

Building Your New Leadership Team

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At the annual congregational meeting new leaders are elected. Even one or two new members change the dynamics of a team. This is a great opportunity to build the leaders as a team.

“There are lots of ways to do church. But none of them work until everyone is aligned to the same mission, vision and methods. Getting everyone on the same page is one of the most difficult and important roles of leadership.”
Larry Osborne “Sticky Teams”

Much of what I am writing here can be read in Larry Osborne’s books, *The Unity Principle* and *Sticky Teams*. These were required reading for the Church Council when the new pastor began of a church I served that has tripled in size since. The leadership base is unified and has expanded greatly.

Larry Osborne speaks of zero based retreats for church council where these questions are asked:

- What would we do differently if we were starting all over again?
- What are we doing now that we wouldn’t do?
- What are we not doing now that we would do?
- On a scale of 1-10 how effective is each ministry and each program?

He also speaks of how at board or council meetings the most important things of spiritual leadership are often neglected such as seeking God’s vision, dreaming, strategizing, and conversation about and training in evangelism, discipleship and taking time for extended prayer. He recommends an extra monthly “unity meeting” to build trust, find common ground and deepen relationships. The agenda includes three things; team building, training and prayer. No business or minutes are kept and it lasts 1 ½ hours. The timing makes a difference; it may be better as a breakfast meeting.

It has been my experience that when people share what matters to them, their core values and priorities, there is an understanding between people when it comes to making decisions at meetings.

It is often easier for people to be heading in the same direction and aiming at the same goal than it is to decide how to get there. That is why many good plans fail. Unfortunately, we may give up a perfectly good plan just because it was not well executed. Most things need more planning than we give them and we don’t take the time to thoroughly discern why something did not work out. What could we have done better is an important question? What did we miss?

This is true of ourselves also. We often have good intentions but it is in the execution that the challenge lies. I find this most obvious when I play tennis. I know what I am aiming for and my strategy, but am constantly aware that the execution may fail. By now I simply take this into account.

Training is a fabulous thing to offer leaders. Even those who have had their role for a long time relish the idea of learning how to do things better. I have found that pastors and lay people are eager to learn new skills. There are so many resources available in areas where we can all learn more such as stewardship, evangelism, the use of technology, or communication. While they may be for church council members, others in the church might like to attend trainings on certain topics. They can be offered by the pastor or a lay leader, or another pastor in the area.

Leadership development is one of the most highly desired needs across our synod. It may be true in your church also. Resources abound, but taking the time to learn, integrate and practice them is the trick!

