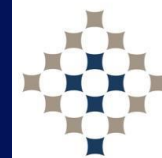


TRAITS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH

A self-assessment tool for balancing the relationship of:
Up (relationship with God)
In (relationship with each other)
Out (relationship with the community)

PRESENTED BY CHURCH RELATIONS COMMISSION



Churches of God
General Conference
Allegheny Region Conference

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INTRODUCTION

The following is the Traits of a Healthy Church self-assessment tool developed by the ARC Church Relations Committee. Our goal through this tool is to help churches develop a balance between their up, in, and out relationships. **Up** referring to how your church relates and shows love for God. **In** referring to how you relate and show love for each other and with other bodies of believers in our conference, in your community, and the worldwide church as a whole. **Out** referring to how you relate and show love for all persons in your community. Our churches are healthiest and most effective when this Relational Triangle is in balance. This checklist tool is beneficial for all churches regardless of their conceptual health.

For churches that are struggling or would say they are in crisis, this tool is the first step to rebuilding a healthy balance. Often when in crisis, we see everything that is out of balance all at once but cannot articulate what the problem is. By completing the self-analysis tool, you will get a clear picture of what is working in your church as well as areas with room for growth. For churches doing well, this tool can help confirm a healthy balance in the relational triangle or identify any area that may be out of balance. By regularly completing a self-analysis, you can not only help your church grow but also prevent your church from becoming a church in crisis.

Whether healthy or in crisis, and as you read through the analysis, we ask that you do so prayerfully and honestly. Consider the following as you work through the checklist:

- Each ministry that occurs in your church
- Each individual inside of your church and how they are impacted as well as participate in each ministry
- The impact your church has on outside persons or groups

For a complete look at your church health, consider not just completing this analysis yourself, but also by your ministry leaders, and perhaps even by a few members of your congregation. The Church Relations Committee would love to partner with you in whatever way your church sees fit to help you have a more significant impact on God's Kingdom.

Church Relations Commission

1. UP

Passionate prayer

Passionate prayer brings peace, promotes unity, and empowers the body for ministry. It allows a congregation to stay focused on and remain connected to God whether the ministry is positive or stalled. Therefore, with prayer, we are no longer working under our own strength or fighting an unwinnable battle.

Evidence of passionate prayer include:

- Intentional corporate prayer
- Identified prayer ministries
- Biblical Fear of God
- Laying on of Hands
- Anointing

Scripture

Philippians 4:6-7 – “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience Gods peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”

James 5:14 – “Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord.”

Acts 13:3 – “So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way.”

Psalms 9:10 – “Those who know your name trust in you, for you, O Lord, do not abandon those who search for you.”

Isaiah 6:5 – “Then I said, “It’s all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.”

Revelation 1:17 – “When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, “Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last.”

Worship

Transformational worship encourages a congregation to be focused and open to the movement of the Holy Spirit in every aspect of our lives. It promotes deep change in the way we think and act by aligning our focus on God. All ages and diversities are transformed and equipped to bring Kingdom impact after being involved in the act of worship.

Evidence of worship include:

- Participative prayer
- Testimony sharing
- Engage in ordinances
- Flexibility for the movement of Spirit
- Engaged in music
- Music is intergenerational and points to God
- The message includes an invitation and challenge towards life change
- Intergenerational ministry involvement
- Clear Kingdom impact on giving

Scripture

Romans 12:1-2 – “And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Biblical Giving

Biblical giving is an important part of worship that takes place within our churches. It displays discipline and obedience to God. Scripture calls us to be cheerful and generous in our giving, remembering that all things we have come from God.

Evidence of biblical giving include:

- Obedient and cheerful
- Time
- Money
- Storehouse tithing as obedience
- Generosity communicated and evident to people
 - Modeled by leadership
- Stewardship education
 - Plan and execution

Scripture

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 – “Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.”

2.

IN

Effective Discipleship

Effective discipleship involves all aspects from conversion, living in faith, to impacting others for the Kingdom. It is inclusive and inviting, promoting unity between all members. Spiritual accountability and development are continual and evident in the daily lives of the congregation. Effective discipleship continues to grow the Kingdom through the recognition of spiritual gifts and APEST leadership, as outlined in 1 Corinthians and Ephesians, respectively.

Evidence of effective discipleship include:

- Conversions, Baptisms, Ordinances
- Spiritual accountability expectations
- People demonstrate or communicate their personal discipleship model
- Active ministry team
- Leadership development plan – all levels
- Gospel conversations
- Living on mission
- Number of regular participants
- Recognize APEST

Scripture

Philippians 2:5-8 – “You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross.”

1 Corinthians 11:1 – “And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-12 – “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.”

Ephesians 4:3 – “Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.”

Ephesians 4:11-12 – “Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.”

Compelling Vision

The compelling vision, which is clearly given by God through the Holy Spirit to the congregation, should encompass the mission given to the Church of God by Christ in Matthew 28:18-20. Knowledge of the vision is clearly communicated by the congregation, both verbally and with written evidence. The church has and knows their measurable goals, and they ensure all ministries align with the vision.

Evidence of compelling vision include:

- Written, evident, verbalized vision
- Measurable goals
- Leaders articulate and held accountable (transparency)
- Congregation verbalizes vision
- Ministries cohesive with vision

Scripture

Matthew 28:18FF – “Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Christian Community

Authentic Christian Community is evident through following Christ's new commandment to love one another. Achieving this can be done by following the "one another" teachings in scripture. The New Testament contains many "one another" teachings on how to relate to those within the faith community. When the church follows these commands, their love will be evident and the world will know that they are disciples of Jesus.

Evidence of love evidence include:

- Meaningful relationships (outside Sunday morning)
- Accountability Matthew 18:15-17
- Unity in leadership and congregation
- Prayer updates outside of worship gathering
- Fellowship events
- Spontaneous gatherings
- Diversity (reflects community)
- Meaningful collaborations

Scripture

1 John 4:7-8 – "Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

1 Peter 3:8 – "Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude."

Philippians 2:1-4 – "Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too."

James 5:14-17 – “Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven.

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years!

John 13:34-35 – “So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

3. OUT

Evangelistic Fervor

Evangelistic fervor is displayed through the natural desire to impact our community for the Kingdom as we continue to focus on our God and build strong church family relationships. A healthy church is evident when the ministries that they participate in align with scripture and the compelling vision that God has given to the congregation, as well as meets the needs of the community. It is an intentional, energetic, and collective outreach that builds meaningful relationships outside the building.

Evidence of evangelistic fervor include:

- Meaningful relationships
- Intentional Kingdom Impact
- Effective Collaboration
- Intentional relationships with new believers
- Outreach participation opportunity for the entire congregation
- Ministries outside of building and grounds
- Identifiable signature ministry

Scripture

Matthew 28:18FF – “Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Acts 2:1-2 – “On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting.”

Matthew 9:38 – “So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.”

Traits of a Healthy Church Checklist

Please rank each area on a scale of 0-5.

- 0 unsure
- 1 our church does not do this
- 2 our church occasionally does this
- 3-our church normally does this
- 4-our church does this well
- 5-our church does this extremely well

UP

Passionate prayer

- Intentional corporate prayer Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Identified prayer ministries Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Biblical Fear of God Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Laying on of hands Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Anointing Score:_____ Comments:_____

Comparable Average Score ----- / 5 =

Worship

- Participative prayer Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Testimony sharing Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Engage in ordinances Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Flexibility for the movement of Spirit Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Engaged in music Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Music is intergenerational and points to God
Score:_____ Comments:_____

- The message includes an invitation and has challenge towards life change
Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Intergenerational ministry involvement Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Clear Kingdom impact on giving Score:_____ Comments:_____

Comparable Average Score ----- _____ / 9 =

Biblical Giving

- Obedient and cheerful Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Giving of Time Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Giving of Money Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Storehouse tithing as obedience Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Generosity is communicated Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Generosity is evident to people Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Generosity is modeled by leadership Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Stewardship education Score:_____ Comments:_____

Comparable Average Score ----- _____ / 8 =

IN

Effective Discipleship

- Conversions Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Baptisms Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Ordinances Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Spiritual accountability expectations Score:_____ Comments:_____
- People demonstrate or communicate their personal discipleship model
Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Active ministry team Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Leadership development plan Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Gospel conversations Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Living on mission Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Number of regular participants Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Recognize APEST Score:_____ Comments:_____

Comparable Average Score ----- / 11 =

Compelling Vision

- Written, evident, verbalized Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Measurable goals Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Leaders articulate vision Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Leaders held accountable Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Leaders are transparent Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Congregation verbalizes vision Score:_____ Comments:_____
- Ministries cohesive with vision Score:_____ Comments:_____

Comparable Average Score ----- _____ / 7 =

Christian Community

- Meaningful relationships (outside Sunday morning) Score: _____ Comments: _____
- Accountability Matthew 18:15-17 Score: _____ Comments: _____
- Unity in leadership Score: _____ Comments: _____
- Unity in congregation Score: _____ Comments: _____
- Prayer update outside worship gathering Score: _____ Comments: _____
- Fellowship events Score: _____ Comments: _____
- Spontaneous gatherings Score: _____ Comments: _____
- Diversity (reflects community) Score: _____ Comments: _____
- Meaningful collaborations Score: _____ Comments: _____

Comparable Average Score ----- / 9 =

OUT

Evangelistic Fervor

- Meaningful relationships Score: _____ Comments: _____
- Intentional Kingdom Impact Score: _____ Comments: _____
- Effective Collaboration Score: _____ Comments: _____
- Intentional relationships with new believers Score: _____ Comments: _____
- Outreach participation opportunity for entire congregation Score: _____ Comments: _____
- Ministries outside of building and grounds Score: _____ Comments: _____
- Identifiable signature ministry Score: _____ Comments: _____

Comparable Average Score ----- _____ / 7 =

HEALTHY CHURCH ANALYSIS

Please read after you have reviewed the healthy church assessment tool and completed the healthy church checklist. This summary is designed to give you guidance on how to proceed following the completion of the Traits of a Healthy Church Checklist.

First and possibly, most important, we want you to remember that there is no predetermined meter for the score on the checklist. Your scores are exactly that your scores and are designed to help you as a branch of God's church determine your strongest and weakest areas. No matter where your individual numbers fall, there will always be areas that score higher and lower. Low scores do not necessarily show an unhealthy church but highlight areas of potential growth. It is crucial to remember that everyone scores themselves and their ministries differently.

To get the most transparent snapshot of your church health, this assessment is best completed by ministry leaders and lay members of your congregation. By this point, we hope that you have collected those scores and averaged them together, so you have firm numbers to work with as you work through this analysis. Take the time to complete the Healthy Church Analysis Chart on page 24. It will give you a clear picture of your highest and lowest scores so that you can better see your assessment results, and then proceed to the next step.

Circle your highest area and two lowest areas from the chart, then use the worksheet to help you complete the following steps. Starting with your highest area, define what you are doing well, and identify three things you can continue to do in the area to help with maintain success. At this point, you should be very excited, and the Church Relations Commission (CRC) wants to hear your stories of success. The CRC would like to take the time to highlight your strengths and possibly share your success strategies with other

churches who may be struggling where you are the strongest. We believe that by taking the time to compile the success strategies of all the churches in our region, we can collectively work to build a stronger Allegheny Region (ARC).

Now, it can be very tempting and easy to only look at where our ministries are the strongest. However, we encourage you to take the strength that you have gained by identifying the areas where you are doing well and use it to help you identify ways you can improve the lower scored areas. We would ask you to identify the things you do well in those areas, then identify things you can do to see improvement. Talk about these items with your leadership team and work with them to identify one action step for each area. An action step should include what you are going to do and a time frame for its completion. Then work together to find ways to help both them and your congregation get excited about moving forward. We encourage you to reach out to the CRC and share your plan so that we can pray for you, offer you resources, and help to keep you accountable for the action steps you are setting forth for your church.

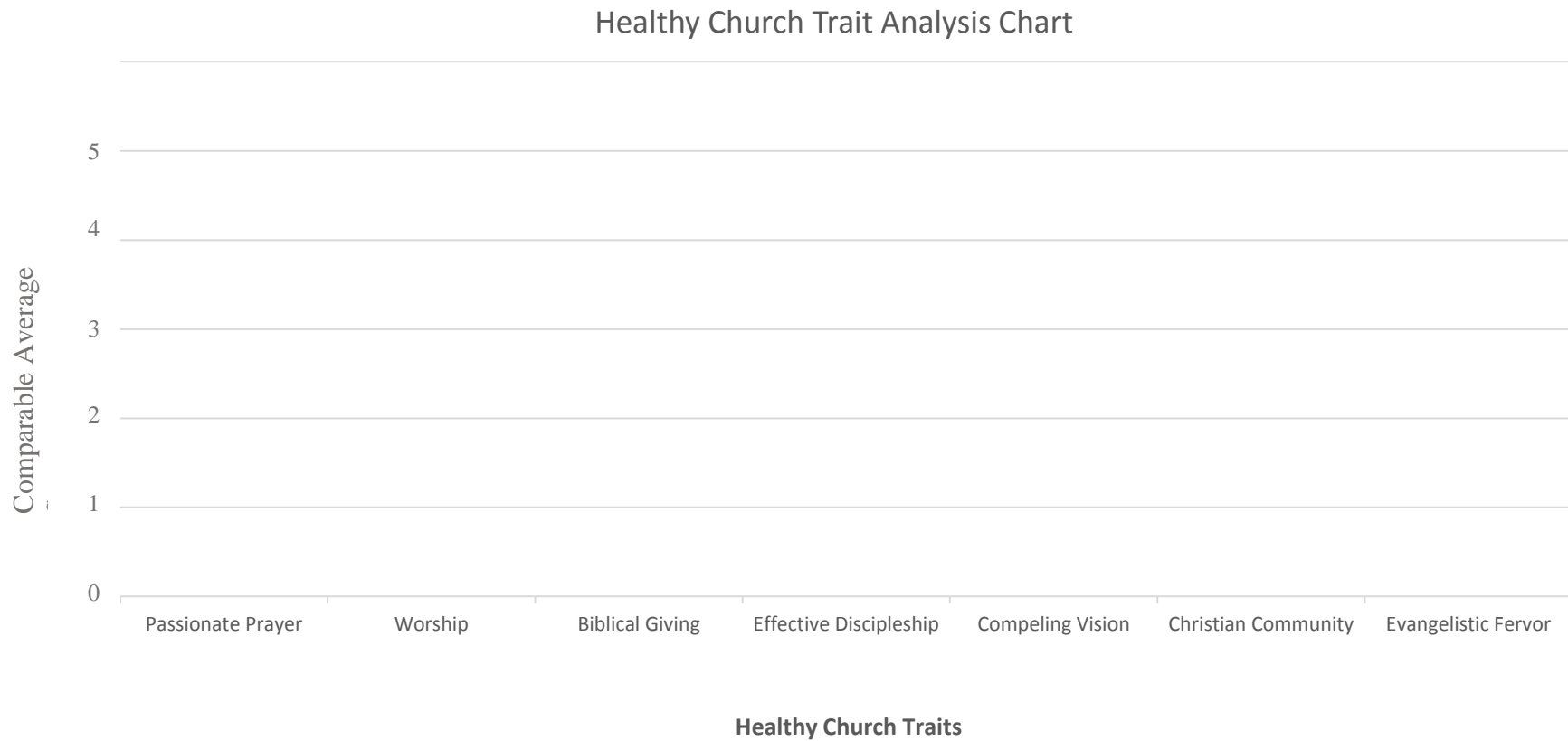
Endnote: Remember that the Traits of a Healthy Church assessment should not be looked like as a one and done snapshot. Instead, it is a tool that can be repeated over time to continue to show you where your ministries are the strongest as well as identify areas of potential growth. We encourage you to reach out to the CRC each time you use it to share your successes as well as any struggles you may encounter.

We look forward to partnering with each of our churches within the ARC so that we can have maximum Kingdom impact in our communities.

WORK PAGES

Healthy Church Trait Analysis Chart

Plot your Comparable Average Scores below.



Worksheet

Highest Score from Chart: _____

Three things we do well:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Three items to maintain success:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Lowest Score from Chart: _____

Three things we do well:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Three areas for improvement

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Next Lowest Score from Chart: _____

Three things we do well:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Three areas for improvement

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Action Steps

1. In the next _____, we will _____.

2. In the next _____, we will _____.