



## What Is a Multisite Church?

A multisite church is one church that offers corporate services in multiple locations. While more locations might be developed in the future, Grace Gathering currently has two locations:

- New Haven (two Sunday morning services meeting in a building we own)
- North (one Sunday morning service at the Parkview YMCA we rent)

## What Are the Common Areas of Every Site at Grace Gathering?

- One elder board over all
- Certain senior level staff members that give oversight over ministries of all sites
- One church budget
- One doctrinal position
- One vision, values, ministry philosophy, and overall DNA
- Same diet of corporate teaching

## What Are the Differences Among the Sites?

- Different location of weekend services
- Different size of services
- Different personality of the site congregation based on demographic
- Worship style relevant to the demographic of the site
- Certain staff members that have responsibilities only for that site
- Each site has a lead couple
- Outreach focus is specific to the people in that geographic area.

## Doesn't Multisite Fragment the Church?

Multiplication is healthy but hard. Whether it is sending kids to college, a small group/MC that grows and multiplies, a church that moves from one service to multiple services, or a church that sends members to plant another church or start another site, it is difficult to let physical or spiritual family members go. However, multiplication for the purpose of health and growth is what the early church was known for as it was expanding. While there is a relational cost to multisite and multiplication in general, it is how God has designed health and growth in all things.

## What Are the Advantages of Multisite?

- New church plants and site locations are proven to be more effective at reaching new people with the gospel than more established congregations
- New sites offer new and expanded leadership opportunities.
- The closer in proximity a location is to the people members are trying to reach, the more likely those new people are willing to get involved.
- Larger churches have an array of resources that significantly increases the chance of success over traditional church planting that must start everything from scratch.
- New sites located in specific geographic areas allows the church to reach different demographic groups within those locations.

## What Are Some of The Current Multisite Facts and Statistics in The U.S.?

- Multisite churches reach and baptize more people than single site churches
- Multisite activate more people into ministry than single site
- Multisite now outnumber mega churches
- The median size of a new site core team is 75 people
- Sites need to be 100-150 to become fully functioning and self-sustaining
- 1 in 3 new sites originate by a merger with another congregation
- 50% of sites are within a 15-20 minute drive of each other
- 25% of sites are in a different language
- New sites have a 90% success rate

## What Is the Current Evaluation of Grace Gathering North Now That It Is Three Years Old?

- We started with a core base of 75 adults and children. We asked for a 6-month commitment to that site.
- About 20% of the core Grace people decided to come back to the New Haven site after the initial six-month commitment.
- About 10-15% of that initial core no longer attend Grace for various reasons.
- The remaining 65% (50 people) of the core 75 are still at Grace North.
- Today we have about 175 committed to Grace North which means about 125 people are new over the last three years.
- Of the 125 new people about one third of them are new believers.
- The first two years saw slow growth. This last year we have nearly doubled.
- Just as importantly to the new believer growth has been the continued spiritual

growth of the people there and the increasing ownership of trying to reach more people on the north side of town.

## Is Grace Gathering Planning Another Location in The Future?

We have a growing number of people from Grace that live and are moving in the greater downtown area of Fort Wayne. For all the reasons stated above about the advantages of multisite, we believe God may be calling us to plant another site in that location within a couple years.

## What Would a Downtown Site Look Like?

- We believe a downtown site would be our most ethnically and socioeconomically diverse congregation.
- We would desire to see a racially mixed leadership team at this location.
- We would foresee a more urban style of worship music.
- We believe a tangible presence in the greater downtown area with all of Grace Gathering's physical and spiritual resources will impact an area of town that has historically lacked for resource.
- We could envision merging with an existing downtown church if Jesus provides that opportunity
- We could foresee greater levels of partnerships with key leaders and/or churches that are already there.

## How Will We Determine Whether or Not God Is Leading Grace to Start a New Location Downtown?

The elders have set up several different trigger points of confirmation that must be met in order

to officially launch this new site. These trigger points could take longer or shorter than this time frame, but this would be an estimate. These trigger points are listed here with associated time frames:

- **Fall 2017** – Ask all the people of Grace, from both New Haven and North, to begin to pray about this potential launch in the fall of 2019. Throughout this first step, we will engage the congregation on what they hear from God. If the response is generally positive, move to the next step.
- **Winter/Spring 2018** – Ask people to pray about who might be willing to commit to being core team for at least the first six months after the official launch. If there seems to be a reasonable potential of a 75 people minimum, move to the next step.
- **Fall 2018** – Seek to name a lead couple who will lead the team and officially lead the launch of the site. This lead couple may come from within or outside the Grace family. If a lead couple is named by the end of this time frame, move to the next step.
- **Winter/Spring 2019** – The lead couple begins training with the core team of leaders among the 75 and begins once-a-month-gatherings. The search for a location increases. If the commitment of the group maintains and the momentum grows, and a location is named by the end of this time frame, a launch date for the Fall is planned.
- **Fall 2019** – Assuming all the above trigger points are met, Grace Gathering Downtown is launched.

## Where Do We Go from Here?

The elders believe that God's hand is upon Grace, and he has plans to expand our territory and influence, not for our glory but for his. We believe he wants us to multiply the impact he has already accomplished through us. We believe a downtown location will result in more unbelievers reached and more believers equipped for discipleship and mission. We are prepared to follow his direction and his wisdom as we seek his Spirit.

## Where Do You Fit In?

We would love for you to pray and seek God on whether or not he is calling Grace to plant a downtown location in the future. As you pray, please let the elders or anyone on the leadership team know what you are hearing from the Lord. Also, if you have a stirring that perhaps God is calling you to be a part of a core team for this site, let us know.

We will simply seek God as a church and evaluate the way he is speaking to us and providing direction.

**Thanks for being open to his leading!**

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1 Warren Bird and Kristin Walters, *Multisite is Multiplying: Leadership Network* (September 2010).

2 Greg Ligon, [http://leadnet.org/resources/page/multisite\\_concept\\_papers](http://leadnet.org/resources/page/multisite_concept_papers). *Leadership Network*.

3 *Sojourn Elders: Why we believe our Multi-Campus Approach is a Biblical Model*.

4 *The Multisite Church Revolution* by Surratt, Ligon, Bird.