01 – Priority Ministries

Identifies Mayflower's priority ministries in light of mission, vision, and limited capacity. Establishes which ministries receive primary staff, volunteer, and budget attention.

- Overview: Priority Ministries
- The Five Priority Ministries We Guard
- Missions, Outreach & Supporting Ministries
- Permission to Say No (and Not Yet)

Overview: Priority Ministries

Status

Implementation status: Approved by Servants Council

Date: 2026-05-30

Summary

Mayflower has named **five priority ministries** that we will protect and strengthen above all others. These are not "programs" so much as the primary channels through which Christ ordinarily builds His church. When capacity is tight, these are protected first.

1. **Ministry of the Word** — faithful preaching and teaching of Scripture as the central ministry of the church.
2. **The Lord's Day Gathering** — a Word-shaped, prayerful, welcoming Sunday service.
3. **Gospel-Driven Prayer** — corporate prayer as a real ministry of the church, not a private preference.
4. **Disciple-Making Pathways** — a coherent disciple-making spine forming believers in doctrine, obedience, mutual care, and leadership.
5. **Membership and Shepherding Care** — guarding the "front door" and the care of souls.

Missions & Outreach is treated not as a supporting ministry but as the church's outward calling that overflows from the five priorities.

Principle (from Streamline)

Lukaszewski's principle: A healthy church names a small number of priority ministries that receive the bulk of staff time, volunteer energy, and budget, rather than treating every ministry as equally weighted. Clarity about priority prevents mission drift and volunteer burnout.

Mayflower's Current Practice

The decision was finalized in January 2026 and documented in *Five Priority Ministries We Guard*. The decision does three things:

- **Names** the five ministries we will guard (this page, above).
- **Classifies** remaining ministries as supporting, seasonal, or scalable — with explicit permission to simplify, rotate, or pause them.
- **Grants leaders explicit permission to say "no" or "not yet"** to requests that do not clearly strengthen the five priorities.

See the chapter's detail pages:

- **The Five Priority Ministries We Guard** — full descriptions with which teams fall under each.
- **Missions, Outreach & Supporting Ministries** — outward calling, seasonal events, and the decision question.
- **Permission to Say No (and Not Yet)** — governing commitment, decision rule, guardrails, scripts, and biblical rationale.

Governance & Document References

- *Five Priority Ministries We Guard* — source decision document (January 2026), 4 pages
- Mayflower Constitution and Bylaws
- Current mission statement: *Building a discipleship community rooted in the knowledge of Christ, driven by faith, empowered to share the Gospel, and committed to welcoming and equipping others in Love and Truth.*
- Scripture anchors: Eph 5:15–17; Acts 6:2–4; 1 Pet 4:10–11; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4:11–16

Open Questions

- Annual review cadence: when and how do elders re-examine whether these five remain the right priorities?
- Where does the source PDF live for staff access?
- How are new ministry proposals routed through the "one-paragraph proposal" process described under *How we say no*?

Page template: Principle + Mayflower Practice. Part of the Operations Plan, adapted from Michael Lukaszewski's Streamline: How To Create Healthy Church Systems.

The Five Priority Ministries We Guard

Preamble

These are the core ministries we will protect and strengthen above all others. They are not "programs" as much as the primary channels through which Christ ordinarily builds His church. Our aim is clarity, health, and sustainable fruitfulness.

1. Ministry of the Word

We will guard the faithful preaching and teaching of Scripture as the central ministry of the church.

Included: Ministry of the Word; Scripture Reading Team; Worship Team.

2. The Lord's Day Gathering

We will guard the quality, order, warmth, and spiritual focus of our Sunday service so that our gathered worship is Word-shaped, prayerful, and welcoming.

Included: Worship Team; Sunday Support Teams as one integrated ministry (First Impressions, Hospitality, Audio-Visual, Nursery, Kitchen, and any other Sunday roles).

3. Gospel-Driven Prayer

We will guard corporate prayer as a real ministry of the church, not a private preference, so that we learn dependence on God and cultivate spiritual power rather than mere activity.

Included: Prayer rhythms connected to worship, discipleship, and mission.

4. Disciple-Making Pathways

We will guard a coherent disciple-making "spine" that forms believers in doctrine, obedience, mutual care, and leadership development.

Included: Bible Fellowship Groups & Studies; Men's Discipleship; Women's Discipleship; Equip Discipleship Training.

5. Membership and Shepherding Care

We will guard the church's "front door" (membership and baptism) and the care of souls so that people are known, discipled, and helped toward holiness and endurance.

Included: Foundations (Intro to Mayflower); Baptism Training; Biblical Counseling Team.

Source: Five Priority Ministries We Guard*, Mayflower Church, January 2026 (page 1).*

Missions, Outreach & Supporting Ministries

Missions & Outreach

Missions, evangelistic outreach, and mercy ministries are **not a supporting ministry** and are not merely one team among others. They are the church's outward calling. We pursue them through the life of the whole church as the gospel overflows from the five priority ministries — our Word-centered worship, prayerful dependence, disciple-making, and faithful shepherding.

Supporting Ministries

These ministries matter, but they are supporting, seasonal, or scalable. We will run them in ways that strengthen the five priorities above, without draining the church's limited leadership and volunteer capacity.

Seasonal and Annual Ministries and Events

- Women's Summer Reading
- Men's Summer Reading
- Fall Fun Festival
- Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Ministry
- Luminaries

Discipletown

- Discipletown — children's ministry

The Question We Must Ask About Supporting Ministries

> "*Does this ministry clearly strengthen one or more of our five priority ministries, with a realistic cost in time, volunteers, and leadership attention — and if not, should we simplify it, rotate it, or pause it for a season?*"

Practical Implications for Leaders

- Supporting ministries should not compete with Sunday faithfulness, prayer, disciple-making, or shepherding care.
- When capacity is tight, we protect the core first.
- A supporting ministry is successful when it serves the priorities, not when it merely continues year after year.

Source: Five Priority Ministries We Guard*, Mayflower Church, January 2026 (page 2).*

Permission to Say No (and Not Yet)

Why We Need This

Mayflower is a finite church. Our people, time, and leadership attention are limited. That means we must steward focus. We will gladly say "yes" to what strengthens the ordinary means by which Christ builds His church, and we will lovingly say "no" (or "not yet") to good things that would weaken the core.

Our Governing Commitment

We give every ministry leader and team lead **explicit permission to say no (or not yet)** to any request, new idea, or added responsibility that does not clearly strengthen one or more of our Five Priority Ministries, or that would pull capacity away from them.

The Five Priority Ministries We Guard

When capacity is tight, these are protected first:

1. Ministry of the Word
2. The Lord's Day Gathering
3. Gospel-Driven Prayer
4. Disciple-Making Pathways
5. Membership and Shepherding Care

And we pursue Missions & Outreach as the church's outward calling that overflows from the five priorities (Word-centered worship, prayerful dependence, disciple-making, and faithful shepherding).

What This Means for Supporting Ministries

Supporting, seasonal, and scalable ministries matter, but they serve the priorities; they do not compete with them. A supporting ministry is successful when it strengthens the priorities, not merely when it continues year after year.

The Decision Rule

If a proposed ministry, event, or addition cannot answer "yes" to the question below, we are free — and expected — to simplify it, rotate it, or pause it for a season.

The Question We Must Ask

> *Does this ministry clearly strengthen one or more of our five priority ministries, with a realistic cost in time, volunteers, and leadership attention — and if not, should we simplify it, rotate it, or pause it for a season?*

Practical Guardrails for Saying No

Leaders have permission to say no (or not yet) when:

- It would reduce faithfulness or quality in the Lord's Day Gathering (setup, hospitality, nursery, AV, worship team, etc.).
- It dilutes the Ministry of the Word (preaching, teaching, Scripture reading, doctrinal clarity).
- It crowds out Gospel-Driven Prayer (corporate prayer rhythms tied to worship, discipleship, mission).
- It fragments Disciple-Making Pathways (Equip, men's/women's discipleship, BFGs/studies, leadership development).
- It compromises Membership and Shepherding Care (foundations, baptism preparation, counseling, soul care).
- It requires sustained leadership/volunteer capacity we do not presently have to do it well.

How We Say No

- "*Thank you — this is a good idea. Right now we are guarding our five priority ministries, and we do not have the capacity to add this without weakening them, so we're going to say no for now.*"
- "*We want to do fewer things better. This doesn't clearly strengthen our priority ministries, so we're going to decline.*"
- "*Not yet. If you'd like to revisit it, bring a one-paragraph proposal that explains which priority it strengthens, who will own it, what it will cost, and what we will stop or pause to make room.*"

Escalation and Unity

If a request affects the Sunday gathering, budget, church-wide communications, or multiple ministries, it should be routed to the elders or the appropriate Board for alignment. We will not guilt leaders into adding commitments; we will honor wise boundaries as an act of mutual love and good stewardship.

Biblical Rationale (Brief)

We aim to:

- Walk wisely and make the best use of time — **Eph 5:15–17**
- Prioritize prayer and the ministry of the Word — **Acts 6:2–4**
- Serve within God-given limits and gifts — **1 Pet 4:10–11**
- Do our work in a way that builds up the body rather than scattering it — **1 Cor 12; Eph 4:11–16**

Source: Five Priority Ministries We Guard*, Mayflower Church, January 2026 (pages 3–4).*