

MAKE IT COUNT

A ten-week study for leadership teams by *Influence* magazine

# Ten Habits of Effective Ministry Leaders

By STEPHEN BLANDINO



**DISCUSSION GUIDE**

## MAKE IT COUNT

### A 10-Week Study For Leadership Teams



### What Is Make It Count?

**M**ake It Count is a leadership development resource for use individually or with staff, volunteers, or board members.

Each installment is also available online as a downloadable PDF, along with interactive pages for group member use. The underlined words and phrases in the following text correspond to fill-in-the-blank sections on team member pages. Access these free resources at [influencemagazine.com/Downloads](http://influencemagazine.com/Downloads).

These lessons are written by **STEPHEN BLANDINO**, lead pastor of 7 City Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and the author of several books.



## Habits of Effective Ministry Leaders

By **STEPHEN BLANDINO**

**H**abits can make or break us as ministry leaders. The right habits will foster deeper personal and ministry health, and the wrong habits will undermine our long-term growth and impact. But which habits are most important?

In this edition of Make It Count, we'll explore 10 habits of effective ministry leaders. This is not an exhaustive list, and these habits are not the only necessary behaviors to becoming a better ministry leader and building a healthier church. But each habit will help you deliver exponential impact. What are these habits?

1. *Cultivating Spiritual Intimacy.* Effective leadership begins with a habit of intimacy with God. Neglecting this habit is a recipe for diminished impact and eventual burnout.
2. *Prioritizing Personal Growth.* When ministry leaders stop growing, everything they lead bumps up against a lid. Like Jesus, leaders must prioritize a growth habit that embraces the right mindset, practices and commitment to intentional growth.
3. *Modeling Servant Leadership.* Good leaders know ministry isn't all about them. Therefore, ministry leaders make it a habit to model servant leadership by leading from a heart surrendered to the Lord and serving for the good and growth of others.

4. *Stewarding Time Wisely.* Every ministry leader is pulled 100 different directions. However, the best leaders build a habit of stewarding time wisely by identifying their highest priorities, setting clear boundaries, and delegating to others.
5. *Maintaining Clear Direction.* Many leaders set direction, but few know how to maintain it. Effective ministry leaders not only choose a direction, but they also discipline themselves to align people and plans to that ministry direction.
6. *Building Strong Teams.* Ministry leaders are only as good as their teams. Therefore, they make it a habit to recruit, raise, release and reward team members for effective ministry.
7. *Practicing Good Communication.* Building a habit of communication isn't easy, but ministry leaders use motivation, meetings, methods, and marketing to ensure good communication happens within the team and throughout the church.
8. *Increasing Ministry Capacity.* Every church will hit capacity ceilings, but good leaders know how to increase the capacity of their people, resources, and strategies so the church can climb to new levels of impact.
9. *Creating Healthy Culture.* Ministry leaders create culture by maximizing values, relationships and accountability among their team members. This habit fosters long-term health throughout the team and the church.
10. *Multiplying Ministry Leaders.* The most effective leaders are multipliers. They don't just lead projects, but also develop people who multiply value to others. Ministry leaders put the habit of multiplication at the top of their priorities.

As you read, discuss, and apply these 10 lessons with your team, commit to build each habit together. The compounding effect of each habit will produce a harvest of changed lives and fruitful ministry.

# 1 | TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

## Cultivating Spiritual Intimacy

### Assess

What are the most impactful steps you've taken to cultivate spiritual intimacy?

### Insights and Ideas

The demands of leadership can be relentless. Before long, you may find yourself feeling wrung out, especially when the busyness intrudes on your spiritual life. Spending time in God's presence keeps our hearts soft, and ministry always flows from the heart. As Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

To lead effectively in ministry, you need a close relationship with God. But you won't simply drift into that. As author Francis Chan observed, "We never grow closer to God when we just live life. It takes a deliberate pursuit and attentiveness."

So, what does it look like to cultivate a habit of spiritual intimacy? I could challenge you to employ a long list of disciplines such as prayer, Bible reading, worship, meditation, serving, fasting, giving, solitude, or taking a sabbath. Instead, I will ask three helpful questions about your spiritual habits:

1. *Which spiritual habits refresh you the most?* Some people enjoy digging deeply into Scripture, while others love extended times of worship. Some find joy in giving or serving, while others feel closer to God in solitude. You could argue, "We need all of these habits." That is true, but we also need a starting place. Start with the habit you love the most. When you experience a win in one area, it will help you develop other spiritual habits too.
2. *How can your personality type enhance your spiritual habits?* If your personality is extroverted, but all your spiritual disciplines happen in private, you may feel spiritually dry or disconnected. Perhaps you should pray regularly with an accountability partner, engage in small group Bible study, or serve alongside a close friend. If, on the other hand, you're more introverted, you might prefer to engage in personal times of worship or serve in one-on-one settings. Leverage your personality type to connect with God.
3. *How can you practice spiritual habits with your team?* One of the most enriching team-building activities is engaging in spiritual habits together. Praying, serving, or studying Scripture together will unify your hearts, and it will send an important message that you value spiritual intimacy.

Cultivating spiritual intimacy makes our relationship with Jesus vibrant, keeps our hearts right, and builds the inner resources to withstand the pressures of ministry leadership.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. Which spiritual habits have become stale in your life?
2. What type of personality do you have, and how might this influence your approach to spiritual disciplines?
3. What can we start doing as a team to practice spiritual habits together?

### Apply

Identify some practical next steps you can take to build the habit of spiritual intimacy into your life and into your team.

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Three helpful questions:

1. *Which spiritual habits \_\_\_\_\_ you the most?*

Start with the habit you love the most. When you experience a win in one area, it will help you develop other spiritual habits too.

2. *How can your \_\_\_\_\_ type enhance your spiritual habits?*

If your personality is extroverted, but all your spiritual disciplines happen in private, you may feel spiritually dry or disconnected. Perhaps you should pray regularly with an accountability partner, engage in small group Bible study, or serve alongside a close friend. If, on the other hand, you're more introverted, you might prefer to engage in personal times of worship or serve in one-on-one settings. Leverage your personality type to connect with God.

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One of the most enriching team-building activities is engaging in spiritual habits together.

### Apply

Identify some practical next steps you can take to build the habit of spiritual intimacy into your life and into your team.

## 2 | TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

# Prioritizing Personal Growth

### Team Review

What changes have you made in your approach to spiritual habits, and how are these changes enriching your intimacy with God?

### Assess

How do you prioritize personal growth in your life?

### Insights and Ideas

When ministry leaders stop growing, everything they lead bumps up against the lid of their current capacity. In other words, their churches stop growing, their ministries hit a wall, and they are confined to limited ministry impact. This is why the habit of prioritizing personal growth is so important. While spiritual intimacy is one expression of personal growth, this habit extends to other important areas of life too, such as relationships, ministry, leadership and health.

There's an old Irish proverb that says, "You've got to do your own growing, no matter how tall your grandfather is." You can't delegate your growth. Nobody can grow for you. Jesus understood this truth. Even though He is the Son of God, Jesus still prioritized and modeled a habit of personal growth during His human life. We can see Jesus' growth prioritization in three ways:

1. *Jesus had a growth mindset.* Luke 2:40 says "the child [Jesus] grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him." This growth mindset is also evident throughout the remainder of this chapter. What about you? Do you have a fixed mindset or a growth mindset?
2. *Jesus engaged in growth practices.* When Jesus was only 12 years old, He was in the temple courts, "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions" (Luke 2:46). How much more might we learn and grow if we took the posture of a student, listening and asking questions?
3. *Jesus made growth intentional.* Luke 2:52 says, "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Jesus didn't just grow physically. He grew in ways that required intentionality, developing mentally, spiritually and socially.

Authors Ken Blanchard and Mark Miller wrote, "Growth for leaders is the treasure that funds the future journey. Stop finding the treasure along the way and the journey ends." When we cultivate a growth mindset, engage in growth practices, and make growth intentional, we find the treasures to "fund" the future of our ministries.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. How would you describe your current mindset toward growth?
2. What are the most effective practices you've employed to help you grow?
3. What does it look like to be intentional about growth (personally and as a team)?

### Apply

Do a self-audit on your personal growth. On a scale from 1 to 10, is your mindset drifting toward "fixed and inflexible," or do you have a "vibrant growth mindset"? What new practices can you employ to help you grow? Finally, what steps can you take to become more intentional about your growth and your team's growth?

## 2 | TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

# Prioritizing Personal Growth

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How Jesus prioritized growth:

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### Apply

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## 3 | TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

# Modeling Servant Leadership

### Team Review

What new practices have you embraced to help maximize your personal growth?

### Assess

Who is the best servant leader you know?

### Insights and Ideas

The habit of *modeling servant leadership* requires constant attention. After all, our culture offers plenty of other self-serving leadership strategies. But serving isn't a model or a method; it's a *posture*. It's who you are. Jesus said, "The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (Matthew 23:11–12).

Great ministry leaders understand that it's not all about them. So, how do we model servant leadership? Start with two foundational principles:

1. *Servant leaders lead from a surrendered heart.* Author Ken Blanchard said, "A true servant heart is the byproduct of a life surrendered in gratitude to the transforming power of God's unconditional love and forgiveness. The desire to honor the giver of that love through service to him as Jesus modeled is the primary ambition and animating force of a transformed servant heart." When service is disconnected from a transformed heart, it becomes nothing more than a way to manipulate desired outcomes. We don't serve to *get*; we *get* to serve. We serve because Jesus transformed our hearts and lives. Therefore, we offer our service to Him and His mission.
2. *Servant leaders focus on the good and growth of others.* Christian leader and author Hans Finzel once said, "Servant leadership requires us to sit and weep with those who weep within our organizations. It requires getting down and dirty when hard work needs to be done. There is nothing in my organization that anyone does that I should not be willing to do myself if it promotes the good of us all."

Blanchard takes it one step further, writing, "Servant leaders must get personal satisfaction from watching the growth and development of those they lead."

Servant leaders are focused on the *good* and *growth* of others. They use their leadership to serve people and draw out the best in those around them.

While servant leadership may not be the most popular approach to leadership, it is the most effective. Jesus modeled it, and He calls every ministry leader to do the same.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. What is the most challenging part of servant leadership for you?
2. What are some practical ways Christian leaders can regularly surrender their hearts — and their leadership — to Christ?
3. How can servant leaders do what's best for individual people and what's best for the overall church or ministry, especially when these seem to collide?

### Apply

What part of your heart needs to be surrendered to Christ to help you become a better servant leader? Take a few minutes to invite the Holy Spirit to search your heart, and then offer to Him anything He brings to your mind. Identify two things you can start doing this week that will help focus your leadership on the good and growth of others.



## 3 | TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

# Modeling Servant Leadership

### Assess

Who is the best servant leader you know?

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Two foundational principles of servant leadership:

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### Apply

What part of your heart needs to be surrendered to Christ to help you become a better servant leader? Take a few minutes to invite the Holy Spirit to search your heart, and then offer to Him anything He brings to your mind. Identify two things you can start doing this week that would help focus your leadership on the good and growth of others.

## 4 | TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

# Stewarding Time Wisely

### Team Review

How have you been more intentional about modeling servant leadership?

### Assess

What's the biggest challenge you face in managing your time?

### Insights and Ideas

One could easily argue that time is the most precious resource available to us today. After all, you can make more money, but you can't make more time. You can only steward time more wisely.

The Parable of the Bags of Gold makes it clear that how we steward resources is extremely important. Matthew 25:16–17 says, “The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more.” The master rewarded the two productive servants when he returned, but punished the one who failed to make good use of his resources.

If time is also a God-given resource, how do we develop the habit of stewarding it wisely? Here are three keys:

1. *Identify high-return priorities.* Every ministry leader has high-return and low-return activities. Some deliver great ministry impact, while others produce little fruit. Our job is to identify the high-return priorities and then allocate as much of our time as possible to them. Any efforts to steward time will fall short if we don't first gain clarity about our priorities. After all, efficiently doing the wrong things is not good time management.
2. *Establish clear boundaries.* Author Stephen R. Covey said, “You have to decide what your highest priorities are and have the courage — pleasantly, smilingly, unapologetically — to say no to other things. And the way you do that is by having a bigger ‘yes’ burning inside.” By establishing clear boundaries ahead of time, you're able to determine what to say “yes” to and what to decline before the moment of decision ever arrives.
3. *Effectively delegate.* There are not enough hours in the day for you to do everything. That's why delegation is so important. To delegate effectively, make a list of your tasks that fall outside of high-return priorities. Then, consider how to delegate these tasks. For example, you might assign them to an assistant, another team member, an intern, or even an independent contractor. Finally, hand off the tasks, along with the training and authority others will need to excel at them.

Stewarding time wisely can't be hit and miss. To have your greatest ministry impact, you need to turn this practice into a real habit. When you do, your efforts will compound, and your impact will multiply.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. What are the high-return priorities or activities in your ministry?
2. What have you been saying “yes” to that you need to start letting go?
3. What responsibilities can you delegate to others?

### Apply

Put the three steps in this lesson to work immediately. Pinpoint your priorities, set clear boundaries, and put together a 30-day delegation plan to get tasks off your plate. Then share your plan with a friend who will hold you accountable.

## 4 | TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

# Stewarding Time Wisely

### Assess

What's the biggest challenge you face in managing your time?

“The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more” (Matthew 25:16–17).

Three ways to steward time wisely:

1. *Identify high-return* \_\_\_\_\_.

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3. *Effectively* \_\_\_\_\_.

To delegate effectively, make a list of your tasks that fall outside of high-return priorities. Then, consider how to delegate these tasks. For example, you might assign them to an assistant, another team member, an intern, or even an independent contractor. Finally, hand off the tasks, along with the training and authority others will need to excel at them.

### Apply

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## 5 | TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

# Maintaining Clear Direction

### Team Review

What changes have you made to steward your time more wisely?

### Assess

How does clear direction make you and your team more effective in ministry?

### Insights and Ideas

The apostle Paul had an unwavering direction for his life. “One thing I do,” he wrote in Philip-  
 pians 3. “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward  
 the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (verses 13–14).  
 Paul was focused, and he maintained that focus throughout his ministry.

This same principle is essential when it comes to a church’s ministry direction. Pastors must  
 pinpoint a clear direction for ministry (that’s the easy part). The real challenge is maintaining  
 clear direction.

With the constant barrage of distractions and interruptions, it’s harder than ever to stick to a  
 vision. That’s why this habit is so critical to long-term impact. How do we develop the habit of  
 maintaining clear direction? Start with three steps:

1. *Identify your goal.* As the old saying goes, “If you chase two rabbits, both will escape.” The first step is to identify your goal. You can’t maintain direction until you choose a direction.
2. *Align people and plans to the vision.* Vision clarifies where we’re going, but people and plans will determine how we get there. If these resources are misaligned, we’ll never accomplish what God has called us to do. Maintaining clear direction is easier when the church’s plans and resources are aligned with the desired destination.
3. *Differentiate between opportunities and distractions.* True opportunities usually play to your strengths, drive you closer to your vision, and fit the DNA of your ministry. On the other hand, distractions are often temporary moments of inspiration that are misaligned with your highest competencies and inconsistent with your values. Creating a decision-making filter will help you distinguish between opportunities and distractions so you can maintain clear direction.

If this habit is especially difficult for you, lean into your team to help determine and maintain clear direction. Every visionary needs a strategist, and every strategist needs a visionary.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. Can we clearly state what direction our church or ministry is going?
2. How well have we communicated our ministry direction to the members of our teams?
3. What do we need to do to better align our people and plans with the direction God has called us to go?

### Apply

Work together as a team to establish direction. Once the direction is clear, construct a plan and align your people to the vision. This may require updating strategic plans or modifying the responsibilities of team members. Finally, create a list of questions to ask when new opportunities arise. These questions should serve as a filter for avoiding distractions and maintaining clear direction.

## 5 | TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

# Maintaining Clear Direction

### Assess

How does clear direction make you and your team more effective in ministry?

“One thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13–14).

Three keys to maintaining clear direction:

1. *Identify your* \_\_\_\_\_.

“If you chase two rabbits, both will escape.”

2. *Align* \_\_\_\_\_ *and* \_\_\_\_\_ *to the vision.*

Vision clarifies where we’re going, but people and plans will determine how we get there. If these resources are misaligned, we’ll never accomplish what God has called us to do. Maintaining clear direction is easier when the church’s plans and resources are aligned with the desired destination.

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## 6 | TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

# Building Strong Teams

### Team Review

What steps have you taken to maintain clear direction with your ministry and teams?

### Assess

What are the qualities of a strong and healthy ministry team?

### Insights and Ideas

Throughout Scripture, we see the importance of teams. Nehemiah had a team that helped him construct the wall around Jerusalem. Jesus had disciples who did ministry alongside Him. And Paul challenged the church in Corinth to see their spiritual gifts as a way to contribute to the larger Body.

Pastors and ministry leaders are only as good as their teams. That's why we must develop the habit of building strong teams. Think of this habit as an ongoing cycle embedded in your personal and ministry calendars. The cycle includes four steps:

1. **Recruit team members.** Effective ministry leaders shift from a *reactive* to a *proactive* mode of team building. You can't wait for people to come to you; you have to proactively extend invitations to serve. That's why I use the word "recruit." Recruiting involves praying, identifying potential team members, and inviting people onto the team.
2. **Raise team members.** Once we recruit team members, we must raise them up to their full potential through training, resourcing and coaching. Businessman Harvey Firestone once said, "It is only as we develop others that we permanently succeed." That's the attitude we need as pastors. We need to develop people more than programs.

This is what Paul describes in Ephesians 4:11–12: "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

3. **Release team members.** Releasing is the process of empowering people with opportunities to serve and lead. Paul told Timothy, "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2). Equipping isn't an end in itself. It must lead to empowerment as we hand responsibility to our teams and release them to run with the vision.
4. **Reward team members.** Ministry leaders who build strong teams learn how to reward team members for faithful service. That's what the master did in the Parable of the Bags of Gold (Matthew 25). He commended them for their faithfulness, celebrated with them, and then rewarded them with greater responsibility and opportunity.

Again, this is an ongoing four-step cycle with each team member. When all four steps become embedded in our ministry rhythms, we cultivate the habit of building strong teams.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. Which steps in the team-building cycle are your greatest strength and weakness?
2. We often become so focused on filling slots that we don't take time to invest in our team. How can you raise your team members to another level?
3. What might it look like to reward team members in your ministry setting?

### Apply

Put together a specific plan to practice the four steps in the team-building cycle. What can you do to recruit, raise, release, and reward team members intentionally and strategically?

## 6 | TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

# Building Strong Teams

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What are the qualities of a strong and healthy ministry team?

Throughout Scripture, we see the importance of teams. Nehemiah had a team that helped him construct the wall around Jerusalem. Jesus had disciples who did ministry alongside Him. And Paul challenged the church in Corinth to see their spiritual gifts as a way to contribute to the larger Body.

The cycle of building strong teams:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ *team members*.

Effective ministry leaders shift from a *reactive* to a *proactive* mode of team building. You can't wait for people to come to you; you have to proactively extend invitations to serve.

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Once we recruit team members, we must raise them up to their full potential through training, resourcing and coaching.

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### Apply

Put together a specific plan to practice the four steps in the team-building cycle. What can you do to recruit, raise, release, and reward team members intentionally and strategically?

## 7

## TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

## Practicing Good Communication

**Team Review**

What steps have you taken to recruit, raise, release and reward your team members?

**Assess**

How would you rank your communication skills on a scale of 1 to 10?

**Insights and Ideas**

One of the most common organizational problems within church teams is poor communication. Too often we view communication as nothing more than dispersing information. However, the real goal is to create understanding.

Proverbs 18:2 says, “Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions.” Communicating opinions and information without creating understanding is a short-sighted way to communicate.

When you fail to create understanding, you breed a culture of frustration and mistrust. Furthermore, everything takes longer than necessary because miscommunication — or lack of communication — creates confusion. To build a habit of practicing good communication, start with four essentials:

1. **Motivation:** *When and how do we communicate vision?* Vision is at the core of motivating people to rally around a shared picture of the church’s future. Clarifying and communicating vision can motivate and mobilize. Failure to do so will result in visions born out of everyone’s personal agendas. As author Brad Lomenick observed, “Leaders who don’t communicate their vision are no better off than leaders who have no vision to communicate.”
2. **Meetings:** *Where are leaders and teams informed?* Meetings are the places where higher-level communication happens, and decisions are made. Leverage these gatherings to create communication alignment among key people and groups. Be sure the agenda for regular meetings (such as the weekly staff meeting) includes communication updates to ensure everybody is on the same page.
3. **Methods:** *How do we share information?* Methods address two keys to communication: systems and tools. Systems focus on the process of sharing information throughout the entire church, from leaders down to staff members, volunteers and congregants. A good system will always address the *who*, *what* and *when* of communication — who needs to communicate what to whom by when. Tools are the specific technology or additional meetings we use to share the information.
4. **Marketing:** *How do we promote ministry and messages?* Marketing is how we communicate to a broader audience, both inside and outside the church. It helps promote key ministries and share important messages.

While communication is a broad topic, these four areas will get you started on the right path. Furthermore, they’ll promote understanding among leaders, within teams, and throughout the church.

**Reflect and Discuss**

1. What are the biggest communication gaps within our staff, teams and church?
2. How can we improve communication during our regularly scheduled meetings?
3. How could we improve in each of the four communication areas: motivation, meetings, methods and marketing?

**Apply**

Put together a communication plan that addresses the four areas above. Be sure to address who owns specific responsibilities within the communication process.



## 7 | TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

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“Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions” (Proverbs 18:2).

Communicating opinions and information without creating understanding is a short-sighted way to communicate.

Four communication essentials:

1. \_\_\_\_\_: *When and how do we communicate vision?*

“Leaders who don’t communicate their vision are no better off than leaders who have no vision to communicate.” — Brad Lomenick

2. \_\_\_\_\_: *Where are leaders and teams informed?*

Meetings are the places where higher-level communication happens and decisions are made. Leverage these gatherings to create communication alignment among key people and groups. Be sure the agenda for regular meetings (such as the weekly staff meeting) includes communication updates to ensure everybody is on the same page.

3. \_\_\_\_\_: *How do we share information?*

Methods address two keys to communication: systems and tools. Systems focus on the process of sharing information throughout the entire church, from leaders down to staff members, volunteers and congregants. A good system will always address the *who*, *what* and *when* of communication — who needs to communicate what to whom by when. Tools are the specific technology or additional meetings we use to share the information.

4. \_\_\_\_\_: *How do we promote ministry and messages?*

### Apply

Put together a communication plan that addresses the four areas above. Be sure to address who owns specific responsibilities within the communication process.

## 8

## TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

## Increasing Ministry Capacity

**Team Review**

What steps have you taken to improve communication in the church?

**Assess**

What does “increasing ministry capacity” mean to you?

**Insights and Ideas**

Every church has a specific capacity to deliver a certain amount of ministry. Some churches are equipped to serve dozens, others can serve hundreds, and still others can serve thousands.

The Early Church experienced a capacity gap when widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. Therefore, the Twelve instructed the church to “choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:3–4). As a result, the need was met, the Word of God spread, and the number of disciples increased rapidly (Acts 6:7).

In churches, it’s easy to get so caught up in doing ministry that we fail to work *on* the ministry. Increasing ministry capacity is all about working *on* the church so it can increase its capacity to deliver more ministry. To develop a habit of increasing ministry capacity, church leaders need to regularly assess three areas:

1. **People capacity.** Every person has a specific capacity to do ministry. If a ministry keeps growing, it will eventually hit the lid of the person leading it. When that happens, the person at the helm must grow his or her capacity or the ministry will stop growing.
2. **Resource capacity.** Resources include things like money, buildings and technology. Ministry impact can stall if a resource becomes inadequate for its continued growth. For example, a children’s ministry can stop growing if its meeting space is no longer adequate to handle more children. You may not be able to increase ministry capacity until you first address the resources gap for doing ministry.
3. **Strategy capacity.** Every ministry strategy has a shelf life. This doesn’t just apply to a strategy’s relevance. It also applies to a ministry’s size. If your strategy cannot scale with the size of your church, it will limit growth. Leaders need to assess the capacity of strategies to ensure they’re enabling ministry rather than prohibiting it.

Increasing ministry capacity takes a great deal of evaluation, but it can lead to the steps that will bring breakthrough and broader impact.

**Reflect and Discuss**

1. How often do we evaluate the ministry capacity at our church?
2. Which capacity area (people, resources, strategy) do we tend to give the least attention to? Why?
3. What would it look like to evaluate our capacity in each area in a systematic way?

**Apply**

Assess the capacity of your people, resources and strategies by asking three questions: Is there any ministry in our church that has outgrown the capacity of the person leading it? Is there a ministry that needs more resources to grow to the next level? Do we have a ministry strategy that has run its course and needs an upgrade?

## 8

## TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

## Increasing Ministry Capacity

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Assessing your ministry capacity:

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## 9

## TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

## Creating Healthy Culture

**Team Review**

What steps have you taken to increase your church's ministry capacity?

**Assess**

What are the traits of a healthy church culture?

**Insights and Ideas**

Pastors and ministry leaders are cultural architects in the churches they lead. They choose what they'll create, celebrate and tolerate. As author Shawn Lovejoy noted, "Leaders set culture by design or by default."

Whether you intentionally design it or slowly drift into it, your church has a specific culture. The question is, how do ministry leaders build a habit of creating healthy culture? At its core, healthy culture requires leaders to focus on three areas:

1. **Values.** Author Steve Moore observed, "Almost all leaders would affirm the importance of values as the central component of a philosophy of leadership and ministry. Few leaders have explicitly identified their values and developed an understanding of how they impact every judgment call." If you're going to shape culture, you and your team must identify and live a clear set of values.

That's what the apostle Paul did in his letter to the Philippians. In Philippians 2, Paul talked about the importance of humility as he pointed out Jesus' model of selfless service. And in Philippians 4, Paul addressed the importance of church unity when he said, "I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord" (verse 2).

Ministry leaders must identify, model, and engrain values at every level of ministry and leadership. Only then will those values shape your culture.

2. **Relationships.** The strength of relationships often determines the strength of a church's culture. And because ministry is all about people, intentionally investing in relationships is of utmost importance. Consider the immediate benefits of good relationships on your team. Relationships strengthen comradery, bring joy to ministry, multiply efforts, and increase trust. The stronger the relationships, the healthier the culture.
3. **Accountability.** The culture of a team will drift into dysfunction if there is a lack of accountability. Without accountability, performance will dip, goals will be abandoned, and poor behavior will be tolerated. Accountability holds the team to standards that ensure ongoing health, foster team unity, and create forward movement with the church's highest priorities.

Each of these ingredients — values, relationships and accountability — plays an important role in creating a healthy culture. Therefore, ministry leaders need to regularly ask, *Am I modeling our values? Am I building relationships? Am I holding team members accountable?*

**Reflect and Discuss**

1. How would you describe our team's culture?
2. Which of the three keys to creating healthy culture is strongest, and which is weakest?
3. What are some specific ways we can maximize values, relationships and accountability to improve our culture?

**Apply**

Bring each culture component in this lesson under the microscope. Rate each of them on a scale from 1 to 10. Then work together as a team to identify practical ways to live out your values, build stronger relationships, and improve accountability.

## 9

## TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

## Creating Healthy Culture

**Assess**

What are the traits of a healthy church culture?

Pastors and ministry leaders are cultural architects in the churches they lead. They choose what they'll create, celebrate and tolerate.

"Leaders set culture by design or by default." — Shawn Lovejoy

Three keys to healthy culture:

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— Steve Moore

"I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord" (Philippians 4:2).

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Ministry leaders need to regularly ask, *Am I modeling our values? Am I building relationships? Am I holding team members accountable?*

**Apply**

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# 10 | TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

## Multiplying Ministry Leaders

### Team Review

What steps have you taken to model values, build relationships, and strengthen accountability in your culture?

### Assess

What steps are critical to multiplying ministry leaders?

### Insights and Ideas

In *Seven Practices of Effective Ministry*, authors Andy Stanley, Reggie Joiner and Lane Jones suggested that instead of focusing only on our personal growth as leaders, we should also ask, “What keeps those around me from growing as leaders?”

If our job is to multiply ministry leaders, we must consider whether we are inhibiting or empowering that process.

Multiplication was in the apostle Paul’s entire approach to ministry. In his first letter to the Thessalonian believers, Paul said, “You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia — your faith in God has become known everywhere” (1 Thessalonians 1:5–8).

Notice the ripple of influence in these verses. Paul personally lived the gospel. He sowed it into the Thessalonian believers, who then passed it on to believers in Macedonia and Achaia, who then passed it on “everywhere.” That’s the power of multiplication. Effective leaders work hard at building a habit of multiplying ministry leaders. To cultivate this habit in your life, ask yourself these questions:

1. *Whom can I start disciplining?* It’s easy to get so busy with the task of leadership that we stop investing in people. Whom can you begin disciplining? Disciplining relationships eventually evolve into leadership relationships.
2. *How can I invest in leaders?* There are three primary ways to invest in emerging and existing leaders. You can train, coach or resource them. Training happens through teaching and conferences. Coaching happens one-on-one. And resourcing happens when you place helpful tools in their hands to help them grow.
3. *What ministry opportunities can I entrust to leaders?* True leadership is learned in the trenches of ministry. You can teach it, talk about it, and read about it, but it’s not until you actually start leading that your skills will begin to grow. Therefore, to multiply ministry leaders, you have to hand off responsibilities and opportunities.
4. *How can my influence multiply?* Once you invest in leaders and entrust them with opportunity, you need to challenge them to do the same for somebody else. This is where true multiplication kicks in. Like the apostle Paul with the Thessalonian believers, seek to multiply your investment through others.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. What aspect of multiplying ministry leaders do you find most difficult?
2. Which of the four multiplication questions most challenges you? Why?
3. In whom can you begin investing today?

### Apply

Think carefully about the importance and challenge of multiplying ministry leaders. What steps can you take to build this habit in your life and ministry?

# 10 | TEN HABITS OF EFFECTIVE MINISTRY LEADERS

## Multiplying Ministry Leaders

### Assess

What steps are critical to multiplying ministry leaders?

“What keeps those around me from growing as leaders?” — Andy Stanley, Reggie Joiner and Lane Jones

“You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia — your faith in God has become known everywhere” (1 Thessalonians 1:5–8).

Questions to help you multiply ministry leaders:

1. *Whom can I start \_\_\_\_\_?*

It’s easy to get so busy with the task of leadership that we stop investing in people. Whom can you begin discipling?

2. *How can I \_\_\_\_\_ in leaders?*

There are three primary ways to invest in emerging and existing leaders. You can train, coach or resource them.

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True leadership is learned in the trenches of ministry. You can teach it, talk about it, and read about it, but it’s not until you actually start leading that your skills will begin to grow.

4. *How can my influence \_\_\_\_\_?*

### Apply

Think carefully about the importance and challenge of multiplying ministry leaders. What steps can you take to build this habit in your life and ministry?