

Great Commandments and Great Commission Reasons for Two Services

Yesterday I was having a conversation with a member at our church about why we have two services. The conversation helped me to review in my mind the reasons and since I was teaching CLASS 101 that day, my mind was integrating the reasons for two services with the six word mission statement of our church that I would be explaining to potential new members: Love God, Love Others, Make Disciples. I am grateful to the member that I was speaking with for encouraging me to restate the reasons why we have two services. The very next day, I was reading how the pastor needs to reiterate the vision to the congregation often. So here's how my thinking came together. I believe it will be helpful to many to have it restated in this way.

1. We have two services to offer two different time choices for people. Research and experience both show that simply by offering people a choice of times, more people will attend church. Some like it early; others like it later. Time is a big factor in the way people plan their Sundays. So having two services helps us help more people love and worship God. And, having two times for worship helps our church love others by serving them better and make more disciples for Jesus.
2. Having two services allows us to express our worship using slightly different styles in our two services. While the message is the same in both services, the worship style is distinct. Both services blend hymns and choruses but the blend is different. In first service the worship is completely led by the praise team. It tends to be a little louder, with more hand-raising and hand clapping, and fewer hymns. In second service, while praise team leads a couple songs, the style is dominated by a more traditional organ and piano worship accompaniment. It feels slightly more formal and includes prelude, offertory, and two or three hymns each week. Contact with attenders, my experience, and the history of our congregation, has told us that some attend one of the services because they prefer that style and feel. So again, I conclude that having two services helps us help more people love and worship God. And, having two times for worship helps our church love others by serving them better and make more disciples for Jesus.
3. Having two services doubles the capacity of our facilities for worship on Sunday morning. Our average attendance is close to 80% of the seating capacity of the main floor of our sanctuary. Research shows that a church cannot sustain an average attendance for long that is substantially more than 80% of capacity. Even now we would be overcrowded in holiday seasons if everyone came to a single service. In the history of our church, before two services were implemented, the average attendance twice peaked at about 140 and then fell back. After two services, our highest attendance peak was just under 190. So once more, I conclude that having two services helps us help more people love and worship God. And, having two times for worship helps our church love others by serving them better and make more disciples for Jesus.

So, simply put, we can accomplish our mission to love God, love others and make disciples and help others do the same much better with a two service system than in a one service system. That's why we have it.

