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).*

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