

Are the Members of Your Congregation Spectators or Kingdom Active?

The results are disastrous whenever only a few of God's people take responsibility to do the work of God's Kingdom. So Jethro told Moses, so the Apostles saw in the Jerusalem church, so Paul told the first churches. Everyone is called to ministry according to Ephesians 4:11-12. Sadly, today churches across the world are attended by men and women who know they need God but are clueless about the part in God's Kingdom they are called to play (OR that God might want them to do something significant for His Kingdom). As a result, they have become spiritual spectators who leave the heavy lifting to the religious professionals and have minimal motivation for developing spiritual muscles. Fortunately, there are pastors, churches, and spiritual leaders who have begun to see the importance of encouraging and empowering men and women to live by faith in every area of life including the area where most people spend most of their time—the workplace. Here is what some are saying.

Most Christians spend the majority of their time at work and often have their most significant relationships with pre-Christians at work. Rather than call Christians out of their work setting to do ministry, affirm them, encourage them, and equip them for effective ministry in their WorkLife setting.

—Leith Anderson, President Emeritus, National Association of Evangelicals

God is in the business of using our work to fulfill His purpose. No matter what your job is, you're working for the King of kings.

—Mark Batterson, Pastor, National Community Church

I believe one of the next great moves of God is going to be through believers in the workplace.

—Billy Graham

Your workplace is not just where you earn a paycheck. It's where you live out your purpose and reflect the light of Christ to those around you.

—Steve Furtick, Pastor, Elevation Church

The people who go out into the workplace are the church. The pastor needs to read his congregation and know his congregation from one end to the other, and see where they are spiritually, see where they are physically. Then ask God, "How do I organize the church to help equip members to function where God has put them in the marketplace?"

—Henry Blackaby

Workplace Ministry will be one of the core future innovations in church ministry.

—George Barna

It might be counter-intuitive, but churches that point their members outside the four walls of the church for ministry in their natural networks of influence and equip them for that ministry are seeing in them an increasing satisfaction with their church and a deepening desire for their own spiritual growth.

There are two ministry components the members of your congregation need from the leadership of the church if you want to encourage them to have a 24-hour-a-day seven-day-a-week faith and fulfill their calling as followers of Jesus.

1. A Biblical View of Their Work

Men and women need to know that the leadership of the church believes that what they spend the majority of their time and energy on—their work—is important to God and that their work itself is a strategic component of God’s Kingdom priorities.

Churches and spiritual leaders who take this aspect of their ministry seriously show it in the following kinds of activities:

- ▶ Celebrate workplace successes
- ▶ Speak of work life positively and never imply it is the enemy of a person’s spiritual life
- ▶ Make prayer for their congregation’s work—their successes, their difficulties, and their spiritual influence—a high priority
- ▶ Encourage members to invest time establishing relationships in the workplace and never elevate the volunteer needs of the church as higher and more spiritually important than the ministry men and women have with their co-workers
- ▶ Consider the ministry of the church to include the ministry of the church “scattered” as well as the church “gathered”
- ▶ Regularly spend time visiting men and women in their workplace
- ▶ Include vision and strategy to evangelize the workplace as part of their missions/evangelism ministry
- ▶ Use workplace illustrations and applications in every teaching opportunity and give workplace “heroes” highly visible opportunities to tell their stories of following Christ at work

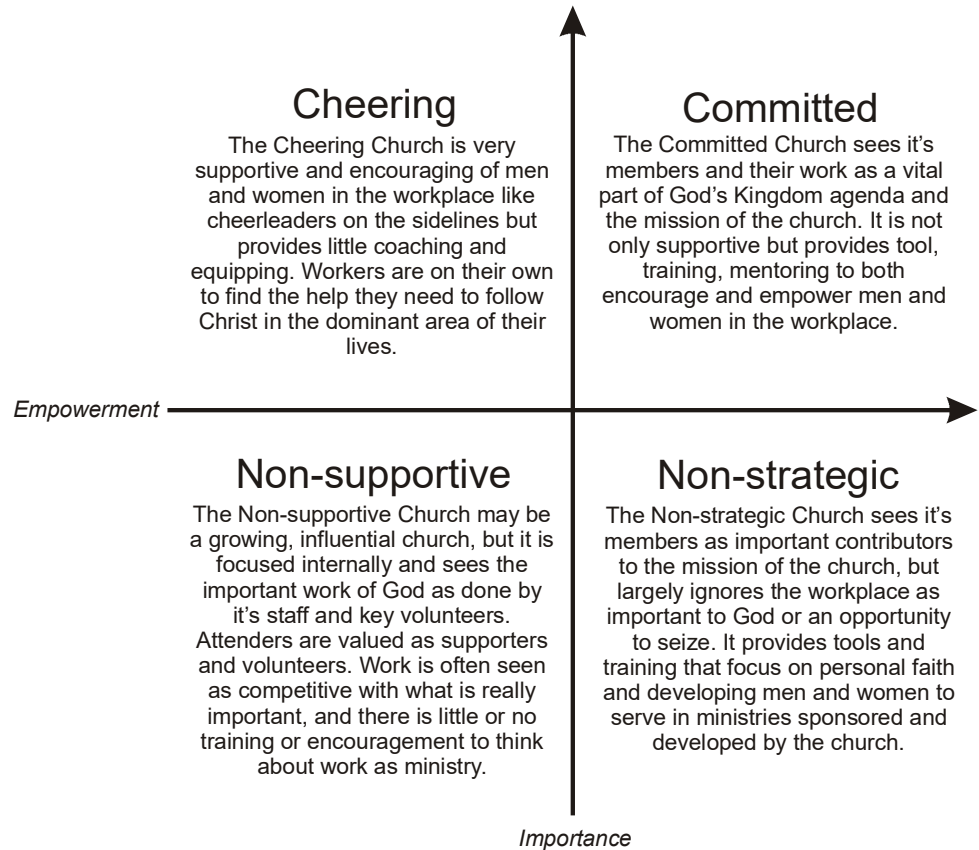
2. Empowerment for Ministry

Men and women need to be equipped and resourced to do the work they are called to do. Even though God calls and gifts people with the ability to do his work, they still need to be trained, mentored, and outfitted for the task.

Churches and spiritual leaders who actively seek to empower their people for ministry seriously demonstrate it in the following kinds of activities:

- ▶ Continually cast vision in every age group that every Christian is called to and gifted to play a vital role in God’s Kingdom and an ambassador for Christ whether inside or outside the church
- ▶ Are eager to tap into workplace skills and abilities and provide serving and leadership opportunities within the church that use and match men's and women’s workplace capacity, skills, and abilities
- ▶ Work at modeling and teaching men and women to balance work and rest and live a life of faith that dominates every area of one’s life
- ▶ Give high honor to men and women who serve the cause of Christ in their workplace and outside the church
- ▶ Provide opportunities that teach, train, and mentor men and women for successful work and ministry in their workplace
- ▶ Provide opportunities for people to be part of a community that discusses what it means to follow Christ at work and be a spiritual influence there

By creating a grid with the Y-axis measuring *Importance* and the X-axis measuring *Empowerment* what emerges is four quadrants representing four general postures churches can take toward members' work life and their commitment to mobilizing men and women for ministry.



Four Different Types of Churches

Committed

A Committed Church sees its members and their work as a vital part of God's Kingdom agenda, critical to the larger mission of the church. The spiritual heroes praised publicly for doing God's work include men and women called to workplace careers as well as those who play key roles in more traditional ministries. The church is not only supportive but is consistently looking for and providing tools, training, and mentoring to both encourage and empower men and women to serve Christ in every area of life, especially the workplace. As a result, the church sees its impact in the community grow geometrically beyond those who happen to attend on Sunday morning.

Cheering

Like cheerleaders on the sidelines, a Cheering Church is very supportive and encouraging of men and women who seek to serve Christ in their workplace and community but provides little coaching and equipping to them as they seek to follow Christ in these endeavors. Men and women who seek to minister outside the church are for the most part on their own to find the help they need to follow Christ in the area where they spend most of their time and energy. Those who find the help they need outside the church are often puzzled as to why their church didn't bring them the help they need.

Non-strategic

A Non-strategic Church sees its members as important contributors to the mission of the church but largely ignores the workplace as important to God or an opportunity for spiritual impact. It fails to see the effect this has on men and women who spend most of their mental and physical

energy in their work life. The church provides tools and training that focus on personal faith and developing men and women to serve in ministries sponsored and developed by the church. But sadly, this often seems irrelevant to members' lives because it ignores the area where they need the most help figuring out how to live by faith. After a while men and women often lose their enthusiasm for personal growth and ministry as a result.

Non-supportive

A Non-supportive Church may be a growing, influential church, but it is focused internally and sees the important work of God as done by its staff and key volunteers. Attendees may be highly valued and praised as supporters and volunteers, but the heavy lifting is always done by religious professionals. Work, far from being honored, is often seen as a competing demand that keeps men and women from what is really important. There is little or no training or encouragement to think about work as ministry. In fact, people are encouraged to find *real* significance in serving the church. Men and women who succumb to this strategy often become burned out trying to live this bifurcated life.

Where is Your Church?

Assessing and recognizing your church's tendency on the grid can be the first step toward helping your congregation live their faith 24 hours a day, seven days a week. *Importance* measures how the church values its members' callings to the workplace and sees them as key to fulfilling the ministry God has called to church to have. *Empowerment* measures the commitment of the church to prepare and train members for the mission of the church outside the four walls.

Importance

1 = Seldom/Never 2= Occasionally 3= Frequently 4=Regularly 5=Always

_____ Church leaders speak of work-life positively and never imply it is the enemy of a person's spiritual life.

_____ Knowing members' work matters to God, church leaders solicit prayer requests from your congregation for their work—their successes, their difficulties, and their spiritual influence.

_____ Members are encouraged to invest time in opportunities with their established relationships in the workplace and not to sacrifice them in order to volunteer in church initiatives where they have few relationships and little established influence.

_____ When the pastors and key leaders think about the ministry of the church, they think of the "scattered" as well as the church "gathered" and regularly visit men and women in their workplace. Men and women who serve the cause of Christ in their workplace and outside the church are honored as much as key volunteers serving in church initiatives.

_____ Your missions/evangelism ministry includes vision and strategy to evangelize the workplace.

_____ Total Range of Ministry score

Empowering

1 = Seldom/Never 2= Occasionally 3= Frequently 4=Regularly 5=Always

_____ Church leaders cast vision for their members (from childhood to adult) to see their work as a calling from God and critical to the mission of the church.

_____ Workplace illustrations and applications are used in each teaching opportunity and workplace “heroes” are given highly visible opportunities to tell their stories of following Christ at work.

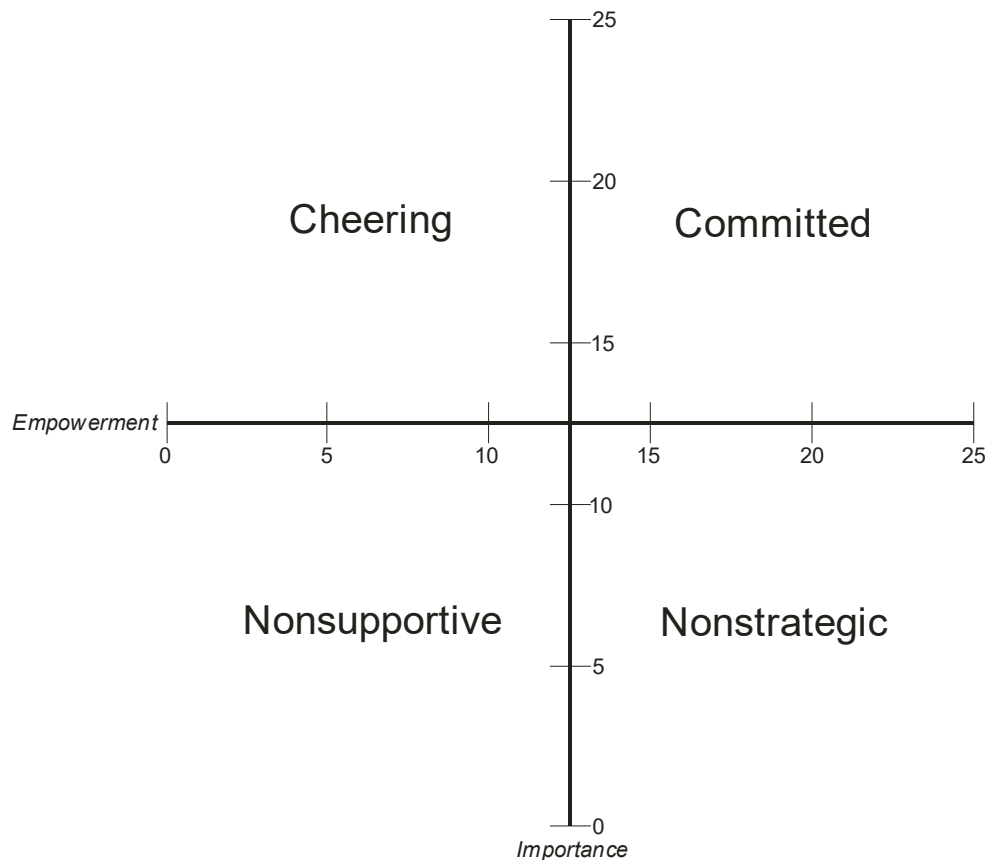
_____ Serving and leadership opportunities are available within the church that use and match men's and women’s marketplace capacity, skills, and abilities.

_____ Specific equipping opportunities exist to teach, train, and mentor men and women for successful work and ministry in their workplace.

_____ Opportunities are provided for every person to be part of a community that discusses what it means to follow Christ in every area of life—including work—and be a spiritual influence there.

_____ Total Empowering score

Plot your scores



Where do we go from here?

If you're a Committed Church

Congratulations, you're at the forefront of effective ministry and already know the incredible joy of releasing people for ministry in their daily lives. We stand ready to help you continue to empower your people and move from an event-driven ministry to a consistent, ongoing emphasis of encouragement and empowerment. It would be a privilege to both provide you and connect you with innovative resources in this endeavor.

If you are a Cheering Church

Let me encourage you to take the next step. Chances are your people are already engaged because of your encouragement. Think of how much more effective they will be when you put the time, energy, and resources into equipping them for their strategic work outside the church walls. We can provide you with the finest tools for equipping people in their work-life that will bring the greatest satisfaction to your people and reap the greatest rewards.

If you are a Non-strategic Church

You believe in your people, otherwise, you would never be making the investment. You've spent a lot of energy and resources equipping people, but the question you need to ask is, *are you pointing them in the right direction?* We can help you channel the tremendous energy for God's Kingdom into ministry that will grow your church and change the community around you. We can help you through this re-deployment process and develop a ministry that dramatically affects your return on investment.

If you are a Non-supportive Church

Thank you for being courageous enough to think seriously about and consider what may be lacking in your church's ministry. Your first step is to consider the purpose of the church. Any leader who hopes to help his/her congregation live for Christ in every area of life will have to come to understand the importance of life outside the church and especially work-life ministry—not only for his/her people but for the vitality of the church. If your church leadership needs convincing, we can help you with resources and strategies to re-direct a leader's thinking. Antagonism isn't profitable, however. Take time and show people a better way. And make this issue a matter of diligent prayer. We will be glad to counsel you toward a godly strategy to a new way of approaching ministry.