

Creating a Balanced Leadership Team

Session Starter 30:
Discerning the call of God to be an elder

What's on your mind?
What is a Review of Ministry? – Part 2

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February 2013

Creating a Balanced Leadership Team
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A Diaconal Minister and educator, Ms. Dorothy Henderson has developed a workshop designed to help sessions create a balanced leadership team. The following is an outline of the workshop that may provide a starting point for you to use something similar.

Every session is made up of elders who have been blessed with God-given gifts. This is a sign of God's grace. If the session is strongly blessed with some gifts but weaker in others, the leadership in the congregation may be a bit lacking. This workshop can help a session assess its current gifts and identify skills needed to strengthen the leadership provided.

Give each elder with a set of 10 cards. Each card describes a leadership trait. Here they are in no particular order.

1. **Managing**
 - You are able to organize people, processes, and resources to achieve a mission.
 - You love bringing order out of chaos.
 - You motivate your team by establishing checkpoints along the way.

2. **Strategic**
 - You can take an exciting vision and break it down into achievable steps.
 - You challenge team members to stay with the plan and not go off on tangents.
 - You work to bring sub-groups into alignment so all the organization's energy is focused on realizing the vision.

3. **Bridge-building**
 - You can bring together, under one umbrella, a wide range of constituent groups.
 - You listen and understand.
 - You meet individually with committee conveners to keep them focused on goals.

4. **Motivational**
 - You have a God-given ability to keep your teammates fired up.
 - You sense who needs public recognition and who needs private encouragement.
 - You dream of new ways to inspire and lift the spirits of everyone on the team.

5. **Reengineering**
 - You love to figure out what went wrong and what the "new" should look like.
 - When things are patched up, you may or may not be motivated to stay around.

- You love to evaluate personnel, strategy and values.

6. **Shepherding**

- You build a team slowly, love the members deeply, nurture them gently, support them consistently, listen to them patiently, and pray for them diligently.
- You draw team members into a rich community experience.
- While visionary leaders tend to attract people because of the compelling nature of their cause, you tend to draw people together almost regardless of the cause.

7. **Visionary**

- You have, or like to have, a clear picture of what the future could hold.
- You have enthusiasm for turning visions into reality.
- You are not easily discouraged or deterred.

8. **Team-building**

- You can find and develop the right person for the right task.
- You give the right person freedom to get on with the task.
- You understand that it takes a team of leaders and workers to accomplish a goal.

9. **Entrepreneurial**

- You function best in start-up mode.
- Once the venture is up and running you tend to lose enthusiasm and focus.
- You love to give birth to something brand new every few years.

10. **Directional**

- You have the ability to choose the right path for an organization.
- You make up your mind after sorting through the options.
- You may not feel comfortable speaking publicly but are a wise person behind the scenes.

Each elder places the cards in three rows. If the elder reads the card and says, "I think God has gifted me with this skill", then the card goes on the top row. If the elder says, "I sometimes use this skill, but it is not strong", the card goes in the second row. If the elder says, "This isn't my strength", the card goes in the third row. Allow for group discussion on these choices. Sometimes others identify gifts in us that we don't recognize in ourselves.

Once all the cards have been placed in rows, write down all the gifts that have been placed in the top row. These represent the collective strength of the current session. Compare this "top row" list of gifts with the ten gifts of the exercise. Identify which of the ten gifts are not as strong on your session or are missing altogether.

This information can be shared with the congregation the next time elders are elected. The "gift discerning exercise" can be explained and the results used by the congregation as a guide. When considering prayerfully candidates for the office of elder, those voting may think about who possess the gifts needed by the session and, at the same time, meets the requirements of our denomination (See Book of Forms sections 106-106.2, 132 and 449).