

# STATE OF THE CHURCH

State of the Church Sunday was a day to "Sing to the Lord" because of His "marvelous works." Almost three years ago, Pastor Nick laid "The Decade of Love" out before us – the vision for the next decade of our church and how we will reach our mission. As we heard Sunday, God is moving marvelously.

## Discussion Questions:

1. Reflecting on all you heard about the "State of our Church," what encouraged you or stood out most?

## Read Acts 6:1-7

2. The Book of Acts records testimony after testimony of rapid growth in the early days of the early church. (See Acts 2:41, 2:47, and 4:4.) Along with growth and its excitement, we can face "growing pains" of various kinds. How do we see this in Acts 6? What "growing pains" should we anticipate at Cross Church, considering all God is doing? Why should we be quick to identify our growing pains?

The opening pages of the Book of Acts recount the early days of the early church and its rapid growth. In Acts 6, we see what often comes along with rapid growth: growing pains. The opening line in Acts 6:1 reads, "Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose". It appears the Hellenists felt their widows were being neglected. Was this complaint legitimate or perceived? We're not sure. We know that the apostles felt like it was enough of an issue that had to be dealt with.

Similarly, we can expect to have growing pains at Cross Church. When there are 1,000 babies in our Preschool Ministry, there are 1,000 diapers that need to be changed. When we have 10,000 people attending services across all three campuses, we have parking issues, bathroom lines, people sitting where we're accustomed to sitting, crowded hallways in Preschool Ministry, etc. When we begin to feel frustrated because these growing pains challenge our "normal" or "expected" church experience, we must remind ourselves that these result from God drawing many to Himself through the ministries of Cross Church. When we're quick to identify "pains" as the growing kind, we can guard our hearts and resist murmuring against the hand of God at work.



# CALLED TO LEAD

SEPTEMBER 18

3. How did the apostles respond to the "growing pains" in Acts 6? What does it mean that everyone plays a part in the church's mission? What does it mean that management and mission are both essential to the church? How do we see this in Acts 6? Why is it easy to become more management-focused than mission-driven?

The apostles responded to the "growing pains" by summoning the church, addressing the situation, and delegating the solution by asking the people to self-select seven men to help meet the need. Whether any widows were being neglected or not, the apostles made sure that the management of the daily food distribution was done well but didn't take their attention away from prayer and preaching the Word. It's important to note that the apostles demonstrate this task's importance by saying those selected to serve were men of "good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom." Furthermore, once chosen by the people, these men were set before the apostles, and [the apostles] prayed and laid their hands on them. In these verses, we see both management and mission held as important.

4. At Cross Church, reaching people drives us in all that we do. What does it mean that the mission matters more than our preferences, opinions, or comforts? In what ways could we be tempted to prioritize these above the mission? How can our preferences, opinions, and comforts hinder the mission and unity of the church?

We've got to give up to go up. What are you willing to give up? What preference, opinion, or comfort are you ready to sacrifice for the mission to continue going forward here at Cross Church? Would you sacrifice by attending a different service to accommodate new people?

5. Sunday, Pastor Nick said, "If we have full rooms but aren't reaching people with the gospel, we're not succeeding at the mission." What does this mean? What are the implications for you/your small group?

Our mission as a church is to reach Northwest Arkansas, America, and the world for Jesus Christ. The pond that we have to fish in is huge! That being said, attendance isn't everything, but it is hard to make a difference in the lives of people in our church if they are not at church. We believe commitment to church attendance is vital for a person's life. We're not done when a room is full. When we have a packed room, we multiply, reproduce, start additional services, etc.

6. How has being engaged in the life of our church blessed you and encouraged your walk with Jesus? What could it look like for you to play a part in helping others experience these same blessings?
7. How might God be calling you to further engage in the work of God that is taking place in our church?

