

New Church Specialties

What Effective ReFocusing Requires

ReFocusing Defined: "The process of...recapturing the vision and heart of Jesus for His church."

What we are discovering in our learning about ReFocusing is that the effective ReFocusing of a local church requires several key things. We do not want to imply that this is by any means an exhaustive list, but here are some beginning issues we at NCS have identified and are currently learning more about.

1. **A ReFocusing church requires a ReFocusing pastor.** A church rarely grows beyond the health and skill of its leader. This is why the ReFocusing process must begin with formal or informal assessment.
2. **A ReFocusing church requires key church influencers to be on board.** It takes more than a ReFocusing pastor to ReFocus a church. Without the key influencers in the church developing a shared sense of urgency to ReFocus, the ReFocusing process is more than likely doomed to failure. This is why the ReFocusing process must include an assessment of the church as to its ReFocusing readiness.
3. **Gate-Keepers and Gate-Pushers must both be identified and begin working together.** Many times key leaders in the church, the "gate-keepers," are not ready for ReFocusing. They are many times solid, godly people who have the best interests of the church at heart, but who process change slowly. "Gate-pushers" are the persons in a ReFocusing church who are advocating change. If not careful, gate-pushers can push too quickly, make mistakes in processing the needed changes appropriately and actually hurt the ReFocusing process greatly.
4. **Effective ReFocusing requires both pastor and key leaders to develop a "shared vision" and an agreed on church action plan.** Many times a pastor and a few key leaders know that changes need to be made, but instead of thinking through what they should do, they begin "flying by the seat of their pants." Most of the time this kind of an approach hurts the ReFocusing process in a church rather than helping it. This is why we encourage every ReFocusing pastor to attend New Church University, go through ReFocusing training, and write a ReFocusing plan with their people prior to beginning implementation.
5. **Community factors can affect the ReFocusing process significantly.** Sometimes factors emerge within the community that are in God's hands alone. For example, demographic changes around the church dramatically affect the ReFocusing process.

6. **Personal & Corporate Renewal fuels the ReFocusing process.** There is no long-term change in recapturing the vision of heart of Jesus for His church unless both the pastor and the congregation together seek to become a New Testament church again. This includes prayer and fresh obedience to God's Word, being honest and authentic in relationships, aching to see lost and broken people in the community come to Christ, every individual using their spiritual gifts to contribute to a healthy body that brings this about, etc. It is not my brother or my sister, but its me O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. (2 Chronicles 7:14).
7. **Effective ReFocusing should follow an intentional process.** We have discovered that without knowing what to call it, dozens of gifted, intuitive leaders have ReFocused churches all over the United States and Canada. They have done so using their natural abilities. When they discover and learn about the NCS ReFocusing process, they usually exclaim, "that's basically what I did." They also usually admit they could have been even **more effective** if they had understood the process before they began. A greater benefit of the ReFocusing process is that it also allows for the **possibility of reproduction**, something that does not happen with relying only on intuitive leadership.
8. **Every ReFocusing church is unique.** While NCS has developed an understanding of the basic steps involved in ReFocusing a local church, every congregation is a unique collection of events, ministries, context, structure, heritage and mental pictures of what "the church" is. No two churches are alike. While New Church University assists in the process of thinking through and beginning a quality ReFocusing Action Plan, the plan must be contextualized for every congregation. **Principles must be learned, but prescriptions must be carefully customized!**
9. **ReFocusing requires the continued development of specific skills.** When they begin the ReFocusing process, few ReFocusing pastors and churches have all the skills they need to complete the process effectively. This is why ReFocusing requires both the pastor and the church to keep learning together. It is a process! The long-term responsibility of NCS is to **assist districts in building the "learning environment" necessary** to the on-going resourcing of both ReFocusing pastors and ReFocusing lay leaders.
10. **ReFocusing is not a quick fix, it takes time.** The ReFocusing of an entire congregation is never done rapidly. Deep changes that move past surface issues like attendance and morale to issues like aching over the lost, sharing hearts at intimate levels, prayer that produces divine expectations, all of these kinds of core changes takes time. But when ReFocusing becomes the shared vision of everyone within the body, it produces tremendous spiritual power and long-term kingdom results.