

# Natural Church Development *summary* guide

The current culture and values of...

## The Salvation Army Mississauga Community Church

April-2026

*Comes more naturally to us*

1

Faith

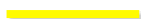


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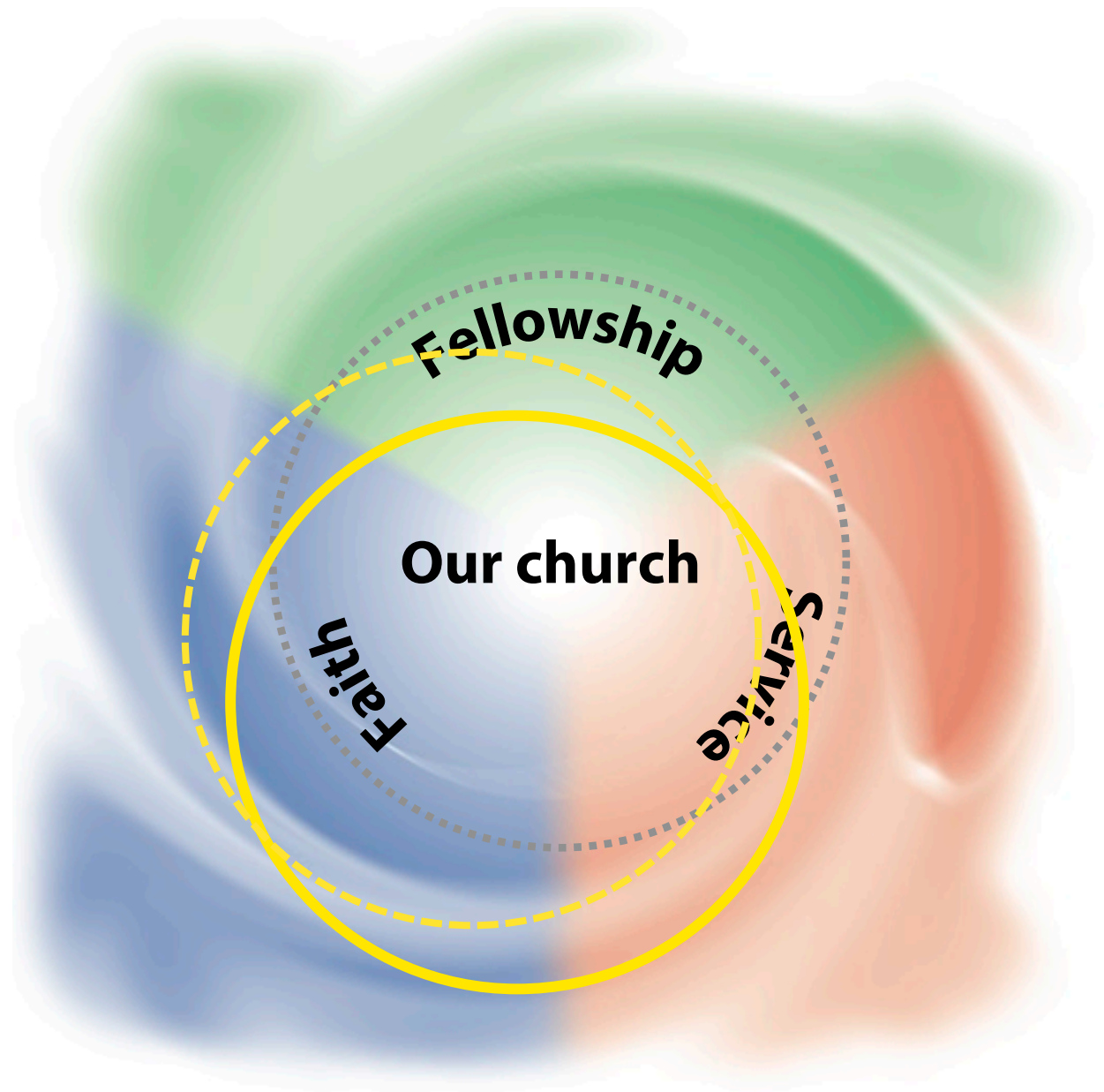
Service

3

Fellowship

*Comes less naturally to us*

- Our current culture and values 
- Our previous culture and values 
- A balanced church 

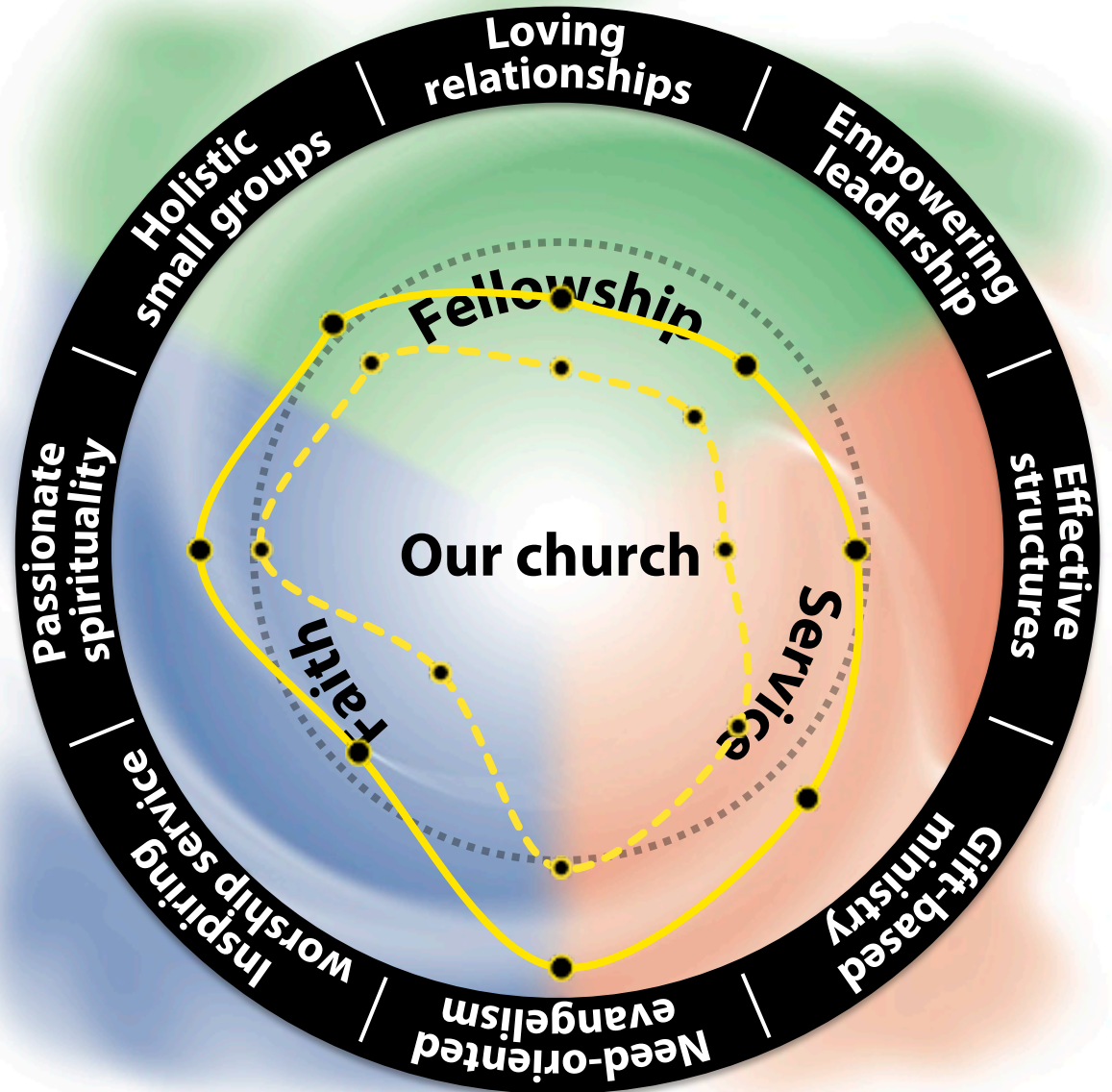
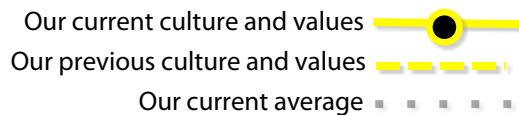




# 8 essentials of church life

The current culture and values of...

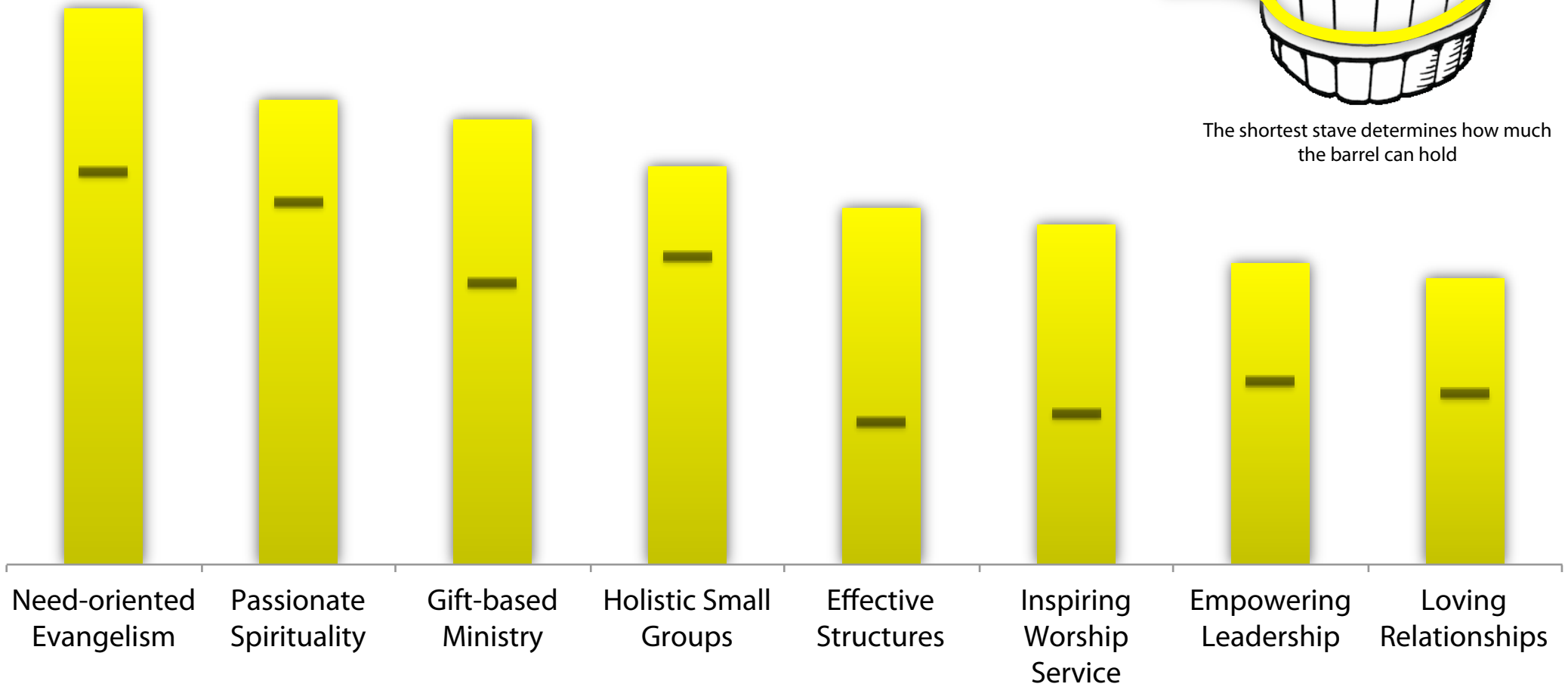
## The Salvation Army Mississauga Community Church





# Where are we leaking?

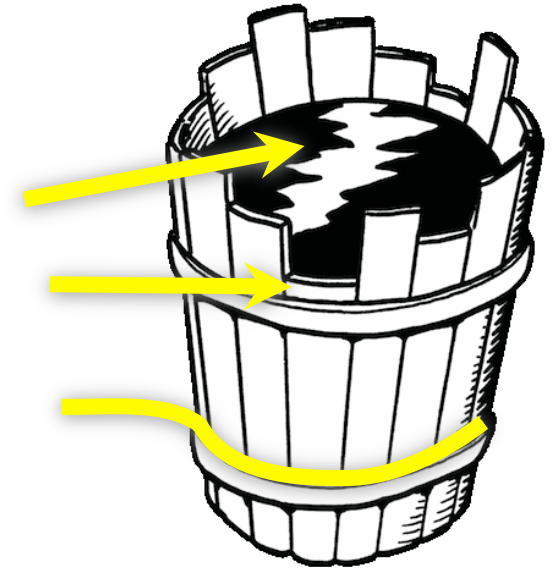
■ Current level    ▬ Previous level



Our church community

Our "minimum factor"

8 essentials of church life



The shortest stave determines how much the barrel can hold



# "Closing the back door" and "Opening the front door"

A local church should be a home in which people can grow in deep, fruitful relationships. It should also send its family members out to be salt and light in the world. With that inward and outward focus in mind, it is common to speak about the "front door" and "back door" of church life. While Passionate Spirituality and Effective Structures are equally important for opening the front and closing the back door (see diagram), the other essential qualities have a stronger connection with one of the two doors.

## "Closing the back door"

When it comes to the back door, you don't want to bolt it shut (that would be acting like a cult). Instead, you want to create an environment within your church home in which people couldn't imagine leaving via the back door since they are being challenged, grown and cared for so well.

Loving Relationships binds people together through the giving and receiving of justice, truth and grace. Holistic Small Groups (or Holistic Teams) provide a place to go deeper with each other, sharing feelings and problems and discovering the fullness of what God intends for each individual and for the group as a whole. Empowering Leadership raises up new leaders by releasing the potential God has placed in each person.

## "Opening the front door"

Of course, even if no one is reaching for the back door, without an open front door, you will become a stale, lifeless, inward-focused family pretty quickly. The front door is a place through which people can be welcomed and embraced. But it is also the door through which the church family is sent to engage with the world through daily life.

Need-oriented Evangelism acknowledges the unique journey of each person and seeks to meet them at their point of need. An Inspiring Worship Service is an embracing gathering in which intimacy with God and other people can be experienced. Gift-based Ministry is the means by which the church family serves each other, but to an even greater extent, those beyond the current church community, sharing God's grace in its many forms.

## "Closing the back door" *Embracing and growing people*



## "Opening the front door" *Inviting and sending people*

**With the protection of anonymity, your survey participants were able to openly indicate their thoughts and feelings about church life. Based on that feedback, it would appear that your minimum factor of Loving Relationships is at the heart of your challenge in closing the back door. You need to work on removing whatever barriers are inhibiting your people from connecting more lovingly with each other across the breadth of your church.**



# Breathing in and breathing out

Natural Church Development is all about identifying things that are being done in an unnatural way, and then removing barriers so that the life God wishes to give can be experienced. One of the natural parts of human life is breathing. Since the church is a gathering of human beings, it is important that it is also breathing in a natural way. Some churches put more emphasis on "inhaling", that is, receiving from God and others. However, if they don't also exhale, they are in danger of becoming light-headed or even delusional, as well as being of little use in serving others.

On the other hand, some churches put more emphasis on "exhaling" or giving to others. While this is of course important, it can lead to exhaustion and even resentfulness if not balanced with an equal measure of inhaling. Aside from the effects of imbalanced inhaling and exhaling on those who are already part of the church, you must remember that the ultimate reason for improving the health of your church is for the sake of those who are not yet connected with it. Finding out, with your help, how to inhale and exhale the Spirit of God will help those people to both encounter God and discover what a sustainable, fruitful life in his Kingdom is like.

## "Breathing in"

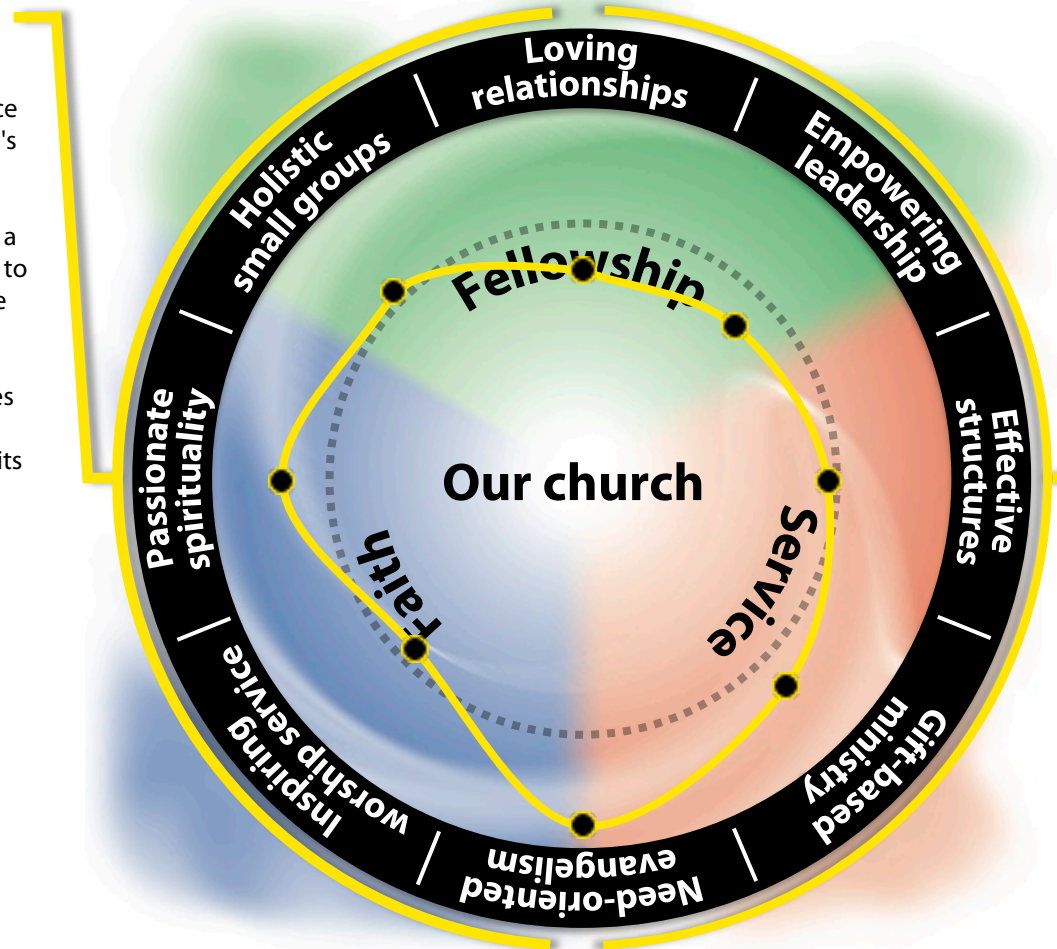
*Receiving from God and others*

Passionate Spirituality brings a confidence that comes with being able to sense God's active presence in widely varied circumstances in everyday life. Holistic Small Groups (or Holistic Teams) provide a place in which you have the opportunity to receive from other people who add value to your own life and work. An Inspiring Worship Service is where each person's offering in worship is multiplied and gives rise to a heightened experience that blesses the heart of God and fills the spirits of those who are there.

## "Breathing out"

*Using what you have been given*

Effective Structures are put in place to make sure that you steward all of the time, treasure and talent your church has been blessed with in order to serve the coming of God's Kingdom in the world around you. Empowering Leadership feeds into and releases people right across your church to work together for greater fruit than they could bring about on their own. Gift-based Ministry takes the unique expression of God's grace that has been breathed into a person's life and helps them to express that in service of others.



**From the perspective of your survey participants, your minimum factor of Loving Relationships shows that you are only sparingly giving the justice, truth and grace of God to one another.**



# Next steps

## Affirmation

Before moving into action plans for addressing your church's minimum factor, it is important that you take the time to affirm some of the leaders in your church who have helped shaped the areas that have scored higher on your results. These relative strengths don't just fall from the sky. Over time, people of influence have advocated, prioritized and sacrificed those strengths into existence. It is only appropriate to spend some time thanking God and those people for their partnership together so that, in those areas, your church family has at the least a small foretaste of the Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven. Having affirmed them, you will then be asking those people of influence to take a larger responsibility for addressing your minimum factors.

## Resources to start making progress

The key to making significant progress with your minimum factor is to have your key influencers (at a minimum) consistently taking simple, habit-changing action steps that are focused on improving that area. To help them get started, there are a few resources you should make use of:

- Visit [ncdchurchsurvey.org/why-ncd](https://ncdchurchsurvey.org/why-ncd) for a short introductory video.
- Cycle Starters ([ncdchurchsurvey.org/cycle-starters](https://ncdchurchsurvey.org/cycle-starters)) are free downloadable action prompts related to your minimum factor. Versions relating to all NCD categories are available, including your priorities of:
  - Fellowship
  - Loving Relationships
  - "Closing the back door"
- In addition to this NCD Summary Guide, your church's results are also available in three other formats that provide additional detail for helping you fine-tune your action steps (see the following page). When dealing with that detail, be sure not to lose sight of the bigger picture presented in this Summary Guide. Removing barriers associated with those big picture issues must remain the leadership's primary focus.
- Your NCD National Partner, NCD Denominational representative or your NCD Coach are all resources you must make use of if you have challenging questions emerging from these results or if you feel insecure about the next steps to take. Don't hesitate to contact them. Helping churches make progress is what they enjoy doing.

## Resources to keep making progress

Since the church is people, and the health of the church is the health in the heads, hands and hearts of those people, at a given point, you will need to start looking at your minimum factor as a pointer towards where more intentional personal discipleship is needed. Natural Church Development has been developing a series of discipleship tools, each with a focus on one of the 8 essential qualities of church life. These are available as personal online eTests ([3colorworld.org/etests](https://3colorworld.org/etests)) that you can quickly and easily make use of across your whole congregation and in book form (paperback and eBook — [3colorworld.org/books](https://3colorworld.org/books)) for going deeper into each topic.

## Discussion questions

1. Which points from these results are not surprising to you? Why?
2. Which points are surprising to you? How so? Can you think of individuals or groups inside or outside our church who would not be surprised by those points?
3. How will we affirm those who have partnered with God in establishing the relative strengths in these results? In what ways will we give thanks to God?
4. Which resources will we make use of for taking the next steps? What will we each do individually as key influencers? What will we do as a group?
5. Who will take responsibility for making sure that the essential priority of addressing our minimum factor is not lost in the busyness of church life? Is there anyone outside of the formal leadership group who should be invited to help out? How often will that group meet to refine plans and monitor progress?
6. When will we share the results with our survey participants to encourage them to improve the health in their group/s within church life? (NOTE: When presenting your results in such a forum, it is advisable to make sure there are some key influencers in the church who can share something of the personal convictions they have felt from working through the results. Knowing that people of influence are acknowledging challenges within the church is very empowering for the rest of the congregation).



# The NCD Result Guides

This Summary Guide provides the central overall picture of your NCD Survey results and the starting point for celebration and growth. The other three result guides (see below) can be viewed as an appendix of information that can increase the clarity of what you have explored so far.

You can approach the other guides in any order you like. The outlines below can assist you in deciding what you would like to explore next. Having worked through one of the other guides, it is always a good idea to return to the Summary Guide again to keep you focused on the big picture of what needs to be addressed for the sake of long-term healthy growth in your church.

The following page suggests a somewhat more structured approach through the result guides if you would prefer that. You might choose to start with that approach and then shift to a more fluid approach once you become clearer about what the results are saying and more confident about the kind of steps your leaders and your church as a whole must take.

Right the way through, as you explore the growth challenges of church life, don't forget to celebrate the current strengths of your church and also give thanks to God and those people who have helped to bring about that foretaste of the Kingdom of God.

## Summary guide

**Aim:** presents an overview of the current culture and values of your church and what most needs to be addressed.

**Will appeal to:** all who would like an overall summary of your church's current strengths and challenges.

## Story guide

**Aim:** presents your results as everyday themes of church life.

**Will appeal to:** more relational people who view and talk about church life through their own and other's real life experiences and stories.

**Who might they be?**

## Status guide

**Aim:** presents the detailed data from your surveys as well as progress information if this is a repeat survey.

**Will appeal to:** analytical people who like to understand the background and connect the dots themselves.

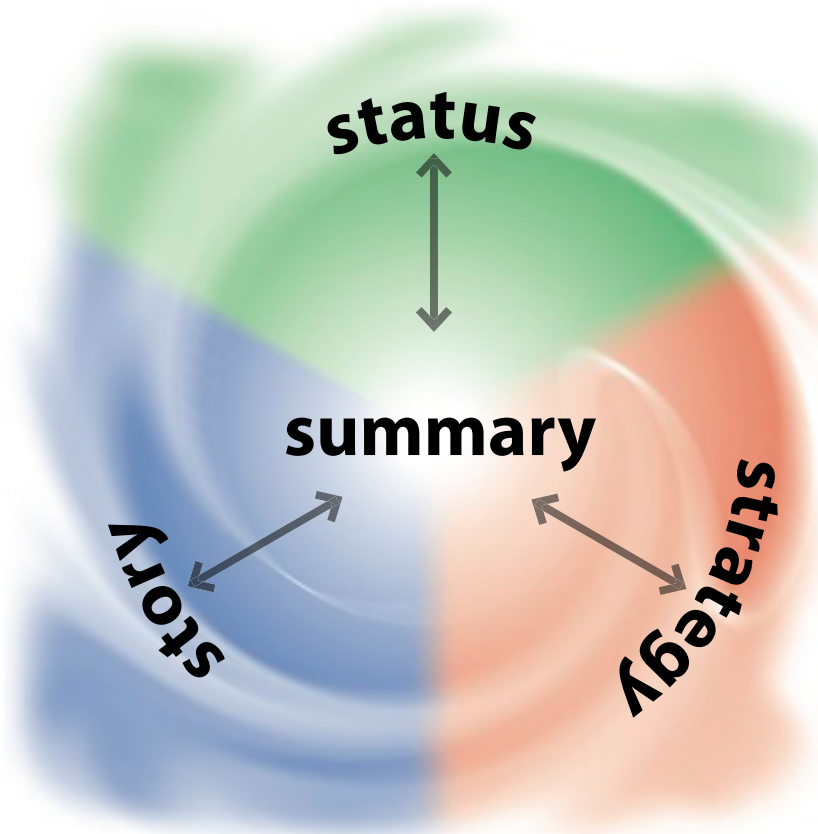
**Who might they be?**

## Strategy guide

**Aim:** presents suggestions for bringing your whole church on board as part of a broader church health strategy.

**Will appeal to:** task-oriented people who like to mobilise others and keep everyone on track.

**Who might they be?**





# A more structured approach

