

The Importance of Using Teams in Ministry

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Course Description:

Explore the power of working in teams to accomplish the vision of your ministry. This workshop will focus on strategies to build, equip and empower teams that will have maximum ministry outreach impact. We will examine various team building principles that help ensure a healthy working relationship among team members.

Introduction:

- 1 - Ministry is a profound and compelling assignment that is filled with tremendous rewards as well as immense challenges. The bottom line is that the work of ministry is too vast for one person to accomplish.
- 2 - The power and potential of working in teams has been demonstrated throughout the Bible and the history of the Christian church.
 - A - The most powerful example of an effective team is our God who scripture teaches is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one in essence and purpose.

Question: Can you think of other teams in Scripture?

- 3 - Verses that support the power of teamwork.
 - A - Ecc. 4:9-12
 - B - Nehemiah 4:6
- 4 - Something dynamic and profound happens when God's people unite and work together.
- 5 - When I was teaching Church History I learned of a movement that radically changed the way that I understood ministry.

William Wilberforce and the Clapham Community:

- 1 - The Evangelical Revival of England in the 1800's was sparked by the ministry of John Wesley that brought tremendous change as men and women were truly transformed by the power of God's Holy Spirit.
 - A - Deep personal piety and devotion

- B - An aggressive commitment to Christian service in society
- 2 - One such group was **the Clapham community**. This was a small town outside of London where a number of very wealthy and deeply committed Evangelicals had their country residences. They would regularly gather together for prayer, Bible study, and Christian fellowship.
- 3 - William Wilberforce, a powerful and charismatic man, emerged as the leader of the group. Many influential men were counted among their numbers. They were **committed to using their wealth and influence for Christian outreach**.
- 4 - They would meet together in what they called "**Cabinet Councils**" to discuss **social injustices and determine the battles** they would wage in order to bring social transformation.
- 5 - After designating their battle and determining their goals **they would move as one body, assigning to each man the tasks most suited to his abilities and his sphere of influence**. They **worked in cooperative unity** to achieve the goals they outlined. They were recognized as a unique and remarkable fraternity.
- 6 - The Clapham community established:
- A - The Church Missionary Society
 - B - The British and Foreign Bible Society
 - C - The Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor
 - D - The Society for the Reformation of Prison Discipline
 - E - Etc.
- 7 - Their **biggest battle, however, was against slavery**.
- A - Wilberforce was a Member of Parliament and worked tirelessly to build a strong political body to support his stand against slavery.
 - B - The second phase of the **campaign centered on gaining public support and bringing this to bear on the political powers**.
 - 1 - They wrote and **published articles** educating the public on the evils of slave trade.
 - 2 - They **lectured** on public platforms
 - 3 - They **used billboards** to disseminate their information.
 - 4 - They **circulated petitions** for signature
- 10 - After 18 years they were finally able to put an end to the slave trade in England.

- 11 - They worked another 26 years to completely abolish slavery in England.
- 12 - When I learned about these people and all that they accomplished, I felt as though I experienced a radical paradigm shift. I knew that I would never do ministry the same way ever again. You see, I had discovered the power that is possible when Christians join forces and work in teams.

Characteristics of “Teams”:

Question: How would you define a team?

- 1 - A Team is a group of diverse people with diverse gifts committed to a higher cause cooperatively working together to accomplish shared goals.
- 2 - Participating on a team allows you to become a functioning member of something larger than yourself and to accomplish goals larger than any one person.
 - A - An effective team is able to accomplish much more than any one person can ever do, and is able to do it much more quickly and efficiently.
 - B - Effective teams are about working to make real, the visions that are bigger than any one person. It involves working toward something that will last longer than you.
 - 1 - Effectiveness is measured in the persistence of reaching the team’s mutual goals, but is not measured in the time it takes to reach them.
- 3 - We work in teams to make our strengths productive and our weaknesses irrelevant.
 - A - In a team one person’s weaknesses are swallowed up by the strengths of others while their strengths are maximized and released to accomplish great things.
 - B - Effective teams work synergistically.
 - 1 - According to the American Heritage Dictionary, “Synergy” means “The interaction of two or more agents or forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual efforts.”

Strategies to Build, Equip and Empower Effective Teams:

- 1 - Team building is a strategic and intentional endeavor.

- A - It is a vital and ongoing process that is constantly looking for people with the potential to enhance and strengthen the team.
- 2 - Building an effective team begins with a profound passion for and understanding of the vision or mission of the organization.
- A - Every member of the team must be passionately committed to the vision. It is this shared commitment for the outcome of the vision that will shape and fuel a team for success.
 - 1 - Each member must be sold on the cause and willing to invest in the vision.
 - 2 - An intense awareness of shared commitment helps make a good team great. This is critical because each member needs to be working toward the vision of the team and not on a personal agenda.
 - 3 - This means you must be passionate about the vision and about continually casting and recasting the vision as a means of motivating and inspiring the team to press on through difficulties and challenges.
 - B - This continual awareness and communication of the vision enables you to see the gifts needed to make the vision a reality.
 - 1 - Each member of that team should have gifts to bring to the table that will further the vision.
 - 2 - We want and need more than warm bodies showing up at the conference table. We need competent and committed men and women to invest in the vision until it becomes a reality.
- 3 - Building an effective team also flows from a very real understanding of personal abilities and limitations.
- A - I need to know my strengths so that I can capitalize on them. In this way I can build a team whose gifts complement my own.
 - B - I also need to know my weaknesses. Knowing my limitations enables me to create a team with strengths to compensate and make my weaknesses irrelevant.
- 4 - Building a team involves cultivating insight into others. This kind of insight flows out of relationship.

- A - Nancy Ortberg, Unleashing the Power of Rubber Bands, says that team building is relationally intensive.
 - 1 - It involves opening yourself to know and be known by your team members.
- B - It is about valuing people and their gifts, recognizing that their dreams and ideas have real value and deliberately investing in their future.
 - 1 - Team members must understand that investing themselves in the goals and vision of the team is an investment in their futures.
- C - Team building involves committing to each person on the team because they are not an object to be used but a vital and valuable person to be cultivated and developed.
 - 1 - We must not only be invested in the success of the vision, but also in the success of every person participating on the team.
 - 2 - Every person on the team has a right to expect to be educated, developed and stretched to become all they are capable of being.
- 5 - Team building must be intentional and ongoing.
 - A - The Women's Ministry Team at Faith Fellowship meets at least once a month to organize and coordinate upcoming events.
 - B - In addition we meet every other month for leadership training sessions.
 - C - We have an annual leadership retreat in which we focus on additional leadership training and team building activities.
 - D - We have specific times for fellowship like at our annual Christmas dinner.

Equipping a Team to Succeed:

- 1 - For a team to succeed, ongoing and clear communication is of utmost importance.
 - A - We need to continually communicate the team's vision in order to refuel the passion and commitment of team members and to establish the context for the work of the team.
 - B - We must clearly communicate the goals and objectives we have identified in order to keep the team moving in the right direction.

- C - Regular communication about the processes and tasks helps maintain the focus and efficiency of the team.
 - D - Find ways to regularly share the information needed for the success of the mission. Through meetings, emails, web based sources, etc. we need to ensure that every member of the team is up to speed on vital information so that we are all working from the same page.
 - E - We also need to encourage and facilitate communication and dialog within the team. It is through creative dialog that the gifts of the team flow and synergy occurs. No idea or question is dumb.
- 2 - Clearly expressing expectations and clarifying roles is another vital part of equipping a team to succeed.
- A - What is the role of each team member?
 - B - What are the outcomes each member is expected to achieve?
 - C - How does this team impact other teams in the same organization?
 - D - Our Women's Ministry team is organized into committees with at least one of our team members heading up the committee.
 - 1 - Food Committee
 - 2 - Decorating Committee
 - 3 - Registration Committee
 - 4 - Cleaning Committee
 - 5 - Administrative Committee
 - 6 - As they step out to lead their committee they are implementing and cultivating leadership skills which will enable them to move upward in leadership in the future.
 - E - For each committee we have developed a job description that details what they are responsible for.
- 3 - Deliberately coaching team members is an important part of team building. This means creating an environment where each member can maximize their talents and creativity. Again, there are no dumb questions or ideas.
- A - We need to help team members discover and cultivate their gifts and talents.
 - B - Provide clear direction for personal development as well as the importance of team involvement to equip each person to rise to new levels of excellence.

- C - Invest in training and professional development for team members, equipping them to excel in their area of giftedness.
- D - Encourage team members to stretch beyond their comfort zone and to attempt things they have never tried before.
- E - Appreciate their contributions and celebrate their achievements.

Empowering Teams to Succeed:

- 1 - Engage in participatory management that gives the team members power in the process. This helps them take “ownership” of the vision, goals and processes of the team.
- 2 - Cultivate relationships and facilitate cohesiveness and shared responsibility among team members.
 - A - Develop relationships with and between team members.
 - B - Strong and effective teams emerge out of an environment of trust, mutual commitment and shared relationship.
 - C - Without a strong sense of trust the overall effectiveness of the team will be seriously diminished and the ability of the team to accomplish their goals will be minimized.
- 3 - Provide clear and constructive feedback both at a personal and a group level.
- 4 - Cultivate a dynamic of group accountability so that the team as a whole motivates every member to accomplish their goals.
 - A - Our personal success is tied to the success of the team. Because of that every member has a vested interest in achieving the desired outcomes of the team and should have a right to hold other team members accountable for their effectiveness.
 - B - Non-functioning members must be removed from the team in order to keep it healthy and productive.
 - C - Members who monopolize the team and team meetings must be managed and trained to be more team oriented.
- 5 - Encourage creativity and innovation.

- A - Develop a synergy that unleashes the creativity of team members and utilize brain storming opportunities to find creative and cutting edge approaches to task management.
 - B - Encourage joint problem solving sessions that encourages team members to bring all options to the table and fosters collaboration and the emergence of new ideas and approaches.
 - C - Recognize and reward contributions made by members of the team.
 - D - Nancy Ortberg says that one of the best things you can give to members of your team is the opportunity to learn from you and permission to do things their own way.
- 5 - Learn from failures as well as successes.
- A - Regularly review the success of the team. Highlight and celebrate what is going well.
 - B - Brain storm about what can be done even better.

Fostering Healthy Working Relationships on the Team:

Question: Can you think of a challenge you encountered when working on a team? Was it in the area of interpersonal relationships?

- 1 - Develop a code of conduct that governs the behavior and actions of team members. Following is one example.

Information from Empowered Leaders by Hans Finzel

- My personal success is measured by the success of our team.
- We will practice honest, open, and transparent communication.
- I recognize that each member of our team has a special gift that contributes to the success of the group.
- I will always speak positively of my teammates in public; they are safe with me even in their absence.
- If I have a problem with a teammate, I will go to him or her first.
- When in doubt, I will give my teammate the benefit of the doubt.
- I will pray for each member of our team regularly.

- We will support in public the decisions we have made in private.
 - Confidences will remain safely inside our group.
 - Grace will be given freely when we encounter one another's faults.
- 2 - Value healthy conflict in the area of ideas as ways to unleash new levels of creativity and innovation.
- 3 - Create an environment of mutual respect and appreciation between team members. When interpersonal conflict arises encourage them to work it out together and if necessary mediate toward reconciliation.