THE

INTENTIONAL CHURCH CHALLENGE

30 Days to Lead Your Church on Purpose, Not by Default

A Resource for Growth-Minded Lead Pastors

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WELCOME TO THE CHALLENGE.

This isn't a spiritual devotional. It's a leadership discipline.

The **Intentional Church Challenge** exists because too many gifted Lead Pastors spend their best years leading reactively—managing what's in front of them rather than building toward what God has called them to. This 30-day workbook is designed to interrupt that pattern and replace it with something better: a rhythm of clarity, structure, culture, and momentum that makes intentional leadership the new default.

Thirty days. Four dimensions. One goal: to lead your church on purpose, not by default.

How It's Structured

WEEK 1 — Vision Reset (Days 1-7): Rethink your mission and mindset. Get clear on what you are actually leading and why.

WEEK 2 — Structure Reset (Days 8-14): Redesign your model. Move from accidental ministry to intentional systems.

WEEK 3 — People Reset (Days 15-21): Reignite the culture. Align your team and congregation around what matters most.

BONUS WEEK—Implementation & Momentum (Days 22-30): Lock in the gains. Build the rhythms that keep you leading intentionally long after this challenge ends.

What Each Day Includes

TEACH: A 1-2 paragraph daily framing that gives you a new way to see a familiar challenge.

REFLECT: 2-3 honest questions designed to move you from insight to self-awareness.

ACT: One concrete action step that turns today's challenge into leadership momentum.

DECLARE IT: A short prayer or declaration to anchor the day in the right posture.

A Few Honest Expectations

- Some days will be convicting. Lean in anyway.
- Some action steps will feel inconvenient. Do them anyway.
- Some questions will surface things you'd rather not see. Write them down anyway.
- Thirty days of consistent intentionality can change the next three years of your ministry. That's the exchange being offered here. It's worth it.

Welcome to the Challenge,

Gavin Adams

WEEK ONE

Rethink the Mission and Mindset

VISION RESET

Days 1 - 7

DAY 1

Define Your Win

Most pastors are working incredibly hard without ever stopping to define what winning looks like. Attendance is easy to count. Budgets are easy to track. But transformation? That is harder to measure, and yet it is the only metric that truly matters in the Kingdom. This year, before you take another step, you need to define your win. Not the board's win. Not your denomination's win. Your church's win—the specific outcome God has called you to pursue in this season.

A clear definition of success is one of the most liberating things a leader can have. It frees you from chasing every shiny trend and Instagram highlight reels. It gives you permission to say no to good things that are not the right things. And it gives your team a shared target that anchors every decision. Take time today not just to think about this, but write it down. Words on paper become intentions. Intentions become action.

REFLECT

1. Beyond attendance and budget, what would success look like for your church this year in one or two sentences?

2. What metrics are you currently measuring that may not actually reflect your mission? What might be missing from your dashboard?

3. If this year went exactly the way God intended, what would be different about your church one year from today?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Write your definition of a successful year in 50 words or less. Be specific. Keep it visible—on your desk, your mirror, or your phone—for the next 30 days.

DECLARE IT

Lord, give me clarity about what You are building in and through this church. Free me from chasing the wrong wins. I surrender my definition of success to Yours. Show me what it looks like when You are pleased. Amen.

DAY 2

Clarify the Mission

A mission statement should fit on a bumper sticker and change how you spend a Tuesday. If your church's mission statement is a paragraph, it is a paragraph too long. Clarity is kindness—to your staff, your volunteers, and the people sitting in your seats wondering if this church is going anywhere specific. A fuzzy mission produces a fuzzy church. A clear mission produces focused people.

Here is the test: Can your newest attender tell someone else what your church is about? Can your most seasoned volunteer explain your mission without looking at a handout? If not, the problem is not their commitment but your clarity. Mission clarity is not a communication problem; it is a leadership problem. And today is a great day to solve it.

REFLECT

1. Can you state your church's mission in one clear, memorable sentence right now, without looking it up?

2. If you asked ten people in your congregation what this church is "for," how similar would their answers be?

3. What would need to change about how you communicate—in sermons, bulletins, signage, and staff—for your mission to become truly memorable?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Ask three people today—a staff member, a longtime attender, and a newer member—to tell you what your church's mission is in their own words. Listen without correcting. Let the answers guide your next step.

DECLARE IT

Jesus, You came with a clear mission—to seek and save the lost. Give me that same clarity for the church You have entrusted to me. Help our mission be so clear that it shapes every decision we make and every person we serve. Amen.

DAY 3

Identify Drift

Drift does not announce itself. It does not show up on a Sunday morning and say, "*Good morning, Pastor—I am here to replace your mission with maintenance.*" It happens gradually, through small compromises: keeping a program because it has always been there, saying yes to a request because you do not want to disappoint someone, letting the urgent crowd out the important. Before you know it, your church is busy doing things that have nothing to do with why you exist.

Drift is the enemy of intentionality, and awareness is the first step toward correction. Most churches do not drift into decline because their leaders are lazy. They drift because their leaders are busy—too busy doing good things to notice the great things are slipping. Today, your job is not to fix everything. It is to see clearly.

REFLECT

1. Where has your church shifted from mission-driven to maintenance-driven in the last year or two? What programs or patterns reveal that drift?

2. What are you doing right now that you would not start today if you were beginning fresh?

3. What does your current weekly schedule reveal about where you have drifted personally as a leader?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

List 3-5 ministry activities your church currently does that are driven more by tradition than by mission. You do not have to eliminate them today—but name them honestly. Naming drift is the beginning of correcting it.

DECLARE IT

Father, give me the courage to see our church clearly—not just what we hope it is, but what it actually is. Reveal the drift I have ignored and the compromises I have rationalized. I want to lead with honesty and move toward what You have called us to be. Amen.

DAY 4

Eliminate the Good But Not Great

Jim Collins wrote that good is the enemy of great. Nowhere is that truer than in ministry. Good programs, good events, and good intentions can fill your calendar, exhaust your team, and quietly strangle your mission—all while looking productive from the outside. The hardest decisions in church leadership are not between good and bad. They are between good and better. Between what works and what transforms.

Intentional churches do not just add things; they subtract things. They regularly ask, "If we were not already doing this, would we start it today?" If the answer is no, that is not a program; it is a tradition. And traditions that no longer serve the mission deserve a gracious but honest funeral. You cannot add what matters if you refuse to subtract what does not.

REFLECT

1. What programs or events in your church produce good activity but minimal mission movement? What would happen if they stopped?

2. What are you holding onto out of sentimentality, fear, or conflict-avoidance rather than strategic conviction?

3. What could your team do with the time, money, and energy currently invested in 'good but not great' activities?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Identify one program or event that consumes significant resources but produces minimal mission impact. Write a one-paragraph case for either eliminating or reimagining it, and share it with a trusted leader or coach.

DECLARE IT

God, give me the wisdom to know the difference between what is good and what is great, and the courage to choose great—even when it is costly. Help me lead our church toward the few things that matter most rather than the many things that simply feel safe. Amen.

DAY 5

Name the Pressure Points

Every pastor faces pressure. But not every pastor knows which pressures are actually shaping their decisions. There is the pressure of comparison: Watching what other churches are doing and quietly wondering whether you are keeping up. There is the pressure of people-pleasing. We all tend to make decisions based on who will be upset rather than on what serves the mission. There is the pressure of fear—holding back bold moves because of what might go wrong. And there is the pressure of pace, moving so fast you lose the capacity to think clearly.

Unnamed pressure becomes unchecked influence. When you do not name what is driving your decisions, your decisions start driving you. Intentional leadership requires self-awareness—knowing not just what you are doing, but why you are doing it. Today's challenge is not to eliminate pressure. It is to be honest about which pressures have the most influence over you right now.

REFLECT

1. Which pressure source has the most influence over your leadership decisions right now: comparison, people-pleasing, fear, or pace?

2. What is one decision you have made in the last year that was more about managing pressure than advancing the mission?

3. What would change about your leadership if you led from conviction rather than from the pressures you have named?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Write down your top two pressure points and one specific way each one has influenced a recent leadership decision. Share this list with a trusted ministry friend, mentor, or coach. Accountability starts with honesty.

DECLARE IT

Lord, I confess that I sometimes lead from pressure instead of purpose. Show me where fear, comparison, or people-pleasing is driving me more than Your Spirit is. Give me the courage to lead from conviction, even when it costs me comfort or approval. Amen.

DAY 6

Define a Kingdom Win

There is a difference between a church win and a Kingdom win. A church win is measurable and internal, like more people, more giving, or more engagement. Those things matter. But a Kingdom win is bigger than your building and longer than your tenure. It is about what God is doing through your congregation in your community, your city, and beyond. Kingdom wins often cannot be counted. But they can be felt in the stories that get told, in the neighborhoods that get changed, in the lives that get rebuilt.

One of the most clarifying questions a pastor can ask is: What would be different about our community if this church did not exist? If the honest answer is "not much," that is a sign that your wins have been too small. The church was never meant to be a destination. It was meant to be a deployment center—sending transformed people into the world as agents of Kingdom change.

REFLECT

1. If your church disappeared tomorrow, what would your community actually lose beyond the Sunday services?

2. What is one Kingdom-sized vision you believe God wants to accomplish through your congregation in the next three to five years?

3. How would your current ministry priorities need to shift to make that Kingdom win more likely?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Write a 'Kingdom statement' for your church—one or two sentences describing the difference your church is called to make outside your walls. Let it be bold, specific, and bigger than anything you can accomplish on your own.

DECLARE IT

Father, expand my vision beyond our building and our budget. Help me see the Kingdom work You are calling us to participate in—the lives, neighborhoods, and generations that need what You have put in this church. Make us a church that changes the community around us. Amen.

DAY 7

Vision Reset Prayer

You can strategize and plan, but at the end of the day, the church belongs to Jesus. He said, "I will build my church." Not "you will build it for me." That is a remarkable statement. It means the burden of results is not ultimately yours. The burden of faithfulness is. Your job is not to produce a great church. Your job is to align your leadership so closely with what God is doing that the results take care of themselves.

Today is a day to stop and pray—not a quick prayer to open the planning meeting, but a genuine, extended conversation with the God who called you and who is building something through you. Invite your team if you can. If not, do it alone. Ask God to reveal what He sees that you cannot see, to remove what is in the way, and to reignite the clarity of calling that brought you into ministry in the first place.

REFLECT

1. As you look back over this first week of the challenge, what has God most clearly revealed to you about your leadership or your church?

2. What do you need to surrender—an outcome, a fear, a program, a pressure—before you move into Week 2?

3. What is one specific thing you want to ask God to do in your church this year that only He can do?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Set aside at least 30 minutes today for extended prayer over your church. Write down what you sense God saying. If possible, invite your staff or a small team of leaders to join you. End by declaring together what you believe God is calling you toward this year.

DECLARE IT

Jesus, this is Your church. We give it back to You today. Forgive us for the times we have built for ourselves instead of for Your Kingdom. Align our hearts with Your purposes. Build what only You can build, and let us have the joy of participating in something far greater than ourselves. Amen.

WEEK TWO

Redesign the Model

STRUCTURE RESET

Days 8 - 14

DAY 8

Map the Movement

Every church has a discipleship pathway. The question is not whether you have one—it is whether it is intentional or accidental. In most churches, people find their way from guest to engaged to growing to multiplying… or they do not. When they do not, it is rarely because they were not interested. It is because no one showed them the next step. A clear, visible pathway is one of the most loving things a church can create for the people it is trying to serve.

Think of it this way: if someone showed up at your church for the first time this Sunday, what would the journey look like from that moment to full engagement and mission involvement? Could they see it? Would anyone help them take each step? The goal of mapping your movement is not to create a system for the sake of systems—it is to create a clear path so no one gets lost in the middle of the most important journey of their life.

REFLECT

1. What are the clear, sequential steps in your church's current discipleship pathway? Can you name them in order right now?

2. At what stage do most people in your church stop progressing? Why do you think that is?

3. What would your discipleship pathway look like if you designed it from scratch today with your current mission and context in mind?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

On a whiteboard or blank sheet of paper, sketch your church's discipleship pathway from 'first-time guest' to 'mission-active member.' Mark every transition point. Identify where intentional hand-offs exist and where people are left to find their own way.

DECLARE IT

Lord, help us build a pathway that reflects how much we care about the people You send to us. Give us the wisdom to create clear next steps and the commitment to walk people through them. May no one get lost in our church because we failed to show them the way. Amen.

DAY 9

Find the Gaps

If your church were a river, where would the water pool and stop moving? That is a question that exposes gaps. Gaps in a discipleship pathway are the places where momentum dies. It's where a first-time guest never becomes a returning attender, where a regular attender never finds community, and where a small group member never takes a step toward leadership or service. Every church has gaps. Healthy churches find them and fix them. Drifting churches ignore them and wonder why people keep leaving.

Finding the gaps requires honest data and courageous conversation. Where are the leaks? Where do people disengage? Where are you losing people between stages? Sometimes gaps are structural, like a missing ministry or a broken on-ramp. Sometimes they are relational, for instance, no one is following up, or no one is inviting the next step. And sometimes they are cultural—your church has created an environment where spectating is easier than engaging. Identifying the gap is the beginning of closing it.

REFLECT

1. Where is the largest gap in your church's discipleship pathway right now—the place where momentum most consistently stalls?

2. Do you have data to tell you where people are dropping off? If not, what would you need to put in place to track it?

3. What is one gap you have known about for a while but have not addressed? What has kept you from addressing it?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Review your church's attendance, connection, small group, and serving data. Identify the stage where you lose the most people. Write a one-paragraph summary of the gap and what it would take to close it. Bring this to your next leadership team conversation.

DECLARE IT

Father, I do not want anyone to fall through the cracks in our church. Give us eyes to see the gaps we have grown used to, and give us the creativity and commitment to close them. Help us be a church that keeps showing up for people—all the way through. Amen.

DAY 10

Rebuild Your Calendar Around the Mission

Your church calendar is a theological document. It tells your congregation (and your staff) what your church actually believes is important. Every event on your calendar carries an implicit message: "This matters." The question is whether that message aligns with your mission. When you audit your calendar and discover that only a fraction of your events actually support your stated priorities, that is not a calendar problem. That is a leadership problem—and it is one you have the authority to solve.

Calendar reform is one of the most practical things a Lead Pastor can undertake. People have attachments to programs. Traditions carry emotional weight. But if your calendar is crowded with activities that do not advance the mission, you are spending your team's most limited resource—time—on things that do not matter. A mission-aligned calendar does not happen by accident. It happens when a leader is willing to make hard calls.

REFLECT

1. If you audited every event on your church's calendar for the next 90 days, what percentage would you say clearly advances your stated mission?

2. What is your process for deciding what goes on the calendar? Does the mission drive the calendar, or does the calendar drive the mission?

3. What is one event or recurring program you would remove from the calendar if you had the full support of your leadership team?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Print your church calendar for the next three months. For each event, ask: 'Does this directly advance our mission?' If not, mark it. You do not need to eliminate everything today—but a clear-eyed audit is the first step toward a mission-aligned calendar.

DECLARE IT

God, help us steward our time as carefully as we steward our finances. Give me the wisdom to know what belongs on our calendar and the courage to remove what does not—even when it is uncomfortable. May our schedule reflect our stated priorities, not just our history. Amen.

DAY 11

Evaluate the Leadership Structure

Most church org charts were not designed. They evolved. Someone needed help, so a new role was created. A volunteer stepped up, so a new layer was added. A staff member had a gift, so a new department formed around it. The result is a structure that reflects history rather than mission. If you have never intentionally designed your leadership structure, you are leading with an organizational framework that was built for a different season. Or worse, for no particular reason at all.

Structure is not neutral. The way you organize your team shapes how decisions get made, how communication flows, how accountability works, and how fast your church can move. A structure designed for clarity and mission alignment produces a nimble, focused team. An accident-designed structure produces confusion, duplication, and frustration. Look at your org chart not with nostalgia but with a question: Does this structure serve our mission, or does our mission have to squeeze around our structure?

REFLECT

1. Does your current org chart reflect your mission priorities, or does it reflect how your church grew historically?

2. Where in your current leadership structure do decisions get slowed down, communication breaks down, or accountability goes missing?

3. If you were building your leadership team from scratch today to accomplish your stated mission, what would the structure look like?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Draw your current org chart from memory. Then, next to it, sketch the structure your church actually needs to accomplish its mission in the next 2-3 years. Note the gaps. Identify one structural change that would produce the most significant improvement in clarity and effectiveness.

DECLARE IT

Lord, help us build a leadership structure that serves the mission rather than complicates it. Give me wisdom to see what needs to change, and humility to make those changes for the sake of the people we are called to serve. Amen.

DAY 12

Align Your Meetings

Show me a church's meeting structure, and I will show you its actual priorities. If your staff meetings are primarily about information (announcements, logistics, calendar updates, etc.), your team is organized around communication rather than transformation. The best staff meetings are about progress, not procedure. They answer the question: "Are we moving toward our mission, and how do we know?" That is a fundamentally different kind of conversation than "Here is what is happening this week."

Meeting alignment is one of the fastest ways to shift the culture of a leadership team. When every meeting has a clear purpose tied to mission, your team begins to see their work differently. They are not just executing tasks—they are advancing a cause. Meetings become the place where momentum is built and celebrated, not just managed. That shift in meeting culture can change the culture of your entire organization.

REFLECT

1. What percentage of your current staff or team meetings is spent on information-sharing versus progress-toward-mission conversations?

2. What would a well-designed weekly staff meeting look like for your team—one that energizes rather than exhausts people?

3. What meeting on your calendar could be eliminated, shortened, or redesigned without losing any meaningful value?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Redesign your next staff or leadership team meeting around one question: 'What progress are we making toward our mission?' Structure the agenda to spend at least 60% of the time on that question. Notice what changes in the room.

DECLARE IT

Father, help me lead meetings that are worth attending—meetings that energize my team, clarify our priorities, and move our mission forward. Give me the courage to change what is not working and the wisdom to protect what is. Amen.

DAY 13

Create a 90-Day Plan

Annual plans are inspiring. Quarterly plans are actionable. There is something uniquely powerful about a 90-day window. It is short enough to create urgency but long enough to build real momentum. Three months is enough time to launch something meaningful, correct something broken, or establish something new. But only if you are focused. Unfocused 90-day plans produce the same results as no plan at all.

The best 90-day plans have three things: clarity of priority (three or fewer major focus areas), specificity of outcome (you know what 'done' looks like), and ownership of accountability (someone is responsible for each priority). If your 90-day plan has ten priorities, you have no priorities. You have a wishlist. Choose three. Assign ownership. Define what success looks like. And then move.

REFLECT

1. What are the three most important things your church needs to accomplish in the next 90 days to build meaningful mission momentum?

2. For each of those three priorities, can you name a specific, measurable outcome that would tell you it has been accomplished?

3. Who on your team owns each priority—and do they know they own it?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Write your 90-day plan today. Three priorities. One measurable outcome per priority. One owner per priority. Put it in writing, share it with your team, and review it weekly. A plan that lives in your head helps no one.

DECLARE IT

God, give me the discipline to focus on what matters most and the humility to resist the pull of busyness. Help me build a plan that reflects Your priorities for this season—not just my own ambitions. Make these 90 days count. Amen.

DAY 14

Define Success Metrics

You cannot manage what you do not measure. But here is the more important truth: what you measure shapes what you value. If the only metrics on your dashboard are attendance and giving, you will unconsciously optimize for attendance and giving, sometimes at the expense of everything else that matters. Intentional churches choose their metrics carefully because their metrics reveal their theology of success.

Healthy church metrics are a mix of leading indicators (things that predict future health) and lagging indicators (things that confirm past results). Attendance is a lagging indicator. First-time engagement is a leading one. Giving per capita is a lagging indicator. Volunteer activation rate is a leading one. The goal is not to track everything, but to track the right things. Three to five meaningful metrics are better than fifteen noisy ones.

REFLECT

1. What are the three to five metrics your church currently tracks regularly? Do those metrics accurately reflect the health of your mission?

2. What would you add to your current metrics to better measure what actually matters—transformation, engagement, movement through your discipleship pathway?

3. Who reviews your ministry metrics regularly, and how do they inform leadership decisions?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Design your 'ministry dashboard'—the three to five metrics you will track consistently this year. Include at least one metric for each: outreach, community and connection, and spiritual growth. Share it with your leadership team and commit to reviewing it monthly.

DECLARE IT

Lord, help me measure what matters, not just what is easy to count. Give me wisdom to track the health of our mission with honesty and clarity. And when the numbers reveal something hard, give me the courage to respond rather than rationalize. Amen.

WEEK THREE

Reignite the Culture

PEOPLE RESET

Days 15 - 21

DAY 15

Revisit Core Values

Core values are not decorative. They are not meant to be framed on the wall in your lobby so first-time guests can read them while they wait for coffee. Core values are supposed to be lived by leaders first and felt by the congregation next. They are the answer to the question, "How do we do things here?" When your values are genuinely lived, they create a culture. When they are only posted, they create cynicism.

Here is the diagnostic test for core values: Can your staff name them without looking at anything? Do your volunteers make decisions that reflect them? Does your congregation behave differently because of them? If not, you do not have core values—you have core aspirations. There is nothing wrong with aspiration. But it is worth being honest about the difference. Today, choose to either genuinely adopt your values or honestly revise them into something your culture can actually embody.

REFLECT

1. Can you name your church's core values right now without looking them up? Can your staff?

2. Which of your stated core values is most clearly lived out in your church's culture? Which one is most aspirational?

3. What would need to change—in your leadership behavior, hiring, or communication—for your core values to become genuinely descriptive rather than merely aspirational?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Ask every member of your leadership team to write down your church's core values from memory. Compare results. Use the gaps to start an honest conversation about which values are truly embedded and which ones need more intentional cultivation.

DECLARE IT

Father, help our values move from the wall to our work. I want who we say we are to match who we actually are. Convict me first where my own leadership does not reflect what we say we value. Then help me lead our culture toward genuine alignment. Amen.

DAY 16

Celebrate the Right Stories

Culture travels on stories. What you celebrate publicly, you multiply quietly. If you celebrate attendance milestones, your congregation will think growth means numbers. If you celebrate transformation stories—the marriage restored, the addiction broken, the prodigal who came home—your congregation will understand that growth means life change. The stories you tell from the platform, in your newsletter, and in your staff meetings are not just communication. They are cultural formations.

Most churches have far more transformation stories than they realize. They just have not created a system for finding and telling them. The person who quietly got sober, the family whose marriage turned around after your series, or the teenager who stepped into faith. Those stories exist in your congregation right now. Your job as a leader is to surface them, celebrate them, and let them do the cultural work that no amount of strategy can replicate.

REFLECT

1. What stories are you currently celebrating in your church—and what do those stories communicate about what you value most?

2. What transformation has happened in your congregation recently that you have not told publicly? Why has that story not been told?

3. What system or process could you put in place to consistently find and celebrate the right stories in your church?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Identify one genuine transformation story from your congregation this week. Reach out to that person, ask their permission, and find a way to share it—in a service, a staff meeting, an email, or on social media. Start the habit of intentional storytelling.

DECLARE IT

Lord, help me see the stories of transformation in our congregation and have the wisdom to celebrate them well. Let the stories we tell shape the culture we are trying to build—and remind our people that You are actively working in the lives around them. Amen.

DAY 17

Clarify Expectations

Most staff and volunteer frustration does not come from hard work. It comes from unclear expectations. When people do not know what "winning" looks like in their role, they default to activity. They stay busy, fill their hours, and feel increasingly disconnected from any sense of progress or purpose. Unclear expectations are a leadership problem, not a people problem. And they are entirely solvable.

Clarity of expectation is one of the greatest gifts you can give your team. It tells people what good looks like, what excellent looks like, and what unacceptable looks like. It gives them a target to aim at and a framework for self-evaluation. When expectations are clear, conversations about performance become collaborative rather than confrontational. And when someone does not meet expectations, you have something concrete to point to, not just a vague sense that something is off.

REFLECT

1. Do your staff members have clear, written role expectations that define what success looks like in their specific position?

2. Where on your team is the most confusion or frustration? Is it possible that unclear expectations are a contributing factor?

3. What is one expectation you hold for your team that you have assumed rather than explicitly communicated?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Choose one role on your team and write out what 'excellent' performance looks like in that role in three to five specific, observable behaviors. Schedule a conversation to share and discuss it with that person this week.

DECLARE IT

Father, help me be a leader who sets my team up for success by being clear about what success means. Give me the discipline to communicate expectations explicitly rather than assuming people understand them. And where I have been unclear, give me the courage to correct it. Amen.

DAY 18

Remove Energy Vampires

Not everything that drains you is bad. Some things are hard and holy. They require your best energy because they are producing transformation. But some things in your church are draining energy without producing anything meaningful. We call them energy vampires: the meeting that could be an email, the program that outlived its purpose, the conflict that never gets resolved, the relationship that requires constant management without ever moving toward growth.

Energy is a finite leadership resource. Every hour spent on something that does not matter is an hour not spent on something that does. The most effective leaders are not the ones with the most energy, but the ones who have learned to protect the energy they have. Removing energy vampires is not laziness. It is stewardship. It is the intentional decision to invest your most valuable resource in the things most likely to produce Kingdom results.

REFLECT

1. What meeting, program, or relationship in your current ministry context consistently drains your team's energy without producing meaningful results?

2. What has kept you from addressing the energy vampires you are already aware of? Is it conflict avoidance, sentimentality, or something else?

3. If you reclaimed the energy currently spent on your top energy vampire, what would you invest it in instead?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Name your top energy vampire—the single thing that drains your team most consistently for the least return. Write down what it would look like to eliminate, delegate, or radically simplify it. Commit to taking one concrete step toward that outcome this week.

DECLARE IT

God, help me be a good steward of the energy and capacity You have given me and my team. Give me wisdom to invest our best in what matters most, and the courage to stop doing what no longer serves Your mission—even when it is uncomfortable to let go. Amen.

DAY 19

Reconnect With Leaders

Leadership drift is contagious. When the Lead Pastor loses sight of the mission, the next ring of leaders starts to drift too, and then the next, until the whole team is busy doing church without building anything. The antidote is not a better strategic plan. It is intentional reconnection. Getting back in the room with your key leaders—not to manage them, but to remind them of why you are all here—is one of the highest-return investments you can make as a pastor.

Reconnection conversations are different from performance reviews or project updates. They are about the mission, the calling, and the "why" behind the work. They are about reminding your leaders that they are not just running programs. They are changing lives. These conversations rekindle the fire that busyness tends to dampen. In seasons of drift, they are not a luxury. They are an emergency.

REFLECT

1. Which of your key leaders have you most neglected in terms of intentional, mission-focused connection in recent months?

2. What do you sense your leaders most need from you right now—clarity, encouragement, challenge, or something else?

3. When was the last time you reminded your team, individually, why their specific work matters in the larger mission?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Identify your top three to five key leaders. Reach out today to schedule a one-on-one conversation with each of them in the next two week, not for a performance review, but a mission reconnection conversation. Come prepared to listen more than you talk.

DECLARE IT

Lord, remind me that my most important leadership work is often done in rooms with a few people, not stages with many. Help me be present and invested in the leaders You have placed around me. Reignite in them the passion for this mission that You first placed in me. Amen.

DAY 20

Realign Communication

One of the clearest signs of organizational confusion is message fragmentation—when different departments tell different stories, emphasize different priorities, and point people in different directions. Your congregation can only follow one mission. Your communication should reflect that. When your worship team is promoting one thing, your children's ministry is promoting another, and your social media is promoting something else entirely, your people do not know where to look. Confusion erodes momentum.

Communication alignment does not mean uniformity (everyone saying the same words in the same way). It means coherence (every voice in your church ultimately pointing toward the same destination). One mission. One vision. One next step. That kind of alignment does not happen by accident. It requires a lead communicator who sets the tone, a shared language your team adopts, and a regular rhythm of internal alignment conversations to keep everyone pointing the same direction.

REFLECT

1. If you surveyed your congregation right now, how consistent would their understanding be of your church's main focus for this season?

2. Where does your internal communication most frequently fragment—between departments, between staff, or between Sunday and digital channels?

3. What would it look like to simplify your church's communication to one primary message, one channel, and one next step for the next 90 days?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Audit your church's communication channels (bulletin, social media, email, website, and announcements) for the past month. Identify how many different "next steps" you have offered your congregation. Commit to one primary next step per season going forward.

DECLARE IT

Father, help us communicate with the clarity that our congregation deserves. Give me the wisdom to simplify our message and the discipline to keep it consistent—so that when people hear from our church, they always know what we are about and what we are asking them to do. Amen.

DAY 21

Commission Sunday

The Intentional Church Challenge is not just about your leadership. It is about what your leadership produces in the people you serve. At some point, the work you have done privately over these three weeks needs to be expressed publicly—and it needs to invite others into the same kind of intentional living. Commission Sunday is that moment. It is the Sunday where you cast a clear, compelling vision for the year and invite your congregation to lean into it with you.

A great Commission Sunday has three elements: honesty (acknowledging where you have been and where you want to go), vision (a clear, compelling picture of what is possible), and an ask (a specific invitation for your congregation to respond). Do not let this Sunday be a pep rally without a destination. Let it be a turning point—the moment when intentionality becomes a collective commitment rather than just a personal conviction.

REFLECT

1. What do you want your congregation to know, feel, and do differently as a result of your Commission Sunday message?

2. What is the specific"'ask" you will make of your congregation—what action or commitment are you inviting them into?

3. How will you follow up on Commission Sunday in the weeks that follow to ensure momentum continues beyond a single powerful service?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Begin outlining your Commission Sunday message today. Identify the three core things you want to communicate: 1. your honest assessment, 2. your God-given vision, and 3. your specific invitation. Consider what elements of the service will reinforce the message.

DECLARE IT

God, give me the courage to lead publicly what You have been building privately in me. May Commission Sunday not just be a great service, but a genuine turning point—the moment our congregation chooses intentionality together. Use it to move us forward in faith. Amen.

WEEK FOUR

Implementation and Momentum

IMPLEMENTATION & MOMENTUM

Days 22 - 30

DAY 22

Block Your Time for What Matters Most

Calendar integrity is leadership integrity. How you spend your hours is how you spend your influence. Most pastors' calendars are a collection of other people's priorities—the urgent meeting, the unscheduled drop-in, the request that felt too important to decline. The result is a week that ends with the feeling of being exhausted but uncertain what you actually accomplished. That is not busyness—that is drift in disguise.

Intentional leaders do not find time for what matters. They make time—by deciding in advance what deserves their best hours and protecting those blocks with the same seriousness they would give any other commitment. Your calendar is either a reflection of your priorities or evidence of your passivity. Choose which one you want it to be, and then act accordingly.

REFLECT

1. What are the two or three activities that, when you invest in them consistently, most directly advance your mission and your own leadership effectiveness?

2. How much of your current weekly schedule is genuinely protected for your most important work, versus reactive and responsive?

3. What would you need to stop doing—or delegate—to protect the time your most important leadership work requires?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Open your calendar for next week. Block two to three time slots of at least 90 minutes each for your highest-priority leadership work, like sermon preparation, strategic thinking, or key leader development. Treat those blocks like appointments you cannot cancel.

DECLARE IT

Lord, help me be a faithful steward of the time You have given me. Give me the wisdom to say yes to what matters most and the courage to say no to what does not—even when it disappoints people. May my calendar reflect my conviction, not just my inertia. Amen.

DAY 23

Delegate What Others Could Do

The hardest leadership lesson for most pastors is not how to lead, but how to let go. Delegation feels risky because it involves giving someone else ownership of something you care about deeply. But here is what is true: if you do everything yourself, you limit your church to what you can personally accomplish. Delegation is not a sign of weakness. It is the engine of multiplication.

Done well, delegation is an act of development. When you hand something off with clarity, trust, and accountability, you are not just freeing your plate; you are building a leader. The question is not whether someone else can do it as well as you can. They probably cannot at first. The question is whether someone else can do it well enough, and whether investing in their growth produces more Kingdom fruit than you holding on to the task.

REFLECT

1. What tasks are currently sitting on your plate that someone on your team could do—not as well as you, but well enough?

2. What has kept you from delegating more aggressively? Is it perfectionism, fear of failure, lack of trust, or something else?

3. Who on your team is ready for more ownership? What could you hand off to them in the next 30 days that would stretch and develop them?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

List every recurring responsibility on your plate. Circle the ones that only you can do. Commit to delegating at least one item on the list to someone else this week.

DECLARE IT

Father, free me from the pride and fear that make delegation hard. Help me trust the people You have placed around me, invest in their development, and believe that the mission advances further when I lead through others rather than trying to do it all myself. Amen.

DAY 24

Build a Rhythm of Reflection

The most effective leaders are not just good at going; they are good at stopping. Not permanently. Rhythmically. They build into their weekly schedule a consistent time to step back and ask: What is working? What is not? What do I need to change? Without a regular rhythm of reflection, you are flying a plane without ever checking the instruments. You might be going fast, but you have no idea if you are going in the right direction.

A weekly review does not need to be long or elaborate. Thirty minutes at the end of each week—asking a few honest questions, reviewing your priorities, noting what needs to carry into next week—can be the difference between a year of intentional momentum and a year of reactive exhaustion. Build the rhythm before you need it. Leaders who only reflect in crisis mode rarely get ahead of the next one.

REFLECT

1. Do you currently have a regular, built-in time for reflection and self-evaluation in your weekly schedule? If not, what has prevented it?

2. What three questions, asked consistently every week, would help you stay aligned with your mission and your personal leadership health?

3. How could you involve a spouse, mentor, or trusted peer in your rhythm of reflection to add accountability and perspective?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Design your personal weekly review template with three to five questions you will answer every week without exception. Schedule the first one for this week and protect that time slot on your calendar going forward.

DECLARE IT

God, help me build a rhythm of stopping, seeing, and adjusting before I get too far off course. Give me the humility to evaluate my own leadership honestly and the wisdom to act on what I find. May my reflection time produce better leadership, not just better self-awareness. Amen.

DAY 25

Share Wins Every Week

Momentum is a leadership responsibility. Your team needs to know that what they are doing is making a difference. Not once a year at the annual banquet, but every week, consistently, specifically. When leaders fail to celebrate wins, they inadvertently communicate that the mission is not moving. And teams that do not believe they are winning eventually stop playing hard.

Sharing wins is not spin or cheerleading. It is honest, specific celebration of real progress. It is saying, "Here is what God did through us this week, and here is why it matters." Done consistently, it does more for team morale and mission alignment than any strategy session ever could. Make it a discipline. Every week. Somewhere, find a way to say: "Look what happened. This is why we are here."

REFLECT

1. What is one specific win—big or small—that happened in your church in the last week that your team may not know about?

2. How do you currently celebrate wins with your team? Is it consistent? Is it specific? Does it connect the win to the mission?

3. What would change in your team's energy and engagement if you committed to sharing at least one specific win every single week?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Start a "weekly win" practice. Every Monday, identify one specific win from the previous week and share it with your team. Be specific: name the person, describe the outcome, connect it to the mission. Do it for 30 straight weeks.

DECLARE IT

Lord, help me be a leader who notices what You are doing and celebrates it—loudly and consistently. May the wins we share remind my team that our work matters, that people are being changed, and that You are faithful to build what we are trying to build. Amen.

DAY 26

Reassess Your Starting Definition

Twenty-five days ago, you wrote down what success looks like for your church this year. Pull it out. Read it slowly. Does it still hold up? Has anything you have discovered over the past three-plus weeks changed how you think about it? Reassessment is not weakness—it is wisdom. The best leaders do not confuse stubbornness with conviction. They hold their plans loosely enough to be corrected, while holding their mission tightly enough to stay the course.

Reassessment is also about honesty. Some of what you wrote on Day 1 may have been aspirational but vague. After working through vision, structure, culture, and implementation, you likely have a sharper, more specific picture of what your church needs to pursue this year. Let that sharpened picture update your definition. The goal was never to protect your original words, but to protect your original conviction.

REFLECT

1. How has your understanding of success for your church evolved or sharpened over the past 25 days?

2. Is there anything in your original Day 1 definition that you now realize was more about performance anxiety or comparison than genuine mission clarity?

3. If you were to rewrite your definition of success for this year today, what would be different?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Go back to your Day 1 definition of success. Rewrite it based on everything you have learned and clarified over the past 25 days. Keep what is still true. Sharpen what has gotten clearer. Remove what you now know was off-target.

DECLARE IT

Father, thank You for the clarity You have brought through this challenge. Where my thinking has grown, I want to act on it. Where I still need wisdom, I ask for it. Keep refining my understanding of what You are actually calling our church to be and do this year. Amen.

DAY 27

Re-Commit to the Mission

Re-commitment is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of clarity. Every effective leader knows what it is to stand at a crossroads and choose, again, to do what they said they would do. The challenge is not getting started. Anyone can get started. The challenge is staying started when the novelty wears off, the resistance shows up, and the urgent begins to crowd out the important again.

Ministry has a way of demanding everything while returning nothing measurable in the short term. That is why re-commitment is essential, not just at the beginning of a year, but regularly. Intentional leaders do not assume their commitment is intact. They reaffirm it. They look at what they said they would do, where they actually are, and make a conscious, deliberate decision to keep moving in the right direction.

REFLECT

1. What specific commitment have you made during this challenge that you most need to recommit to today because it is already starting to fade?

2. What is the most significant obstacle you will face in maintaining the momentum you have built over these 30 days?

3. What would need to be true about your systems, rhythms, and relationships for your commitments from this challenge to still be active 90 days from now?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Write out your top three commitments from this challenge. For each one, name the specific threat to that commitment and the specific safeguard you will put in place to protect it.

DECLARE IT

God, I do not want this challenge to be a moment. I want it to be a turning point. Strengthen my resolve to follow through on what You have shown me. When I am tempted to return to the default, remind me of this moment—and why I chose something better. Amen.

DAY 28

Report to Someone

Accountability is not about control. It is about clarity. When you know you are going to report to someone, you show up differently. You track things you would otherwise let slide. You follow through on things you would otherwise rationalize away. The presence of a trusted person who will ask, "How is it going?" is one of the most underestimated leadership tools available to a pastor. And yet most Lead Pastors operate without meaningful accountability for their own growth and commitments.

Accountability relationships work best when they are built on trust, not hierarchy—when the person you report to genuinely wants you to succeed and is not afraid to ask hard questions. That person might be a coach, a peer pastor, a mentor, a spouse who knows your leadership well, or a small group of like-minded leaders. The format matters less than the commitment. Find someone who will ask you the questions you would rather not answer, and give them permission to ask them regularly.

REFLECT

1. Who in your life currently has real visibility into your leadership commitments and the permission to ask you hard questions about them?

2. What is the most important thing you want to be held accountable to from this challenge, and who is the right person to hold you to it?

3. What would you need to share, and what would you need to ask for, to build the kind of accountability relationship your leadership genuinely needs?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Reach out today to the person you want as your accountability partner going forward. Be specific about what you want them to ask you, and give them permission to ask it regularly.

DECLARE IT

Lord, thank You for putting people in my life who can speak truth to me. Give me the humility to invite accountability rather than avoid it. Help me build a relationship with someone who will help me become the leader You have called me to be, not just the leader I am comfortable being. Amen.

DAY 29

Protect What You Have Built

The challenge ends. The mission does not. One of the greatest risks of any renewal season is that the energy fades when the event ends. The goal of these 30 days was never to create a moment. It was to create a new normal. The work you have done, the clarity you have gained, the plans you have written, and the conversations you have had need to be protected from the inevitable gravity of default.

Default is powerful. It is the accumulated weight of habit, expectation, and inertia pulling everything back toward the way things were. Protecting what you have built requires more than willpower. It requires systems. Regular review rhythms, accountability relationships, and leadership practices that keep the right things front and center. The best thing you can do the day after this challenge ends is decide in advance how you will resist the pull of default.

REFLECT

1. What is the biggest "default pull" you expect to face in the weeks after this challenge ends—the force most likely to drag you back toward the way things were?

2. What specific systems, rhythms, or relationships will you put in place to protect the clarity and commitments you have built over 30 days?

3. What would it look like to revisit this workbook 90 days from now? And what would you want to be able to say has changed?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Set three calendar reminders over the next 90 days titled "Intentional Church Check-In." Each one should prompt you to review your Day 1 definition of success, your 90-day plan, and your top commitments from this challenge. Make the check-ins non-negotiable.

DECLARE IT

God, I do not want to go back. Help me protect what You have built in me and through me over these 30 days. Give me the discipline to maintain the rhythms, the courage to hold the commitments, and the wisdom to adjust when I need to, but always forward, never backward. Amen.

DAY 30

Lead Forward

Thirty days ago, you started this challenge. You took it because something in you knew there was a gap—between where your church is and where it could be, between who you are as a leader and who you sense God calling you to become. That gap is exactly where God does His best work. Not in churches that have arrived. Not in leaders who have it all figured out. In leaders who are still leaning forward.

You have done the work. You have defined the win, mapped the model, reignited the culture, and built the rhythms to sustain momentum. But here is the most important thing to carry out of this challenge: intentionality is not a season. It is a posture. It is the ongoing decision to lead your church on purpose rather than by default, not just for 30 days, but for every day of your ministry. The challenge ends today. The leadership begins.

REFLECT

1. What is the single most significant shift in your thinking or your leadership that has come out of these 30 days?

2. What would you tell a pastor friend about why they should take this challenge, and what they should be prepared for?

3. What is the next bold step you need to take as a leader—the one you have been thinking about but have not done yet?

TODAY'S ACTION STEP

Write a letter to yourself—one page, dated today—describing the leader you intend to be one year from now. Be specific about your church, your team, your habits, and your Kingdom impact. Seal it and set a calendar reminder to open it in exactly 365 days.

DECLARE IT

Father, thank You for the privilege of leading Your church. I do not take it lightly. I do not want to waste it. Make me the kind of leader who chooses intentionality every day. Make me the kind of leader who leads on purpose, lives on mission, and keeps leaning forward toward everything You have for the people I serve and for me. May my best days of leadership still be ahead of me. Amen.