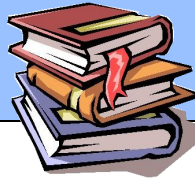


Library News

By Dan Benson



Book Review:

Simple Church

by Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger

Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples by Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger is not just another book about church

growth or "how to do church." It aims to define why some churches, regardless of size, seem to do a better job of accomplishing God's mission of making disciples and fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). The authors studied several hundred churches and found there are four principles for maximizing the disciple-making effectiveness of the church. These are:

- Clarity - What is the process? Does everyone understand the mission?
- Movement - What are the steps in the process by which people move to greater levels of commitment?
- Alignment - Are all ministries and people aligned around this process? How do they contribute to the process?
- Focus - Is everything we do as a community of believers focused on the mission and goal?

Failure to ask these questions and maintain focus, the authors write, leads to a dissipation of people and resources. Typically, in a church this means lots of programs and activity that don't contribute to the overall goal. For many churches, the authors found, this means hard choices such as cutting back on traditional, even popular, programs. "Programs must work for your process, not the other way around," is the way the authors put it.

For me, one of the key concepts the authors suggest is that "the purpose is the process." It's important to remember that as we study Friedens' mission statement over the next few weeks through Pastor Brandon's sermons, the sermon discussion groups and other venues, that the purpose of Friedens Church - making disciples - also is the process. Small groups, social events, committee meetings, ministries, and outreach efforts are opportunities to help each other, as our mission statement says, to love God wholeheartedly, connect with one another authentically and share God's love generously with those in the family of God and without.

Finally, one helpful point the authors make is that it is our personal responsibility to grow as disciples. "Moses walked up the mountain," they wrote. "He discovered the place where God would move in his life and he put himself there."

"Simple Church" is available in the Friedens library.

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