

Selecting Members for Your Team by Ken Behnken

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Have you ever sat back and said, “I just can’t meet the expectations of my congregation or Mission Board”? Unfortunately most of us have been trained in an unhealthy form of leadership. We have the understanding that good leadership is about one person—me!—performing all the critical tasks of ministry. Our Lord never meant for us to do it ourselves. He himself worked with a team, a team of 12 disciples.

In 1 Samuel 14:52 we read, “All the days of Saul there was bitter war with the Philistines, and whenever Saul saw a mighty or brave man, he took him into his service.” We can learn from the wisdom of Saul. We are in a bitter war with Satan. Both of us seek to win the souls of people. Jesus did not expect us to go into battle alone. Our task is to find the mighty and brave, the gifted and talented, to be in service with us.

Great teams are the result of smart recruiting. In the sports world, teams do their home work. They assess what their team needs to make it stronger. They then send out scouts to find the people who can help make their team the best. In the church we, too, need to select and recruit high-potential lay leaders who have the skills of leadership, and who also have the sense of team. We are not looking for the individual player who is seeking all the credit, glory, and honor. We seek team players willing to work with others for reaching common goals.

As you look and pray for leaders, here are some characteristics to consider:

Ability to lead: Good leaders lead. They have followers who respect and trust them and are willing to work with them in an area of ministry.

A mature faith: Good leaders are leading in the church because they are led by the Holy Spirit. They recognize their sinfulness, but, more than that, they know that the Gospel of Jesus Christ covers them with God’s love and forgiveness. They lead because they want others to know and share this Good News. They don’t lead for themselves, but out of love for Christ and His church.

A teachable spirit: Strong leaders are always open to learn. They don’t feel that they know it all, but have a humble spirit. They are willing to attend seminars, read books and especially attend Bible studies.

Driven by vision: Team leaders are all working toward a common vision. The vision drives their actions. They are excited about accomplishing great things for Christ and His church. They are motivated not by selfish personal goals and visions, but by the united vision of the team.

A servant’s heart: Leaders in the church are in ministry. Their goal is to serve God and their fellow man. Leadership decisions are made from the perspective of a servant, not one seeking control.

As you select leaders, look for those who are gifted in areas currently lacking on your team. Do not select a leader only on the basis of personality. Look first for a person who has a passion for the same vision as your team. Determine their willingness to work as a member of the team, realizing that each member of the team is a leader and respecting them for their particular gifts and skills. Then make sure that they have leadership qualities and aptitudes.

Developing a team of lay leaders who share your vision will eliminate the frustration that the expectations are higher than one person can fulfill.

The key for the success of a ministry team is that you, the pastor, are willing share leadership. Each of the leaders you have selected is a part of the ministry team of your new mission plant or church. You have empowered each team leader to lead in his/her area. You will make decisions together. You will share with one another your ideas, dreams, and programs. Each member of the team will agree to be accountable to the whole team as you all work together toward the same vision. You are leadership partners. Together you will accomplish far more than trying to do it all yourself.