



Models for Ministry

The congregation that can be most relevant for our day is one that is mobile and one that offers a gathering point. Its ministries are housed within the church and are present outside the church.

Here are examples of how some congregations have tried to create a new model for ministry by using a combination of the Jesus model and the Pauline model.

A large congregation in the Midwest has taken its church school program to the streets of a nearby community. With the assistance of a team of volunteers and a truck that has been fitted with a stage and sound system, this congregation reaches out to the children of a nearby community in an attitude of love, acceptance, and nurture. While this is not a “traditional” church school program, it is an appropriate response in the context of this community.

In the Pacific Northwest, a large congregation in a university area begins its early morning contemporary worship with a 30-minute time for breakfast. Members of the worship community share the responsibility of preparing breakfast, and worship follows the meal. This style of worship meets many of the needs of the community, including the need for fellowship, a very practical and informal setting for young families, a less threatening point of entry for university students, and an opportunity for homeless individuals to start the day with a hot meal and a caring community.

Many congregations throughout the U.S. are using the Internet in a wide variety of creative ways. While a growing number of churches are posting websites featuring basic information about their worship services and programs, others are taking steps toward reaching their communities in new and creative ways. Some congregations have created electronic newsletters that include articles and commentaries about current topics in the news or about how the church is responding to the needs of the community. Many offer links to resources for spiritual growth and share opportunities for community building. The Internet may be one of the greatest tools for the church to create synergy between the Jesus model and Pauline models for ministry. Use of the Internet for such communication, teaching, and outreach is limited only by our creativity and imagination.