

SESSION 6
VISION STATEMENT
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When people think of church vision statements, there are usually two related but different things they picture. One is a vision statement, and one is a mission statement. The difference is that a vision statement describes how you and God see your church. It focuses on the personality of the church. A mission statement describes what actions will result from your vision.

Keep in mind that the purpose of your vision statement is to direct the course of your church. This is a big deal, so don't feel you have to rush. Take your time, let the committee meet five or six times. Talk to pastor friends. Take time to revise and rewrite until you have what you want. And, don't feel guilty about spending a lot of time. It's not easy, but it is worth the effort.

EXAMPLE OF VISION STATEMENT

VISION STATEMENT

To seek out those who are lost, hurting, and need hope. To offer all a safe haven where they will find love, acceptance, and forgiveness.

Emphasis on Jesus Christ

We emphasize sound biblical doctrine: We are committed to sound biblical doctrine. We believe that the essential doctrines of historic Christianity are those upon which Christian faith is based, and which have been generally agreed upon — and attested to by the witness of the Holy Spirit — in the experience of the universal church. We believe that doctrinal disagreement on peripheral matters, while natural and inevitable (and biblically permissible) in the Christian church, should not be allowed to foster division within the body of Christ.

We emphasize the power of the gospel: Paul wrote: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). People enter God's kingdom by responding to the gospel. Today, in the Cleveland Tennessee Church of God, the kingdom is advancing. People are accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior and King. They are repenting of their sins, giving their allegiance and loyalty to him, and doing his work in the world. With Paul, we believe in and are not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

We emphasize bringing glory to the name of Christ: Jesus, who died for us and loves us, calls us to glorify him in every part of our life's experience. Knowing we are secure in his love, we are a people committed to glorify him in all our relationships, in

our homes, our families and neighborhoods, our skills and abilities, our jobs, our free time, our spending habits, our church time and our business transactions. Whatever opportunities, challenges or crises we face, we are forever committed to bring glory and honor to Jesus Christ.

We emphasize submission to the sovereign rule of God in the church: Our church has been chastened and blessed by our loving heavenly Father. He has led us out of doctrinal error and scriptural misinterpretation into the joy and power of the gospel. And in his sovereignty, according to his promise, he has not forgotten our labor of love, even in our imperfection. He has made our past church experience, problematic as it was, meaningful to us because it forms part of our personal journey toward complete faith in our Savior. Yet, with Paul, we are now able to say: "What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ... Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:8, 13-14).

We emphasize commitment and obedience to the Lord's call: Traditionally, members of the Cleveland Tennessee Church of God have been a highly committed people, eager to do the work of the Lord. In bringing our fellowship to repentance, reformation and renewal, our gracious heavenly Father has claimed that sense of commitment and obedience for the work of the gospel and for the name of Jesus. We believe in the present and active work of the Holy Spirit in leading and enabling Christians to live a godly and obedient life in the power of Jesus' resurrection.

We emphasize heartfelt worship: Because we are all created to bring glory to God, the Cleveland Tennessee Church of God believes in dynamic worship and joyful praise of our Lord and Savior that is culturally sensitive and relevant. Because our members vary in their backgrounds, tastes and preferences, we strive to worship God through a variety of meaningful worship styles and occasions, blending traditional and contemporary in a way that brings glory to the name of the Lord.

We emphasize prayer: Our fellowship believes in and practices prayer. Prayer is an essential part of the believer's life in Christ and is an important part of both public and private worship. We believe that prayer leads to God's intervention in our lives.

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