

Template 1

GROWING CHURCHES

A church that is willing to change and adapt

Starter question: Out of ten, how do you rate your church as one that is willing to change and adapt? (where 1 is the weakest and 10 the strongest) /10

Read together:

The research showed that it's important for churches to look regularly at what they are doing and not to do things just because they have always been done that way.

"Vitality comes with reflection and choice. The particular style is less important than the fact that it has been considered and embraced rather than adopted by default."

Change is not always easy but for there to be growth it is often necessary for the existing congregation to be willing to change and adapt.

KEY FACTS FROM THE RESEARCH:

- "...at a minimum, the arrival of new people disrupts what might be a cosy club."
- The research shows that it's not essential to adopt a particular tradition or style to grow; what does matter is that you embrace your tradition wholeheartedly and that your particular worship style is chosen rather than inherited and accepted because it's easier not to change.
- The researchers described successful churches with a "let's give it a go" attitude. These churches try different initiatives as experiments, if they work they invest in them; if they don't they drop them.

Questions for discussion:

1. Here are some questions to help you start thinking and talking about what being more open to change might mean in your church life:
2. What opportunities are there for us to sit down and to talk about our church life and how things are going?
3. Which changes can we celebrate? Where has change has been good in our church?
4. Are there areas in our church's life, where we might be doing things because we've always done it that way?
5. Do we find it hard to change?
6. How can we support one another through change? Could anyone describe our church as "a cosy club"?
7. Which areas of our church's life might be more effective if we did something differently? For example, service times, style and regular activities?
8. Could we consider making any changes (small or larger) to our building to make it more welcoming or more fit for our ministry and mission? Please add your own questions to this list
9. Think of some ideas which might involve change or being more open to change in your church. Discuss your ideas with others. Choose one to take forward.