

CHURCH STYLE

Congregations can typically be characterised in one of four styles. What follows is descriptive of the leadership and decision-making characteristics of these styles, which are loosely based on congregation sizes. All styles can be healthy. It can be helpful for a congregation to recognise the style by which it is best described, and recognise the transition required if it wants to move to a different style.¹ It can also be helpful for ministers to understand what kind of style or styles are involved in congregation(s) when they are invited into Placement conversations.

FAMILY CHURCH

- Everybody knows everyone
- Minister is a coach
- The church is largely run by 1 or 2 key leaders who often don't occupy any formal position

PASTORAL CHURCH

- Minister holds a central position, and is often deferred to by the Church Council
- Minister knows roughly what's going on across the church
- Often people don't feel pastorally visited unless it's by the minister

PROGRAM CHURCH

- Larger congregation, with lots of committees running the different programs and groups
- The Church Council is vital in its overview of what is happening in the church
- New members are incorporated through a program or small group
- Minister provides oversight of programs, committees and ministry team

RESOURCE CHURCH

- Minister may not know everyone but is vital in promoting the vision.
- Vision needs to be shared as common cause to maintain unity
- New members are incorporated through commitment to the vision.
- Church Council functions like a board with the Minister as the CEO.

¹ See, for example, Alice Mann's work on transitions for congregations in [*The In Between Church: Navigating Size Transitions in Congregations*](#), and much that has been published since then. Further details can be found at https://www.ecfvp.org/uploads/tools/files/Overview_of_Church_Size_Theory1.pdf <https://www.congregationalconsulting.org/what-size-is-our-congregation/>