STRONGER CHURCHES NETWORK

Cohort and Network Guide

The Stronger Church Network engages with pastors and churches in two ways:

Local Cohorts | **State-Wide Network**

Cohort Engagement

What is a Stronger Churches Cohort?

A cohort is a local group of diverse pastors and leaders who meet for a specific purpose and duration to move them and their churches toward spiritual, relational, practical, and missional health.

What Cohorts are Available?

There are three cohort options:

1. Cohort One: This is a group of 6-10 local pastors who lead churches of diverse stages and seasons who agree to meet regularly for a specified duration for the purpose of deepening relationships and discovering ways to work together toward greater church health and community impact.

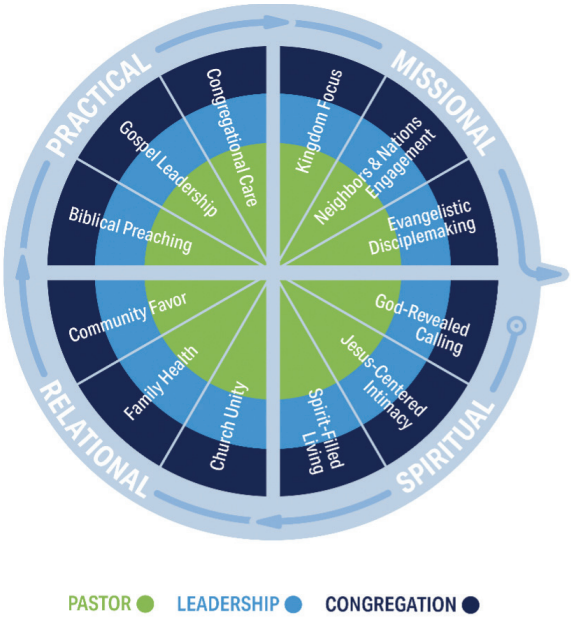
Cohort One is the required first phase cohort that focuses on spiritual and relational health. The book, *Developing a Christ-Centered Church*, by Henry and Richard Blackaby is the core content. The Stronger Church Wheel and other Stronger Churches Network resources will be introduced and used as well.

2. Cohort Two: Based on discoveries in Cohort One, a smaller group of pastor's form to focus on a specific aspect of spiritual, relational, practical, or missional health as illustrated on the Stronger Church Wheel. It's led by a catalyst or coach for a specific duration with a specific goal based on the context and participants.

3. Cohort Three: Based on relationships that formed during Cohort One, this cohort develops into a working relationship between pastors and churches to renew a local church. Completing Cohort Two is not required for participants in Cohort Three.

This cohort involves the pastor and leadership of both the stronger church or churches and the struggling church. It may be led by a catalyst or coach, but it can also be led by a member of the Stronger Churches Network Core Team or by an outside organization.

Cohort Three becomes a local church renewal partnership.



Four Goals of a Stronger Churches Cohorts

- Build relationships, deepen trust, and grow spiritually.
- Renew a biblical vision for a Christ-Centered church.
- Develop a shared vision for the community.
- Cultivate opportunities for church renewal partnerships.

Who Leads the Cohort?

Cohort One is led by a trained catalyst who secures the location, convenes the cohort, prepares and guides the discussion around selected content, and creates an environment for collaborative partnerships to emerge.

Catalysts who lead Cohort One will complete *Spiritual Leadership Coaching Training by Blackaby Ministries, International* as well as specific Stronger Churches Network orientation.

Cohorts often include coaches who personally encourage and mentor cohort participants as they move toward personal and church health.

Cohorts Two and Three may be led by a catalyst, coach, or another qualified leader.

When and Where Do Cohorts Meet?

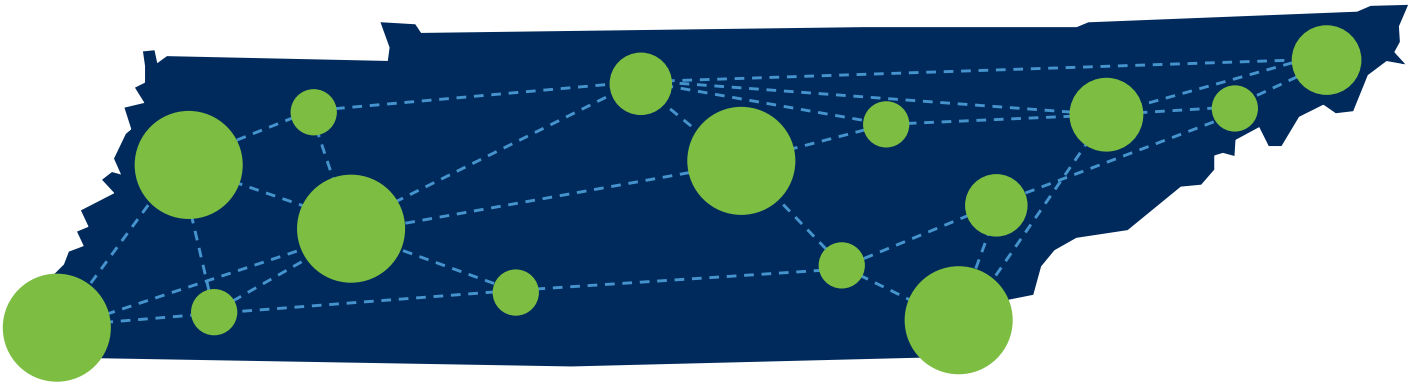
Cohorts meet at a local Convening Hub, which may be a church or associational office. The frequency and duration of the cohort meetings will vary, but Cohort One meets bi-monthly for four to five months to build spiritual and relational foundations.

Network Engagement

Local cohorts are the foundation of the Stronger Churches Network. These cohorts invest in pastors and build up churches with a vision for their specific communities.

Our task includes reaching every Tennessean with the Gospel, and that requires a network. Networks that are rooted in shared vision and values create greater capacity to advance the kingdom.

The Stronger Churches Network includes a family of cohorts located across Tennessee connected through a communication platform called *Mighty Pro.*



What are the benefits of the Stronger Churches Network?

• **Prayer and support:** Cohort leaders and participants pray for one another across the state and build relational support that strengthens the work.

• **Wisdom and skill:** Cohort leaders and participants share learnings and best practices of the cohort that help move pastors and churches toward greater health.

• **Resources and partnerships:** Cohorts share resources, develop a common language, and build strategic partnerships that strengthen and multiply gospel leaders, evangelistic disciples, and healthy churches.

What does the Stronger Churches Network Do?

• **Champion:** We boldly advocate for a Christ-centered vision of the church.

• **Pray:** We invite pastors, leaders, and congregations to seek the Lord with renewed energy and expectancy.

• **Resource:** We create and curate the best resources available to help pastors and churches move toward health.

• **Collaborate:** We create the structure and opportunities for cohort participants to work together locally and state-wide.

• **Gather:** We convene local, regional, and state-wide events to inspire, connect, and equip pastors, leaders, and congregations to move toward greater health.

How do I participate in the Stronger Churches Network?

• Serve as a network leader or cohort participant.
• Join the monthly virtual gathering.
• Join the online community through Mighty Pro.
• Attend local, regional, and state-wide events.
• Engage in local church renewal partnerships.

Tennessee Baptist MISSION BOARD

Can Bi-Vocational Pastors Participate in the Stronger Churches Network?

65% Almost **65%** of Tennessee Baptist churches are led by bi-vocational pastors. Investing in bi-vocational pastors and church ministry is an essential and strategic priority.

The Stronger Churches Network, including local cohorts, is available to bi-vocational pastors and church leaders.

Creativity, flexibility, and sacrifice will be important for every participant, but cohort meetings can be scheduled at times and locations that make participation more feasible. And the *Mighty Pro* communication platform makes staying connected and engaged possible.

What if I'm Already Involved in a Church Renewal Network?

The Lord is already working in Tennessee and around the county through wonderful networks and organizations who care about church renewal, revitalization, and replanting. The TBMB and the Stronger Churches Network encourage pastors and churches to pursue the opportunities that help them fulfill the mission of God.

The Stronger Churches Network builds mutually collaborative relationships with existing networks in order to give every pastor, leader, and congregation every opportunity available to move toward health. So, we welcome existing networks into the Stronger Churches Network for the purpose of prayer, fellowship, resourcing, and church renewal partnerships.

Networks Make a Greater Impact

The Stronger Churches Network is a network of pastors, leaders, and churches devoted to Jesus, fully cooperative with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and collaborating to fulfill the mission of the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board.