

# Outline of Congregational Gathering(s) for a Mission Study

*The following can be done in one gathering or two or three ...*

*One gathering: approximately 3 ½ hours, inclusive of breaks and a light meal ...*

*Two gatherings approximately 1 ¾ hours each; Three gathering approximately 1 1/4 hours each*

1. **Time-Line Exercise** see *Studying Congregations, A New Handbook* pp. 209-210;  
or *Holy Conversations*, pp. 127-128):

*Record on the wall (on a long piece of butcher paper):*

church history . . . events . . . key dates . . . pastorates . . . family highlights . . . age-grouping  
times when individual members joined  
community and world history events . . . what life was like . . .

2. **Division Into Groups**

*Divide the gathering into discussion groups of 7-9 persons, preferably seated at round tables, each group represented as far as possible by a session member, a deacon, a youth, a charter member, a new member, various congregational committees (worship, education, property, mission, evangelism), potential PNC, Mission Study Task Group, etc. In other words, mix em up. Mission Study member records, notes to be shared with team..*

3. **Discussion Questions**

*Reflecting on the time-line, ask each group to discuss the following*

- **What Difference Would it make if \_\_\_\_\_ Church did not exist?**
  - In the community/city?
  - In your life?.
- **What Changes or Trends have you noticed about \_\_\_\_\_ Church?**
  - On the Time Line?
  - During your time of association with the church?
- **What has happened that . . .**
  - You would like to have happened in a different way?
  - That you like?
- **If you are talking to a potential minister, how would you describe \_\_\_\_\_ Church?**
  - What are our needs?
  - What are our challenges?
- **What kind of qualities would you tell him or her are needed in a pastor?**

4. **Bible Study/Mission Statement**

- *Each table reads and engages in study in one biblical text, i.e. Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 2:41-47, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, 1 Peter 2:4-10, 1 Corinthians 12:1-27, Exodus 19:1-6, Micah 6:1-8 . . .*
- *Each table reads and relates scripture to the Book of Order, F-1.01-0404 (New Form of Government Chapter One, The Mission of the Church *The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity.*), with focus on The Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304)*
- *Each table completes the following sentence:*

**“ \_\_\_\_\_ Church is a church that . . . . .”**

Note: each table completes the sentence on newsprint, which are gathered and given to a congregational Mission Study Team or another group to compile into a mission statement.

5. **Envisioning/Futuring**

*It is now 2021 (or 5 or 10 years out) . . . what is your family like? What is \_\_\_\_\_ (city/community) like? What is the world like? Where do you live? What is \_\_\_\_\_ Church like? How and what are we doing? What did we do to get there?*