

# 10 Principles For Gaining & Maintaining Church Momentum



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Oh what an exhilarating ride momentum can be! Just like the adrenaline of an amusement park ride, the ebb and flow of a giant roller coaster – when you are riding momentum it seems like *‘anything could happen and it probably will!’*

Momentum speeds up progress and propels you forward in a way best described in the Amplified Bible’s definition of the word ‘blessed’: *“Blessed, happy, fortunate, and to be envied!”*

Momentum is a friend to every leader who is consumed with the cause of Christ and His Church. Conversely, a lack of momentum is the catalyst of great frustration and duress, and often produces striving or disillusionment – neither of which will ever lead to momentum. It is at times like these that the frustration we feel over lack of momentum is only exacerbated by acquaintances or peers who make it all look so easy as they ride on the wings of the momentum we so desperately crave.

So, as a fellow church leader in constant pursuit of grace-filled momentum, here are my 10 principles for the GAINING and MAINTAINING of Church momentum:

## **1. MOMENTUM IS PROPELLED BY A HEALTHY SOUL:**

Momentum has an ENGINE that is powered by a healthy soul. Every church has a soul and in the same way as a strong ‘core’ is essential to physical fitness, a healthy soul (or core) is critical in igniting momentum within the life of any church. Typical symptoms of an unhealthy ‘soul’ are indifference, ambivalence, politicking and negativity; which eat away at the health of a church like terminal cancers. I will always try and encourage church leaders not to focus as much on the GROWTH of the church as you do on the HEALTH of the church – because healthy things grow.

A healthy church *“prosper and is in good health, in the same way as its soul prospers”*. (3 John 2.) When the soul of a church is healthy, the church will be unified and in turn, unity ignites momentum.

## **2. MOMENTUM IS CONTAGIOUS:**

Like a magnet, momentum will attract and pull even greater momentum towards itself. If it came with a warning label, momentum would caution of the potential discomfort and disruption it is likely to bring; but remarkably, people are drawn toward momentum. They may have to line up, sit on the floor, or wait for hours, but they are glad to be part of something that is “happening”. Things that would normally be unacceptable to people, suddenly become part and parcel of the ride known as momentum.

A wise leader knows the value of momentum and enjoys the blessing it brings, recognizing its ability to attract greater momentum; whilst the “safe” leader becomes fearful, and will attempt to cater to people’s comfort, rather than capitalize on their new-found commitment to adaptability!

### **3. MOMENTUM IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO TIMES & SEASONS:**

Momentum has a RHYTHM, and a wise leader recognizes the way it beats in time and gets in sync – using it to his or her advantage.

There are only 52 weeks each year and every one of them is too important to be ruled by the vagaries of the seasons. So, instead we must pilot momentum through the ebbs and flows – enabling it to roll on like an avalanche, encompassing all before it and refusing to allow it to be dictated to by an adverse season or a contrary environment.

### **4. MOMENTUM THRIVES IN A CHARGED ATMOSPHERE:**

Momentum ELECTRIFIES any atmosphere and a wise leader knows the importance of creating an environment that is friendly to momentum’s cause. Funnily enough, it is often NOT the aesthetically perfect, architecturally designed sanctuary where momentum flourishes. It can be an old theatre or a disused barn, a small chapel or in the carpark volunteer meeting. Certain things – such as empty seats, poor sound, stark colours, or natural light, do not easily lend themselves to a momentum- friendly atmosphere. Be aware of the atmosphere!

Some leaders are oblivious to the things that are working against momentum. It may not be a spiritual problem you are facing! It could be something as practical as the aesthetics of the room, the length of your services, or (dare I say it) the monotony of your messages.

As accountable leaders, we must ask ourselves the hard questions about the potential momentum inhibitors and the things that are limiting our church... Starting with US.

### **5. MOMENTUM IS THE FRUIT OF GRACE & FAVOUR:**

A wise leader recognizes that momentum is less about their talent and efforts, than it is evidence of God’s great grace. Whilst nothing substantial is established or sustained without a commitment to hard work, it is obvious that not everyone who works hard enjoys the fruit of momentum.

The encouraging news however, is that grace is not the exclusive property of a few good leaders; it is freely available to us all. The only question to ask ourselves is whether we are living in the grace God has given us, or stressing and striving in our own strength, attempting to “make” something happen.

The New Testament words for *‘gift’ and ‘grace’* are interchangeable, and momentum will never flow if you are trying to function outside of the grace or the gifts that God has given you.

The apostle Paul, (speaking to the Corinthians), spoke of *“living within the limits of the sphere that God appointed him”* (2 Corinthians 10:12-14.)

That, in fact, is the ONLY place sustained momentum will flow – when we are living in our own God-given ‘grace zone’. In other words – BE YOURSELF – and watch what God can do!

## **6. MOMENTUM HAS A LIFESPAN:**

*“It’s just a season”*, I heard someone say. But it’s a season that has brought to the forefront many gifted and anointed people, yet has proven time and again, to be greater than any one person’s talent. It is a season that has been extended through the emergence of younger generations with fresh waves of sounds and songs. Momentum has a lifespan and left to itself it WILL eventually subside and fade away.

The wise leader trusts God for an intuitive ability to be one step ahead of the curve and make changes (or sometimes small adjustments) ahead of the peak, breathing fresh life and extending momentum’s tenure.

It seems to me that momentum is the property of leaders, who model *‘an ever-changing consistency.’* That is an oxymoron but it’s true. Momentum comes to those who model consistency yet find within the parameters of consistency a constant innovation, fresh ideas and timely change. The mystery of momentum is unlocked by leaders possessing the capacity to discern the constants from the changeable, and make timely adjustments that produce fresh life.

## **7. MOMENTUM IS ATTRACTED TO WISDOM AND REPELLED BY FOOLISHNESS:**

The book of Proverbs refers to both wisdom and folly in the feminine, calling them both SHE! Two starkly contrasting ladies. Just as Lady Wisdom is attractive to momentum; the deceptive charms of Madam Folly brings it to a grinding halt. I have heard it said that *“you are just one foolish decision away from lost momentum”* and depending on the gravity of the decision, that could well be true.

My encouragement to every church leader is to constantly pray for discernment, remain open and lead with the input of others whose counsel brings godly wisdom... We need each other!

## **8. MOMENTUM IS A MYSTERY AND OFTEN ELUSIVE:**

Momentum is not always easy to predict. It can elude those you would most expect to attract it and break out where you would least expect it.

There is no ONE right way of doing things and trying to reduce momentum to a formula, is a recipe for frustration.

## **9. MOMENTUM IS SEDUCTIVE & WITHIN ITS CHARMS ARE THE SEEDS OF ITS OWN DESTRUCTION:**

The danger of momentum is the feeling of invincibility that accompanies it. Perhaps everything you are doing is turning to gold. Maybe everyone wants to be your friend, people want to know your secret and compliments are constantly coming your way.

Delusions of grandeur can accompany momentum and it's easy to fall into the trap of believing you are better than you really are.

Stay humble. Continue to honour others. Don't be too quick to become an *'expert,'* because given enough time, the seasons of life will challenge many of your ideals. Sustained momentum is really only proven in the difficult times and the greatest proof of leadership comes with our capacity to maintain momentum through challenging times.

## **10. MOMENTUM REQUIRES AN APPRECIATION OF REWARD AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF RESPONSIBILITY:**

Great opportunity and blessing is the fruit of progress and momentum brings with it, great reward. It is so easy to look at those who are further along the road than you and covet the blessing they enjoy, without any real appreciation for the price they have paid.

Favour, opportunity, and influence, are the fruit of momentum and of course, *"To whom much is given, much is required"*. Good stewardship of momentum means using what we have to bless others and increase their world. According to The Message Bible, *"The world of the generous gets larger and larger; but the world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller."* It is the responsibility of those who enjoy momentum and blessing, to be generous with what God has given them.