



10 Keys to Create a Dynamic Church Culture

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By Glen Reed

Pastor's Coach Essentials

Healthy Leaders Produce Thriving Churches

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Intro

Understanding and harnessing the power of culture in your church can unleash powerful transformation. In this ebook you will learn some key steps you can take to begin to shift the culture in your church to what you would like to see happening.

This is primarily a “how to” document so we’re not giving the whole biblical and philosophy of ministry foundation that we do in our regular courses and MasterClasses. These are bite-sized steps you can take to begin to shift culture. And you should see real changes within a month.

We have a complete MasterClass on Church Culture that goes into far greater detail. That MasterClass has five video lessons and four weekly one hour group coaching calls with some of the best ministry coaches on the planet. You can sign up for that at <http://pastorscoach.com/building-thriving-church-culture/>.

Since culture starts with the leader, these steps are designed for the senior leader of the church (or group of any kind).

Key 1: Understand that Culture is the Primary Force Shaping your Church

“The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.” Luke 6:45
NASB

In other words... what is inside will be expressed or reflected on the outside.

Culture is what happens outside, and it is the expression of the inside nature. It is what happens naturally in any group of people or organization. Every family, business, school, group and church has a culture. It’s what people in the group do normally – how they act, what they say, how they spend their time and money ...when not required. That’s the key – it’s what they do naturally. And it will affect and infect new people as they come into contact with that culture.

If you have a church full of people who are super friendly and welcoming to new people, that will rub off on the new people and they will become that way...without you telling the new people to do that! The success or failure of programs depends on the culture of the people leading and in the program. If you have a program to welcome new people, but the people you start with to lead and be the core of the program are unfriendly people, the program will probably fail.

Culture is more important than your preaching and your worship team and your children’s church. Those are important but it’s the culture at the core--you and your leadership team—that makes the most difference. Culture becomes an asset you can harness in leadership if you build it intentionally.

STEP: Make improving your church culture a priority in your mind and put it at the top of your list of to dos.

Key 2: Take responsibility as the prime culture builder

Culture can be shaped, and we are going to show you how. But realize this, if you are not intentional to shape the culture, it will be shaped by the strongest personalities in the group, or by the traditions already in place, or by other outside factors. And then you are not leading, you are in reaction mode, trying to counter more powerful forces.

Start with yourself, the senior leader. Are you naturally expressing the things that you want to see happen? Are you reaching out to non-believers and sharing the gospel? If not, how can you expect your church members to? Would you attend your own church if you didn't have to?

STEP: This is simple but essential: Take some time to pray and commit yourself to repent for the current culture if it's not what you think it should be, and take responsibility as the main factor that impacts your church culture and to lead accordingly.

Key 3: Define your vision

Your vision is what you see; mission is what you need to do to accomplish that vision.

STEP: In one paragraph, state what you want your ideal church to look like. Describe how it feels, what people experience when they come into your church.

Also meet with your leadership team and get buy in so they are tracking with you and doing and reinforcing all that you are going to do.

Key 4: State your top three values for your church

Values are the things are important to you, especially in terms of what you want people to experience. Values are most often words that end in -icy, -ity, or -ness. Things such as intimacy, honor, integrity, authenticity, accountability, creativity, transformation, truth, relationship, etc. Not teaching or meetings, or programs or prayer. Those are practices. A value like authenticity is one of the primary values in our culture right now, while hypocrisy is seen as one of the most negative expressions. People don't like hypocrisy but they love authenticity.

You must have more than values you aspire to..... they must be actual values.

STEP: State the three most important values for your church. They should reflect your personal values. Choose **one** that seems to need strengthening.

Key 5: Identify priorities

Priorities reflect how we spend our resources, which are limited. If you want to make a cultural shift, you need to make it a priority. And that means allocating some budget for it, getting it on your calendar and working with your leadership team to buy in and follow you on it.

If you choose intimacy for your value to work on, how does that happen? If all you have for people interaction is Sunday services, training classes or Bible studies, that is not facilitating intimacy. If all you have are fun events and community service projects, that will encourage relationship but not much truth. If you want to foster creativity, do you celebrate artists? Etc.

The activities that take place reveal the priorities.

STEP: State the top three priorities. Choose one to work on.

Key 6: Reinforce your priorities

You can strengthen or discourage priorities by publically celebrating people who exhibit the value and privately correcting people who seem to inhibit the value. So if Susie seems to exude friendliness and relationship then have her share about how she meets with new people... If Jim is showing strong spiritual growth in the men's group by being transparent, have him share or lead a small group. Mention them from the pulpit.

STEP: Figure how you can celebrate publically the value you're working on in your team, and three ways to do that with your members.

Key 7: Promote practices

Practices are you do naturally in your lifestyle. What's your lifestyle like? What is the lifestyle of your people without them being told how to live, without their lifestyles being structured or having programs in place? What do they naturally do because of their values and priorities?

- Do they naturally seek the Lord every day?
- Do they naturally share about Jesus when they have an opportunity at a Peets Coffee, gym, or some other kind of setting?
- Do they naturally pray for the sick when there's an opportunity to?
- When somebody shares a need with them, do they naturally stop and really counsel the person and pray with them?

One of the big challenges we have is that churches are built so programmatically that we end up putting in programs to facilitate outcomes. Structure should only be there to contain the substance that's already in place.

You can shape the river of culture by strengthen or changing the river banks to go where you want it to go. You do this by reinforcing and starting practices that support the values and priorities you are working on. For example: To reinforce the priority of enfolding new people, a practice would be to have people assigned to greet new comers after the sun service and try to connect them with others, invite them to small groups, etc.

Or to strengthen the priority of intimacy with God and others, insist that all small groups close with 20 min of prayer in groups of 3-4 so each person experiences prayer. Not a two min prayer, but real time to pray individually.

STEP: For the priority you are working on, determine 2-3 practices will support or encourage that priority

Key 8: Programs

Programs are the structures (or bones) that support the substance (or flesh).

For the previous example of the practice of welcoming new people after the service, identify 5 or 10 people who are outgoing and evangelistic and assign a leader and make them a roving team that greets people after the sun service and tries to connect them with others and with groups etc. Train the leader to schedule the teams, train and encourage the people, give them a budget if they need materials, etc.

Or to reinforce the previously mentioned practice of having small groups close with 20 min of prayer in groups of 3-4, meet separately with all small group leaders, and you or one of your leaders teach them and have them EXPERIENCE what you are talking about. Give them tips on how to help people pray, what to do with people who are afraid to pray out loud, etc.

STEP: Create a program to support one or more of the practices you identified in the last step. It must have a leader who is fully expressing the specific value and priority. Allocate time, energy and money to support this program (because it represents one of YOUR stated key values).

Key 9: People

Make sure your leadership team and secondary leaders, such as small group leaders, are not just involved, but actively promoting the culture you want. You should be meeting with your top leadership or staff team weekly, and your secondary leaders at least once every month or two. Take time in these meetings to teach, celebrate and experience the vision, values, priorities, practices and programs you are focusing on.

STEP: This first month, make at least one of your weekly meetings with your top leadership team focused on the chosen value, priority, practice and program. Make sure they are experiencing and expressing these naturally or learning how to if it's not natural to them.

Also, Meet with your secondary leaders and do the same as you did with your primary leaders.

Key 10: Get Feedback and Reinforce

The key is ... are the values being transmitted down several generations? If not, then they are not really part of the actual culture, they are only aspired to.

STEP: Recruit a couple of people to anonymously attend some meetings and participate in activities and sit in on meetings and observe and report back to you. Then make changes accordingly.

Note: We have an amazing and powerful tool, the **Church Health Assessment**, that enables you to get feedback fairly easily and comprehensively. It's an online assessment with 50 questions that cover all key aspects of the internal health of a church. We've designed it so you can invite staff and members and anyone to take the assessment about your church. They can do it for free, and you get the results. Then you get a detailed report allowing you to see each response, team average, compare etc. AND.... We've got 60 ten-minute videos by Pastor's Coach founder and CEO, Michael Brodeur, that provide solutions – one for each of the 50 topics and 10 more overview videos. This is available to Pro and Max members. Check it out at: <http://pastorscoach.com/assessments/church-health-assessment-description/>.

Culture can be shaped, but it starts with the senior leader and is transmitted from the inside out. Being intentional is half the battle. With the help of the Holy Spirit, you can do it!

END