



# HOW TO ENCOURAGE A DISCOURAGED CHURCH

*ADD FUEL TO  
ENERGIZE GROWTH*

 **CHURCH ANSWERS**

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- Failure: I tried, and it didn't work.
- Unmet expectations: I was expecting something better.
- **Perceived inadequacies: I can't do this.**





**When discouraged, people will respond emotionally with sadness, hopelessness, frustration, and apathy.**





**When discouraged, people will resort to distortions of overgeneralization (“nothing works”) or catastrophizing (“my church won’t make it”).**



**Discouragement is not only personal but also corporate.**



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- Individual church leaders can be discouraged.
- **Entire churches can be discouraged (or nations).**



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  - Fear and despair: “Then the whole community began weeping aloud, and they cried all night.” (14:1)
  - **Catastrophizing and loss of hope: “If only we had died in Egypt! Or even here in the wilderness!” (14:2)**



- Numbers 13:33 “We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them we felt like grasshoppers, and that’s what they thought, too!”
  - **Overgeneralizing: “Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder!” (14:3)**



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  - Overgeneralizing: “Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder!” (14:3)
  - **Desire to quit the mission: “Let’s choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!” (14:4)**



**Discouragement often arises in churches when an inward focus supersedes an outward focus.**



**#1**

**Lack of visible results: “We’ve tried that, and it didn’t work.”**





#1

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#2

**Comfort replaces mission: “It’s what we’ve always done.”**





**#3**

**Maintenance replaces movement: “We’re just trying to keep the lights on.”**





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Maintenance replaces movement: “We’re just trying to keep the lights on.”

#4

**Status quo becomes the default: “We’re too small. We’re too old.”**



**#5**

**Burned by conflict: “People got upset last time.”**



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**#6**

**Church hurt: "Leaders or power groups made mistakes."**





**#7**

**Confusion leads to low motivation: “We don’t really know where to start.”**





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#8

**Missiological apathy: “People today aren’t interested in church anymore.”**



**#9**

**Nostalgia of the past: “We used to do big events, but people just don’t come anymore.”**



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Nostalgia of the past: “We used to do big events, but people just don’t come anymore.”

**#10**

**Fear of rejection: “We don’t want to offend anyone.”**



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- Pessimistic leaders assume negative outcomes are likely.
- Realistic leaders determine what is.
- **Optimistic leaders highlight potential and opportunities.**





The **best** church leaders show the way to a better future. But how?





# Celebrate Faithfulness, Not Just Fruit





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*Shift from a results-only mindset to celebrating obedience and trusting God with the outcome.*





## Rediscover the Joy of the Mission





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*Reignite hearts with stories of life transformation and cast a compelling vision for being the church on mission.*





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*Help the church see themselves as part of God’s redemptive plan, no matter their size or resources.*





## Leverage Strengths, Not Limitations





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*Highlight the relational depth, wisdom, and nimbleness that smaller churches often possess.*





## Heal, Learn, and Move Forward





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- **Discouragement:** “People got upset last time.”
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*Acknowledge past pain but invite the church to move forward with greater unity and maturity.*



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## Renew Trust Through Repentance and Grace





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*Foster a culture of forgiveness and humility, while encouraging transparency and servant leadership.*





## Clarify the Next Faithful Step





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*Offer simple, actionable steps to build confidence and momentum with a six-month initiative.*





## Reclaim the Power of the Gospel





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*Remind the church that the good news message still works in a broken culture, and a strong majority of people are still open to an invitation to church.*





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*Use legacy as a launching pad for new outreach efforts to reach the younger generations.*





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*Encourage courage—not harshness—in sharing the gospel and showing compassion in a confused world.*



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# QUESTIONS?

 **CHURCH ANSWERS**



**THANK YOU!**

 **CHURCH ANSWERS**