

# 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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## 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?