

THE UMC - 16 KEY - MINISTRY STRATEGIES

Engagement of disciples in small groups and the number of ministries for children and youth

1. Vital churches have more small groups for all ages.
2. Vital churches have more programs for children.
3. Vital churches have more programs for youth.

Lay leadership

4. Vital churches focus on increasing the effectiveness of lay leaders (understand their role and carrying these roles out effectively).
5. Vital churches have lay leaders who demonstrate a vital personal faith (regular worship, intentional spiritual growth, personal devotional life, and giving of financial resources).
6. Vital churches place an emphasis on rotating lay leadership in order to involve more people over time.
7. Vital churches call, equip, use and support more lay leaders than non-vital churches. (Twenty percent or more of their worship attendees describe themselves as current or past leaders in their church).

Pastor

8. Vital pastors give attention to developing, coaching, and mentoring lay leadership to enable laity to increase their ability to carry out ministry.
9. Vital pastors use their influence to increase the participation of others in order to accomplish changes in the church.
10. Vital pastors motivate the congregation to set and achieve significant goals through effective leadership.
11. Vital pastors inspire the congregation through preaching.
12. Vital pastors, when they are serving effectively, stay for a longer period of time. (Short-term appointments of effective pastors decrease the vitality of a congregation).

Worship

13. Vital churches offer a mix of contemporary (newer forms of worship style) and traditional services.
14. Vital churches have preachers who tend to use more topical sermon series in traditional services.
15. Vital churches use more contemporary music (less blended music that includes traditional tunes) in contemporary services.
16. Vital churches use more multi-media in contemporary services (Some congregations in other parts of the world may have limited access or do not use multi-media to the same extent and therefore it may not be as important as it is in some cultures.)

While the study noted that vital churches give more to mission, some have noticed that other types of mission engagement and outreach are not listed as proven “drivers.” This is because, during the past, we have not collected this data consistently across the UMC and therefore the research could not quantitatively substantiate mission engagement. But, in conversations with vital congregations, they tell us that this is an important aspect of their ministry. Directly related to the giving to mission is in all matters fostering a spirit of generosity both giving and serving in individuals and in congregations. It also should be noted that while the study alludes to spiritual vitality in the faith of the laity and the inspirational leadership of clergy, one should not see these ministries/strategies as mechanical operations. Rather, they are undergirded or enlivened by a deep and abiding faith in Jesus Christ.