

Time for a change?



As we think about the possibility of new service times at Mitchelton Presbyterian Church, read how two Sydney churches have approached the same problems...



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Stephen Gibson:

'Third runway' takes off in the Shire

by Geoff Robson

In recent years politicians have debated the merits of a third runway for Sydney's airport to cope with the increasing number of arrivals. But now two churches in Sydney's south are applying a similar idea in the hope of helping their ministry to grow.

Last month, St Luke's, Miranda and Jannali Anglican Church both introduced new Sunday services – St Luke's launching a third morning service, and Jannali starting a third evening meeting.

The new morning service at St Luke's has been nicknamed 'The Third Runway', and is a contemporary family service including children's programs. With a reshuffling of meeting times, St Luke's now has Sunday morning services at 7.30, 9 and 10.30.

The Rev Stephen Gibson, rector of St Luke's, said that with around 200 adults and 100 children at the old 10am service, the church's building was simply too full to allow for further growth. "We needed to start a new service to create new possibilities," he said. "The building was comfortably full and there wasn't any way for the meeting to grow."

The possibility of a third service at St Luke's had been discussed for several years. However Mr Gibson said the diocesan Mission had helped give impetus for the change to occur now.

He said the transition process had happened 'remarkably smoothly', with the backdrop of the Mission helping people focus on the reason for change.

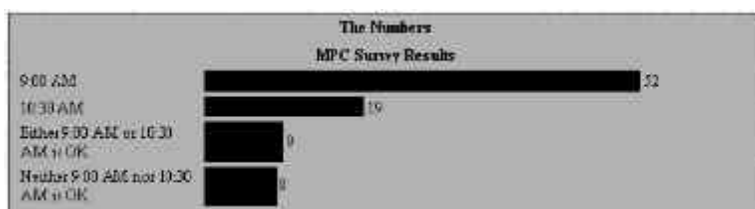
At Jannali, the 'Southern Region Celebration' service dominated by young adults has been split into two identical meetings, at 5.45 and 7.15pm, to allow room for more growth. An existing youth service has been moved to the earlier time of 4.30pm to accommodate the change. And with three services sharing the building, musicians now rehearse off-site before each service in a nearby studio.

While providing the evening ministry with more room to grow, the change has also encouraged more people to become involved with the ministry. Over 100 people have volunteered for additional rostered duties connected with the new service.

The Rev Alan Lukabyo, assistant minister at Jannali, said that despite the sacrifices the congregation had embraced the change. "People see very clearly that this is necessary for our ministry to go forward," he said. "The reason we're doing it is to draw more people to Christ through each service. So when people show up at church and see 100 empty seats around them, they know why we're doing it."

Stephen Gibson said that while change is never easy, it may be necessary. "We need to make decisions bearing in mind not only those who presently attend, but also those we hope and pray will join our fellowship as we seek to reach out with the saving message of the Lord Jesus Christ."

mpc service times survey



So far, our service times survey indicates that 52 respondents would choose 9am, 19 would support a new 1030am service, 9 are happy with either time, and 8 prefer no change. Have you responded yet? Use a survey form, or have your say on our website at...

www.mpc.org.au/news/survey