Overview of Church Size Theory

Size Types and Their Characteristics

Family size
- Under 75 ASA* (47% of Episcopal congregations; 15% of the worshippers)
- Single cell
- Group-centered
- Governance: by key family or families
- Pastor as chaplain
- Fights are family feuds

Pastoral size
- 76-140 ASA (25% of Episcopal congregations; 22% of the worshippers)
- Pastor-centered
- Governance: key family(ies) still on Vestry, but new groups forming
- Pastor at center of program and new member incorporation
- Fights are over the pastor (and his/her attention)

Transitional size
- 141-224 ASA (15% of Episcopal congregations; 23% of the worshippers)
- Stretched cell
- Governance: key family(ies) still on Vestry, but many new groups, some outside influence – subgroups form
- Pastor stretched – at cusp of needing additional staff, but resources may not be there
- Fights are over inclusion, information/communication, attention of clergy

Program size:
- 225-800 ASA (15% of Episcopal congregations; 23% of the worshippers)
- Multi-cell
- Group-centered
- Governance: committees have power; Vestry moves to oversight/direction; more relational and less task-focused
- Pastor is administrator/delegator (danger of micromanaging)
- Fights are over resources and priorities

Resource size:
- 800+ ASA (0.5% of Episcopal churches; 4.5% of the worshippers)
- Multi-cell
- Pastor-centered
- Governance: staff
- Pastor is CEO of the operation; manager
- Fights are between program units and staff

*Average Sunday Attendance
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Overview of Church Size Theory

Impact of Church Size on Structure, Governance & Relationships

**Family Size —– Pastoral —– Transitional —– Program —– Resource Size**

**Focus**
Relationships ———— Program ———— Organization

**Role of Rector**
Chaplain ———— Administrator ———— Leader

**Role of Vestry**
Doing ———— Leading ———— Visioning

**Decision Making**
Informal ———— Formal

**Change Driven**
Bottom-up ———— Middle-out ———— Top-down

**Tone of Conflict**
Emotional ———— Subjective

**Questions for Discussion**

*Using the “Overview of Church Size Theory” on the previous page, determine your congregation’s type based on its ASA and then place your congregation on each of the above scales.*

Are your congregation’s structure, governance, and relationships consistent with its size type across all the scales? Where are they different from size type?

How alike/different is your congregation from the description of its size type? What have you observed that supports your response?

What about the congregation’s history, generational or ethnic/cultural make-up may be contributing to how it behaves?