

Breaking Growth Barriers in Smaller Churches

Insights from Pastor & Scholar Dr. Ed Stetzer

Originally shared in a free webinar on 2/27/25. [Register to watch the full recording here.](#)

Is your church stuck at 35, 75, or 125 members? You're not alone. Many churches hit these common growth barriers, but with intentional leadership, you can break through to reach more people with the love of Christ. **Here are 5 Tips for Breaking Growth Barriers in Your Church.**

1. CLARIFY YOUR CHURCH'S PURPOSE

Many church members aren't as clear on your mission as you might think. Growth starts with a strong vision: Why does your church exist? Clearly communicate that your church is called to glorify God, equip believers, and reach the lost.

2. GROW YOURSELF FIRST

According to Ed, "The most important thing you can do if you want to grow your church is to grow yourself." Church leaders can do this by:

- Cultivating personal repentance and spiritual health
- Developing strong leadership habits
- Guarding against burnout

3. DEVELOP LEADERSHIP SYSTEMS

As your church grows, your leadership approach must shift:

- 35+ members: Recruit volunteers
- 75+ members: Train leaders to oversee volunteers
- 125+ members: Raise up leaders of leaders
- 200+ members: Create robust systems where you're leading *through* others

4. SHIFT YOUR CARE MODEL

Pastor-centered care limits growth. Instead, equip your church to care for one another. A healthy church fosters care through small groups and shared leadership.

5. EMBRACE MISSION OVER MAINTENANCE

Churches that grow are focused outward, not inward. Help your congregation see themselves as sent (John 20:21)—not just attending church but living on mission.

READY TO BREAK YOUR CHURCH'S NEXT GROWTH BARRIER?

RightNow Pastors+ offers expert-led courses to train and develop your church leadership team. Learn more at rightnowpastorsplus.org