



A PROCESS FOR HEALTH AND GROWTH

## 1. What is this guide about?

This guide was developed to help you, step by step, with the management of a process for the health and growth in your church. It does not provide a model. There is no program. We recommend a

*Heb. 10:24: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works..."*

## 2. What is its background?

Churches that grow and shrink is something that have been investigated thoroughly. There are a lot of factors involved. After international research that has been done about this, the GKSA established a principle framework in 2012, which is necessary for churches to function in a healthy way again and that meets reformed principles.

But usually we struggle when it comes to practice. A lot of prayer, distinction, gifts, wisdom and courageous faith are therefore necessary. More than one way are probably possible, but the process that is suggested here is a framework which will help you to understand God's way and calling for your church better.

*Ephesians 5:15: "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise..."*

## 3. What is the NCD? – Natural Church Development

One must start where you currently are. To help you distinguish what is currently going on in your church, we start with a church analysis. It is almost like a blood test which will help you to understand how healthy or sick the church is, with regard to 8 different elements. The organization that helps us with this is *Natural Church Development* (NCD). They have tested over 70 000 churches like this and knows very well what is going on in sick or healthy churches. Expando has an agreement of cooperation with them to support you during this process.

## 4. What are the 8 elements to be tested?

There are especially 8 elements of a church that must be healthy for a church to function healthily and to be able to grow. This is:

- **Empowering leadership**

Leadership that develops disciples and their gifts, and that makes it easy for them to work in the church.

- **Gift driven ministry**

Ministry that is serious about making use of the God given gifts of a church. The right people in the right places.

- **Passionate spirituality**

Prayer, witnessing, singing and loving discipline that comes sincerely from the heart.

- **Inspiring services**

Worship services where the truth and atmosphere touch your heart and make you long for more.

- **Holistic small groups/Bible studies**

More gatherings than the service on Sunday; for Bible study, support and ministry.

- **Need directed evangelization**

Addressing needs in your community through which the gospel becomes visible and audible.

- **Loving relationships**

A warm, sacrificing, caring and accomodating way of doing as part of the church's culture.

- **Effective structures**

Structures and administration are clear, effective and goal orientated with accountability.

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*1 Peter 4:10: "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace..."*

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Some of these will be healthier than others. The goal is to see how you can use the healthier parts to start addressing the part of the church that is least healthy. The most healthy part is the 'minimum factor' which is most probably responsible for the decline in the congregation. First aid must first of all be applied there.

## 5. How do we do such an analysis?

The first phase is to do such an analysis and this can take 2 to 3 months. It entails the following:

- Contact Expando's office for the questionnaires.
  - It is available in Afrikaans and English.
  - There is a seperate questionnaire for the church members and the minister(s) or leader
- Announce the process in the church and ask for prayer
- Identify 50 'core' members to complete the questions
  - The analysis is qualitative and wants informed answers about people's experience of the ministry.
  - The goal is not to understand what uninformed members that is uninvolved think is wrong with the church.
  - Try to achieve balance by using men and ladies from different age groups.
  - It must be anonymous and can simply be submitted at some post box.
- Write a cover letter that is attached to each questionnaire
  - The cover letter provides instructions regarding the questionnaire
  - Expando will provide the concept wording of such a cover letter
- Hand out questionnaires and cover letter with a deadline
- Collect questionnaires
  - Regardless of how many members the church have, at least 30 questionnaires must be submitted
- Send to NCD
  - It will reach NCD with Expando's help.
- Receive report
  - Report comes in PDF document

## 6. What do we do with the analysis?

The next phase is to understand the analysis (to interpret) and to start working towards practice. This phase can take 8-10 months and roughly entails:

- Give feedback to the church and ask for prayer.
- A minister or elder from the church studies the analysis

- Via telephone consultation, email or a visit Expando helps with guidelines in interpreting the guidelines.
- The minister or elder then equip the elders at a workshop about the 8 elements of the NCD report and how it functions.
- Prayerfully interpret each element with the elders.
- Divide the elders as far as possible, depending on their gifts or interests, into 8 work groups. One for each element.
- Each group's elder invites church members with their specific gifts and interests to be members of that work group.
- These work groups meet and the elder gives equipment
- The work group interprets, with the elder, their element's results (it can take more than one meeting)
- The work group decides on one or at most two action steps that can improve that element
  - Small and feasible goals
  - Short-medium term (max 1 year, rather shorter)

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*1 Peter 5:2,3: "Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly..."*

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## 7. What do we do with the work group's suggestions?

The last phase can take 6-18 months. It focusses on implementing the suggestions and can entail the following:

- Give feedback to the church and ask for prayer
- Elders meet and decide about suggestions and work groups
- Work groups are involved in performing suggestions and can become ministry groups if your church wants to work according to the ministry group model. Otherwise it is the ideal opportunity to start with this model.
- Goal dates are monitored.
- After quite a while (1-3 years) has passed and a few necessary changes were brought about, the process with the questionnaires should be repeated. In this way you build on your progress.

## 8. How can Expando practically help?

Expando is available with advice and guidance through the whole process. Expando also helps with the following:

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*Rev 2:5: "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first...."*

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- Expando contacts NCD and provides questionnaires and cover letters.
- Additional reading material can also be provided in English and Afrikaans.
- Expando helps with the process of submitting questionnaires at NCD.
- Expando holds you accountable for your progress every three months.
- Expando can put you in contact with other churches/ministers who are familiar with the process so that you can learn from them.

## 9. Contact us

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