

EMBA Fruitfulness Indicators Self-assessment Tool

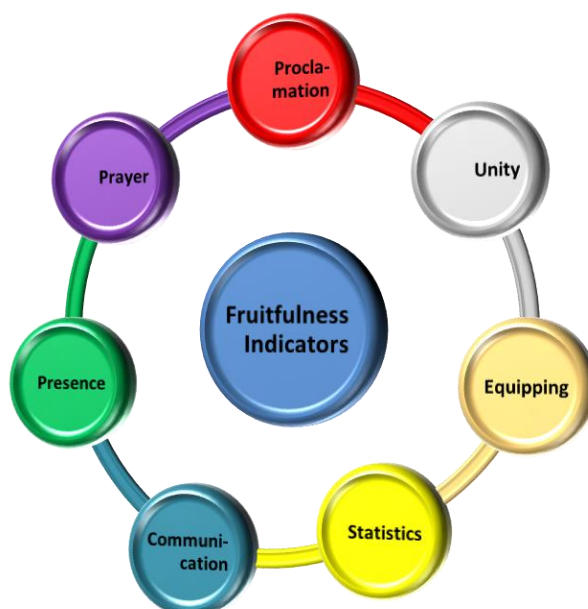
Fruitfulness Indicators

We start with Jesus. In John 15 Jesus used the metaphor of fruitfulness to set an expectation that where the Spirit is at work in his people they will grow, develop and bear fruit. The Fruitfulness Indicators Tool builds on this idea. It is a flexible tool which can be used as a stand-alone exercise to give a snapshot of a church's state of health. However, it is best used as part of a fuller Mission Action Planning (MAP) Process which aims to plan for a better, more fruitful future.

The tool uses seven indicators to give an insight into where your church is NOW, today! The seven indicators are:-

- Statistics
- Presence
- Proclamation
- Prayer
- Unity
- Equipping
- Communication

A description of these indicators is given below in the assessment tool.



How to use this tool

We think that the material is best used in two stages; firstly, individuals express their thoughts on each of the seven indicators and, secondly, the team comes together to compare notes and decide on an agreed position. In addition to the agreed position, provision is given on the **data collation sheet** for the range of marks and for some agreed comments to be recorded.

Please read the brief explanation of what is meant by each indicator below, and then place an 'X' on each line of the diagram to give an indication of where you think the church is at this point in time. If you would like to write any brief comments, notes or observations about why you have given the mark you have, please do so in the space provided. The diagram will give a helpful visual representation and starting point for reflection and discussion.

The hope is that out of such discussions will come both a realistic appreciation of current realities, and some clear thinking around where the church needs to give its energy in the future to develop its ministry and mission.

Fruitfulness Indicators Self-assessment Tool - for individual use.

Statistics

Focus on any statistical information that you think would be useful to reflect upon. For example, baptisms, new members, average age, number of children & youth, attendance at toddlers group, coffees served, children at messy church, the health of the church budget etc. Or maybe small groups participation and the extent to which people meet together other than on a Sunday? Or mission events held during the year? Or perhaps geographical factors – e.g. the type of neighbourhood/what percentage of congregation live in the locality around the church/how many travel in? etc. What story do the statistics tell? And what part of the story is left untold, or even distorted by them?

Fruitful

Not so Fruitful

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Notes/Comments/statistics used:

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Community Presence

In what ways are 'church people' involved in the local community and beyond, being salt, light, and yeast? What are the opportunities being taken to serve or bless the community? Is there an intentionality about this? Who are your 'partners' in the community (this might be other Christian groups or secular organisations)? Examples might include things like fun days for the community, pop up events, involvement with local schools, the council, and other local groups. It might also include church activities that aim to make the community a better place in which to live. It might be helpful to ask some 'neighbours' outside of the church for their view of the church's presence and reputation in the community.

Fruitful

Not so Fruitful

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Notes/Comments:

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Gospel Proclamation

If, when, and how, is the message of Jesus being communicated? We are aware that the message of Jesus is communicated both verbally and non-verbally; in word and in deed. How is the message being communicated to those outside of the church community? Is it being contextualised so that it connects with the culture and needs of the intended audience? Are there those outside of church who are a natural audience for the message? How does the gospel message connect with this audience? What is proving most/least effective?

Fruitful

Not so Fruitful



Notes/Comments:

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Prayer for mission

In what ways is prayer for mission practised? We appreciate that prayer for mission will take many shapes and will likely form part of a broader prayer practice. Our starting place is that prayer should lean more towards adventure than chore and will include both individual and collective practice. Questions you might like to ask: Is there a particular prayer concern/practice that focuses on local mission? Is this done with enthusiasm, imagination and creativity or out of a sense of duty? Is prayer accessible to the many or is it the preserve of the few? Is there a habit of listening to God as plans are made, and petitioning God as those plans are enacted?

Fruitful

Not so Fruitful



Notes/Comments:

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Mission centred **Unity**

This indicator is about ownership! Is there a unity of purpose in the church that galvanises the efforts of church members? Or is the vision fractured or held limply by members, leaving a small, weary group doing all the work? How is unity/ownership expressed? Is the church mainly inwardly focused (prioritising the needs/interests of the members) or outwardly focused (prioritising the needs/interests of God's mission)? Jesus' loved all-comers, but emphasised the needs of the "lost" and "marginalised". If your church took it's cue from Jesus in this respect would it do so happily or would such a shift cause conflict?

Fruitful

Not so Fruitful



Notes/Comments:

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Equipping *for mission*

How is the church equipped, trained and released for its mission and ministry? This might include the general encouragement of every member; multi-voiced ministry; and particularly the identification, mentoring, training and releasing of new leaders. Thinking specifically of mission; how are church members encouraged to see the outreach of the church as part of God's mission? Are members encouraged and released to find a place of service and witness in the wider community? Are they equipped to share their faith in this or any other context? There are numerous helpful 'faith sharing' resources around; have any of these been used? There are also helpful resources to re-envision the task of mission in the contemporary context; is your church open to engaging with such material?

Fruitful

Not so Fruitful



Notes/Comments:

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Communication *beyond the church*

What do you communicate to your local community about your church and the message of Jesus?

It should be noted that we communicate a message whether we are trying to do so or not, so the question becomes “*what is the message and is it the message we want to communicate?*” If we are intentional in our communication with those outside our church, how effective is our communication? Have we asked any non-church attending people what impressions we convey? We might also usefully ask: how can we improve our communication? What do our buildings communicate? Do we have an up-to-date, attractive online presence (website, social media presence etc.)?

Fruitful

Not so Fruitful



Notes/Comments:

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DATA COLLATION

Once individual thoughts and reflections have been recorded, the leadership team should meet for a discussion and collate the agreed conclusions. We suggest that you discuss each fruitfulness indicator in turn and record an agreed position. There is also space to note the range of individual responses, and some commentary on why/how you have reached the agreed position. **Churches not applying for a Mission Partnership Grant will find it very helpful if a Mission Accompanier facilitates this conversation.** An adapted version of this exercise *could* be carried out subsequently with the whole church membership to test the perceptions of the leaders and to engage the membership in the process.

Fruitful

Not so Fruitful

Statistics – range



Statistics – agreed position

Notes/Comments – please give a brief commentary, specifying how you have reached this agreed position and explain your choice of statistics:

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Fruitful

Not so Fruitful

Presence – range



Presence – agreed position



Notes/Comments – please give a brief commentary, specifying how the church has been present in the community:

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Fruitful

Not so Fruitful

Proclamation – range

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Proclamation – agreed position

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Notes/Comments – please give a brief commentary, specifying how the good news has been communicated:

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Fruitful

Not so Fruitful

Prayer – range

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Prayer – agreed position

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Notes/Comments – please give a brief commentary, specifying the ways in which mission has been born out of prayer:

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Fruitful

Not so Fruitful

Unity – range

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Unity – agreed position

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Notes/Comments – please give a brief commentary, specifying how the whole church has participated in mission:

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Fruitful

Not so Fruitful

Equipping – range

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Equipping – agreed position

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Notes/Comments – please give a brief commentary, specifying the ways in which church members have been equipped and released into mission and service:

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Fruitful

Not so Fruitful

Communication – range

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Communication – agreed position

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Notes/Comments – please give a brief commentary, specifying how you are perceived in your community, the message you have sought to communicate and how well you think you've communicated it:

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Any Further Comments/Observations/Thoughts (You might like to note what has surprised you, challenged you and encouraged you)

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Does this Fruitfulness Indicators self-assessment suggest any priorities the church should adopt? If your church is using this tool as part of a full MAP process, any priorities identified should be revisited and woven into the planning process.

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Next steps

If you are using this tool **independently** as part of the full EMBA MAP process, proceed to phase two of the process which explores the options for development. As you do so, bear in mind the priorities you identified above.

If you are using it **as part of an application for a Mission Partnership Grant**, you will need to return this completed form, along with other requested documents, to Mrs Becky Nicholls. If your grant application is successful, you will then need to feed your insights into the MAP process, and you will be assisted with this by your Mission Accompanier. It’s a good idea to retain a copy of the data collection sheet, together with team member’s individual comments and to bring these to the discussion with your Mission Accompanier.