

Determining Our Church's Style

As you answer the questions below, you are helping to determine the church's style in current practice – not what we think it should be or what the congregation aspires for it to become – but what it actually is, right now. Some of the choices are between two good things; neither answer would be bad. That's because we are trying to *describe* the church's style, *not evaluate* its quality. So, choose the answer that is the "most true." Answering "kind of both" would not be helpful. Mark the "Most True" answer. The questions, all together, will take the full picture into account. If you have trouble deciding, then a helpful question to ask yourself is "Which kind of church are we trying to be?" Another clue is, "How would you describe the difference between this church and other churches in our area?"

Each possible answer for a question includes a letter in parenthesis, please write that letter in the space provided on the right. If absolutely no answer applies, then enter the letter "Q."

1.	Predominantly, our church is driven by the Content (Y) -or- by Relationships (Z)	
2.	What blesses us at our church is mainly: How it makes us feel (V) -or- How it makes us think (U)	
3.	What makes our church special is: What we see and hear in the services (W) -or- What we do in ministry (X).	
4.	What our members enjoy the most is the Music (M) -or- the Spoken Word (N).	
5.	The best stuff happens in the Worship Center (Y) -or- in the Classroom (Z) -or- on Weekdays helping people (J)	
6.	The sermons our people really respond to are: On Felt-Need Topics (B) -or- Preaching through Books & Passages of the Bible (A)	
7.	We expend more effort on: Teaching Christian disciplines and how to live the Christian life (D) -or- on Reaching the Lost (E)	
8.	Almost everyone in our congregation is Related by Birth or by Marriage (I) -or- No one is related to anyone outside their immediate family (Q).	
9.	Our worship includes: Choir (G), Praise Team (B), Both (H), Neither (Q).	
10.	Primarily, we rely on: Sunday School Classes on campus (G) -or- Sunday School, but we have small groups off-campus (H) -or- on Small Groups off-campus (B).	
11.	New members must "make their own way," the church is friendly, but they can't make friends (P) -or- It's easy to find new friends and a place to fit in (O).	
12.	Church decisions are made: With fresh study, giving the Bible the final word (A) -or- We just let the Lord lead (F) -or- In recent years, we've re-evaluated our traditions in light of Scripture (H)	
13.	If we had to cut ten minutes out of the worship service, our members would vote to cut that time from: the Music (N) -or- from the Sermon (M).	
14.	When inviting friends to attend our church, we consider the better selling point to be: The Worship Services (Y) -or- the Fellowship of the members and the pastoral care (Z) -or- The opportunities for personal involvement in ministry (J)	
15.	In practice, in our worship services (in songs, prayers, sermons), the Person of the Trinity given the most attention is: The Father (R), the Son (S), or the Holy Spirit (T).	

16.	When a new pastor comes, the attitude is: Pastor, we do the ministry here; you show us how and equip us (X) -or- Pastor, you do all the ministry here; we'll tell who to visit (I) -or- We don't care about ministry; we're just here for the show (W).	
17.	Our worship services are more formal with such things as responsive readings, creeds, and written prayers (G) -or- Our services often have things happen not in the order of service (F) -or- People take careful notes of the sermons (A) -or- Our worship services are about participation and responding to God (C)	
18.	Our Sunday School classes / small groups are organized to reach new people and to check on those who are missing in action (O) -or- We check on our friends, but we don't have those kinds of plans in place (P).	
19.	The heroes of our church passed from the scene some time ago (G) -or- The heroes of our church are here now and moving things forward (Q).	
20.	Every insider at this church is involved in an accountability or discipleship group (D) -or- Our members' greatest longing is for a fresh encounter with God (F).	
21.	We have a large church staff (K) -or- We are a small or medium-sized church (Q).	
22.	It's very important to us that we know and see everyone in the service (Z) -or- We look around the worship center and we don't know everyone and that's OK (K).	
23.	The ministry we do off-campus is: More along the lines of helping the poor (J) -or- More along the lines of PrayerWalking and evangelism (E).	
24.	When parents pick up their children from class, they ask them: "Did you have fun today?" (V) -or- "What did you learn today?" (U).	
25.	We emphasize doctrinal teaching quite a bit (A) -or- A worship experience where we have a powerful sense of the Spirit's presence is what it's all about for us (F).	
26.	Our services are typified by good production values, smooth transitions, etc. (B) -or- We are too down-home for all that (I) -or- It's the substance, not the style, that matters here (Y).	
27.	Our church sponsors Christian recovery and grief support groups (J) -or- Our worship services connect our members to God in praise and worship (C)	
28.	We sing mostly congregational music, and our soloists are trained not to draw attention to themselves (C) -or- Our church has an orchestra (K)	
29.	We have a lot of: Evangelistic events (E) -or- Concerts (M) -or- Conferences on practical Christian living (D) -or- Outstanding guest Bible preachers (N)	
30.	People stand around and talk for a good while after the worship service (Z) -or- People leave very quickly after the service ends (Y).	
31.	Our classes are happy to create new classes to reach new people (O) -or- You better not split our class!! (P)	
32.	We have full programming for every age group (not just Sunday School) (K) -or- We're not large enough to provide a full program of ministry (Q)	
33.	In our worship services, there is a very conscious effort to sing praise <i>to God</i> (C) -or- In our services, the songs are sung by musicians to the congregation (Q)	
34.	People join our church because: Our members won people in their spheres of influence to the Lord (E) -or- We're the traditional church that has changed with the times (H) -or- We all really want to grow spiritually (D).	

Tabulation Sheet

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X	Y	Z				

M	N
Music	Spoken Word
Questions: 4, 13, 29	

O	P
Open	Closed
Questions: 11, 18, 31	

R	S	T
Father	Son (Jesus)	Holy Spirit
Question: 15		

U	V
Think	Feel
Questions: 2, 24	

W	X
Attend & Watch	Do
Questions: 3, 16	

Y	Z
Content	Relationships
Questions: 1, 5, 14, 22, 26, 30	

The boxes on the left give insight into what your church is “all about” and what draws new members to your church. If you are trying to decide between some of the styles below, this information will be helpful.

Is it the worship services that draws them or the relationships? If it’s the worship service, is it the emphasis on music or the content of the teaching?

If the Father is more emphasized, you are more likely to be a Traditional Legacy Church. If the Holy Spirit, a Spirit-filled church. If the Son, perhaps a Highly Evangelistic Church.

Open or Closed (O & P) reveals your church’s actual openness to growth and new people.

		No.
A	The Preaching / Teaching Church	
B	The All-In Contemporary Church	
C	The Congregational Worship Church	
D	The Discipleship Group Church	
E	The Highly Evangelistic Church	
F	The Spirit-Filled Church	
G	The Traditional Legacy Church	
H	The Blended Legacy Church	
I	The Family Church	
J	The Community Ministry Church	
K	The Full-Service Ministry Church	

Eleven Styles of Churches

At first glance, we often think of our church's style as the kinds of songs we sing in our worship services. However, it involves much more than that. Churches have a niche they fill in their communities and in the Kingdom of God. Here are some types of churches:

- A. **The Preaching/Teaching Church:** Its emphasis is on expository preaching, teaching, learning, and doctrine. This church is led by a strong teaching pastor.
- B. **The All-In Contemporary Church:** The songs are all new and hymns are almost never sung. There is a praise team and a band. Production values and quality of presentation are considered very important.
- C. **The Congregational Worship Church:** Music is very important to this church also, but there is more of an intentional effort to consciously direct the worship *to God*. More non-musical forms of worship may be included in the worship services.
- D. **The Discipleship Group Church:** This church has a lot of small groups to develop disciples. There is more accountability. Every event on the church's weekly schedule may feel like a variation of a discipleship group. If they go over to the dark side, then everything is about deepening the members they have instead of multiplication.
- E. **The Highly Evangelistic Church:** Emphasizes a lot of evangelistic sermons and events, as well as training for members in personal evangelism.
- F. **The "Spirit-Filled" Church:** This church wants to feel the movement of the Holy Spirit. Doing something as a matter of responsibility or duty wouldn't be an emphasis here. They're seeking a fresh encounter with God.
- G. **The Traditional Legacy Church:** This is a church that has been in existence for some time. It is not contemporary but has a much more formal worship style. It is more traditional. Many such congregations have historic buildings that are a part of their self-identity.
- H. **The Blended Legacy Church:** This church has also been in existence for some time, but it has tried to keep up with the times and the current culture. The music is blended between traditional and contemporary. So is everything else.
- I. **The Family Church:** A few community families have been in the church and been its leaders for generations. Every service is like a family reunion, not figuratively, but literally. Another variation may be a high school reunion church. The preacher is hired to do all the visiting and ministry; members only tell him who he needs to go see. The pastor is not the leader, but merely a hired hand.

J. **The Community Ministry Church:** The members of this church help with benevolence, grief support, and addiction recovery. This church has multiple such ministries throughout the week in which their members volunteer to serve.

K. **The Full-Service Ministry Church:** This is a large church with a large staff offering multiple programs and ministries for the various age groups and interest groups in the church.

Often, churches see themselves as one of these types of churches because that's what their pastor is like. And it is true that, over time, the personality of a church comes to reflect that of the pastor. So, it's fair to ask if the perception of the church is the perception of the congregation as a whole or just the pastor? Would the church be described in that way if he wasn't their pastor? Does the pastor balance our weaknesses or define who we are?

Churches can be a blend of two or three of these styles — like a college student having a major and a minor or, perhaps, a major and a double-minor.

If you had a new neighbor who is looking for a church home in the community. He describes to you the style of church he is looking for. Which local church would you recommend him to for each of the styles listed above? Try to list a local church for as many of the styles above as you can.

How would you describe your church to your neighbor – what type of church it is, its style, and its niche in the community and in the Kingdom?

As a group, with the above information in mind, write an “About Us” page, as if for your church web site. Ask a member of your team to smooth out the writing of this first draft and bring a more polished draft to the next meeting. Then, discuss and refine your description of the church.