

SO YOUR CHURCH IS DISCUSSING RELOCATION

Relocation is a big decision for a congregation. As they used to say in weddings, it is not to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly, but soberly and discreetly. This step should be taken only when it is clearly the best strategy, at the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Davis Byrd, of LifeWay's Church Architecture Department says churches need to relocate for one of two reasons:

1. Out of a need for additional land area that is unavailable in the present location, or
2. They have a poor location to do the ministry they feel called to do.

It is not the purpose of this material to urge your congregation to relocate. That may not be the best course for your congregation – there is no such thing as a “one size fits all” answer on this question. By considering relocation, your congregation is saying that you have issues that need to be addressed. If you are considering relocation for the second reason above, the discussion will be particularly difficult for your congregation, for your church may be at the point of a life and death crisis.

One of the most difficult things for you or some of your fellow church members will be to sort through the emotions relocation talk stirs up. Some may feel that the church is considering a course that is disloyal to your forbearers, or that the church will never be the same in another location. These feelings will not just go away if we ignore them. They are powerful and sometimes agonizing. We need to acknowledge them, but we should not allow them to prevent us from studying the facts about the situation, and searching for insights from Scripture that may apply to it.

Discussions about relocation are about more than your building's street address. They are about the kind of church you are going to be. The relocation decision is about your church growth strategy. What is your church's niche in the Kingdom of God? What are the strengths of your congregation and where could you best put those strengths to work?

The relocation question involves some of your deepest held doctrinal beliefs – in particular, the doctrine of the church. What do you believe about the nature and mission of the church?

Your answer to the relocation question may also reveal your level of spiritual commitment. The key question is: would you be willing to support relocation if you knew God wanted it? These are spiritual issues that need to be *thought through* and *prayed through*.

You would not be reading this if you did not love your church. However, be warned: this booklet will speak firmly to you and your fellow church members concerning ministry and mission. The strong wording is intended to overcome the defenses we put up to protect our feelings concerning the church we love so much. God bless you as you enter the presence of God, and study relocation together with Him.

Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think—according to the power that works in you—to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. – Ephesians 3:20-21