



Philosophy of Ministry

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“As you come to Him, the living Stone - rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him - you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”
1Pet. 2:4-5 (NIV)

Leadership model

No pastor can minister to everyone. Therefore, leaders are vital and should draw others in. Leaders should be chosen for their spiritual fruit and their willingness to honor the least of these through service. Some will be better at teaching, some at games, some at counseling, worship, or missions, etc. The pastor provides a frame-work for the leadership team and ministers primarily to them, and in turn the leaders pastor the members. The goal is to nurture a deep, trusting relationship between Jesus and each member.

Teaching

There are three modes of learning and a successful ministry will use them all since most people need a combination of the three.

Visual - learners deeply rooted here cannot understand unless they see it. Even the best stories are meaningless unless they see it acted out in front of them so that they can store it in their memories. Diagrams, timelines, photos, cartoons, symbols, cue cards, and film (among others) are crucial to keeping them interested because they need these to learn. Leaders must live out their beliefs because Visual learners will notice.

Audial - lessons can be sung, dramatically read, or just spoken from the pulpit for these learners (even instrumental), but to make the best impact you will need to incorporate music within their favourite genre; there is a Christian contemporary music group available to reflect every secular genre so take advantage of music you don't like in order to reach those unlike yourself.

Kinetic - learners are constantly in movement or at least seem to be. These learners need hands-on experience for the lesson to stick; forget showing them a story or singing to them, they will need to sing the song themselves, act in the scene, draw the chart, or find some active way to explore the lesson for it to have any lasting meaning. It isn't the finished product that matters, but going through the process (struggles and all) that will give them something with which to hang on. Games are a perfect way to instruct these learners.

Games

Members may remember specific lesson points that affected their personal lives, however, fun and exciting games will remain the most memorable. Therefore, purposeful, worthwhile, lasting games use three principles:

1. Games should build the group, not tear it down. Cheating, name-calling, impatience, leaving the least of these out, heavy and frequent or constant competition, and strictly athletic games are things that make individuals stand out for better and worse. Get ideas for different, strange and even artistic games (non-athletic) and teach the leadership to be Godly examples.
2. Games should be infrequently competitive. Frequent competition teaches your group to be in competition with each other for honor and approval instead of in cooperation against our common enemy: *Eph. 6:12* “*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*” Use games that get the members to help each other because you are training servants not olympians.
3. Games should add to the lesson, not detract from it. It can be the best object lesson so use a game to accentuate the day's lesson.

Counseling

Women need to be in leadership simply because women need women as much as men need men to understand their particular needs. God created us, designed us, and fine tunes us best. Therefore, counseling should be Biblically based and prayerfully- administered. *Col. 2:8* “*See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.*” Leaders should minister in pairs and seek a Christian professional when encountering abuse issues.

Worship

Regardless of the reason for a group's meeting, time should be made for worship. Putting Him in His proper place as a group will build the group because it is our foundation. Opportunities for worship are endless and aspects of worship vary according to the culture and sub-culture of your group. Worship is not singing, contrary to popular belief, but singing praise songs, psalms, and hymns, reading Scripture, praying, and works are all parts of worship. (Eph. 5:19; Isa. 56:6-7; James 1:27)

Missions

A group that wants to stay the same is a club not a church. Exposure to mission opportunities should be regular. One big mission trip a year and a smaller one quarterly is a good rule. College-age groups on their own can create a mission solution based on an opportunity that presents itself if provided the proper tools and support. Younger members will need significant support and motivation. Small groups focused on outreach grow and new small groups can eventually be led by the members of the older ones.

Discipline

1. training/re-training - a study means that training is a goal. Sometimes members will rebel or unwittingly create obstacles stopping progress toward that goal. Consistent discipline, in love and respect, with reconciliation our goal is the method. A meeting statement outlines what is and isn't acceptable behavior to be posted in a prominent place along with the consequences. When necessary family members will be quietly involved. A loved one is not more innocent than a troubled one. *Prov. 18:17 "The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him."* (Prov. 16:2; 21:2 also.)

2. perseverance - do not give up on a member because God does not quit. *2Pet. 3:9 "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*

Family Involvement

A leader's spouse and children are their first ministry and many group members have not experienced a Godly family. Therefore, leaders should keep their family informed of their prayer requests, struggles, and dreams and provide opportunities to be involved. (Sometimes our children will hear from God more clearly.) Involvement is not required, but the ministry door should be open. Family of leaders may attend retreats: some will work best with their family nearby and some will love a break-time. Leaders may need to discipline their own children, so the group will learn more about God's love for themselves by witnessing a Godly family in action.

Debriefing

Frequent debriefing allows members to reflect on what they have learned and how they feel. Usually seen after a mission trip or a staff retreat, debriefing can be done after every group meeting. Members can take five minutes to prayerfully consider one to three questions about the day's lessons and work and then express their answers and feelings through notes (like journaling), drawings, prayer, or just talking openly. Lastly, what is said in meetings stays in the meeting; if leaders want to share what someone has said, they will get the speaker's permission first.

Teens in Service

Students have many obligations and when involved in a ministry (especially one that requires practice time) they should not hold jobs [outside of school and ministry]. They are responsible for school grades and extra-curricular activities that they must perform well in order to obtain scholarships on top of their responsibilities at home. Therefore, a commitment statement must be signed by the student, parent(s), and the ministry leader to ensure that all understand this principle so that all can expect rehearsals to be effective, worthwhile and the team to be reliable, consistent. Special arrangements may be possible but not common.