

Capturing Vision

What is vision, and where does vision come from?

Vision: A clear, clarifying picture of the future, as it can and should be.

In 1730, a church in Sussex, England, posted a sign that read, “A vision without a task is but a dream; a task without a vision is but a drudgery; but a vision and a task is the hope of the world.”

What a Vision is:

- Vision answers the question: Where are we going?
- Vision is a picture of God’s preferred future.
- Vision is a specific fulfillment of one or more aspects of the church’s mission.
- Vision is “a dream, with feet attached.”

Where a Vision comes from:

- Like Mission, Vision comes from God.
- Unlike Mission, Vision is not explicitly given in scripture.
- Mission is defined and described for us. Mission may be discovered, by answering the questions Who are we? Where are we? and Why are we here? Vision, on the other hand, must be captured. Capturing vision can be a little like trying to catch a ray of light or a note of music.

What a Vision does:

- Vision excites.
- Vision inspires.
- Vision empowers.
- Vision provides purpose.
- Vision promotes excellence.

How a Vision fails:

- Often vision fails, not because it is too big, but because it is too small.
- Vision fails when we fail to capture God’s will and instead pursue our own.
- Vision fails when it does not challenge us to look beyond ourselves.
- Vision fails when it cannot be connected to reality. Vision should be meaningful and measurable. Vision has an expiration date (usually 3-5 years).

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Our Dreams

Occasionally you may hear a question that begins like this: “If money were no object...” While we may immediately object – money is, after all, an object – these questions seek to unlock something inside us: our dreams, our hopes, our passions. Let’s take some time today to dream together.

If you (individually) could do one thing to improve the life of our community, what would you do?

If we as a church could do one thing to improve the life of our community, what would we do?

If money, time, and place were no object, what would our church look like in five years?

What is keeping us from reaching these dreams?

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What If?

In the 1946 Christmas classic, *It's a Wonderful Life*, George Bailey (Jimmy Stewart) sees first-hand what life would be like without him. Let's do likewise for the next exercise.

Imagine for a moment that Salem Community Baptist Church doesn't exist. All that sits in this field is an old school building. What would look different in the life of this community?

Now, imagine that momentum begins to build for a church plant here in Salem. What would you look for or hope for in that church plant?

What ministries would you most want to see?

If the church planters came to you for your advice, what would you tell them? Where would you tell them to start? How would you advise them to begin?

Thankfully, we don't live in this alternate reality. Salem Community Baptist Church *does* exist. But what lessons can we learn from this exercise? What should we implement or apply in our ministry?
