

From the Pastor's Pen

I would like to share with you a brief outline of the seven practices Andy Stanley discusses in his book, “7 Practices of Effective Ministry”—a book I have asked the LBA and Creative Team to read, as I believe it to be the best book I have found in my years as a pastor to help anyone build a truly effective church. (And if you have not already, I encourage all of you to find a copy of this book and read it as well.)

(The following is an excerpt from the book, pages 10-11.)

... So what are these seven practices?

1. *Clarify the Win.* It is impossible to know if you are making progress if you are not clear about your destination. This means examining each and every event and program and asking the question, When all is said and done, what is it we want to look back on and celebrate?
2. *Think Steps, Not Programs.* Your programs should take people somewhere, not simply fill up their time. Ask yourself, Where do we want our people to be? What do we want them to become? Is our programming designed to take them there?
3. *Narrow the Focus.* Focus is the key to achieving excellence and making an impact. Each ministry environment should be designed to do no more than one or two things well.
4. *Teach Less for More.* The less you say, the more you will communicate. You will be more effective at every level of your organization if you say only what you need to say to the people who need to hear it.
5. *Listen to Outsiders.* The needs and interests of insiders have a tendency to determine the agenda for the organization. This is especially true of the church. Focus your efforts on those you're trying to reach, rather than those you're trying to keep.
6. *Replace Yourself.* One day someone else will be doing what you are doing. Whether you have an exit strategy or not, ultimately, you *will* exit. So embrace the inevitable and prepare now for the future.
7. *Work On It.* To maintain your relevance, your sanity, and your effectiveness, you must carve out time in your schedule to step back and evaluate what you are doing and how you are doing it.

Notice something missing? Conspicuously absent here is any discussion about prayer, the Holy Spirit, and dependence upon God. Though absent from the book, these things are certainly not absent from the culture of North Point or from any healthy church.

In fact, the seven practices have proven an answer to our fervent prayers as we sought to create a church that reflects the mission of our Savior. ...

As your pastor, I too have spent countless hours in prayer, searching for a way for us to fulfill the Great Commission and become the Church God has designed us to be—one filled with people whose hearts are breaking for the lost, and who are actively trying to reach out beyond our walls and help others find Christ. I truly believe that by employing these practices, our church can—and will—accomplish great things for Christ!

See you in Church!

Pastor Tenney