

Top Ten Launch Questions

By Jerry and Melanie Stone

As a pastor, it is your job to cast vision, to paint a picture that people can see in their minds and hearts. The dynamics of participating in a church plant are much different than committing to a church that is already established. People will need to grasp it if they are going to be a part of it. In the prelaunch stage, as you continue to add people to your launch team, it is vital that the answers for these ten questions are continually being communicated.

1. What is the purpose for starting a new church in our city?

Focus on the need. Are there still people to reach? If there are other churches already established in the area, respect them for what they are doing and turn your attention to what we can do to help reach the ones no one else is reaching.

2. Who are we trying to reach?

We are trying to reach the unchurched, which includes the lost or those who are saved that have been displaced. Emphasize that we aren't trying to pull church people out of life-giving churches. We want to have good relationships with other churches and pastors in the area.

3. What is Launch Sunday?

Launch Sunday is the day we present ourselves to the community, like a grand opening.

4. When and where is Launch Sunday?

Choose a date to aim for, and prepare to offer a full service on that day. If the church is not ready for that date, push it back.

Secure a location. As a church plant, you will most likely rent a facility and need to set up and tear down each week, such as a school, theater, community building, etc. Explain that process, maybe even visit a portable church set up in a nearby city.

5. Are we a church now?

Yes, we are, but we consider the church to be in preparation, or prelaunch. The reason why we use the word "prelaunch" is because we don't want the beginning team to settle into a mentality that we have arrived. Instead, we want them to have the mentality that we are preparing to reach more people. Until we launch, we are ministering to the needs of the current group - we are meeting regularly in prelaunch meetings, spending time building relationships, developing our ministry teams, praying for needs, receiving offerings, doing outreach, etc.

- 6. What can we expect on Launch Sunday?**
Give a realistic number of the amount of people you expect to come. You may have more, you may have less, but you need to cast vision for reaching people. You also need a number to plan for.
- 7. What is a Launch Team?**
The Launch Team is anyone who is part of the church before Launch Sunday.
- 8. What people do we need?**
Following church leadership, develop ministries and teams. Common areas to develop first are worship, production, children's ministry, youth ministry, road crew to set up and tear down, greeters, welcome center attendants, ushers, parking lot attendants, and café workers. Remember to care for people and not to burn out eager volunteers. Also remember it's not just about the launch; we're in this for the long haul.
- 9. What resources do we need?**
Explain what is needed to have a Launch – the equipment for each area, the facility, the advertisement, the outreach, etc. Invite people to give. We put a box at our information table during each prelaunch meeting. Included in our schedule for prelaunch meetings, we remind the people about giving and using the box or online. Give updates each week about what we have and what we still need. If their hearts are with you, people will pray and give.
- 10. How can people fit in now?**
There are four ways people can get involved right now:
 - Connect: We encourage our team to do their best to be at the prelaunch meetings. When they are there, they can help create a friendly atmosphere, build relationships, and connect people to the launch team.
 - Serve: We try to fit people in positions where their talents and interests are; however, we ask them to serve where there is a need. We explain that a church plant is always changing and developing, so we ask them to be flexible to serve in more than one area or to be willing to be moved to another area temporarily.
 - Give: We don't pressure people, but we do provide the opportunity to tithe and give offerings. We are also collecting resources, especially for children and youth ministries.
 - Reach out: Help your team share about the church by providing an invite card to pass out. Also plan outreaches where they can volunteer their time to reach people.

Communicate your vision, make it simple and easy to understand, and then your launch team can run with it (Habakkuk 2:2). God bless you as you prepare.