

CORE VALUES

1. Core values are the core beliefs that drive a church’s ministry.

- a. Core values are the church’s “constant, passionate, biblical core beliefs that drive its ministry.”¹

2. Core values are far more important than strategy, structures, or systems.

- a. “Every church is driven by something. There is a guiding force, a controlling assumption, a directing conviction behind everything that happens. It may be unspoken. It may be unknown to many. Most likely it’s never been officially voted on. But it is there, influencing every aspect of the church’s life. Churches are often driven by tradition, personalities, finances, buildings, programs, events or even seekers.”²
- b. Often core values are assumed but never expressed.
- c. Core values are indicated by how a church spends money and time.

Unifying Value	Role of Pastor	Role of People	Primary Purpose	Typical Tool	Desired Result
Biblical Instruction	Teacher	Students	To know	Sermon outline	Educated Christians
Evangelism	Evangelist	Inviters	To save	Altar call	Born-again persons
Worship	Worshiper	Worshippers	To exalt	Liturgy	Committed Christians
Fellowship	Chaplain	Siblings	To belong	Potluck	Secure Christians

3. Core values can be either actual or aspirational.

- a. Usually there is a huge gulf between a church’s aspirational core values and its actual core values.

4. The passions and personalities of a church’s leaders usually shape its core values.

- a. Aspirational core values must be lived out by church leaders.

5. Among church leaders, do a core values audit.

- a. “[U]se the storyboard process. Have each person call out his or her values, and have a couple of people write them down on four-by-six-inch Post-it notes. Place them on a whiteboard or a wall and see what you come up with. Eliminate any duplicates. Discuss whether you’ve really captured the core values of the ministry. Identify any that are aspirational. After this, give each person six small red dots and have them place them on what they believe are the church’s six values. (Avery makes a quarter-inch red dot that is ideal for this process.)”³

6. Determining core values.

- a. Who are we?
- b. What are our strengths and weaknesses?
- c. What are our distinctives?
- d. What occupies our church calendar? Where do we spend our church budget?
- e. What are we known for? What would we like to be known for? What would you like our community reputation to be?

¹ A. Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting*, Kindle Locations 1146-47.

² R. Warren, *Purpose Driven Church*, 77.

³ A. Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting*, Kindle Locations 1341-48.

- f. What are the three-five things we want to drive our church? What are the 2-3 things we want to do more effectively than any church in our city?
- g. What is our ministry passion? What excites us? What motivates us?
- h. Our church is the _____ church.
- i. What hills are we determined to die on? What are our non-negotiables?
- j. What leadership model-style do we prefer? Do we prefer leadership by committee or more decisive top-down leadership after consultation?
- k. What frustrates you about our church? What is keeping you up at night thinking about the church? What are our biggest challenges? How would you like our church to be different?

7. Sample core values.

- a. Agape love.
- b. Evangelism and world missions (Ac 1:8; 2:41, 47).
 - (1) “We want to be people with supernatural character, focused on sharing the gospel with neighbors and coworkers. We want to be people who are not focused on survival or higher standards of living, but devoted to the mission. For some, this will mean going to foreign countries to share Christ where He has not been heard. For others, this means supporting those who have gone. For everyone, it means sharing the gospel regularly.”⁴
- c. Disciple making (Mt 28:19-20).
- d. Prayer (Ac 1:14; 2:42).
- e. Leadership and leadership development (Ac 1:15; 2:14).
- f. Biblical instruction (Ac 2:42), such as inductive Bible study.
- g. Fellowship (Ac 2:42-46).
 - (1) “The body of believers is supposed to be closer to us than our own families (Matt. 12:46, Luke 14:26). Jesus said that ‘all people will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another’ (John 13:35). He also prayed that his disciples would be so ‘perfectly one’ that the world may believe that the Father sent Jesus (John 17:20-23). We want to be people who love each other deeply and show this by our sacrifice. We seek a bond that surpasses that of our natural families and is only possible because of our common fellowship with Jesus. We share our possessions and our lives with each other. We seek to obey all of the ‘one another’ commands in Scripture. Christ wants us to be known for our love, and He claimed that our unity would cause others to believe in Him. Our goal is not merely to get along but to love each other to the extent that Christ loved us, and to be united to the extent that the Father is one with the Son.”⁵
- h. Worship (Ac 2:42-43, 46-47).
 - (1) “We want to be people who are *devoted* to worshiping Jesus. We want to carve out time daily to be alone for prayer and Bible reading. We make time to join with others to pray and study His Word. We regularly celebrate the Lord’s Supper and can’t stop thanking Him for His mercy. These are not obligations we try to squeeze in, but cravings we can’t live without. We don’t require gifted

⁴ We Are Church, <http://www.wearechurch.com/values-1>.

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communicators or musicians; we just love to worship Jesus even in the most basic settings. It is the Object of worship that makes worship exciting to us.”⁶

- i. Biblical worldview and apologetics.
- j. Ministry to the poor and oppressed.
- k. Marriage and family ministry.

8. Core values must be communicated constantly.

- a. Core values should be communicated every time there is an opportunity.
- b. They can be communicated in a credo, in sermons, on a website, in a brochure.
- c. They should be communicated at any organisational meeting, worship service, new members class, and other meetings of the church.
- d. Communicating values helps would-be members determine if they share the same values.⁷
- e. Choose concrete, real-world, tangible core values, rather than abstract ones.
- f. When a church’s core values are clear, there is less need for policies and procedures.
- g. Buy in to the church’s core values results in “centralised control, decentralised execution.”

⁶ We Are Church, <http://www.wearechurch.com/values-1>.

⁷ A. Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting*, Kindle Locations 1366-72.

Bibliography

Malphurs, Aubrey. *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting: A Guide for Starting Any Kind of Church*. Kindle ed. Baker Publishing Group, 2011.