

Brief Introduction to Faithful Innovation

What is Faithful Innovation?

Faithful innovation is the process of learning new ways to embody Christian identity and purpose in a changing cultural context. It often involves the rediscovery of ancient spiritual practices as much as the embrace of new technologies.

Rather than only relying on the faith and work of one leader, the way forward involves whole congregations *cultivating life together through spiritual practices and innovation focused on discerning God's presence and joining God's work*. Leaders encourage congregational members to engage in spiritual practices alongside practices of experimenting, prototyping, testing, and evaluating to cultivate faithful new expressions of ministry.

The three congregational practices of **Listen-Act-Share** help us discover how to make deeper connections to God, each other, and our neighbors. They help us discover what God might be up to in our context, promote personal spiritual growth, and allow us to experience a new way to be church.

The hoped-for result of the faithful innovation process is to help congregations make deeper connections with God, each other, and their neighbors, and to have congregations experience being the church in a new way.

Listening—Tracing God's Movement in Our Lives and Neighborhoods

These practices equip participants to listen to God, their neighbors, and each other in their local contexts. Participants will dwell in Scripture together, share stories about what God is doing in the life of their local church, and notice where God might be at work in their everyday lives. The goal for these practices is to help the participants begin to answer the question “What might God be up to?”

Acting—Using Action Learning to Discover God's Leading

In this phase, the practices help participants use action learning to deepen their exploration of what they think God might be up to. The idea is to help participants “behave their way into new thinking” rather than only trying to think their way into new behaviors. Participants will be given simple action learning experiments to try in their neighborhood and are encouraged to invite congregation members to join in as well.

Sharing—Sharing Stories about What We've Learned

The practices in this phase help participants share what they've learned from the action learning experiments they did. A key practice that is too often left out of processes of congregational change is the simple but powerful step of reflecting on what was done and what was learned from it.

Without this practice of reflection getting into the bones and rhythms of a congregation's life, the first two practices of “listen” and “act” will be little more than a moment of trying something before moving on to something else. Sharing the stories of what was done and learned is where we see transformation beginning to unfold in congregations as we see what God might be teaching us!