
5 Ways to Improve Your Weekend Services

Every Monday morning, the same question rolls through my head “How were our weekend services and what can we do to make them better?”

I’m guessing you have a similar conversation every Monday (or even Saturday night) yourself.

The weekend service is the biggest priority at most churches in our modern era because it’s the front door for people in our community to enter through. We spend countless hours, dollars, and energy planning, preparing, practicing, and performing the 60—90 minutes per week we get with our attendees and guests. Their time is a gift and we want to steward it to the best of our ability to engage them with the life-changing power of the gospel.

So the question we all seek to answer week after week. What can we do to make our weekend services better? Here are 5 ways to improve your weekend services...and each one is completely free to implement!

1. Meet people where they are.

I served with a pastor a number of years ago who used to say, “You can’t clean a fish before you catch it.” If you’ve ever been fishing (a sport I’m absolutely horrendous at), then you know how crazy this statement sounds. But how often do we approach ministry with this mindset? We expect people to come to us and know exactly what to do and how to behave.

When we look at the example Jesus laid out for us time after time, he sought to meet people where they were by identifying with their needs. He told stories filled with relatable illustrations. He fed the people he'd been teaching instead of sending them away. He healed physical ailments and cast out demons. Jesus understood the power of what Franklin Roosevelt said many years ago: "People don't care what you know until they know that you care."

2. Help people uncross their arms.

In an interview on Church Fuel's [Strategic Ministry Solutions podcast](#), Pastor Vince Antonucci shares how Verve in Las Vegas works to remove barriers which may keep people from connecting.

One of the Verve's top priorities for their weekend services is to uncross arms. The service starts with a cover a popular song from culture to give attendees something familiar. The segment which follows is an upbeat and fun welcome time which explains what is coming up. The speaker shares that songs will be sung about God with the words on the television monitors behind him to assist those who may not know the songs. Finally, he introduces the message topic for the day and who will be giving it.

And the service rolls on from there.

Vince stresses the importance of explaining things. As leaders, we can simplify our vocabulary by using words and phrases which are easily understood, or making the extra effort to explain what something more complicated means. In addition to the words we use, service elements can be confusing. Church might be the only place in our culture where we do things like singing songs, praying corporately, reading scripture, and observing communion. Do you take time to explain why these elements are a part of your services?

To uncross arms, church leaders must work to remove the barriers which keep from attendees connecting.

3. Plan the flow.

Do you plan out the flow of your weekend services? I'm a big advocate of planning out every element in terms of what's going to be done, how it will get accomplished, and who is going to do it. I want to account for every minute we're given.

Now, before you start accusing me of programming the Holy Spirit out of the service, let me stop you. I'm also a believer in being sensitive to the Spirit to the degree that plans are dismantled. Every time that happens, something more wonderful is built in its place. But that doesn't mean we enter into a gathering of people directionless either.

I bet you've heard the phrase "Fail to plan – plan to fail." And fail is what will happen if you choose to wing it come Sunday. Trust me, I know. Laying out the structure of the service elements and who will do which one is an important part of stewarding the time we are given each week.

As a worship leader, I want to talk through how each song will start with my team. This communication can tighten up the flow and remove a big disruption to the spirit of worship: dead space. Let's face it. Dead space feels awkward, so planning transitions ahead of time can drastically reduce it.

Another aspect of planning is by identifying what Dan Ferguson talks about in his book [The Big Idea](#). He calls it the "Know Feel Do" of the service. What do you want people to **know**, how do you want them to **feel**, and what do you want them to **do** in response to your weekend services. Planning the "Know Feel Do" of every service keeps the entire team moving in the same direction so that they can lead those in attendance more effectively.

Finally, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit during your planning, preparation, practice, and performance. Imagine the Spirit as your GPS on a trip. A good GPS tells you how to get where you're going. All you have to do is follow it! The same rings true with the Holy Spirit. He will lead you if you will follow. Lay down your pride and your desire to control what happens and follow and obey.

4. *Work the plan.*

Clear communication with those involved in executing the plan is crucial. You should touch base with your team leading up to the Sunday services to make sure they are getting themselves ready to serve (spiritually, mentally, emotionally, etc.) and to find out what's going on in their lives.

Conduct a mid-week rehearsal, especially for the worship team. I know it's hard to get everyone together throughout the week, but you're missing a golden opportunity here. First of all, it gives your team a time to work through arrangements, chords, vocal parts, etc. without the stress of a service time coming at them like a runaway train. But even more important, it gives your team a time to connect with you and each other relationally.

A run-through on Sunday morning beforehand gets everyone on the same page. It's early, the kids were fighting with you over their clothes, and coffee hasn't been made yet. You never know what kind of mood your team will bring with them. A Sunday morning run-through allows the team to remember what you practiced, work through transitions, and test out volume levels or video feeds.

The final point here is repeated from above because it's that important. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Trust Him with everything and then get out of the way. One of my biggest requests each week is that we may be invisible so that God may be glorified. If I'm rigidly sticking to my plan, I'm going to miss out on some wonderful Spirit-filled moments of worship.

5. *Have fun.*

An often overlooked way of improving our weekend services is having fun. It shows all over your being if you enjoy doing what you're doing with the people you're doing it with. And fun is contagious.

Here are a few gut checks to help you gauge your fun quotient:

- If you aren't having fun, you should consider your perspective.
- If you can't laugh at yourself, you should consider your pride.
- If you don't enjoy serving with the people on your team, you should consider your attitude.

It's not about money; it's about focus.

You don't have to spend money to improve your weekend services. Fancy lights, high-quality sound, great looking props, or whatever else you dream of buying to add some spark to your services will only carry you so far.

Eventually, the shine will wear off the new toy and you'll be looking for the next thing to add.

Church Growth Resource

Feel like your church should be growing, but it's not?

Ultimately, church growth is up to God. Are we being good stewards of what He's given us? Are we doing everything we can to ensure our church is healthy? How do we overcome the barriers we feel are in front of us?

We know you care deeply about leading a healthy growing church because it means leading more people to Jesus. So we created a free guide to breaking barriers that will bring clarity and help begin to alleviate your frustrations.

Get your FREE copy of the Senior Pastor's Guide to Breaking Barriers today.

[Download the guide](#)