

## Tool #16: How Is Your Church Engaging the Community?

This exercise gives you a quick overview of how your church is engaging the community. An accurate picture of the church's strengths, weaknesses, and goals for outreach is useful in helping the church enlarge its capacity to serve its neighbors.

1. We address community needs primarily ...
  - Through church-sponsored programs, using our own resources.
  - Through referrals to other agencies.
  - Through programs operated in partnership with other churches and agencies.
  
2. Our church is primarily engaged in the community ...
  - Informally, through interactions by individual members
  - Through occasional outreach events
  - Through various scattered ministries with little coordination
  - Through a few focused ministries with coordinated member involvement
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Which of the following are true of the church's community ministries? (*check all that apply*)
  - The congregation understands the theological basis for what we do in the community.
  - Our programs are grounded in an assessment of the community's assets and needs.
  - We maintain a network of relationships with community residents, leaders and partners.
  - We know how to develop assistance plans and walk alongside families who request help.
  - We have a long-range vision for community transformation.
  - We have a coordinated plan for adding new ministries.
  - We have a process in place for evaluating and improving our community ministries.
  - We offer restoration and hope in Christ to all who are open to spiritual guidance.
  
4. Our greatest challenges are ... (*check all that apply*)
  - We don't know how to connect with people who need help or with community partners.
  - We sense our efforts to help people are often abused.
  - We can only provide short-term solutions, not real transformation.
  - We struggle to mobilize church support for helping people who are not members.
  - The people we help don't seem interested in the gospel or in our church.
  - Community needs are overwhelming; we don't know where to start.
  - We aren't equipped to plan or manage community-oriented programs.
  - We don't have enough resources to engage in substantial ministry.
  - We are uncomfortable dealing with people from a different ethnicity, culture or economic class.
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Our church's vision for community ministry is ... (*choose **three** that best describe your goals*)
  - To help meet the urgent needs of people seeking help.
  - To see church and community members live transformed, spiritually vital, fruitful lives.
  - To break the yoke of oppression in the form of generational poverty, addictions, and abuse.
  - To help the community become a better place to live (better jobs, improved environment, etc.).
  - To make improvements in community social life – how people interact and live together.
  - To see churches and organizations working cooperatively to make life better for everyone.
  - To help break down the racial, cultural and economic barriers that keep people divided.
  - To unleash gifts in the community, helping neighbors work together on shared goals.
  - To improve political and economic systems so that life is more fair and just for everyone.
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **(Tool #16, continued) How Is Your Church Engaging the Community?**

### **Questions for reflection:**

- a) Did you gain a helpful perspective on your church's outreach, learn anything surprising about your church, or spark ideas for ministry through this assessment exercise?
- b) Question #5 asked you to select your church's main goals for engaging the community. Why are these the most important driving factors for your church at this time? (Identify theological, cultural, and/or practical reasons)
- c) What do you consider your church's greatest successes or strengths in relation to community ministry? In what areas are you most prepared?
- d) Reflecting on your church's goals for community ministry, and the challenges you face in making these goals a reality, which of the following areas of readiness does your church most need to develop:
  - *head*: understanding of community ministry
  - *heart*: commitment to community ministry
  - *hand*: capacity for community ministry