

Mike Davies

# MULTI-SITE CHURCH

ANSWERING PRESSING QUESTIONS ABOUT BUILDING MULTI-SITE CHURCH



# Multi-Site Church

by Mike Davies

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# Table of Contents

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MULTI-SITE CHURCH..... 1  
    Is multi-site church biblical?..... 1  
    How does multi-site work? ..... 2  
PLANTING A CHURCH..... 3  
    What does a church planter look like? ..... 3  
    What are the qualifications of an elder? ..... 6  
    Training potential elders ..... 8  
    Mistakes and challenges in establishing a multi-site church..... 9  
    Benefits of multi-site church..... 12  
    Administration and maintaining unity ..... 12  
CONCLUSION ..... 14

# A LOOK AT MULTI-SITE CHURCH AND CHURCH PLANTING

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## MULTI-SITE CHURCH

### Is multi-site church biblical?

I have often been asked if there is a biblical reason for planting multiple congregations as part of one church. This is a particularly difficult issue for people who are afraid of falling into denominationalism. Whilst this fear is not unfounded, it should not prevent us from following a God given strategy to effectively reach the nations with the Gospel and effectively disciple people. Of course, going multi-site is not the only way forward but it is most certainly an option that is allowed for in Scripture.

In the book of Acts, we see that people met both in each others homes and in the temple courts (which could accommodate several thousand people). In addition, we know, both from the biblical record and from history that the early Christians also met, at least in the early years of the church, in the synagogues of which there were many.

We can see that when Peter is miraculously released from prison in Acts 12, he goes directly to the house of Mary where certain believers were gathered, leaving instructions to them to speak with 'James and the other brothers'. In fact, churches in Corinth, Jerusalem, Rome, Antioch, Thessalonica, Ephesus, Philippi and Laodicea were all referred to as 'one church' even though Christians in those cities met in multiple locations - with these various 'congregations' gathering periodically, for example to celebrate the Lord's supper as one city wide church.

We further see references to the churches of Galatia (Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe) whilst referred to in the plural (Gal 1:2) seems to be treated, especially in the epistle, as one church.

We can see that whilst any given city seemed to have one church (linked with the wider church via Eph 4 gifts, in the case of large cities, with large Christian populations, or where a church was spread over a large geographical area) oftentimes a single church operated on a 'multi-site' model.

This isn't to say that all churches must be multi-site, but rather that multi-site is a legitimate, biblical option for leaders to consider

## How does multi-site work?

Whilst we see evidence for the existence of multi-site churches, little is revealed in Scripture about how they are administrated (other than the general principals of being eldership governed etc.). This is true of many aspects of church leadership: Christ has, via the Scriptures established a foundation, with boundaries that we must stay within. Yet within those boundaries has delegated responsibility to local elders, working alongside apostles, and given them the freedom to decide on how the life of the church should be administrated. Whilst we may often wish for more detail, there are many benefits to this manner of revelation of church governance:

- It ensures that leaders remain connected to the head, Christ, and hear His voice rather than leading according to a set of rules and regulations alone (or at least they should)
- It allows for the flexibility required to deal with different sized churches, in different environments and cultures, with differently gifted leaders.
- It allows the wineskin to grow, stretch and change, to accommodate the new wine without breaking

As we look across the world we see many ways of implementing multi-site, each with its pros and cons. Each of these 'systems' has a different approach to the level of 'autonomy' each congregation/campus exercises. On the one extreme there are churches that simply have different meeting places but use technology to disseminate the message (e.g. there will be one man preaching with that preach being transmitted via video link to the various 'campuses'). There is little, if any, governmental responsibility at each individual site, with a centralised leadership. Generally speaking most administration (including financial decisions) would be done centrally with leaders at each 'campus' carrying primarily a pastoral and organisational role.

At the other extreme, there are churches that have a high degree of 'autonomy' in each congregation. All ministry, administration (financial and otherwise) and pastoral work is the responsibility of the leadership of that congregation. These congregations would be linked by an individual or team of leaders who would act, essentially as apostolic oversight.

Between those extremes there are many leadership models. Even within Four12 there are a number of multi-site churches, each operating slightly differently. Joshua Generation itself has developed and changed its modus operandi since we planted our first congregation: partly because we didn't know quite what we were doing at first and have learned valuable lessons along the way and partly because our needs have developed and changed: having two congregations has very different challenges to having 23. Furthermore, as we have seen Four12 develop into a truly global movement, with hundreds of churches across the globe partnering with us, our senior leaders are carrying more and more responsibilities outside of the local church at the expense, if we are not careful, of the health of the local church. We have had to develop and adapt, therefore, to ensure that all of our congregations receive the help, support and resources that they need.

# PLANTING A CHURCH

## What does a church planter look like?

Churches aren't always started by elders

This may, at first seem like a surprising statement but there is a biblical precedent for it. The church in Rome was started, it is generally accepted, by believers returning from Jerusalem post-Pentecost. In Acts we see Philip the evangelist see many people saved and gathered together, only to then call the apostles to set elders in place. Likewise, Paul sent Timothy and Titus to established groups of believers in order to ordain elders.

Of course, elders need to be set in place at some point but the initial gathering together of people may be facilitated by anybody. One of our congregations was started by a couple, who weren't elders or deacons. They were relocated to a new town and began to meet with other believers. Eventually this group grew to the point where we needed to establish a church. That couple later were ordained as elders and now lead the church there: Interestingly we had never really considered them for eldership prior to that.

In another instance, a deacon couple began a home group (community as we call them) in an area some distance from one of our congregations. They drew enough people that it made sense to plant a congregation in that area. In that case they remained as deacons and we sent an elder to lead that group of people.

In many cases, however, we do send an elder, who has been trained and equipped, usually with a group of people, to plant and establish a church in an area we feel the Lord wants us to plant in. In this case we are looking for leaders with the right character, gift make up and personality to succeed as a church planter (whilst God can use anybody, it is easier for a person to be successful in church planting if it is more naturally part of their gifting and calling). We would be reluctant to send somebody alone (though this has happened – we had one successful church plant by a couple in their 80's who felt to go and plant a church).

Normally speaking, the chances of success are greatly increased when a man plants with a team. A group of people who carry the values of the church and can establish the correct culture to bring people into, makes life easier, especially if there is, for example, a worship leader, a children's worker etc. in the group. Of course, this isn't always possible. One dynamic that we have found to be very beneficial is, where possible, to combine a good teacher/preacher with a good 'pastor' in the leadership of a congregation (few men are gifted in both, but such a man makes for a great planter).

## Being sent to plant a church

People need to be sent rather than just to go of their own accord. There is no set methodology, no system; there should be a sense of the moving of the Spirit and an activation of faith. Of course, we believe people should be sent, rather than just choosing to go.

When God has clearly spoken to the elders about sending someone it's an easy call, but there are times when leadership is approached by someone who feels called to go elsewhere. If, after praying, the elders do not feel a clear 'No' from the Lord, it may well be that such a person is released to follow their conviction. Undoubtedly there will be challenges ahead and difficulties to overcome for anyone planting a church: one thing that is essential, no matter how one has been sent, is that there is a deep conviction that this is from the Lord – a conviction that will stand when the doubts and difficulties arrive.

## Any church planter will face difficulties

A man should know what he is getting into before he starts. The leader of a church plant is key. Some of the most gifted persons will not be able to break something open: he has to be gifted in the right way and be willing to work hard.

There are, of course, bad reasons to want to plant a church:

- Being rebellious: when he goes, make sure it's for the right reasons. We use the term 'splant' sometimes which is made up of split and plant. Some churches plant leaders out because they have been causing trouble etc. Only plant good faithful servants in the house.
- Having an outgoing personality.
- Because he likes new things.
- Because of pride and ambition

## Requirements for a church planter

- Know that God has called you to plant a church, not just lead a church. Have a clear sense of calling, remembering that the clearer your calling is, the harder it might be. You need a special grace from the Lord to plant a church.
- Make sure you are dead to self. Die before you live. Be ruthless in dealing with the flesh.
- The endorsement from your local elders and affirmation from people who know you.
- An inspiring vision, a dream – you need to see what could be. When you speak about your dream, do others want to be part of it? The vision has to burn in you.
- Can you inspire people to pay the price and honour God. Will people come with you and pay a price with you to help you build? Can you get other people excited about the vision?
  - o Being able to attract and develop the right leaders. A new church plant often means one man doing most of the work, but as the church grows it is imperative that new leaders are identified and developed. It is far easier to put a leader in place than to remove him. Some advice then, when raising and releasing new leaders (especially elders and deacons);

- o Get apostolic perspective before you release new leaders.
- o Don't make a worldly leader a spiritual leader.
- o A new leader needs internal spiritual authority.
- Do you carry an internal authority? A man cannot rely on his position or title for his authority.
- Pragmatic confidence. Leaders without confidence create insecurity in the people they lead.
- Highly relational. Can you gather people? Do people want to spend time with you? Test yourself. See how you can grow a home group or bring new people to church. If you can't gather people as part of an established church, you will struggle to attract them as part of a church plant.
- An ability to break something open. Does life flow when you minister?
- Do others believe in you and believe with you.
- Are you widely gifted? In a large congregation it is possible (even desirable) for a leader to specialise but in a smaller congregation, with a much smaller leadership team, the lead elder needs to be more of an all-rounder: able to teach, shepherd, etc. etc.
- Can you 'dig wells'. I.e. can you find the life of the Spirit? Does grace flow through you to others when you minister? Can you hear the voice of the Spirit and follow Him?
- Courage: it requires great courage to give ones life to such an endeavour. It is not for the faint hearted, for a man-pleaser or for somebody who will shrink back under pressure.

It is easy to build a church. But not so easy to build a church where everybody dies to himself or herself for the church. Your vision from Jesus needs to inspire people to participate, give, and die. It is costly, but far more glorious. The ideal church planting couple is a charismatic all-round anointed couple. They will find it easiest. People often come to a church plant because they like the lead couple. They are often gifted in hospitality with an evident love for Jesus and people.

## What are the qualifications of an elder?

Somebody once said, “show me you leaders and I will show you the future of your church”. The ‘success’ or otherwise of a church plant is largely dependant upon the character and gifting of its leaders. We should be careful who we place in positions of authority. This is especially true in the case of multi-site churches. The potential for a church split always exists, even in the best churches, if leaders fail to maintain the kind of unity spoken of in Phil 2, ‘being of one heart, mind and purpose’.

Disagreement over theology, ambition, offense, pride, etc. can all lead to a split among leaders. This potential is far greater within a multi-site church where it is far easier for a ‘rogue’ or ‘independent’ leader to take a single congregation away from the whole. This is why we need to look for the following before we ordain elders, especially in a multi-site model (or even within an apostolic field).

### Character

As per 1 Timothy 3:1-7 & Titus 1:6-9, the primary qualifications for an elder relate to character not gifting. This is because people ‘catch who we are, not what we say’. One role of an elder is to model what a walk with Christ looks like. As Paul wrote, ‘you know how I lived when I was among you’ (Acts 20:18), or ‘follow me as I follow Christ’ (1 Cor 10:32). These lists, with the exception of ‘ability to teach’ (which in this context speaks of establishing sound doctrine and opposing heresy), are all about character.

These lists are very familiar to us but I find it helpful to look at the lists through fresh eyes, trying to describe them in a manner that is relevant to us all today (for example a man must not be given to much wine- I believe we need to look for men who are not addicted to/mastered by anything - including Facebook/Netflix etc.).

These are intended to identify character traits not one-off actions (i.e. if a man lost his temper once that does not necessarily disqualify him, but if it something that is repeated then it certainly would).

### Calling

A man may have the perfect Christian character but that does not, in itself, make him an elder. There must also be a sense of calling. Does he carry an ability to think and act governmentally? Does he possess leadership ability? Does he have an inward conviction of such a calling that will carry him through times of difficulty, sacrifice and the cost of leadership?

We cannot afford to raise fathers in the house that will quit when times get tough - this will result in people who will not persevere. Has he considered the price, counted the cost, so he will not take his hand off the plough?

## Charismata

What is his natural gifting, and is it something that the team need? Can he develop in areas where he is presently weak? Where will he be best used within the team? If he is being sent to plant a church, would he need others around him to 'add what is lacking' in his gifting.

## Chemistry

As well as having Godly character, what is his personality? Is he a 'lion' or a 'lamb', is he a Paul or a Barnabas? It is essential that an eldership team is not made up of people who all have the same personality traits, who see things the same way. What will he add to the team, and will he benefit the team dynamic or disrupt it?

## DNA

Carrier of the heart and 'DNA' of the current leadership of the church. It isn't sufficient simply to understand these things, or even to agree to teach them: they must be carried in the heart of each elder. In the Old Testament we see a number of men come to David whilst he is still on the run from Saul. They express loyalty to David, but those whose loyalty he is unsure of he assigned them tasks where they would be useful but not essential so that if they proved disloyal, they could not destroy him.

In the New testament we see Paul commended the Macedonians who gave themselves 'first to the Lord and then to us' (2 Cor 8:5). To the Galatians, he said ' you received me as an angel of God, as Christ....if possible you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me' (Gal 4:14). Of course, we must find men who understand submission to authority (a man who cannot submit should never be entrusted with authority) but I believe we need to go beyond this: we need to find men who have given their hearts to the leader. Like Timothy of whom Paul wrote, 'my true son whom I love...He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church' (1 Cor 4:17). We need to identify faithful sons in the house - not hired hands - no matter how skillful they may appear.

How do I know if this is the case? I would look for the following indicators:

- He believes the best of and is quick to defend his leaders.
- He anticipates the needs of his leaders and does his best to serve them well.
- He makes the life of his leaders a 'joy and not a burden' (Heb 3:17).
- When he speaks, people hear the heart of the leader.
- He doesn't look to make himself look good but to make those around him look good, especially his leader.
- There is not a grasping or demanding from the leader but a generosity toward him.
- He doesn't push his own agenda, theology or cause. He has not joined a leader to open doors for his own ministry but is prepared to lay down his own dreams to serve his leader.

There are other things we look for:

Consistency, a servant heart, faithfulness with attendance, finances etc., a heart for worship etc. These are all signs of spiritual and emotional maturity (physical age is less important to us – we have elders as young as 23). We also listen to the perspectives of Eph 4 gifts that visit the church. Often an apostle will point somebody out who he senses has a calling on their life. In addition, we will often ask people we see as potential elders to meet with Eph 4 gifts in order to get an outside perspective which is often invaluable.

Identifying future elders requires both observation and revelation:

We need to know what a man is like but ultimately, we need to hear the Lord. One major challenge is when a man seems to have all of the ingredients necessary as listed above but lacks experience or seems young. We believe that whilst we should never risk with questions of character, there are times to risk with age and experience: otherwise we will often be too slow in raising leaders, with all the problems that entails.

On a very practical level, we have developed a questionnaire that we give to people we have identified as potential elders to complete. It is a useful tool for us. It asks a number of questions about how a man sees himself and the church, how healthy his marriage and family are, his finances, etc. Such a questionnaire is not an exam paper with a pass and fail mark but is one useful tool, among others, to help identify gifting and calling, strengths and weaknesses and potential areas of concern or disqualification.

## Training potential elders

Training never stops. We are continually training and retraining people. This may be in the form of training courses (such as biblical leadership, potential elders training, church planters training, doctrinal studies, etc), and ongoing discipleship and relationship building (coffees, meals together, weekends away etc.). There are times when we include potential elders in elders meetings to expose them to how we work and even to hear if they have useful perspective. We may exclude them from certain meetings (or parts of meetings) where it would not be helpful for them. There is no hard and fast rule for how long this process might take.

One young man was invited to the eldership meetings of the congregation I was leading for three years before he became an elder: he is now leading that congregation! We need to find the key to developing each individual: there are different routes and different time periods for each individual. What is important though, is that when inviting people into meetings (with Eph 4 gifts, elders meetings or even eldership training) etc. we make it clear that there is no promise of eldership at the end. We cannot afford to set people up for disappointment and offense.

## Mistakes and challenges in establishing a multi-site church

When we first went to multiple congregations, there weren't many churches doing it, so we had little to learn from. We made many mistakes! Yet even without making any mistakes there will still be difficulties and challenges involved.

Here are some:

### Maintaining unity is always a challenge

Unity does not just happen. It needs to be fought for. Man's natural impulse is toward self, toward independence. This is a challenge within any church but is magnified when there are multiple congregations. It is easy for a man leading a congregation to become prideful if it is doing well and resentful if it isn't (it is more common than it should be that a man will shift blame to others if he is failing in some way). There needs to be strong relationship and strong oversight (in Ephesians 4 we see that one of the roles of the five fold gifts is to ensure unity). I will look at things we have put in place to help maintain unity in a later section.

### Multi-site scenarios

In multi-site scenarios, the leader must take responsibility for his congregation without taking 'ownership'. This is one of the challenges we faced where expectations were not always clearly expressed, along with areas of authority and responsibility. This sometimes caused tension and frustration as oversight and 'apostolic' input was sometimes viewed as lack of trust or interference. It is essential that boundaries to decision making etc. are clearly established.

Certainly when we were fewer congregations (less so now) we had to work against a mentality that there was a 'mother church' and 'satellite churches'. We have worked hard to establish that we don't have one congregation dictating to the rest but that we have one church with many congregations. The fact that we house many of our administrative functions at one of our venues can sometimes give rise to a thinking (common in the corporate world) that we have a 'head office' with 'branches' but this is not true.

### Various roles of elders

The various roles of elders had to change and develop as we grew more congregations. This was also a challenge as people are often fearful of change. The idea that not all elders would be involved in every decision was difficult for some to accept when we first began to implement this (when we were one congregation with five elders every elder was involved in every meeting). This took skillful and patient leadership. Another factor is that those who were very influential in the early days sometimes found their influence diminishing, or being superseded by others, who may have been with us a shorter time. Dealing with men's flesh, ambition, offence etc. is a never-ending responsibility.

## Closing a congregation

One particular challenge was when we decided to close a congregation because it wasn't growing and wasn't very healthy. The leader of that congregation found that difficult to process, took some offense and blamed the rest of the eldership team (claiming he wasn't given the help he needed etc.). We nearly lost him over this, but eventually we processed him, he responded well, repented and later took over leading another of our congregations. He is now one of our 'elders that direct' actually helping to oversee our congregations, as well as working apostolically around the world.

## Centralising the administration

By centralising much of the administration we keep costs to a minimum and help lift a lot of workload from each congregation. This has many benefits but they are sometimes easily forgotten. The challenge with this is that elders can't or don't always get what they ask for, when they ask for it. This can lead to frustration if we are not careful. There is a constant challenge to communicate expectations as well as reasons behind global decisions to avoid problems.

Leaders of congregation can easily become 'parochial', focussed on the needs of their own congregations without understanding the bigger picture. Any decision with regard to one congregation will have repercussions for the rest. Decisions around employing staff (including elders and ministry workers), scheduling global meetings, allocating resources (human and financial) are all potential causes of conflict, misunderstanding etc. Clear communication is vital as well as a constant reminder and training in seeing the bigger picture.

This is where how you build or see multi-site comes into play. If you truly believe that you are one church in many areas/venues/locations, then you will continually reinforce this truth by ensuring each leader knows they are not a standalone but part of a team, where each person has a role and delegated authority.

## Rework values constantly

We need to constantly rework our values so that all of our leaders carry the same 'DNA' and that they teach and live out these values. One of the mistakes we have made in the past is that in being so busy with so many churches we can take for granted that people know, understand and are living what has been taught in the past. This is not always the case: new people arrive, people drift from the truth etc. We have had to ensure that we put things in place (built on strong relationship) to continually remind, retrain and refresh all of our leaders. Even the language we use is important for words shape thinking and behaviour. For example we call our mid-week meetings in homes 'communities' because we want to communicate the idea of doing life together, not just having a meeting. Therefore we want all of our leaders to refer to them as communities.

We have realised also that we need to regularly audit our elders and our congregations. We have developed a form that is completed weekly to give feedback on certain health indicators for each congregation (attendance, number of salvations, anybody leaving, what was preached, etc.) . This has proven to be a very valuable tool that helps us improve the health not just of the congregation but of those leading it.

## Mobilising saints

Practically speaking, of course, a major challenge is that we need to mobilise many more saints for the work of the ministry. With 23 congregations (and growing) we need 23 worship teams, 23 sets of children's workers, etc. every Sunday. Many more people are needed to serve. Without being very intentional and constantly equipping every saint for works of service, this would become a huge problem. However, with good leadership this is turned into a benefit because there are fewer 'pew warmers' and many more active, involved saints than there would be in one very large congregation.

## Releasing elders

Sometimes we have been too quick to release leaders (not all elders are equally wise in raising leaders) because of need. This has caused problems in the past. We now make sure that every potential new elder is 'checked out' by a senior elder and by outside apostolic gifts. We will usually also have potential deacons meet with a senior elder also.

Sometimes we have had leaders that have failed to 'self-correct' and we have realised that we need to be very 'hands-on', with our elders, not leaving them to their own devices.

Sometimes we have been too slow to identify and release leaders (we believe that at any given time we should have in place more leaders than we currently need in order to be prepared for growth). A lack of trained leaders hinders growth. It can also mean the loss of people who had the potential to be great leaders but who left because they were not well disciplined into God's calling on their lives.

## Growth in congregations

Congregations develop in different ways, with different challenges and grow at different rates. We have to be careful that we don't become focussed on the size of congregations (though healthy things do grow, and a lack of numbers is an indicator we should look at). We have had instances where an elder who has been asked to move from one congregation to another has seen it as a 'demotion' because his new congregation is smaller. This is worldly thinking that we need to work against. Likewise we may change the leader of a congregation as the congregation grows if we feel he has reached his capacity (he may have the grace only for a certain number of people) or he is suited to planting rather than building/maintaining a congregation.

It is essential that the administration and 'structure' develop as the church grows and the congregations grow. It is when structures become inflexible or set in stone, when the church serves the structure rather than the structure serving the church, that we are in danger of falling into denominationalism and becoming a monument instead of a movement. We must retain the ability to change, to adapt, to follow the leading of the Spirit. Once we lose the ability to 'corporately repent' we are doomed to religiosity.

## Benefits of multi-site church

- Effective outreach to unbelievers. Being a part of a church plant often stimulates a desire to evangelize and grow the church, whereas being part of a large church can often cause people to become spectators and 'pew warmers.'
- The church gains a presence in numerous communities. This aids growth as we benefit from 'name recognition' and 'gospel credibility.'
- There are many more serving possibilities, enabling people to feel they belong, are a real part of and are important to the church. That their presence makes a difference.
- Pastoral care becomes more real and easier to facilitate. People feel that they are known personally rather than being a 'number' or an insignificant part of the church.
- Administrative and financial burdens can be shared, enabling greater resources being dedicated to pastoral care, outreaches, etc.

## Administration and maintaining unity

Our partnering church in the Isle of Man, Living Hope, currently has seven congregations and works differently to us. They have a weekly meeting with the elders and discuss what will be preached on any given Sunday, that same message is then preached in all their congregations (unless there is somebody coming in from outside of Living Hope).

Joshua Generation works somewhat differently (having over 25 congregations spread over several hundred km presents different challenges). There is a lot to unpack but here are some key points in how we operate and how we maintain unity and continue to grow in health.

1. Each congregation has an eldership team, with an elder that leads the local team. They are responsible for the local congregation but work in partnership with senior elders (elders who direct the affairs of the church) who act in a similar manner to Eph 4 gifts working into different churches. These elders shepherd and disciple the people in their congregations (including preaching and teaching) and recognise that is their primary area of responsibility but they are also recognised as elders in the wider church, not just in their own congregations.
2. Most of the administrative load is carried centrally – salaries, legalities, purchasing, printing of materials, etc. This means the local elders can focus on leading and pastoring with a minimal administrative burden. Also our administrative costs are minimised. Our web page, social media, communications etc. are handled centrally by people well qualified for the task ensuring quality and clarity in our communications.
3. Generally, the elders in the congregation are responsible for day to day decisions, pastoring, deciding what is preached, what training to do, etc. Wisdom dictates that they ask for perspective from other, senior elders when making significant decisions.

4. Around four times a year we have a gathering, where all the congregations come together. Here we welcome in new members and ordain new elders and deacons. The messages preached here are of such a nature that they will take the whole church forward together.
5. Occasionally we will ask all the congregations to preach the same message (at least the basic message will be the same but made personal by each preacher). This may be prepared in a group. This is a useful tool both to bring the church together onto the same page from time to time as well as being helpful in training up preachers. Occasionally this may extend to what is being discussed in our communities (home groups).
6. Elders meet within their congregations. They will also have local leaders meetings, training, etc.
7. Elders that lead congregations (and others who can) meet regularly together facilitated by one of the senior elders who have been assigned the role of overseeing the congregations and looking after the elders. This is a time of training, of envisioning, encouragement, discussion, etc.
8. There is a much smaller group of elders (currently around 15 men) who meet regularly to pray, and to discuss vision, direction and strategy. Any decisions are generally then taken to the wider eldership team (106 men currently). Any elder is able to voice opinions and concerns and give input but this makes sure that we don't become immobile because of the size of the team. There is a recognition of the grace carried by these men and the freedom to make such calls.
9. There are then various responsibilities given to certain elders/groups of elders within the life of the wider church e.g. doctrine and training, worship, children's ministry. These elders then work alongside local elders to help ensure the health of every congregation in every area of ministry.
10. All of this is under the overall leadership of Andrew who planted the church, remains the 'visionary elder' and who is recognised (inside and outside of JoshGen) to be an apostle. His leadership along with the various teams.
11. We also schedule regular meetings for all elders, deacons and/or leaders for training, envisioning etc.
12. We provide training and other resources centrally to help each congregation and supplement what they do.
13. We encourage groups of people from each congregation to go on outreach to other churches and to other congregations within Joshua Generation. This helps to build a sense of mission and helps people see the bigger picture. It is also a great way to see people serve and grow in their gifts.
14. We regularly invite outside gifts to come and minister, to bring encouragement and correction where necessary, to cast vision and to give us perspective on what we can do better as a church/congregation and where we need to change.

# CONCLUSION

It is impossible to distil all the elements of successfully building a multi-site church whilst remaining faithful to the biblical blueprint of church. This gives merely an overview of some of the key points that are worthy of further discussion.

In the end, whether a church goes the multi-site route, and how this is administrated, will depend on a number of factors; including the resources and people available, what gifts they have etc. What is essential though, is that whatever structure we implement, the structure must be biblical and must be of service to the church. We have found that ultimately, for the church to attain maximum health, true partnership with Ephesians 4 gifts, within an apostolic field is essential. For whilst the basic building blocks can be discussed in a general sense, the vision and implementation of such, as well as equipping of the saints requires partnership with a master builder:

*“According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.” 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 ESV*