

The Value of Values by Ken Behnken

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Stop and think--what makes you click? What excites you and gets you going in the morning. Ask the very challenging question, "Why do I do what I do?" When you start digging for answers to these questions, you are searching for your core values. Your core values are the WHY of your life. They are the filter through which all your behavior will be evaluated.

Values are the constant, passionate core beliefs that drive you and provide the energy and fuel for your ministry. If you are having difficulty getting excited about your ministry or if you feel as if you are spinning your wheels, then there is a good chance that your values are not driving your ministry.

I am not talking about "aspirational values," those things that you think you ought to be doing or be excited about. I am talking about actual values, those values that are built into your very being; those values that, when talked or thought about, get your motor running to the point where you can't wait to get involved.

Take a piece of paper and try a little exercise. Write down those things in your ministry that excite you. What are the things that you would do even if you didn't get paid to do them? Why did you go into the ministry? What were the things you couldn't wait to do? If time and money were no problem, what would you be doing with your life? How does your spouse and family fit into these values? What things in your life are not negotiable?

If you are having a difficult time discovering your values, try this. Take a few minutes and review the past 30 days of your life and look at where you have spent your time, reflection, money and energy. For example if you say your value your family, how much time, reflection, money and energy have you spent with your family each week? ("For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" Matt. 6:21)

Now that you have a list of your personal values, have your ministry team or core group also evaluate their personal values. Then list them on a white board or newsprint and see how many of your values match. The majority of conflicts rising in our ministries are conflicts of values. If your personal values are conflicting with those of your leaders, you have some work to do. Spend some time sharing your values and talking about them together. If this is done initially, many problems can be avoided. If it is done in the midst of a conflict, it can help to identify the real issues.

Have your leaders work together to determine the core values of your congregation. One of the best ways to determine your congregation's core values is to look at the budget. How are you spending your money? Your budget will draw a very clear picture of what

is important to you as a congregation.. You will quickly discover what you as a congregation value and what you do not value. Now match your personal core values with that of your leaders and your congregation. This will be a significant tool for helping you and your congregation determine your ministry focus together. What you value is what you will do best.

If you want some help in discovering your values I would suggest the following books: Malphurs, Aubrey, **Values-Driven Leadership** (Grand Rapids, Mich. Baker Books, 1996) and Malphurs, Aubrey, **Advanced Strategic Planning** (Grand Rapids, Mich. Baker Books, 1999). The appendix of each of these books contain core value audits which will help you discover both your own and your congregation's values.

I guarantee that you will find your "value search" of great value to you as a leader, to your congregation, and your ministry together. ■