



CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

**MULTIPLYNAZ
COLLEGE OF MINISTRY**

Healthy Churches Learn Organization

Lay Pastor Certificate Devotional

Luke 10:1-16; Acts 6:1-7

Reading through the Bible, it becomes clear that God is a God of organization. The sun, moon and stars all operate in organized symmetry. All of creation reveal to us an organized God; his Son Jesus “sustains all things by his powerful word” (Hebrews 1:3). Simple observation also reveals that church leaders who follow Jesus become highly effective when they use their God-given abilities **to organize** his work. The Nazarene Manual follows this biblical principle and includes multiple references to the importance of organizing and how Nazarenes unite throughout the world to do so.ⁱ In our Articles of Faith, we affirm, “The Church is a historical reality that **organizes itself...**”ⁱⁱ We believe the work of the church is God’s work and should never be done in a disorganized or haphazard manner. When he was on earth, the ministry of Jesus required organization. Let’s look at some examples from Jesus’ life.

Jesus taught, preached and healed throughout Galilee (Matthew 4:23). Jesus began to gather a group of followers who traveled with him and watched what he did (Matthew 4:18-22). Jesus organized his schedule to ensure that some healing happened on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-6). Everything he did was organized and intentional. People were amazed at how he operated and said, “he has done everything well” (Mark 7:37). After several months of ministry and an all-night of prayer, Jesus organized his leadership team by selecting the first apostles (Luke 6:12-16).

With so many people following him, the organization of Jesus required financial support. This is why Jesus gathered people around him who could help provide this need, both men and women (Luke 8:1-3). He urged his disciples to pray for more workers, all of whom would need direction and organization (Matthew 9:35-38). Jesus trained and organized the twelve apostles and sent them out to do what he had been doing (Matthew 10:1-16).

Jesus organized the disciples to feed five thousand people in groups of hundreds and fifties (Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17). He organized the disciples again when they fed four thousand men, plus women and children (Matthew 15:32-39). Every Israelite and Levite in Jesus' day were required to pay a "temple tax," which went toward the upkeep of the Jewish temple. Jesus didn't overlook this detail and organized Peter to take care of this tax (Matthew 17:24-27).

Jesus appointed and organized seventy-two other leaders, trained them and sent them out two by two (Luke 10:1-16). Large crowds followed Jesus, including families who brought little children to Jesus to have him touch and bless them. The disciples' organization around Jesus needed adjustment and Jesus "re-organized" their operations to place a high value on children (Mark 10:13-16). **The parables Jesus told reveal his high level of organizational understanding** (Matthew 20:1-16; 25:14-30). Jesus was not just "big picture;" he paid attention to details. Effective ministry requires good organization. We find these principles taught throughout the scriptures (Exodus 18:13-27; 1 Corinthians 14:33, 40; Ephesians 4:16)

"The early church developed basic organization in every congregation. They developed a leadership team in every church (Acts 13:1). Paul sent team members to develop organization where it was lacking; Timothy to Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3:1-2), Titus to Corinth (2 Corinthians 7:6-7), Timothy to Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3) and Titus to Crete" (Titus 1:5).ⁱⁱⁱ

Healthy church development requires pastors and church leaders to learn and practice biblical principles of organization as the church develops. Moses learned these principles from Jethro (Exodus 18:13-26). The apostles practiced these principles in the growth of the early church (Acts 6:1-7). Healthy, multiplying churches never stop learning biblical, church development principles and they discover that **healthy churches require more leaders and good organization**. This is why we create organized environments where God can raise up new leaders who can lead within the church.

We have already devoted a chapter to spiritual planning. Spiritual planning should always be linked with good church organization. Churches become healthy, multiplying churches because they never stop learning how to improve their church organization. Here is the good news. **Church organization is a skill you can learn**. Healthy, multiplying churches stay close to the scriptures in this regard and follow God's example of organization. Just like God does, they think about future development and use their God-given capability to **organize** the work of the church for health and growth.

Leaders of healthy, multiplying Nazarene churches have studied the Manual and understand both the principles of Nazarene local government, along with the flexibility available to churches that hunger to keep growing and multiplying. They overcome the disease of "structuritis" and re-organize the church for health and micro- multiplication at the appropriate times.

They understand that spiritual momentum, agenda harmony, shared vision and so much more all come together when a church operates with good structure. As a result, the church never stops developing better organization and this contributes to a positive change of climate in the church. A foundation piece in organizing the leaders of hundreds of churches is the operation of an effective **leadership community**.

ⁱ The Manual explains how Nazarenes organize throughout the world; how superintendents **organize** local churches (100, 211.1, 708), how the work of the local church is best **organized** by age groups (147), how a church board **organizes** itself into committees (113.12), how districts can be **organized** into zones or mission areas (200.6, 241.8), how the General Assembly **organizes** the membership of the church into districts (200), how the General Assembly **organizes** the church into district assemblies (24) and **organizes** itself for its business (300.2), how the General Board **organizes** itself by electing officers and committees and members to committees (335.3), how the NYI **organizes** the ministry to our youth globally (243), etc. We are an organizing people!

ⁱⁱ Nazarene Manual, Article of Faith XI.

ⁱⁱⁱ Duane L. Anderson, *The Development of the Early Church*, (American Indian Bible Institute, Norwalk, CA, 2003), pp. 41-42).