***Readiness for Change* Assessment Tool**

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Adapted from: *Readiness for Change Inventory* by Aubrey Malphurs, Ph.D.

**Please Read**: When addressing the topic of change within a congregation, leaders need to start the process on the right foot. Many change initiatives fail due to poor initial planning. Taking an initial assessment will help identify where the congregation is now and what potential obstacles might impact the transformation. Change initiatives find a higher level of success when all aspects of congregational transformation are addressed. Frequently their are many unseen elements within any organization that can derail a change initiative. Understanding the congregation’s readiness enables you to address challenges before fully engaging in the full change initiative.

**Directions**: Each item below is a key element that will help you to evaluate your church's readiness for change. Strive for objectivity. Read each statement and then circle the number that most accurately rates your church. (If asked, you should be able to give reasons or example(s) that will support your answer.)

1. **Leadership**. The pastor and the church board (official leadership) are favorable toward and directly responsible for change. Influential persons (unofficial leadership: the church patriarch, a wealthy member, etc.) are favorable toward change. If so, score 5. If moderately so, score 3. If only some of the leadership or only the secondary level of leadership (support staff, Sunday school teachers, etc.) are favorable toward change while unofficial leadership opposes it (making it less likely to occur), score 1.

**Circle One: 5 3 1**

2. **Vision**. The pastor and the board have a single, clear vision of a significant future that looks different from the present. The pastor is able to mobilize most relevant parties (other staff, boards, and the congregation) for action, score 5. The pastor but not the board envisions a different direction for the church, score 3. The pastor and board have not thought about a vision, and/or they do not believe that it is important, score 1.

**Circle One: 5 3 1**

3. **Values.** The church's philosophy of ministry (its core values) includes a preference for innovation and creativity. Though proven forms, methods, and techniques are not discarded at a whim, the church is more concerned with the effectiveness of its ministries than adherence to traditions, score 5. If moderately so, score 3. The church's ministry forms and techniques have changed little over the years while its ministry effectiveness has diminished, score 1.

**Circle One: 5 3 1**

4. **Motivation**. The pastor and the board have a strong sense of urgency for change that is shared by the congregation. The congregational “culture” emphasizes the need for constant improvement, score 3. The pastor and/or the board (most of whom have been in their positions for many years) along with the congregation are bound by long standing traditions that are change-resistant and discourage risk-taking, score 1. If somewhere between, score 2.

**Circle One: 3 2 1**

5. **Organization**. How does the change effort affect the other programs in the church (Evangelism, Discipleship, Worship, Missions, etc.)? If the individuals in charge are all working together for improvement and innovation, score 3. If some are, score 2. If many are opposed to change and/or are in conflict with one another over change, score 1.

**Circle One: 3 2 1**

6. **Processes/Ministry Functions/Systems**. Major changes in a church almost always require redesigning processes and functions (how things work) in all the ministries of the church such as Christian Education, Worship, etc. If most in charge of these areas are open to change, score 3. If only some, score 2. If they are turf protectors or put their areas of ministry ahead of the church as a whole, score 1.

**Circle One: 3 2 1**

7. **Ministry Awareness**. Does the leadership of your church keep up with what is taking place in the innovative evangelical churches in the community and across America in terms of ministry and outreach effectiveness? Does it objectively compare what it is doing to that of churches that are very similar to it? If the answer is yes, score 3. If the answer is sometimes, score 2. If no, score 1.

**Circle One: 3 2 1**

8. **Community Focus**. Does the church know and understand the people (needs, hopes & concerns) in its immediate community? Does the church have regular direct contact with the community? Does the church regularly seek to reach them? If the answer is yes, score 3. If moderately so, score 2. If the church is not in touch with its community and focuses primarily on itself, score 1.

**Circle One: 3 2 1**

9. **Evaluation**. Does the church regularly evaluate its ministries? Does it evaluate its ministries in light of its vision and goals? Are these ministries regularly adjusted in response to the evaluations? If all of this takes place, score 3. If some takes place, score 2. If none, score 1.

**Circle One: 3 2 1**

10. **Rewards**. Change is easier if the leaders and those involved in ministry are rewarded in some way for their creativity and for looking for new (sometimes risk taking) solutions to their ministry problems. Also, rewarding ministry teams is more effective than rewarding solo performances. If this characterizes your church, score 3. If some times, score 2. If your church rewards the status quo and only a maintenance mentality, score 1.

**Circle One: 3 2 1**

11. Organizational Structure. The best situation is a flexible church where change is well received and takes place periodically, not every day. If this is true of your church, score 3. Some churches are very rigid in their structure and have changed very little in the last five years or have experienced several futile attempts at change to no avail, score 1. If between, score 2.

**Circle One: 3 2 1**

12. **Communication**. Does your church have a variety of means for two-way communication? Do most understand and use it, and does it reach all levels of the congregation? If this is true, score 3. If only moderately true, score 2. If communication is poor, primarily one-way and top-down, score 1.

**Circle One: 3 2 1**

13. **Organizational Hierarchy**. Is your church decentralized (has few if any levels of leadership between the congregation and the pastor or the board)? If so, score 3. If there are people on staff levels or boards/committees who come between the congregation and the pastor or the board, then more potential exists for them to block essential change, score 1. If between, score 2.

**Circle One: 3 2 1**

14. **Prior Change**. Churches will most readily adapt to change if they have successfully implemented major changes in the recent past, score 3. If some change, score 2. If no one can remember the last time the church changed or if such efforts failed or left people angry and resentful, score 1.

**Circle One: 3 2 1**

15. **Morale**. Do the church staff and volunteers enjoy the church and take responsibility for their ministries? Do they trust the pastor and/or the board? If so, score 3. If moderately so, score 2. Do few people volunteer and are there signs of low team spirit? Is there mistrust between leaders and followers and between the various ministries? If so, score 1.

**Circle One: 3 2 1**

16. **Innovation**. The church tries new things. People feel free to implement new ideas on a consistent basis. People have the freedom to make choices and solve problems regarding their ministries. If this describes your church, score 3. If this is somewhat true, score 2. If ministries are ensnared in bureaucratic red tape and permission from "on high" must be obtained before anything happens, score 1.

**Circle One: 3 2 1**

17. **Decision-Making**. Does the church leadership listen carefully to a wide variety of suggestions from the entire congregation? After it has gathered the appropriate information, does it make decisions quickly? If so, score 3. If moderately so, score 2. Does the leadership listen only to a select few and take forever to make a decision? Is there lots of conflict during the process, and after a decision is made, is there confusion and turmoil? Then, score 1.

**Circle One: 3 2 1**

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Please add the numbers circled for each question to find your total score.)

**IF YOUR SCORE IS**:

**47-57**: The chances are good that you may implement change, especially if your scores are high on items 1-3.

**28-46:** Change may take place but with varying success. Chances increase the higher the score on items 1-3. Note areas with low scores and focus on improvement before attempting change on a large scale.

**17-27**: Change will not likely take place. Note areas with low scores and attempt to improve them... if possible. Consider starting a new church and implement your ideas in a more "change-friendly" context.

**FOR FURTHER HELP**:If you have downloaded this exercise from our website and desire further help in understanding and implementing change in your ministry, we have some excellent resources that may assist in your discovery and implementation of a transformation strategy that is right for you and your congregation. We offer free consultation and welcome your questions and concerns. In addition, we also provide excellent church consulting services.

Please contact us via our web page: [www.latiyalive.com](http://www.latiyalive.com) (click on “contact” tab)