

On Mission? Are We Measuring the Wrong Things?

By Bob Young

“You measure what matters!” I first heard this truth over forty years ago. What statistics do most churches measure, publish? Budgets and bodies! What about spiritual growth? Bible studies, spiritual conversations, prayer, Bible reading? What about new churches planted? Disciples making disciples? Baptisms?

What would you think if a coach were to say, “I am so proud of the team because the team members show up every time that we have a game”? What if a coach lets team members miss practice? What if the coach ignored the statistics and the won-lost record and focused only the team being present for games? How absurd!

What if a team spent most of their practice time doing something other than practicing? What if a football team spent the whole game on their end of the field and never attempted to score? What if a basketball team played only defense and never played offense?

Unbelievable! We know the value of practice. We know the importance of team members doing their best, working together. Teams must be and do their best. We know the importance of playing to win.

Wise church leaders help the church define success. What matters? What is the mission? What is success? Not attendance, not dollars. Not activities, not attractive events. The mission comes from Jesus: making disciples who make disciples. Success means fulfilling the mission!

Wise church leaders help the church understand that the goal is not merely showing up. A church can have good attendance and utterly fail in God’s mission. A church that focuses on attendance usually ends up developing spiritual consumers. That church will constantly struggle to look like the Acts 2 church.

The measure of a church’s health is not how many people attend on Sunday morning. Measure the mission! The goal is bringing people to Jesus. The goal is holistic disciple-making. How many people are serious enough about discipleship to study together, encourage one another, connect with non-churched people to bring them to Jesus? Where are the changed lives? How many new disciples are made? How many disciples are making more disciples?

Are we just showing up, or are we serious about God’s game plan!