

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

# Hope Is Not a Strategy for the New Year

## Episode 126

### *Why Vision Without a Plan Is Just a Dream*

Possibilities. With the turning of the calendar, there's often a renewed sense of hope and a dream of what could be. We all tend to believe this is the year things will be different. Too often, though, leaders hold onto this hope without a plan to achieve it. In this episode, Tony and Amy explain why hope is not a strategy for your church and explore some practical ways that you can create a plan for greater ministry impact.

### *Why Church Leaders Resist Planning... And Why It's Wrong Thinking*

- There can be an unconscious belief that planning is “unspiritual” or somehow the antithesis of relying on the Holy Spirit for wisdom and direction.
- There's actually a scriptural foundation for planning, and for the hard work that follows.
- “Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.” Proverbs 21:5
- The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and insight that others can't access. Christians should be the best planners in the world. We can choose to ignore the promptings of the Holy Spirit, but, as Christ-followers, the Holy Spirit lives inside us and is with us in every area of our lives... even leadership.
- Planning leads to change and change is hard. Some churches don't plan because they are just unwilling to do the hard work. It's far easier to do what they've always done.
- And the truth is: The lack of a plan *is* your plan. It's just a plan to do *nothing*.

### *What a Plan Does for a Church*

- A good planning process should always help an organization answer three key questions: Why do we exist? Where are we going? How are we going to get there?
- Those answers create focus and alignment on your team.
- The loudest person in the room will fill the void when no plan exists. And, you'll get one of two results: People will stay busy doing what they've always done. Or, people are left guessing what they should do next.

## *Best Practices for Churches Engaging a Planning Process*

- Plan with a team: “Plans go wrong for lack of advice; many advisers bring success.” Proverbs 15:22
- Keep your planning team to 12 or fewer people. When the planning team gets too large, you sabotage the process. Extroverts will get more extroverted, and introverts will get more introverted. It’s more difficult to come to decisions. The value in planning as a team is to get different perspectives.
- Find an annual planning retreat rhythm where you identify priority initiatives for the next 12 months and structure those initiatives around your primary growth engines.
- Invite an outside facilitator so that you can participate in the planning conversations, rather than facilitate the conversations.

## *Next Steps*

- Discuss with your team:
  - What beliefs have we held about planning? How have those beliefs shaped our team behaviors?
  - Do we know where our church is headed in the next year? In the next five?
- If you determine you need to engage an outside facilitator, [let’s talk](#). Six months after completing the Unstuck Process, 9 out of 10 pastors say they’d recommend us to another church—because they are seeing real results.

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