3. The contents of a good plan.

GATE = Goal, Activities, Time schedule, Evaluation

A plan consists of facts, a goal, activities and a time schedule (activities + time schedule = a programme) and it must often be executed within an organisation with its leaders, co-workers, policies, regulations, priorities and limited resources.

How do you make a plan? You may like to plan alone or with a group of people.

- (1) Gather facts. The facts tell you what your context is.
- (2) Set a goal. The goal tells you what you want to accomplish. For this you need to make some decisions.
- (3) Devise activities. The activities clarify how you intend to accomplish your goal.
- (4) Draw up a time schedule (programme). The time schedule tells you when you carry out the activities.
- (5) Organize the people. The organisation tells you who is responsible for what.

## B. MAKING A PLAN<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Gather the facts.

In order to set a goal, you need to gather facts in the following areas (if applicable):

- (1) God's guidance.

What does God say in the Bible and through his Spirit to Christians everywhere and to you personally?

*Explanation:* It is important to seek God's guidance when you are making plans. Your plans cannot succeed when they are not in line with God's plan. God's plan (goal, decree, will) cannot be thwarted! He is almighty over everyone and every event (Job 42:2-3; Psalm 33:11; Proverbs 16:9; 19:21; 20:24; 21:30; Isaiah 8:10; 14:24-27; 25:1; 40:8; 46:10-11; 48:14; 55:11; Jeremiah 44:9; Ephesians 1:11; Revelation 3:7-8).

- (2) Goal of your church (organisation).

What are the goals of the church or organisation you belong to?

*Explanation:* Your plan must fit within the vision of your church.

- (3) Progress.

What have you accomplished until now? What progress have you made the past year (1 Timothy 4:15).

*Explanation:* It is important that your plans lie within the development of your personality and ministry.

- (4) Lessons learned.

Which lessons can you draw from your previous experiences, successes, failures and mistakes? (Proverbs 24:32). Think about the reasons.

*Explanation:* If applicable, apply what you have learned in the past to your new plans. This increases effectiveness.

- (5) Culture.

What are the characteristics of the (sub)culture within which you want to carry out your plan

*Explanation:* Study the characteristics of the group of people you want to reach or influence. Their worldview, faith, superstitions, values, norms, and habits (Deuteronomy 18:9-13; Matthew 15:1-9), so that your plan may be in keeping with these people. Which aspects in their culture is sinful and should change?

- (6) Needs.

What are the conscious and unconscious needs of the people you want to reach, of your fellow workers and yourself (Proverbs 27:23; Jeremiah 12:10-11; Zachariah 10:2-3; 11:15-17; Matthew 9:36) (*Read* Jeremiah 23:1-40; Ezekiel 34:1-24).

*Explanation:* List the needs so that you can take account of them.

- (7) Possibilities (chances).

What are the possibilities or open doors that God gives you? (Acts 14:27; 1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12; Colossians 4:3).

*Explanation:* See God's guidance (manual 4, lesson 43).

- (8) Obstacles (problems).

What are the difficulties, problems, hindrances you are facing? (Acts 16:6-7; 2 Corinthians 11:28; 1 Thessalonians 2:14,15,18).

*Explanation:* Problems and hindrances can come from God, but also from the Evil one. Study them, pray about them and let God's light shine upon them.

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<sup>1</sup> Another way of viewing decision-making is in three steps:

- conceptualization (gathering and understanding the facts)
- forming an opinion (make a judgement about the facts)
- making a decision (make a choice based on the facts)

(9) Means.

Which means do you have available?

*Explanation:* Possible means are: people (fellow workers), their available time (Philippians 2:19-23), available places to carry on the ministry (Acts 19:9), materials, money (Philippians 4:15-16), prayer support (Colossians 4:2-4).

(10) Skills.

What are the skills of your fellow workers and the people you want to reach?

*Explanation:* For example: their natural talents, spiritual gifts, strengths, weaknesses, experience, faith, etc.

(11) Costs.

What are the costs (Luke 14:28-30)?

*Explanation:* The costs can be expressed in terms of time (2 Corinthians 11:27), energy, self-denial, money, preparation of materials, programmes and workers, possible opposition (2 Timothy 3:12).

(12) Advice.

What advice do the following people give to you: your leaders, other God-fearing and wise people, people who have done similar things?

*Explanation:* Ask advice only after you have done the above research.

## 2. Make decisions.

(1) Brainstorm for ideas.

- Brainstorming is a spontaneous discussion in search for new ideas.
- Brainstorm especially with your team of co-workers, but also with your leaders, counsellors, spouse and children.

(2) Interaction in an open atmosphere.

- Interact with one another in an open atmosphere.
- Weigh all alternative ideas, ways and methods.
- Listen carefully to reactions and questions.
- Try to understand one another's intentions.
- Think together through the real and imaginary consequences of your decisions and actions. Isaiah 47:7 "Reflect on what might happen".
- Test every idea with God's Word. All decisions and plans must be in accordance with the Bible.
- Pray thoroughly about every major issue.
- Give time to everyone involved (wife, children, team members, etc.) to think and pray about the proposed decisions.

(3) Making decisions.

- Make decisions as much as possible together as a team of co-workers, as a board of elders or as a congregation.
- Make every effort to make decisions with a consensus (cf. Acts 15:28) and not by voting.
  - The Christian Church is NOT an autocracy where the pastor makes all the decisions.
  - The Christian Church is also NOT a democracy in which the members of the church enforce their will by means of a majority vote.
  - The Christian Church IS a Christocracy in which Christ's will and plans are carried out by means of the Holy Spirit, the Bible (correctly interpreted), the council of elders together with the church members!
- A wise council of elders will involve the members of the church as much as possible in the decision-making process (cf. Acts 1:21-23; Acts 6:2-3; Acts 15:4,22-29; 1 Timothy 3:14-15)! The "decisions" (Greek: dogmata kekrimata) were not decisions that were enforced to be obeyed, but were decisions in the form of advice (Acts 16:4). In this case the decisions were: (1) not to make it difficult for non-Jews that became Christians by enforcing circumcision, (2) requesting non-Jews not to anger Jews who have become Christians by eating meat of strangled animals (cf. Romans 14) and (3) to avoid sexual immorality.
- The group leader will have to make some decisions alone! In that case only the group-leader will be held responsible and accountable.

(4) Important decisions before you formulate your goal (a checklist).

- Biblical motive. What is the biblical motive for your plan?  
*Explanation:* For example a command or a teaching in the Bible.
- Expectation. What would you like God to do?
- Influence. What kind of influence would you like to have on the people?
- Philosophy of your ministry. What are the important principles that determine your behaviour?  
*Explanation:* These are the principles give direction to your ministry, for example, multiplying disciples, labourers and leaders.
- Strategy of your ministry. What is your tactic? What will be your approach?  
*Explanation:* This your method of approach, the most important action steps, for example by means of small groups and personal contact.

- **Plans.** What are your plans?  
*Explanation:* These are your goals and programmes (activities and time schedules).
- **Organisation.** What is the structure of your organisation?  
*Explanation:* Who is responsible for whom and for what and to whom?
- **Relationship.** What is your relationship to other members of your church and to other churches?  
*Explanation:* Determine the place of your plan and its execution within your church or organisation
- **Style.** What are the style, tone and speed of your ministry?  
*Explanation:* Think about your leadership style.

When you have made all the above decisions, you can write your goals.

### 3. Set goals.

(1) Important characteristics of a goal (checklist).

- **God's calling or challenge.** What does God want you to do? What does God want you to give your life to? (Isaiah 30:1-2).  
*Explanation:* A good goal reflects God's calling and challenge.
- **God's commands and teachings.** What are important commands and teachings with regard to this goal in the Bible to obey? (Luke 10:25-28).  
*Explanation:* A good goal reflects God's command and teaching.
- **God's Kingdom, Church and your neighbour.** What are goals of God's kingdom, the Church or organisation to which you belong?  
*Explanation:* A good goal reflects the interests of God's kingdom, Church and your neighbour.

(2) Functions of clear goals.

The formulation of your goal should fulfil the following demands:

- **Motivating.** The goal should clearly tell everyone "why" you are doing what you are doing.
- **Selecting.** The goal convinces people to commit themselves to this goal.
- **Efficient.** The goal should prevent waste of resources (people, money and time) and prevent sidetracking or specialising in non-essentials.
- **Measurable.** The goal forms the basis for evaluation (assessment) and control. That is why goals should be formulated in terms of attainable (realistic) and measurable results.

(3) Formulate goals with the following characteristics.

The formulation of your goal should be:

- **Brief** so that it can be remembered.
- **Clear** so that it be easily communicated or explained
- **Realistic** so that it can be attained and you do not waste time and resources
- **Specific (measurable)** so that you can check whether you have reached your goal. Also in order to keep everyone on the right way so that no one strays from it and people waste time on non-essentials
- **Open.** It describes results and not activities. (Begin the description with: "I have ....")
- **Motivating** so that it sets people in motion and participants clearly know why they are doing it
- **Challenging** so that it stimulates faith and development.

### 4. Write plans

(1) Formulate the goal.

(2) Devise activities.

What activities will reach the goal? How do you want to do it?

(3) Make a time schedule (programme).

The time schedule or programme describes when you will do what. It shows the date, day of the week, hour of the day when you start and when you finish

(4) Organise the people. Finally, write job-descriptions or overviews of the expected responsibilities for each person involved, so that everyone knows to whom, for whom and for what they are responsible.

(5) Make a final check. Ask yourself the following questions:

- How can I give Jesus Christ a more central place?
- Have I counselled others (Proverbs 15:22; 24:6)?
- Have I applied the resources to the opportunities that would reach the goal in the best way?
- Have I considered the alternatives?
- Have I prayed (together with my assistant) about every point of the plan (Proverbs 16:3), for the people in the target group (Colossians 4:2-4) and for the group members (Colossians 1:9-12)?
- Has God approved my plan (Isaiah 30:1-2; 2 Corinthians 10:18; Acts 15:28)?

## C. CARRY OUT PLANS

### 1. When have you carried out a plan.

“To plan” is to put your resources into those opportunities that would reach your specific goal.

A plan is carried out by: organising, leading and evaluating.

POLE = Planning, Organising, Leading, Evaluating

(1) Planning.

I have planned when, based on the facts of my context, there are clearly defined goals and a programme that can attain these goals.

(2) Organising.

I have organised when everyone knows clearly to whom, for whom and for what he is responsible.

(3) Leading.

I am leading when I make the right decisions early enough and see to it that they are carried out.

Clear communication is an essential part of leading.

(4) Evaluating (assessing).

I have evaluated when I have compared what I have done with what I should have done (have planned to do), and have analysed the differences.

### 2. An example of a year plan for disciple making.

GOALS	ACTIVITIES	TIME
I have made the current group of 5 people disciples of Christ.	Teach and train the 4 discipleship manuals containing creative and pass-on-able discipleship disciplines.	48 weekly lessons this year. Each lesson between 2 to 3 hours long.
I have stimulated application of God's Word and life changes.	Regular person to person meetings.	Whenever requested or needed, but at least once every month.
Have built a community of followers of Christ.	12 meetings of all the small groups or house fellowships together.	12 monthly meetings, in the middle of the month.

### 3. An example of lesson 3 of disciple manual 1.

GOALS	ACTIVITIES	TIME
We have worshipped together.	Attribute: God is great and powerful.	20 minutes.
We have shared quiet times together.	Matthew 8:1 – 11:24	20 minutes.
I have taught one new discipleship discipline.	Concepts of the message of the gospel	70 minutes.
We have prayed together.	Prayer in response to God's Word	8 minutes.
I have given an assignment.	Written assignment for lesson 4	2 minutes

### 3. An example of lesson 4 of disciple manual 1.

GOALS	ACTIVITIES	TIME
We have shared quiet times together.	Matthew 11:25 – 14:36	20 minutes.
We have meditated and memorised a Bible verse.	Assurance of answered prayer John 16:24	20 minutes.
We have made a Bible study together	The 5 step method. Where do I come from? Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a	70 minutes.
We have prayed together	Prayer for one another	8 minutes.
I have given an assignment	Written assignment for lesson 5	2 minutes

## 5. Checklist.

- Have I counselled others (Proverbs 15:22; 24:6)?
- Did I plan together with my assistant, whom I am training to be a new group leader?
- Did God confirm the plans (Isaiah 30:1-2; 2 Corinthians 10:18; Acts 15:28)?
- Have I weighed all alternatives?
- Have I put my resources in the best way into my opportunities?

## 6. Do-list.

- Prepare the activities for the next lesson well, eventually together with your assistant.
- Gather the materials needed for that lesson, including the preparation for the next lesson in writing for the students to take home.
- Organise the table and chairs, light and temperature, whiteboard, pen and eraser (or blackboard and chalk), songbooks, extra Bibles, paper and pens, drinks (or delegate this responsibility to your assistant).
- Pray and commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed (Proverbs 16:3). Pray regularly for each member of the group. Pray together with your assistant. Pray for example Colossians 1:9-12 for them.