

BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH OF HARLEM

BETHANY FORWARD

Facing Reality. Reimagining Ministry. Renewing Leadership.

SESSION 1 · FACING REALITY

YOU SEE / COME / LET US REBUILD

NEHEMIAH 2:17-18 · SUMMIT SCRIPTURE

**Why don't people come, serve
and participate like they used
to?**

**The pandemic accelerated
the trajectory.**

**We cannot lead the church we
remember. We have to lead the church
that exists now.**

The ministry environment has changed

Participation

Sunday routines

Institutional trust

Digital life

Understand the times. Discern the response.

1 CHRONICLES 12:32

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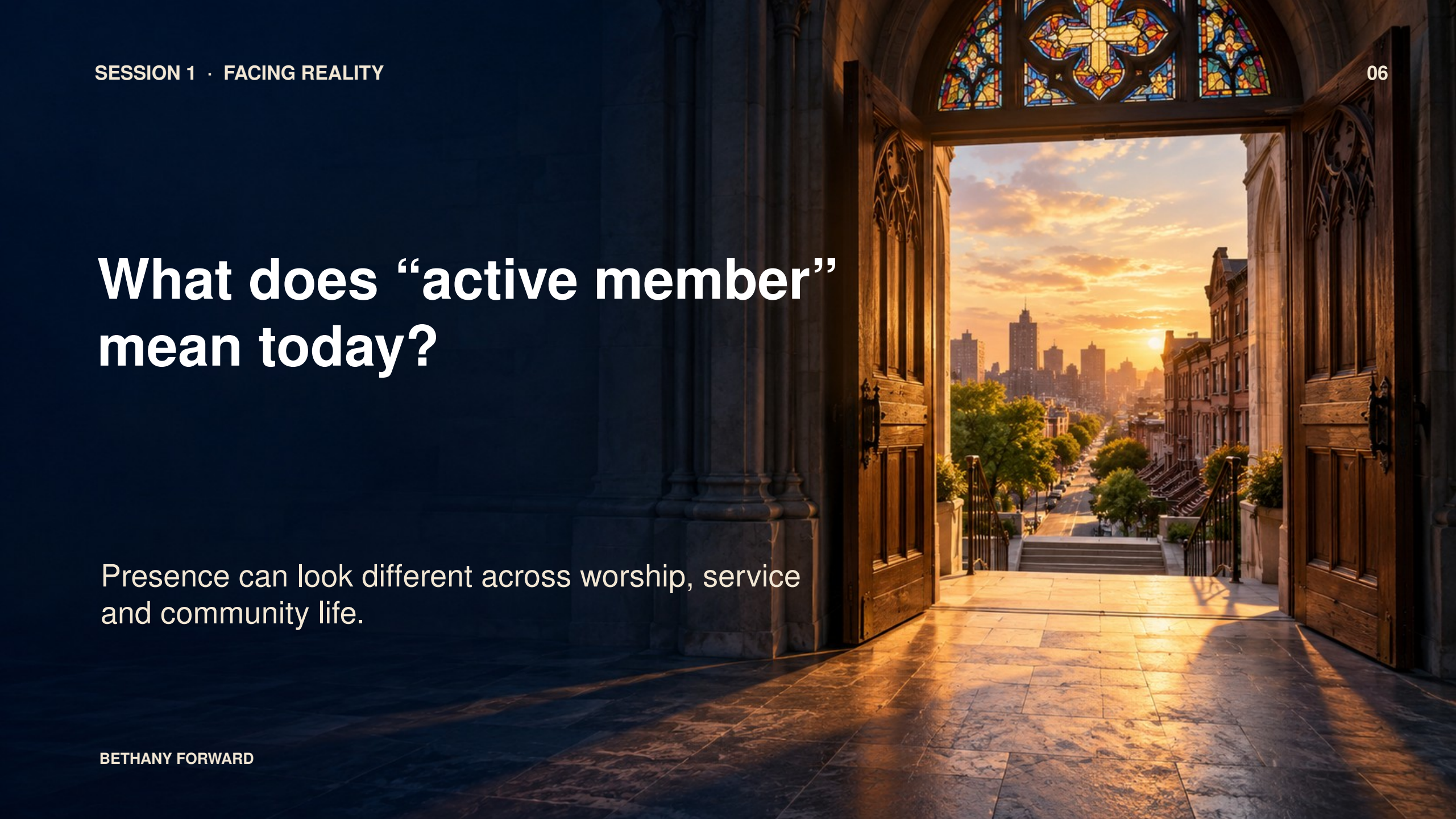
Harlem is changing

Who lives nearby? Who can reach us? Who finds a place here?



What does “active member” mean today?

Presence can look different across worship, service and community life.



Four measures of church life

Attendance

Membership

Engagement

Discipleship

Distinct measures, different questions

Young people aren't the problem

Their spiritual interest and the church experience both deserve attention.

What are people looking for?

Belonging

Purpose

Authentic relationships

A place to contribute

What stays? What evolves?

MISSION

TRADITION

METHOD

HABIT

What is sacred? What is adaptable? What is merely familiar?



Classify Bethany's practices

Mission / Tradition / Method / Habit

DISCUSS · RECORD · REPORT BACK

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Faithfulness does not require sameness

Hold the mission. Reconsider the methods.

Be transformed. Discern what is good.

ROMANS 12:2

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What must never change?

What can change so Bethany can live its mission now?

The Bethany reality check

Name one strength, one changed reality, and one practice to examine.

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Reimagining Engagement

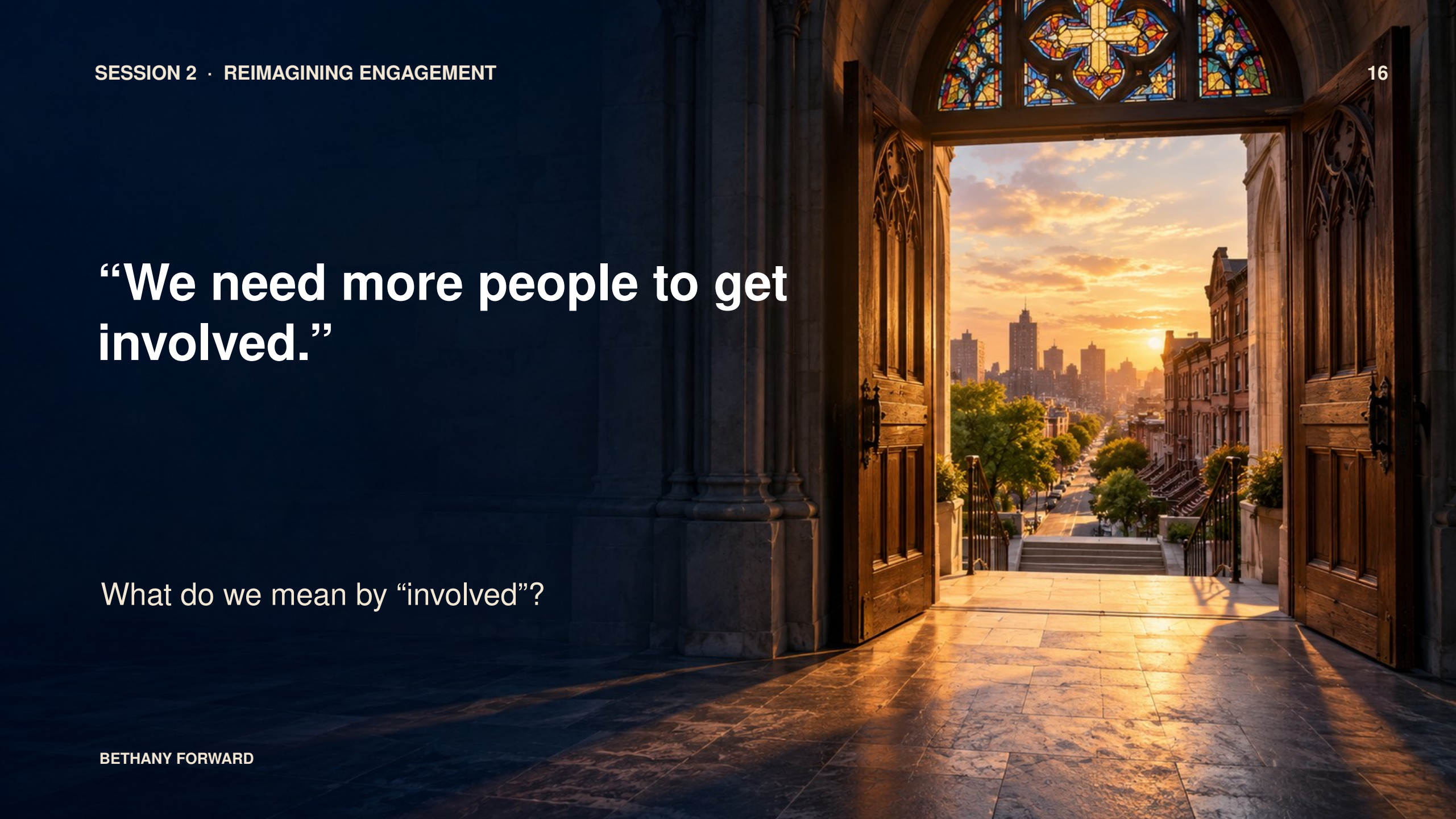
Building a Church People Want to Belong
To

Facing Reality. Reimagining Ministry. Renewing Leadership.

ONE BODY, MANY MEMBERS · 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12–27

“We need more people to get involved.”

What do we mean by “involved”?



What are we inviting them into?

A vacancy to fill, or a meaningful place to grow and serve?

Belonging comes before serving

People are more likely to contribute where they are known.

One body. Many members.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12–27

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The engagement journey

01

CONNECT

02



BELONG

03



DISCOVER

04

SERVE

05



DEVELOP

06



LEAD

Every part contributes as the body grows.

EPHESIANS 4:15–16

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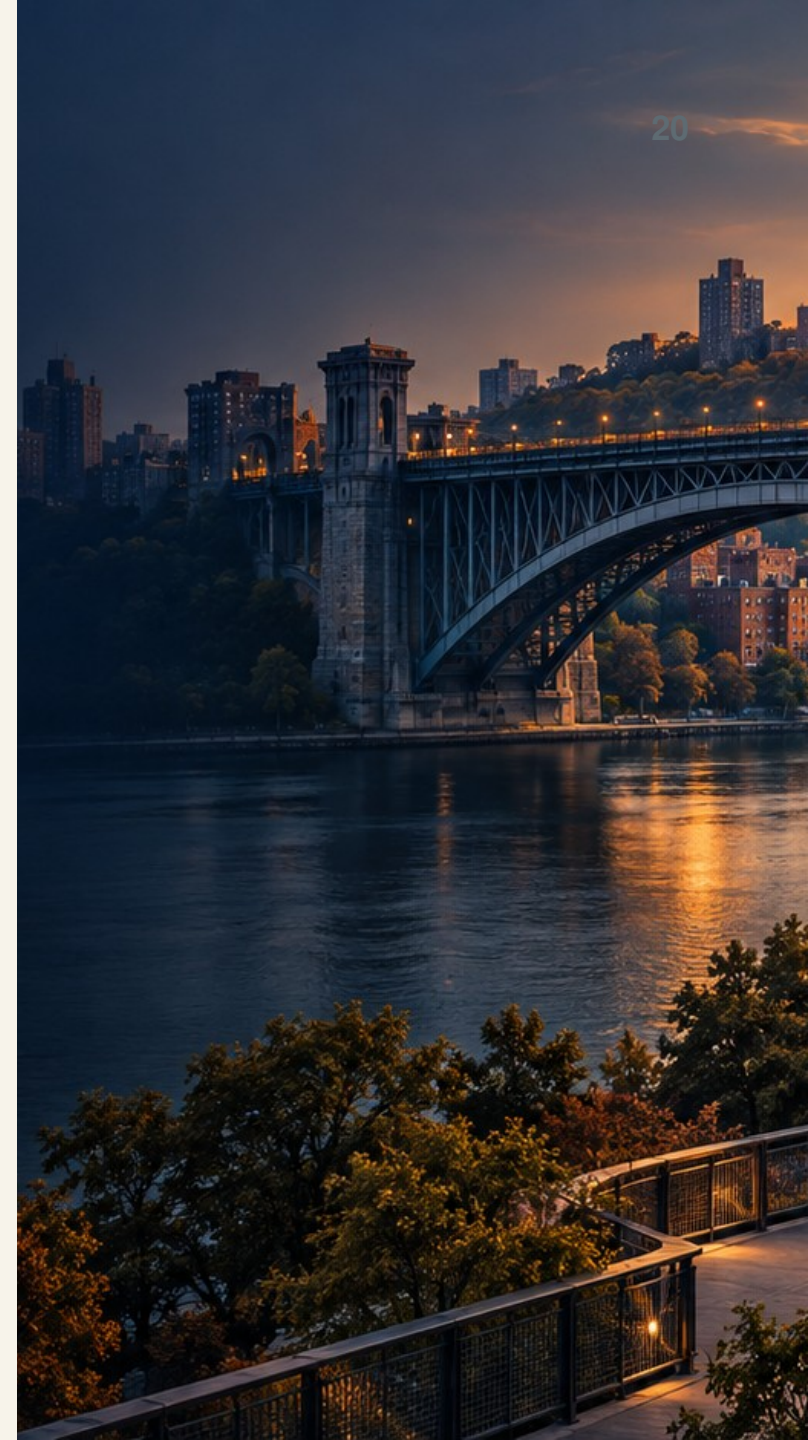
The volunteer problem may be a systems problem

Unclear invitations

Closed circles

Time demands

Weak follow-up



What do we want for people?

Their gifts, growth and relationships matter alongside the church's needs.



Young adults need a place in the whole church

What happens after the invitation?

The conditions for participation

01

VOICE

02



VISIBILITY

03



VALUE

04

RESPONSIBILITY

05



RELATIONSHIP

Every part has a place.

EPHESIANS 4:16

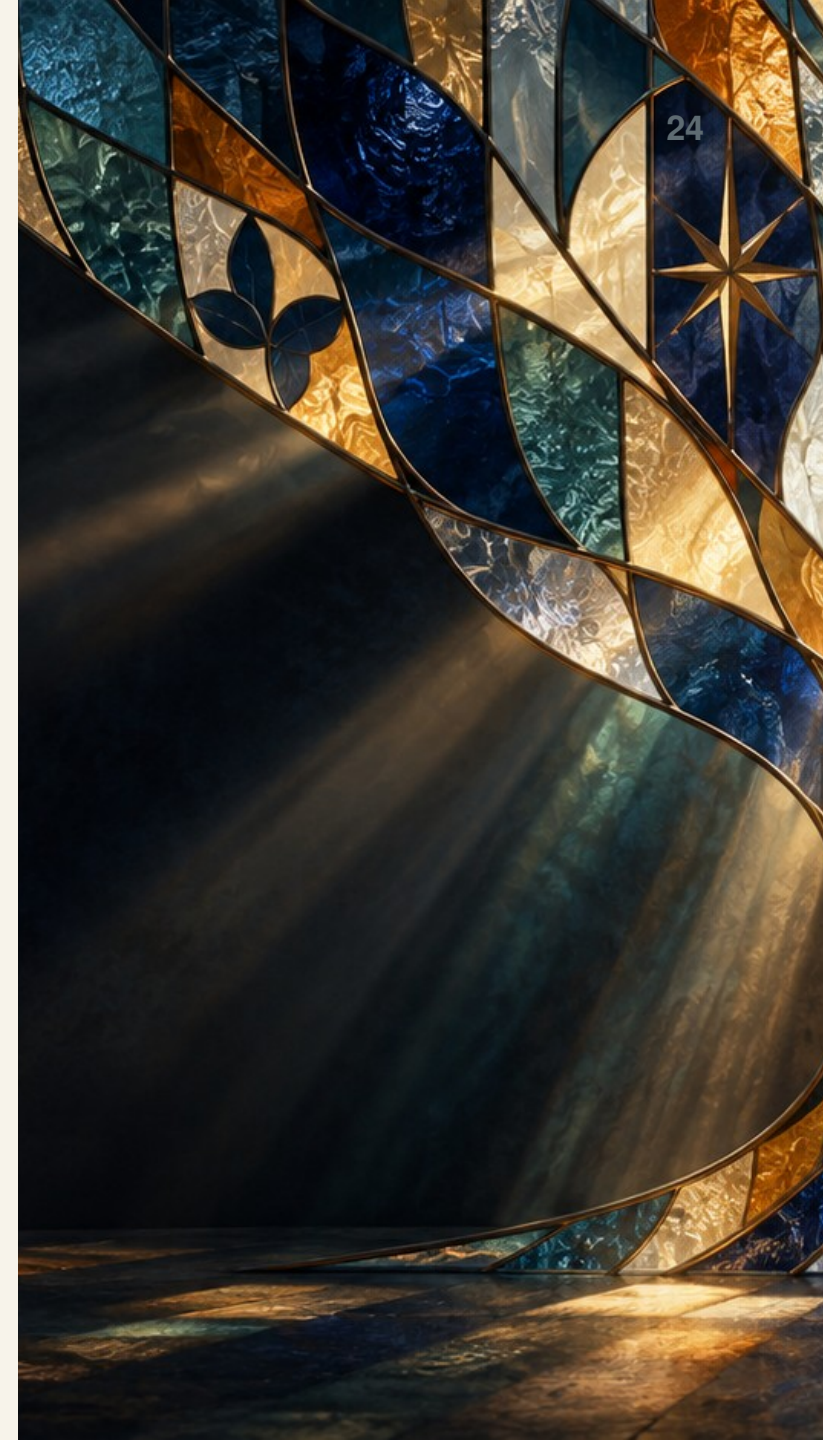
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Engagement barrier audit

Where does someone encounter friction on the path to participation?

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Five places to look

01

ACCESS

02



CULTURE

03



TIME

04

DEVELOPMENT

05



LEADERSHIP

From programs to pathways

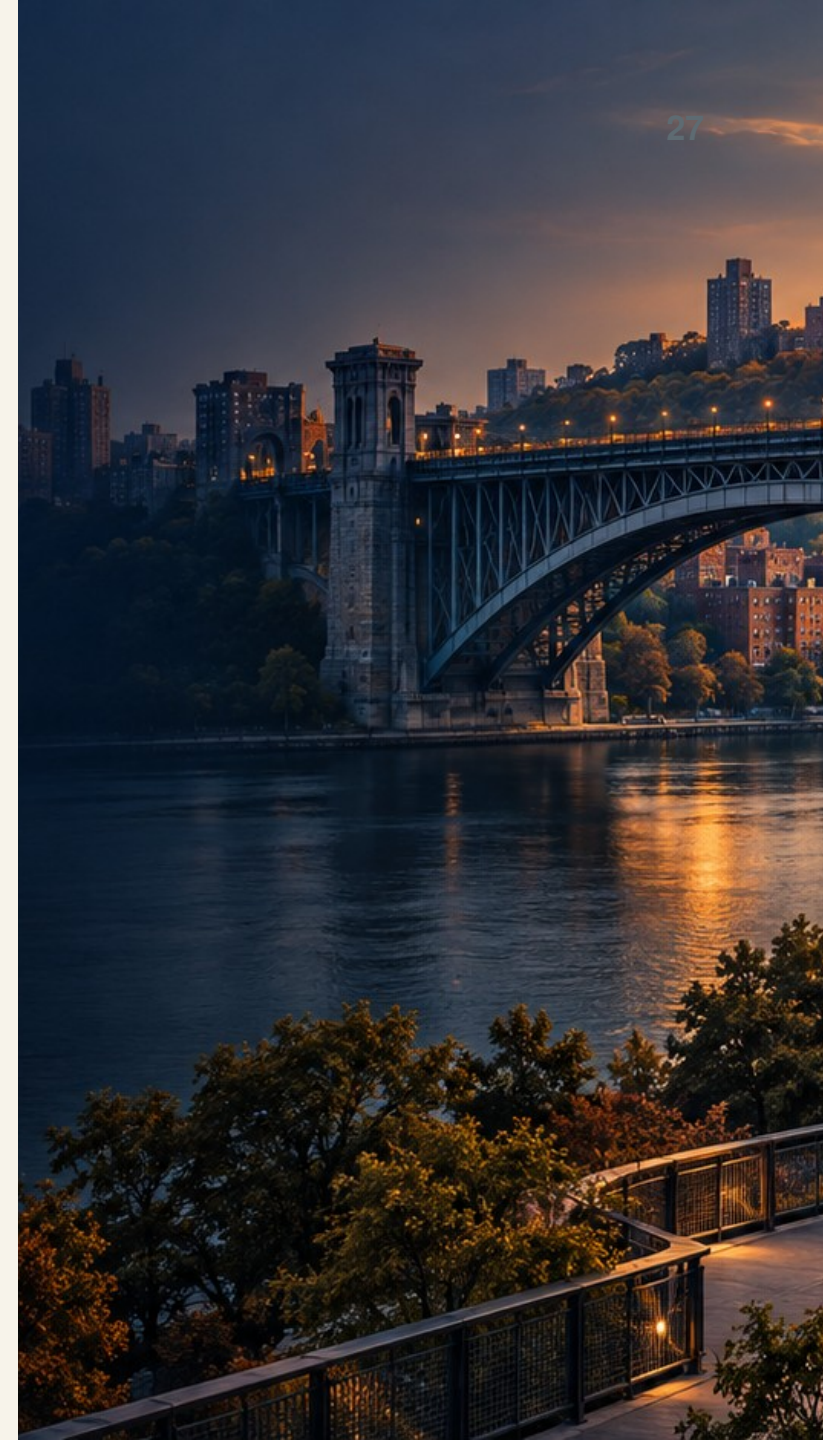
How does a person move from first contact to meaningful responsibility?

The empty chair

Picture someone Bethany hopes to reach who is absent today.

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Who is missing, and why?

What would have to change for that person to belong?

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Sustaining the Church

Shared Leadership, Pastoral Renewal &
the Future

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SHARE THE BURDEN · EXODUS 18:17-23

**If the pastor were unavailable
for three months, what would
stop?**

The pastor-dependency cycle



↪ the pattern repeats

“The thing that you are doing is not good.”

EXODUS 18:17–23

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The shared-ministry cycle

Equip → **Entrust** → **Support** → **Leaders grow**

Ministry expands, and more people can lead

Equip the saints for the work of ministry.

EPHESIANS 4:11–12

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Equipping the saints

Ephesians 4:11–12

Equip the saints.

EPHESIANS 4:11–12

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Delegation and development

A task can be assigned. A leader must be equipped and supported.



A leadership development pathway

01

IDENTIFY

02



INVITE

03



EQUIP

04

EMPOWER

05



SUPPORT

06



RELEASE

Development makes room for ministry.

EPHESIANS 4:12

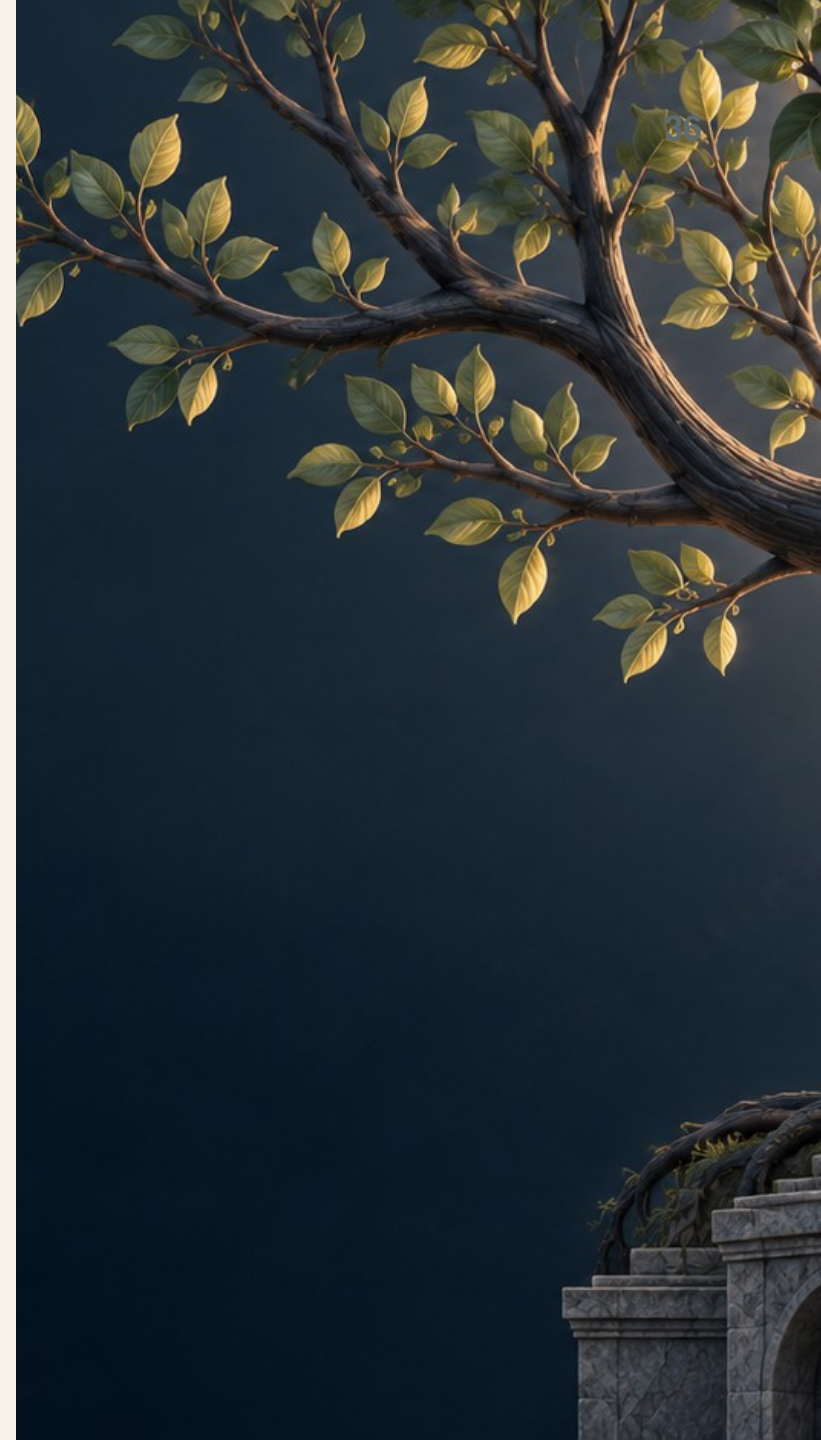
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The ministry dependency map

What depends on one person? What could be shared or developed?

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Rest is not a reward

Renewal belongs in a healthy ministry system.

“Come away ... and rest a while.”

MARK 6:31

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Three different kinds of time away

VACATION

Personal rest

STUDY LEAVE

Focused learning

SABBATICAL / RENEWAL LEAVE

Intentional extended renewal

The church gets a sabbatical too

Pastor renews. Leaders practice. The congregation discovers capacity.

Renewal makes space for new capacity.

MARK 6:31

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Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program

A congregation and pastor plan renewal together.

PASTOR + CONGREGATION

RENEWAL PLAN

APPLICATION THROUGH CTS

A sustainable Bethany

01

SHARE

02



DEVELOP

03



RENEW

04



COMMIT

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Let us rise up and build.

What will Bethany do next? Who will carry it? When will we begin?

NEHEMIAH 2:17–18

“See, I am doing a new thing...” · ISAIAH 43:19