

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

10 Crucial Questions to Ask if You're Considering a Church Merger

Episode 183

Multisite and Merger Strategies (Part 2)

What do church mergers have to do with multisite strategy? And why is this such a critical conversation right now?

We've heard from a lot of churches in recent months looking at potentially merging — some were the leading churches, some the joining churches. (Joining churches many times are being considered for new locations in a healthy church's multisite strategy.) Pre-Covid, 15,000 churches took the Unstuck Church Assessment and close to 20% identified that they were in the "life support" phase. When a church gets to the point where they realize they can't survive on their own, merging with a healthy, thriving church in the community can be a good option.

But before your church merges with another church, there are 10 crucial questions you need to consider.

3 Preliminary Questions to Ask

- **Is our church healthy enough to merge with a church that is not healthy?**
 - Merging is a lot like marriage. Make sure you are healthy enough to enter into a merger relationship.
- **Will this become a new location or campus? If so, do you have a multisite strategy?**
 - You do not want to start opening new campuses until you've clarified your multisite strategy.
- **Is the joining church located in a community that matches your multisite expansion plans?**

10 Crucial Questions to Consider

- **Doctrine:** Is there alignment between the two churches on doctrinal and social issues?
- **Culture:** While it's possible to build on strengths and adopt best practices from both churches, one culture will (and should) overtake the other if it's truly going to become one church.

- **Staffing:** If both churches have a senior pastor, what will happen to the senior pastor of the joining church? What will the new staff structure of the post-merger church look like?
- **Finances:** How does each church approach budgeting? What is the asset, cash and debt position of each church?
- **Governance:** How similar are the two churches' forms of church governance? What will happen to the boards and lay committees at each church?
- **Ministries:** Are the ministries of each church similar? Which will be replicated at both locations and which ones won't? What ministry strengths and best practices at each individual church need to be adopted and expanded on after the merger?
- **Teaching:** Who will be the primary communicator of this new church after the two churches merge to become one? Will the teaching be the same or different on each campus or location of this new church after the merger?
- **Communications:** What will be the communication plan throughout the process? What audiences need what communication and from whom?
- **Voting:** How will this decision to merge actually be made and ultimately who makes the decision? What do the by-laws of each individual church require?
- **Launch:** Once the merger is voted on, how will you launch this newly merged church? How will you let the community know?

Next Steps

- If you've never been through a healthy merger previously and you sense this might be in the future, don't wait for another church to approach you before you start considering these questions. Walk through the questions above with your leadership team.
- [Our Church Is In "Life Support", What's Next?](#)
- [Better Together: Making Church Mergers Work](#) by Jim Tomberlin
- [Navigating Staff Changes in a Church Merger](#)
- [Assessing Merger Compatibility](#)
- Our [Unstuck Mergers Process](#) helps you navigate each stage of the merger process. If you're considering merging with another church, [let's talk](#).

Listen to the episode on iTunes or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode183.