

## Session Twenty-two: Structure

**Overview:** Over time, organizations develop structures to effectively put feet to their vision. If they are not evaluated and reshaped on a consistent basis, they are likely to do more to hinder the work than to empower it. In this session you will look at the first articulation of a focus for Christian ministry that is found in Acts 2, and how that focus connects to us today. In the L<sup>2</sup> section, you will introduce another set of tools to help your organization take a look at its structure.

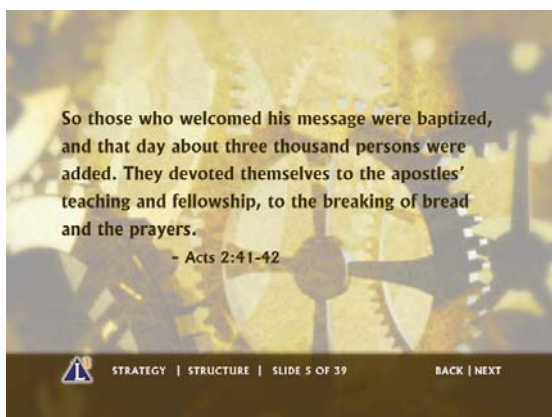
Before proceeding, be sure you have completed all the steps found in *Session Twenty-one: Priorities*. Once you have finished the *Strategy Step Five: Improvement Strategies* chart, you are ready to go work on structure.

### Session Setup:

- One guidebook for each person
- Copy of Strategy Step Five: Improvement Strategies
- Copy of your values, mission, and vision statements for each person
- DVD player hooked up to a TV or LCD Projector with screen
- Flip chart with paper and markers, or a large white board or chalkboard to take notes for everyone to see
- As people enter, have music from the DVD playing "*Holy, Holy, Holy & Santo, Santo, Santo*".

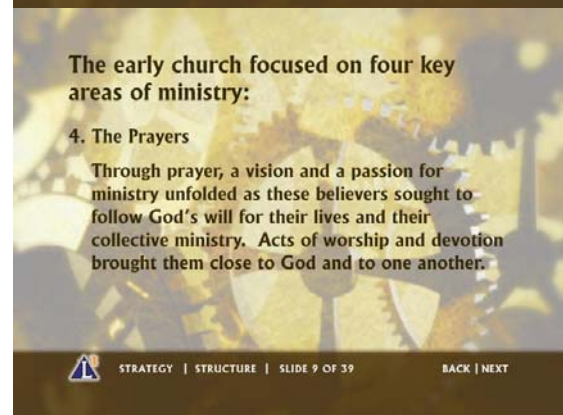
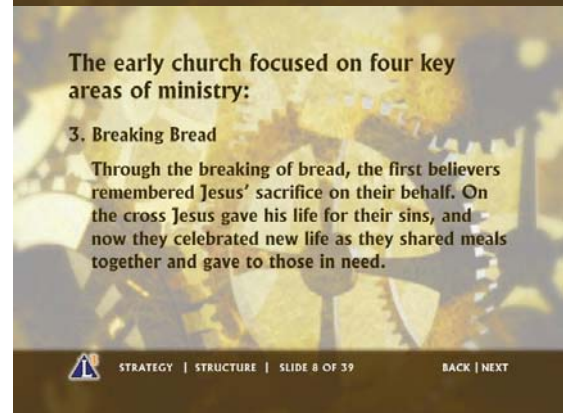
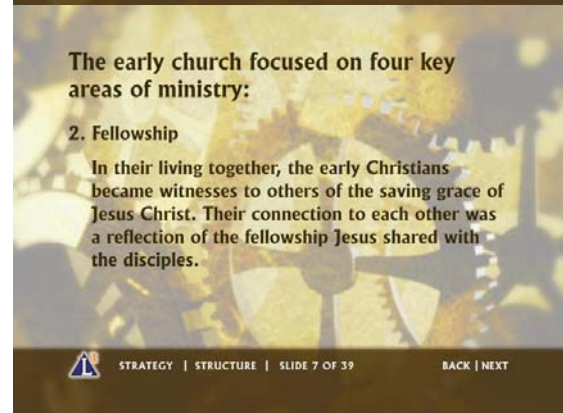
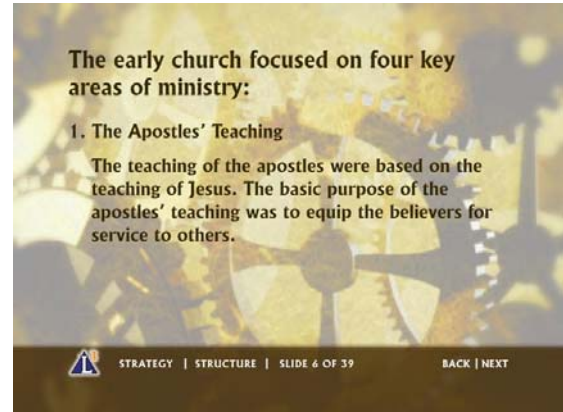
### L<sup>1</sup> Love: Incubate Your Heart & Formation Que

As you begin, use slide 2 to show the group where it is in the process, and slide 4 to remind people of the expectations of the Incubator.



**Facilitate:** Using slides 5 through 9, talk about the focus of the early church on these four essentials of ministry. By devoting themselves to these four things, they created a structure that allowed them to multiply while

maintaining their focus on reaching newcomers for Christ.





**Principle:** On the day of Pentecost, Peter proclaimed the message about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Once the crowd heard the message, they asked what they should do. Acts 2:38 gives us the most basic articulation of what people are called to do if they desire to become a Christian:

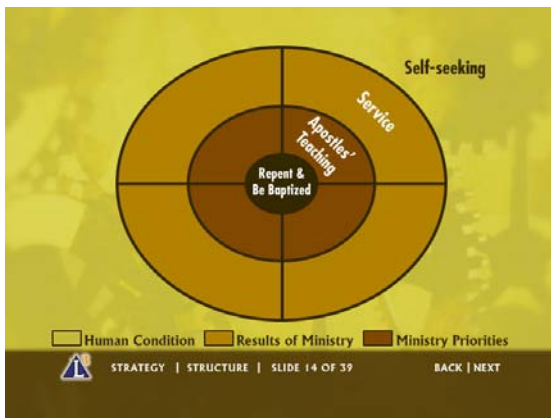
**Repent:** Turn away from their sins and receive forgiveness.

**Be Baptized:** Make a public acknowledgement of their faith and participate in the sacrament of Baptism.

**Receive the Holy Spirit:** As a new person in Christ, they are now empowered to live out the faith.

The basic beliefs formed the core values of the early church. From these core values flowed mission, vision, and the focus on the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and the prayers.

**Facilitate:** Talk about how repentance, baptism, and the empowerments of the Holy Spirit were central to the life of the early church.



**Principle:** These series of slides are designed to show the connection between the gospel and the human condition. When the gospel is lived out in congregational life, it meets the felt needs of people in our current environment. Notice the code at the bottom of the slide:

**Ministry Priorities (Dark brown):** How the congregation lives out Repent & Believe in church life and structure.

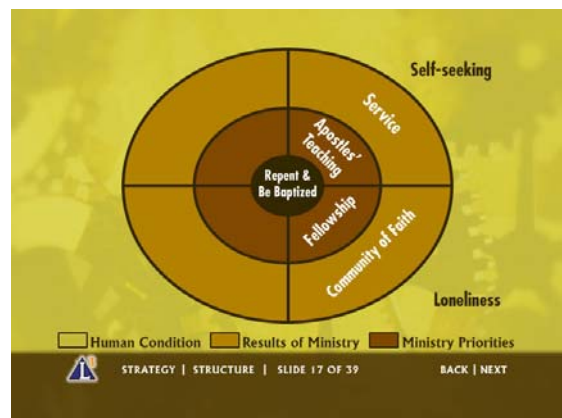
**Results of Ministry (Light Brown):** How the living out of priorities leads to practical application of faith in daily living and connecting people to a greater vision of serving others in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Human Condition: (Yellow):** The gospel, as it is lived out in Christian community, meets the deepest needs of the human soul.

**Apostles' Teaching:** The apostles' teaching is seen in that area of church life that focuses on the understanding and living out the values and beliefs found in scripture. Fundamentally, this is lived out in the teaching ministry of the church. The basic purpose of the apostles' teaching is to equip people for service.

**Service:** As newcomers and believers wrestle with the Biblical narrative, they are challenged to move beyond themselves to be in service to others. Knowledge is not enough; a Biblical faith moves people to action.

**Self-seeking:** While many would say people in our society are selfish, the reality is that most people are self-seeking. Not trusting in the institutions of society they cope by forming their own values, beliefs, and rituals as a way to make sense of this world. The antidote to self-seeking is service, offering acts of mercy and kindness to others. When Christians truly live out the apostles' teaching through service to others, they encounter people outside the church who long to make a difference in this world.

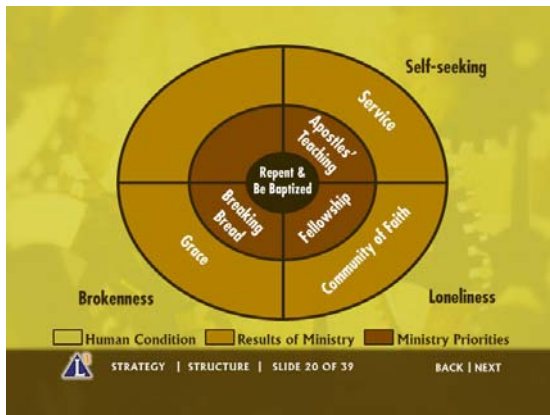


**Fellowship:** The pattern of the early church was to gather together in homes for meals, mutual support, and friendship. Congregations live this out when they intentionally connect people and create environments where they experience the grace of God and the joy of Christian fellowship. This can happen in small groups, worship, and fellowship groups, as well as in community based ministries that invite people into relationship with

those in the congregation. Their relationships to each other echo the relationship Jesus had with the disciples.

**Community of Faith:** When Christians are truly living in Christian fellowship it is contagious—people want to be part of a group that connects them to God and to each other. The early church did not have an evangelism committee. Their witness was seen in the way they lived together. There was something about them that set them apart and naturally attracted newcomers.

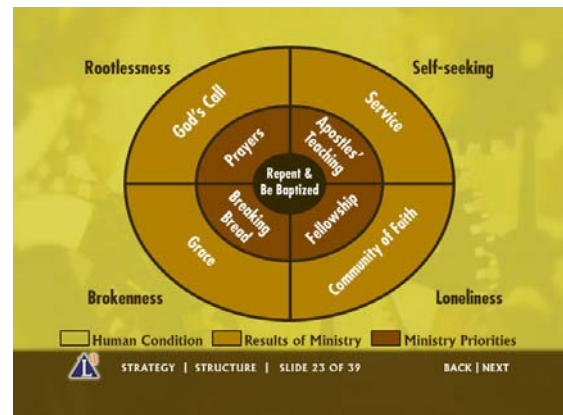
**Loneliness:** One of the most profound realities of today's culture is loneliness. Loneliness has to do with the disappointments of life that are tied to unmet expectations of others. When people do not fulfill our needs or do not return love, we try to do it all on our own. Loneliness is rampant among those who are leaders in the Christian community. Pastors, teachers, staff people, and laity many times feel like they are alone. The community of faith creates an environment of love and accountability that allows us to become the people God created us to be. It gives us a place where we freely connect with God and invite the lonely into our midst. It's where we can most be ourselves as children of God.



**Breaking of Bread:** Through the breaking of bread, believers remember the sacrifice that Jesus made on behalf of the whole world. The sacraments of baptism and communion form the community into a fellowship that is willing to give themselves to others as Christ gave of himself on the cross for the sins of the world. By sharing meals together and giving themselves to the healing of the broken hearted, they become whole.

**Grace:** Grace is a gift that God freely gives. It moves people beyond repentance to acceptance of people's brokenness and their need for God's love poured out for them through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Grace frees people to give and rejoice with abandon, not counting the cost, but reveling in the abundant, awe-inspiring love of God. (Note: The synonyms for reveling include partying, raising the roof, and going out on the town.)

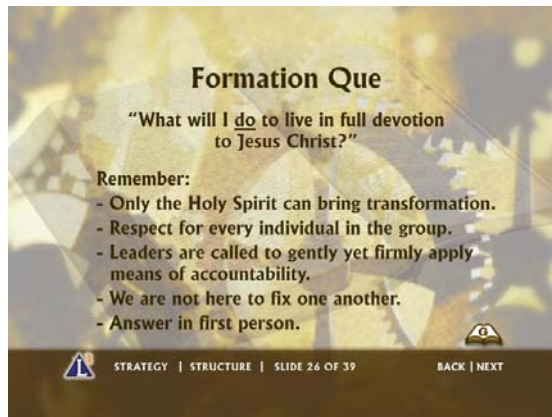
**Brokenness:** This is the condition we reach when we are at the end of the rope, when it seems like no one cares or hears, when words are inadequate to capture the grief of loss. Loss is experienced when we lose loved ones, when we face unexpected change, when we celebrate the growing up of children while knowing life will never be the same, when illness cuts short a dream, when what we thought would give us ultimate fulfillment ends in unspeakable disappointment, when our friends turn away as we go to the cross. Jesus understands this part of the human condition all too well, but through his brokenness we are made whole; through his stripes we are healed. When ministry connects with those who are broken, healing and wholeness flows from God.



**Prayers:** Prayer is the intersection between God and humanity. Through prayer individuals as well as the community of faith listens to the voice of God and is shaped by experiences of the soul that are too deep for words. Prayer is the atmosphere that surrounds and informs the spiritual formation of individuals and the community of faith.

**God's Call:** As people seek God they hear God's voice, a voice that calls them to be the people they were created to be. Call is not limited to pastors or selected leaders. All who are baptized are enabled by the Holy Spirit to be the hands, heart, and feet of Jesus.

**Rootlessness:** Whereas loneliness has to do with unmet expectations in relationships with people, rootlessness has to do with unmet expectations in relationship to society as a whole. Vast changes in technology, work, and mobility have created a population that mistrusts the institutions of society and questions their role in the larger picture. Downsizing, the elimination of work benefits, concerns about the environment, terrorism, and the role of religion in society create a sense of disconnection from each other and from God. The end result is rootlessness, an endless pursuit of meaning in the moment and a loss of community. Through prayer and Christian community, God roots people and gives them a faith that will not be shaken.



**Principle:** Before starting the Formation Que, review the basic ground rules that are on the slide. Remind participants to answer in the first person.

As people share, they first will be asked to talk about how they did with the items they talked about the last time. Consult your list (the notes you took on page 99 in the guidebook) as they share. Some may need to be reminded what they said. Invite them to start a new list on page 103.

**Facilitate:** You have ninety minutes for this time.



**Facilitate:** Review with your group the results from Strategy Step Four and Step Five Templates.

**Facilitate:** Show slides 29 and 30 and talk about the strategic planning process and the importance of Strategic Place.



**Principle:** Structure provides the framework through which we accomplish our visions and goals. It also gives us a picture of how we are interrelated to each other. A well thought-out structure that is clearly understood and shows the connections of our work to the greater organization is essential to delivering ministry. While it's easy to come up with great ideas, the hard work is creating the systems and structures through which the idea is realized in all its fullness.

An essential element of structure is trust. When people trust each other and are inspired by the vision of the organization, structure changes to meet the needs of the organization. When an organization is filled with mistrust, people work with self-interest and want to lock-down the structure to insure their place and position. In a ministry environment it is crucial to address the issues around trust and to develop ways to build up the community of faith through encouragement, prayer, spiritual formation, and the gift assessment of people who are put in leadership positions.

**Facilitate:** Invite participants to talk about their experiences with structure in the workplace outside of the church. What has helped them and hindered them when it comes to the way their workplace has been organized? Talk about the implications of having an effective structure for the ministry of your organization.

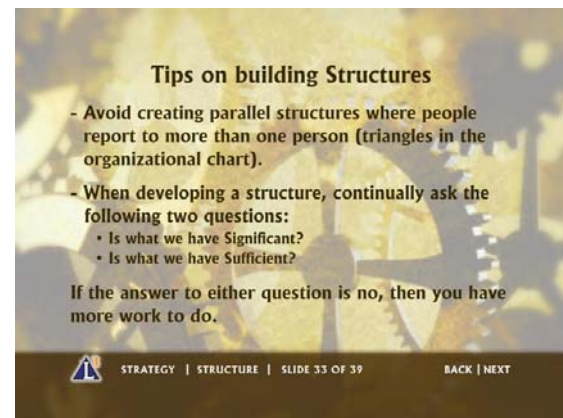


**Principle:** Here are four misconceptions that effect the way people think about structures:

1. **Structure and accountability are the same thing:** Just because you have a structure does not mean people are accountable. Accountability happens when members of an organization see accountability as a way to improve and make progress. Accountability is different than punishment—it creates an atmosphere that allows people to risk and improve in all aspects of their work and life.
2. **People function better when they are not constrained by structures:** Watch the opening episode of one of the *Survivor* shows and you will see that people quickly self-organize around the opinion of the most vocal person in the group. Structure is most effective when it is based on the context of the situation and flows out of the core values, mission, and vision of the organization. Its focus is to enhance the ability of its people to create and implement the strategies of the organization.
3. **A single structure will work for every size and type of organization:** Structure needs to be formatted to meet the needs of delivering effective ministry, not to fill up the organizational chart. By tailoring the structure to the strategy you are better able to bring about improvement and free people to live out their call for ministry.
4. **Hierarchy and bureaucracy are the same thing:** A bureaucracy is an administrative system in which the need to follow complex rules and regulations actually impedes the ability of people to be effective. The goal of a bureaucracy is to maintain itself. On the other hand, a hierarchy tells the members of the organization who is accountable to whom. It clearly shows how work is accomplished and its focus is on delivering what is needed to

meet the needs of those to whom the organization is in ministry.

**Facilitate:** Talk about the implications of these misconceptions for your ministry.



**Principle:** When you create confusing structures you have confused workers. Use these tips to streamline your structure so it can deliver what you want it to. In a local congregation your goal is to deliver great experiences of worship, excellent opportunities to grow and develop faith, and effective ministry that truly helps people in the community and the world. A well thought-out structure allows you to focus your energy on what you are trying to deliver, not on how to get it done.

When more than one person is responsible for the same thing, confusion is the norm. For example, if you want to change the flowers in the sanctuary, who makes the final decision? How many committees do you have to ask? If its more than one, your structure is bureaucratic, not hierarchical. The elimination of parallel structures saves time and energy.

**Is what we have significant?** Do we need this part of the structure? Does it allow us to smoothly make decisions when maintaining accountability?

**Is what we have sufficient?** Is there a proper balance of accountability? Does one person or group have so much to do that he or she is unable to do it? Are their reasonable expectations around what needs to be done?

**Facilitate:** Talk about what these tips say about the way your organization is structured.

**Testing the effectiveness of your Structure**

- What percentage of the people in your organization can explain the structure?
- Make a list of different types of people that you could potentially micromanage. If this is difficult, your structure is not clear.
- Make a list of the people who you must report to.

If this is difficult, your structure is not clear.

STRATEGY | STRUCTURE | SLIDE 34 OF 39      BACK | NEXT

**Organizations that meet the needs of its constituents and build towards the future have structures that match their values, mission, and vision.**

STRATEGY | STRUCTURE | SLIDE 35 OF 39      BACK | NEXT

**Principle:** The effectiveness of a structure can be seen by the way people inside the system can articulate what it is. If they are confused, how confused are those who are outside the organization?

If you are not sure who is accountable to you, it's hard to manage projects and take advantage of new opportunities. If you do not know to whom you are accountable, it's difficult to make decisions and move forward.

**Facilitate:** Review slides 33 and 34. Help people think through the ways accountability flows through the systems to which they are connected.

**FIRST CHURCH**

TEAM 1: ENGAGE	TEAM 2: RECEIVE
TEAM 3: EQUIP	TEAM 4: SEND
TEAM 5: ADMINISTRATIVE	

Using Strategy Step Six, think about ways your structure echoes your categories. Some congregations organize themselves around the major categories. Go to [L3incubator.com](http://L3incubator.com) for more examples.

STRATEGY | STRUCTURE | SLIDE 36 OF 39      BACK | NEXT

**Strategy Step Six**

YOUR CATEGORY	YOUR CATEGORY	YOUR CATEGORY	YOUR CATEGORY
ENGAGE	RECEIVE	EQUIP	SEND

Review your structure as it relates to your categories.

STRATEGY | STRUCTURE | SLIDE 37 OF 39      BACK | NEXT

**Principle:** Use slides 36 and 37 to design a structure that reflects your strategy. Take a look at the Strategy Scenario to see one way this is fleshed out.

**Facilitate:** Building on your Strategic Flow, develop an hierarchical structure that best fits your current needs and goals. Pay attention to denominational requirements and other outside factors that may affect your work. For example, in The United Methodist Church local churches are to include a charge conference, a church council, a committee on pastor-parish relations, a board of trustees, a committee on finance, and a committee on lay leadership.

**Assignment I-MAP**

Using Strategy Step Six, continue to review your structure as it relates to your categories.

STRATEGY | STRUCTURE | SLIDE 39 OF 39      BACK | NEXT

**Facilitate:** Review assignments and end in prayer.