

What is a church vision?



The vision is *where you are heading* – “we will be/see..” Vision is **future-orientated and focuses on where we are going.**

A church vision is an idealistic dream, so it inspires and speaks to the heart. A vision is ‘seen’ with eyes of faith and is ‘felt’, bringing shape to tomorrow. The vision reveals the destination, to be steered and moved towards.

What is a church mission?

In short, the mission is *what you do* – “we exist to..” **The mission is focused on the present and what we need to be doing.** A church mission is functional and purposeful. It informs and speaks to the head tends to be ‘known’, in the sense it is understood cerebrally. A mission makes today clear and is like a job description, bringing direction to what needs to be done.

<u>Vision</u>	<u>Mission</u>
Future	Present
The Where	The What
The Going	The Doing
Inspires	Informs
Seen	Known
Tomorrow	Today
The Dream	The Purpose
The Destination	The Job Description

A- vision statement

What is a church vision statement?

A church vision statement articulates the destination and direction for the church to move towards. It is the God-spoken future for the church and the ultimate goal for success. It answers the question ‘where is the church going?’

Why is a vision statement important?

It brings clarity on the long-term destination that God is leading the church, helping leaders make decisions today. **Vision brings focus,**

What does a healthy vision statement bring to a church?

1. A vision statement is a picture of what the successful apostolic mission looks like.
2. It clarifies church cultures that must be non-negotiable.
3. It guides the selection and development of church structure so the right people and programs are in place for success.
4. It enables the strategic setting of wise goals, targets and objectives that align with it.

What happens if a statement is lacking?

There could mean there is be no target to aim for, or defining picture of what success looks like. There can be organisational drift and leadership that comes from a place of reaction, rather than intention. There could be disunity and confusion because of an unclear or non-existent guiding picture.

How do you develop a church vision statement?

1. **Review the key prophetic words over the church.** What has been repeated? What has been prophesied the most? What words have come through with the most authority, or feel the most significant? These will need to shape your vision.
2. **Write it as a team.** This ensures that other perspectives shape it, making it better thought through. It will also be owned by the team that have input into it. Clearer language will be another benefit, which helps with articulation and communication.

3. **Answer the key question.** Where are you heading? What do you want to see? What do you want to be like as a church? What seems to be the dream of God for your church, when you factor in prophetic words. “We will be/see” is a good example of how a vision statement could begin.
4. **Write in a future and aspirational tense.** It’s a dream or desire, so something you should be aiming for. If it isn’t futuristic, it could be a mission statement instead. It’s also a destination – somewhere you are navigating towards. It’s a going statement. It isn’t an observation, or an action, or strategy, or method, or ‘doing’ statement.
5. **Be broad yet specific.** Be specific enough to communicate the general sense of direction and ultimate feel of the destination, but broad enough that whilst you may say generally some things you’ll do.
6. **Speak plainly.** Don’t use Christian jargon or theological terms. If a twelve-year-old, a new Christian, or a non-christian wouldn’t understand it, you need to simplify it.
7. **Get the majority buy-in.** You might not get everyone to like what you come up with, but if you get the majority of those involved in the process, that will be key to ensuring the mission statement has sufficient backing to be accepted across the church.

Discussion Starters

When creating or casting church vision statements, some questions will help us articulate our vision, which in turn will determine whether the vision is ‘caught’ or not. Consider these questions to begin formulating your vision:

What is the Need?

What is the problem being faced? Is it an adversary, or a situation? What needs to change and seems insurmountable? What are the consequences that will be faced if nothing changes? Speaking to a fear of loss sometimes provides a wake-up call or call to action – the reality check that leads to people facing up to the situation and making the necessary changes.

What is the Promise?

What are the benefits? What good will come out of this successful vision? How will life be better? Not church – but life and existence. How will the world be better, and how will tomorrow be a happier time?

What is the Call?

What is God saying? Why is the time now? What is the urgency? What does action look like today, right now, this moment?

What is the Challenge?

What requires faith and adventure like nothing before? What will compel them to take risks, make sacrifices, and work together in new and deeper ways?

What is the Act of Worship?

What pleases the heart of God, as an act of worship and commitment to Him? What steps are steps of adoration, wrapped in faith and love, and bring honour to His name?

Conclusion: Church Vision Statements

Church Vision Statements are more than just words spoken or written down. They bring life, energy and impetus to the people. They bring clarity to the future and should be a faith-manifestation of the heart and promises of God to the church. Creating a church vision that ensures you articulate what it is God is leading you into as a church is essential to building a healthy church.

B- Mission statement

What is church mission Statement?

In short, the mission is *what you do* – “we exist to..” The mission is focused on the present and what we need to be doing. A church mission is functional and purposeful. It informs and speaks to the head tends to be ‘known’, in the sense it is understood cerebrally. A mission makes today clear and is like a job description, bringing direction to what needs to be done.

An effective mission statement answers the following question:

To whom, or where, has God sent us?

To what place, or what people, are we called to reach? What part of this Great Commission is our responsibility?

When we know the answer, we must focus on it relentlessly and faithfully. That is how we ensure we remain ‘on mission’.

Why is a church mission statement important?

A mission statement brings awareness, clarity, and focus on God’s unique call to the church, for both leaders and the people.

What are the benefits of a church mission statement?

1. A mission statement provides the bedrock for the church to discern its God-given vision.
2. A mission statement enables the church to identify the values it needs for success.
3. A mission statement aids the church in implementing the right structural form and function.
4. A mission statement enables the church to correctly discern strategic priorities.

What happens if a church mission statement is lacking?

Resources, time, energy and money are spent on activities God hasn’t called the church to do.

How do we develop a church mission statement?

1. **Write it as a team.** This ensures that other perspectives shape it, making it better thought through. It will also be owned by the team that have input into it. Clearer language will be another benefit, which helps with articulation and communication.
2. **Answer the key question.** Why do you exist? Specifically, who or where has God called you to disciple? Think through your church and its part in the Great Commission. What was the call of God to the people or person who founded the church? “We exist to” is a good example of how a mission statement could begin.
3. **Write in a present and active tense.** It’s a job description, so something you should be doing today. If it’s not, it could be a vision statement instead. It’s also an activity – what you are doing. It isn’t a passive or reactive statement.
4. **Be short and sharp.** If it isn’t memorable, it won’t be remembered! It should be simple and smart, saying what God is asking you to do. Brevity is clarity!
5. **Speak plainly.** Don’t use Christian jargon or theological terms. If a twelve-year-old, a new Christian, or a non-christian wouldn’t understand it, you need to simplify it.
6. **Get the majority buy-in.** You might not get everyone to like what you come up with, but if you get the majority of those involved in the process, that will be key to ensuring the mission statement has sufficient backing to be accepted across the church.

C- Developing Church Core Values Statements

When developing church core values statements, you will need to be clear on your apostolic mission and your prophetic vision. Without these, it’s impossible to accurately discern the culture you’ll need to intentionally create to see success. Clarity on vision and mission will allow you to identify some essential core values to fuel cultural development, which is essential for it to function as a healthy church.

What are core values?

In short, core values are principles that undergird, influence and clarify what a church does, and **how** it does it. They provide boundaries and parameters around the mission, leadership and ministry philosophy, priorities and strategy.

Core values answer **the question** “who are we? what defines us? what is really important to us? What are the non-negotiables?”

Core values guide **our identity** (who we say we are), **our theology** (who we say God is), and **our activity** (how we do what we do).

Why is a church core values statement important?

A core values statement will help people align their thinking and acting naturally and collectively to ways that contribute towards the church vision.

What are the benefits of a church core values statement?

1. It defines key beliefs needed to develop the momentum of the mission.
2. It shows people how to live in a way that serves the success of the vision.
3. It influences overall beliefs, and therefore behaviour, in the church
4. It steers church culture development
5. It brings guidelines and principles to the church's structural and strategic thinking.
6. It provides parameters of assessment during ministry review and evaluation.

What happens if a church core values statement is lacking?

An unhealthy culture will develop in the church, which means dominant values, beliefs, preferences, attitudes, practices and behaviours characterise the church that may be counter-productive to the vision, or even actively work against it.

How do we begin developing a church core values statement?

1. **Work as a team.** This ensures that other perspectives shape this process, making it better thought through. The values will also be owned by the team that have input into it. Clearer language will be another benefit, which helps with articulation and communication.
2. **Avoid pitfalls.** Don't copy the core values of another church – you aren't like them, so they won't feel you. Don't have too many core values – the difference between a value and a core value is that one is core, central, primary and essential, and the other... isn't. Have distinctive values that are truly you – not just values that any church on the planet could hold. Make sure you are choosing congregational values, and not personal preferences – otherwise, you are letting a single type of person dictate your church culture and it might not be a culture that serves your mission and vision.
3. **Consider your foundations.** Review your mission statement and vision statements and identify all keywords in them that could be possible values. This gives you a working list of elements that have already been identified as essential to your church's thinking. These possible values must be evidently present in either the mission or vision statement. If there is conflict over a value that isn't present in the mission or vision, you have a choice – is it really, really a core value and not just a preference? Or do the mission and vision need to be rewritten to incorporate it?
4. **Discuss and review.** Prioritise the list of values as a team to the core values – the non-negotiables that cannot and will not be dismissed. A good way to do this is to get individual leadership team members to do this first, then compare notes. Tally them up – what are the top ranking half a dozen?
5. **Clarify and define the core value.** Language is powerful. What you think you mean when you use a word might not be the same thing someone else hears or thinks when they encounter it. As a team, agree 'what do we really mean when we describe and define this value?'
6. **Be Wordsmiths.** Articulate each value using simple and smart phrasing. "We believe in" is a good way to start a core value statement phrase. Don't just say "we believe in the Bible" or "we believe in the works of the Holy Spirit". Explain what you mean, and why it is important. Be creative. 'We believe in excellence' is one way of saying it, but you could also say 'We reject mediocrity'. Then unpack it with a sentence to capture its heart and show why your value is *valuable*! Don't use a paragraph when a sentence will do!
7. **Speak plainly.** Don't use Christian jargon or theological terms. If a twelve-year-old, a new Christian, or a non-Christian wouldn't understand it, you need to simplify it.
8. **Get the majority buy-in.** You might not get everyone to like what you come up with, but if you get the majority of those involved in the process, that will be key to ensuring the core values statement has sufficient backing to be accepted across the church.