

Staffing for Growth, Part 2

Once you hire staff persons, it's imperative that lead pastors and churches do as much as possible to develop them to be the best they can be under the influence of God the Holy Spirit. Thus staffing for growth not only includes recruiting staff who are able to take their ministries to the next level (see last quarter's article) but training those staff for ministry excellence. Remember: as the staff goes, so goes the church! In this Leadership Connection I'll focus on who trains the staff and what such training might look like.

Who Trains the Staff?

There are a number of potential answers to the question. One is the senior pastor. However, my experience is that few lead pastors have the time nor the training to accomplish this. Also, he is their boss and in this role there may be some reluctance on the part of the staff to disclose sensitive information that might be important to the staff person's development. Others could be an executive pastor or another staff person. However, the fact that they too are on staff and may be a boss or peer person to the staff would limit their roles in such development. Other trainers of staff could be those who conduct various seminars and write books that are designed to encourage and grow staff persons. I would challenge every staff person to find a mentor. These are people who come alongside the staff person to help them grow in any number of areas. Some denominations are providing mentors for pastors but limit this to church planters.

One other source is a church consultant. A consultant functions similar to a mentor. He or she would visit the church quarterly or twice a year, and spend several hours with each staff person specifically on leadership development that enhances the staff's ministry at the church. The primary problem here is most churches simply aren't aware of their services.

How Do You Train the Staff?

What might a staff leadership development program look like? A good ministry consultant comes alongside a staff person and helps them develop a PLDP. This stands for a Professional Leadership Development Plan. Such a plan should consist of the following:

First, the consultant will secure such information as the staff person's life circumstances. This includes age, marital/family status, education, gender, health issues and so forth. Second, the staff person provides a ministry or job description that specifically spells out the staff person's responsibilities. That way the consultant knows what is expected of the staff person and can spend some

time assessing how he or she is doing in that role, especially if the church conducts annual staff evaluations.

Next the consultant should help staff persons discover their divine designs. They consist of one's natural and spiritual gifts, passion, and temperament, leadership style, learning style, etc. Then the consultant compares the person's ministry description with his or her divine design to make sure there is a reasonably close fit.

A fourth area is to assess the leader's competencies such as his or her interpersonal, leadership, administrative, contextual and professional competencies. The Malphurs Group brings in a specialist in this area who uses a tool that is based on years of ministry research to help the staff person discover his or her competency strengths and weaknesses.

A fifth area is the staff leadership development plan itself. It focuses on four areas. One is the leader's character. The question is, "What are the character requirements for one in this position?" Another is the leader's knowledge base. The question is, "What does the leader need to know to be most competent in his or her role?" A third is the leader's skills. The question is, "What are the skills that this person needs to be most effective in the staff position?" A final area is the leader's emotions. Here the question is, "What are the emotional qualities for the particular ministry?"

A final area that might be optional for some is a Personal Development Plan that would include such areas as the leader's diet and exercise. While God is sovereign and in control of the length of our lives, that doesn't mean we shouldn't take care of the bodies he's given us. A healthy diet and an exercise program is essential for the staff leader.

Today there's little debate as to the importance of staff development. Should you not have such a program, I would challenge you to develop the same. And if you would like some help, then contact the Malphurs Group for such training.

Announcement

The Malphurs Group will offer training in Christ's church building process (Mt. 16:18) this fall, beginning in early August. It covers numerous leadership issues, and is a must for pastors in general, church planters, denominational executives, consultants and those who lead at an associate, state or international level. Attendees may receive seminary credit toward a masters or doctor of ministries degree. If you would like to know more, contact Aubrey at the Malphurs Group (Aubrey@malphursgroup.com). Also, you can learn more from the Web site (www.malphursgroup.com).