

# Short Planning Session Outline

## 1 session of 1.5 hours

Every local church has its own unique qualities. It will have strengths and weaknesses. This session is designed to help them focus on the strengths that they bring to their ministry and to celebrate these strengths.

The session provides an introduction to the *Summary Profile* (part of the *Church Life Profile*), which displays a church's unique set of survey results from the completion of a *Church Life Survey*. Any church could use this session to engage their *Summary Profile* of results in a simple, positive and time efficient way.

### Who should be involved?

The short answer is anyone in the church who would like to take part. The session can be run by a leader from the church; it does not require an outside facilitator. About 1.5 to 2 hours should be allowed.

### Step 1 – Opening with prayer

Begin with a time of prayer celebrating the life of your congregation. We recommend that this time be built around John 10:10 – “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full”. Celebrate the life of your church.

### Step 2 – Exploring our strengths (40 minutes)

Divide people into 3 groups and allocate each group a page from the *Summary Profile* to examine. The following 3 pages from the *Summary Profile* can be used (one page per group):

1. *How People Relate to God;*
2. *How People Relate to Each Other; and*
3. *How People Relate to the Wider Community.*

If there are enough people to divide into 5 groups, also use the following 2 pages:

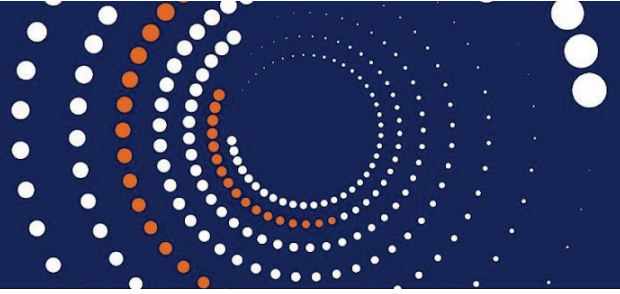
4. *Our People, Our Values and Priorities; and*
5. *Vision, Innovation and Leadership Culture.*

### Invite each group to review their page of results and discuss them:

- Identify any findings they feel are significant. Choose one result that appears to be a strength of the church.
- Explore the chosen strength in pairs or small groups. Ask people to share their most life-giving experiences in this area of church life. Discuss what might have contributed to this being a strength of your church.

### Report back:

- The groups come back together as a large group and share the fruits of their discussion. The leader writes summary notes up on a board. It is important to identify any common factors across individual stories. These may be sources of life for the local church.



### **Step 3 – Building our strengths (40 minutes):**

**Now that time has been taken to reflect on one area of strength of the church community, invite the groups to discuss ways your church can build on that strength.**

- Break up into groups again and ask each group to discuss how the church can build on the strength (chosen in Step 2), in large ways or small. This could involve directly developing this strength or identifying how this strength can be used to address a weakness elsewhere.

#### **Report back and conclude:**

- The groups come back together as a large group and share their ideas for building on their chosen strength. The leader takes notes of the ideas raised. Using the overview of notes taken, the leader summarises the strengths identified and any proposed improvements.
- A closing prayer could be offered, celebrating the strengths of the church and giving thanks to God.

#### **Beyond the session**

The group should agree to meet again to consider what has been the impact of any proposed improvements, whether these will continue or whether some other course of action will be considered.

People may wish to spend time reflecting on a different strength of their church or whether there may be benefit in the other planning processes discussed in the Workbook. They may wish to focus on how they can be more outwardly focused, looking to those on the margins of the church and how to better connect with and serve the wider community.