

Col. 1:28; Jer. 29:11; 1 Thess. 2:8— 12 Principles of Ministry: Part 2

7. **Ministry is a lifestyle**— For us to be well rounded Christians, we must view ministry as more than what we do for the churches. We must view our interactions with others at work, school, within our neighborhoods, our children’s sports leagues, our families, etc., as ministry opportunities. We should not be so busy with church activities that we don’t have time to build meaningful relationships with neighbors, coworkers, classmates, etc. (*1 Thess. 2:8*)
8. **No sacred cows, except the proclamation of the gospel**—when certain events, activities, ministries, programs, etc. become so important that we have to do them simply because they’ve always been done, then those things have become a hindrance to ministry and the church. This may also include *the way* in which something is done. (*Exod. 20:3-5*); Is it serving our mission or are we serving the activity?
9. **Ministry can appreciate the past, but needs the freedom to move forward**—two things will hinder and potentially destroy a church: (1) “We’ve always done it this way” attitude and (2) “Remember the good old days when we used to do this...” attitude. For better or worse, the good old days are not coming back. Trying to get the church to look like what it did in 1985 won’t work. The younger generations think differently. (*Ecclesiastes 3:1, 6*)
10. **Everything should have a well-defined purpose**—Activities/events/programs should be about teaching or proclaiming God’s truth to others, spiritual growth, fostering relationships (that may help draw people to the church), or serving the community or world beyond (helping the those in need or social justice). All programs should be evaluated from time to time to make sure it is accomplishing one of those things. Therefore, change simply for the sake of change is also not healthy. (*Proverbs 19:21*)
11. **Success should be measured by faithfulness and fruitfulness**—we must be careful about measuring the way the world tends to measure, by the ‘mores’—more money, more programs, more people (or for some it is a bigger or better building). Those things are fine, and we should desire more people and care about outreach, but sometimes God simply calls on us to be faithful. (*Matt. 25:23; Matt. 7:16-20 & Gal. 5:22-23*)
12. **We must have the freedom to fail**—success does not come by *not* failing, but rather having a willingness to take risks on new things, and not giving up when failures occur. When something is tried and it clearly fails, we must give grace to those involved, and then step back and evaluate, learning from the failure, and then move forward.
13. **(Addendum 1)** Culture eats strategy for breakfast
14. **(Addendum 2)** Be willing to change and adapt the methods but not the message. (Changing methods for an unchanging message)—there is often a temptation to dumb down the message

or compromise areas that may seem offensive or politically incorrect. (disclaimer—we may sometimes need to rethink our posture even when not compromising the message).