

Introduction

Church planting is hard work

Apologize to all of the ARC and Grow pastors

We make it look so easy – even make that promise
Add water and stir – it’s not easy

Feel responsible to teach you how hard it is
Maybe even talk you out of it

After 18 years of church planting

Some have million dollar dreams with hundred-dollar work ethic
Some have come back and said – “Why is it not working?”

We often miss opportunity because it’s dressed in overalls
and looks like work.

~Thomas Edison

When talking about Kingdom work – Jesus used the metaphor of plowing
He said...

(Luke 9:57-62 MSG) On the road someone asked if he could go along. “I’ll go with you, wherever,” he said. Jesus was curt: “Are you ready to rough it? We’re not staying in the best inns, you know.” Jesus said to another, “Follow me.” He said, “Certainly, but first excuse me for a couple of days, please. I have to make arrangements for my father’s funeral.” Jesus refused. “First things first. Your business is life, not death. And life is urgent: Announce God’s kingdom!” Then another said, “I’m ready to follow you, Master, but first excuse me while I get things straightened out at home.”

(Luke 9:62 NIV) Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

How to Plow

I want to teach you how to plow tough ground – get a harvest
It takes work – here’s how...

1. Own the farm.

You’re the farmer – it’s your farm

The Owner’s mentality consists of three defining traits:

Owners own the vision.

They have stock in the farm

They have vision for the farm

The belief that we are called – have a commission straight from God

We are at “war” with the enemy

And we burn with passion for people

Owners care about the whole farm.

Owners tend to obsess about every detail

“If it’s that way – it’s because I let it get that way”

We need to care about the whole experience

Don’t micro-manage – trust and empower people

But they still have to know your culture and expectations

Owners assume responsibility for the farm.

How to Plow

Because they are the owners

They take responsibility for what goes wrong
For the culture
For change

Great leaders don't feel sorry for themselves
They don't assign blame – they assume blame

Too many – “Well in my city...”
“Our people won't...”

Some are still saying, “Multisite won't work in my town”
As leaders it's our responsibility to lead change

Never say, “Our people won't _____.”

Say, “We haven't led them to _____.”

That's what owners do

2. Get up every day and farm the fields.

(Proverbs 13:4 NLT) Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper.

One of the books that impacted me most
John Maxwell's book *Today Matters*

We have a tendency to over exaggerate yesterday
It wasn't as bad as we say – and it wasn't as good

We have a tendency to overestimate tomorrow

How to Plow

Story – when we first started

I was always peering into the future – dreaming about tomorrow

Portable – but wishing we were in a building

The key is focus on today – work today

And the secret to success is determined by your daily agenda

We make success mystical – think it happens by chance

So what is the key? Create some daily habits

Only the right habits can give you the church you want

We need uphill habits – great work ethic

And then do it every day

Studying is not amazing

Praying is not amazing

Serving is not amazing

Dreaming is not amazing

Leading is not amazing

Trying is not amazing

Showing up is not amazing

Doing it every day is amazing

It's the power of compounding interest

“I never did anything great for God. I just did something
every day.”

~Lester Sumrall

So what do we do?

Every day get close to God.

Spiritual growth – prayer and fasting – studying and filing

If you look at almost any growing church

- It has expressive worship, more emotional delivery in preaching
- An openness to the work and activity of the Holy Spirit
- Comes from time with God

Many attractional churches are finding it harder to reach new people

- Why? Because they already have access to information
- The online boom – the information boom
- We cultivate experiences that they can't get online

People aren't looking for information

- They're looking for transformation

Even lost people know ABOUT God

- They're looking for an experience WITH God
- Information is everywhere – Transformation is scarce

We can't let people come to church looking for God and only find us.

At the same time – we don't need to be weird

- That is what the attractional churches helped us with

Every day recruit and develop your team.

Develop leaders – reach someone far from God

Every day give time to your most important activities.

Story – John Maxwell – The Rule of Five

If you took an axe and swung it at the tree 5 times every day
Just 5 times – eventually the tree would fall down

Principle – find 5 important activities – do it every day

Not all day – just every day
Give it thought – time – and effort

For me – My Rule of 5...

Spend time with God in prayer
Study God's Word
Love those closest to me
Make a difference in someone's life
Take care of my self

3. Expect farming to be hard.

Again – maybe we've made it sound too easy – it's not!

Farming is dirty – exhausting – work

Come in at the end of the day and need a shower and a bed
Too many think it's supposed to be automatic

(John 9:4) As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me.
Night is coming, when no one can work.

You expect God to bless it – favor it – be with you through it
But it's going to be tough

(Joshua 1:6, 7, 9) Be strong and courageous...

Think price not perks.

Too many get into ministry for the perks

Freedom – be your own person – travel and spend like you want

In John Maxwell's new book *Leadershift*...

Leaders Who Focus on Perks

What will I receive?

Leaders Who Focus on Price

What can I give?

Leaders Who Focus on Perks

How will this affect me?

Leaders Who Focus on Price

How will this affect others?

Leaders Who Focus on Perks

How long will this take?

Leaders Who Focus on Price

How far can we go?

Leaders Who Focus on Perks

What will you give?

Leaders Who Focus on Price

What must I give?

Here's the second principle about expecting it to be hard...

Think spiritually not naturally.

If you forget you're in a spiritual battle – you'll lose – get discouraged

We're in a war – not against flesh and blood – principalities and powers

If you decide to help people – All of hell will resist you

Jesus said “Satan desires to sift you like wheat”

(Acts 20:23) “I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.”

When you choose to take territory – you become the target

The enemy doesn't want you to succeed

It's spiritual – Win the war in the spiritual

Protect your marriage – take every measure possible to stay pure

Financial integrity

Think marathon not sprint.

“Fastest growing church...”

All good – but don't make that a goal

Like a prizefight – may lose a few rounds – win the bout!

Need more endurance – persistence

You're going to fail – just need to get back up

(Proverbs 24:16) For though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again.

How to Plow

(Ephesians 6:13-14) ...and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then...

Story – Barbara Corcoran

She's invested in 70 business on Shark Tank
20 have succeeded

The reason the 20 succeed – determination

When they get knocked down – and they will

They don't get more discouraged – they get more determined

They fight harder

Killer instinct

Example – try to talk them out of it

They will fight you to the death

Make leaders defend what they do

This creates the killer instinct

Story – Billy's death – last message – Struggle Well

(2 Timothy 4:7-8) I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.