**Leading the Rural Congregation.**

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1. Demographics are considered part of culture, or at least a major contributing factor in the culture of an area. Demographic trends also have an important impact on churches. Who we find in our community will play an important part in our ministry.
2. The trend of most rural areas is that in comparison to urban areas, rural areas are generally: (circle one for each)
	1. Higher or lower income?
	2. Younger or older?
	3. Marked by population decline, or population growth?
	4. Intermarried/related or culturally diverse?
	5. Changing or stable populations with little immigration/migration?

**Helpful Categories for Understanding Our Community**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **People who have left and returned.** | **People who have never left.** | **People who never return.** | **New Arrivals** |
| **Characteristics of:** |  |  |  |  |
| **How is their story a challenge for our ministry?** |  |  |  |  |
| **What opportunities do they bring?** |  |  |  |  |
| **What do we need to do to minister to these people?** |  |  |  |  |

1. Appreciate that the rural congregation is:
	1. Highly\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and highly invested.
	2. Working extremely \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
	3. Linked to a long history and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the church.

**I have come to love, respect, and appreciate our people. Understanding is crucial in exercising patience and compassion.**

1. Learning to lead without the following:
	1. Relief or Respite:
	2. Expert Help:
	3. A large budget:
	4. Relevant Resources:
	5. Clearly defined structure:

**Just as a lack of competition can be one of the greatest opportunities in a rural area, finding ourselves without many of the things we associate with ministry in a larger context can be some of our greatest blessings.**

Finding ourselves dependent on God and His Word is never a bad thing.

*‘Not by might nor by power , but by my Spirit says the Lord Almighty....Who despises the day of the small thing?’* ***Zechariah 4:6,10***

*‘Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.’* ***2 Cor 12:9***

1. The most relevant resource we have is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Being able to focus on relationships is a great thing.

1. Be personal.
2. Enter into the lives of the people you came to serve and reach.
3. Be your own person.

PREACH THE WORD ---------- LOVE THE PEOPLE

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