

CHURCH OF HOPE EVANGELISM AND MINISTRY TRAINING COURSE BY EMAIL AND WEBSITE: *STUDY GUIDE: WEEK FIFTEEN*

TOPIC TWELVE: KEYS TO BUILDING HEALTHY MINISTRY TEAMS (ENCOURAGING ALL BELIEVERS TO USE THEIR SPIRITUAL GIFTS)

INTRODUCTION TO WEEK FIFTEEN:

Building healthy leadership teams and ministry teams is a great key to seeing a church growing healthy and strong and making a great difference in the community. As a team people achieve much more collectively than what they would achieve collectively as individuals. There is a synergy that comes from people working together in unity for a common cause. One will put a thousand to flight but two will put ten thousand to flight.

In this study guide we will be looking at keys to building healthy teams. As part of this week's readings, we will be looking at the following three teachings: 1) Having Effective Ministry Teams, 2) Conflict Resolution, and 3) The Different Spiritual Gifts. These teachings are in the TEACHINGS for Weeks 12 to 17 manual.

Within a team we can receive encouragement from one another as we work together for a common cause. Being part of a healthy ministry team and having a support network, helps believers to be fruitful in their walk with the Lord. Ministering as part of a team is more important than ever for Christians, given the days that we are now living in where many believers are now facing much opposition for their faith. Maintaining unity within a team is crucial if we are to see God's favour and blessing upon our efforts as a team. Particularly in the areas of ministry and the family unit there is great spiritual warfare as the enemy tries to divide and conquer. Jesus Himself said,

“Every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.” (Matthew 12:25)

The Bible also makes it clear that when we work together in unity with other believers, we see God's favour and blessing upon our efforts. In Psalm 133 we read,

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing –Life forevermore.” (Psalm 133:1-3)

As Christians working together in unity and having a genuine love for each other helps to see our lives making a great impact on the lives of unbelievers. Jesus Himself said,

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

As pastors and leaders, we need to be visionaries and bigger picture people. Rather than trying to meet all of the pastoral needs of those in our church, as our church grows, we need to be looking at expanding the pastoral care team so that all those in our church can have their pastoral needs met. We mentioned much about this in our last Study Guide which focused on the importance of having small groups.

As bigger picture pastors we need to look at the needs in our church and community and look at raising up leaders to facilitate the running of programs and ministries to see those needs being met. Rather than a pastor seeing his church being full of individual members, as visionary pastors we need to be looking at developing teams within our church which can effectively meet the needs of those in our church and community. Teams for the children's ministry, teams for providing community lunches, ushering teams to make people feel welcome in our church, follow up teams to help connect new believers to the life of the church are just a few teams that are important as a church begins to grow in size.

Carl George in his book “How to Break Growth barriers” shared about the importance of pastors going from being Shepherders to Ranchers as their churches grow in size. The Senior Pastor of the largest church in Sydney, which now numbers around 38,000 across all of its many campuses, has a real heart to see leaders being trained up and church planting teams raised up to pioneer new ministries and church plants. As part of his vision to train up leaders he has established a Bible College. This senior pastor is very releasing and encourages all believers to flow in their ministry gifts and callings. The now global church is Hillsong.

Carl George emphasised in his book that for a church to grow in size, the pastor must go from being a Shepherd to being a Rancher. From trying to be the major care provider for the entire church to assessing the bigger picture and making sure that all those in the church are connected to a pastoral care support group. The Rancher has a greater focus on strategic planning and on identifying areas of ministry that are required in the church and then organising groups and teams to be raised up to meet these needs.

The Rancher is more focused on seeing the pastoral needs of all church members being met through lay pastors (small groups) than providing the pastoral care himself. In this way as a church continues to grow in size all members are still cared for pastorally. It is good also to encourage as pastors all Christians to be actively involved in reaching out to and serving others in their community and workplaces. Every believer has the potential of making a great difference in this world by loving people into God's Kingdom. Visiting people in hospital is one such way of demonstrating the practical love of Christ. A loving Christian fellowship has the potential to make a great difference in the community.

Ranchers focus on the objectives and needs of the church and on what groups and ministry teams are required to see those needs and objectives met. Ranchers have the ability to delegate work to others and to supervise them in a way that is most suited to their temperament and personality type. The Rancher is continually looking at seeing Christians being trained up and released into ministry roles in the church. The Rancher is also continually looking at creating ministry roles and opportunities for Christians to exercise their spiritual gifts. In this way the church continues to grow in size and effectiveness in the community.

Shepherders on the other hand have a reluctance to delegate tasks to people and to release others into ministry roles and responsibilities. Shepherders are invariably needs driven and feel personally responsible to help everyone that requests help in their church. Shepherders work to the limit of their time and energy and they do not ask for a greater vision than what they can do by themselves. For this reason, churches run by pastors with a Shepherders mindset will invariably remain small in size.

As a pastor and leader of a church, it is so important that we regularly draw aside with the Lord to seek God's perspective and direction for our church. By doing this we become aware as our church grows of what ministries are required and which people God is preparing to lead and oversee the new ministry groups and teams that are required. It is so important that as a church we actively encourage all believers to follow God's plan for their life and to be positioned where God would have them be. Every believer has an important ministry and part to play in the Body of Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (*Ephesians 2:10*)

“from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself IN LOVE.” (*Ephesians 4:16*) The role of those in the five-fold ministry is to help equip those in the Body of Christ for the work of ministry and to see all believers being edified and built up in their walk with the Lord. The Apostle Paul wrote,

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.” (*Ephesians 4:11-13*)

A church with a strong committed core group of leaders with varied ministry gifts will grow strong and become a community changing local fellowship. As senior pastors, it is so important that we invest our lives in a core group of key leaders in our church.

I will now be looking at a number of factors to consider in relation to forming strong teams. A champion team is far better than a team of champion individuals. Working together in unity as a team we can achieve much. The following keys and features to having healthy teams are applicable to all teams and groups but are particularly related to the establishment of strong ministry teams. Again, maintaining unity in teams is crucial as Jesus clearly emphasised the disastrous consequences of disunity. (**Matthew 12:25**) Because the Devil knows that as a team Christians can achieve much, he will try and create strife and discord among its members to bring destruction to the group from within. We must be aware of his devices. (**1 Peter 5:8**) This spiritual warfare increases the more a team or church is making a great impact in the world for eternity.

The following guidelines could be studied by the members of any team in your church to help see the vision and purpose of the team being fully realised.

1) THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A SHARED VISION FOR THE CHURCH MINISTRY TEAM

Having a clear vision and purpose for a ministry team or church department is a key to seeing things being accomplished by its members. "Where there is no vision people cast of restraint; ..." (**Proverbs 29:18**) Having specific objectives for a team helps its members to be focused and fruitful in their endeavours. The LORD said to the prophet Habakkuk,

"Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it." (*Habakkuk 2:2*)

2) The importance of praying together as a team (Involving God in all that we do as a team)

3) The importance of leaders continually spending time with the Lord to seek ongoing guidance and direction for the operations and activities for the team or church. For example, as a children's ministry begins to grow the Lord will continue to give ongoing wisdom and direction to the leaders on how best to see the ministry developing in order to make the greatest impact on the lives of the children attending (**Proverbs 16:3**) (**Jeremiah 23:18**) (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**)

4) The importance of allowing the LORD to build the team (That those in the team have been called by God to be part of the team) (**Psalm 127:1**)

5) The importance of prayerful planning and preparation before launching new ministry teams. We can avoid many problems when commencing new ministry activities if we spend adequate time preparing and equipping the leaders for the new work and thinking through and PREPARING for possible challenges and issues that could arise. By doing this new ministries and church plants start off on a good footing. (**Proverbs 3:5-6**)

6) Each team member having a spirit of excellence (not perfection). There is a saying that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. It is good to give our best for the Lord. He deserves it. As leaders we must be careful to ensure that there is good morale in our teams and that all team members have an enthusiasm for what they are doing. Purpose and joy come from flowing in our gifts and callings. For this reason, it is important that team leaders ensure that all team members are operating in their area of gifting.

7) The importance of teams having clear plans and goals to achieve. A vision when implemented by making clear plans and goals which are achieved brings powerful results. (**Proverbs 21:5**)

8) Those in leadership need to have a passion and enthusiasm for the purpose of the group. This is crucial if they are to effectively communicate the vision to others and to inspire them to commit to the purpose and vision of the team.

9) The importance of being quick to deal with any contention or conflict within a team (See Attachment Two – Conflict Resolution) – **Titus 3:10-11**

10) The importance of having adequate training for all team members. For example, a training session on people skills would be ideal for those involved in the welcoming team, who are responsible for greeting visitors to the church. We only have one chance at a good first impression

11) The importance of spending quality time together with other team members to help develop healthy and strong relationships – We also need to spend some fun times together from time to time by having a meal or a tea or coffee together to learn to enjoy each other's company

12) The importance of teamwork. It is vital that all members work TOGETHER for the common cause of the team or group. Members of the group ideally should be prepared to go the extra mile to help other members in the group who may at times be lagging behind. The importance of having an US and TEAM mentality is vital to the success of any group or team initiative. (**Romans 12:16**) (**John 17:20-23**)

- 13) **The importance of leaders of teams and churches involving and seeking INPUT from those in their core leadership team or ministry group when formulating plans and strategies for their groups.** It is good as leaders to get input from those in our team as there is wisdom in a multitude of counsellors. **(Proverbs 11:14) (Proverbs 15:22)** As leaders we need to be mature enough and secure enough to embrace the ideas of others that may be far superior to our own. People are also more likely to be connected and committed to the life of a church or team if they have also been given the opportunity of being involved in the planning process
- 14) **THE ABSOLUTE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING UNITY WITHIN A GROUP: Some keys and attributes that can help to maintain unity within a team or church group are:**
- i) **That people always take precedence over programs.** All ministry activities must focus on helping people to grow in their faith and to live an overcoming and fruitful life. Caring for and loving people must always be the priority. **(1 Corinthians 13:1-3)**
 - ii) **The importance of always thinking what is best for THE TEAM**
 - iii) **That all team members esteem other team members better than themselves. A great key to unity** (Philippians 2:3-4)
 - iv) **That we continually extend grace towards others. None of us are perfect.** (Romans 12:10) We need to continually look for the best in others rather than always fault finding. The Apostle Peter wrote, "And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "Love will cover a multitude of sins." **(1 Peter 4:8)**
 - v) **The importance of continually ENCOURAGING others within the group.** Especially as the leader of a group we need to be continually encouraging everyone to be all that God has planned for their life and OPENLY APPRECIATING the efforts of others **(Hebrews 10:24-25)**
 - vi) **That each team member has a sense of calling to the vision and purpose of the group or team.** For example, that someone has a real heart to be part of the welcoming team and gets great satisfaction from greeting those who enter the doors of our church, or that a person involved in children's ministry senses a real call to ministering into the lives of children. **WE ARE MOST PASSIONATE WHEN WE ARE OPERATING IN THE AREA OF OUR GIFTING**
 - vii) **The importance of each member being committed to the vision and cause of the group or team. Team loyalty is a great key to seeing unity within a team or church**
 - viii) **The importance of all team members having a servant heart** (Matthew 20:26-28)
 - ix) **That those in the team have a genuine desire and commitment to growing in Christlike character** (2 Timothy 2:21) (Colossians 3:12-14) (Romans 8:28-29)
 - x) **The importance of leaders mentoring and encouraging members of their team or group to become all that God has planned for their lives and helping to equip and empower them for greater responsibilities in the future** (2 Timothy 2:2)
 - xi) **The importance of all team members having a genuine love for the other team members and that practically there is mutual support for one another** (Romans 12:9-10)
 - xii) **The importance of all team members remaining FOCUSED on seeing the purpose and mission of the team or church group being accomplished,**
 - xiii) **The importance of dealing quickly with any personal differences that may have the potential to create strife and division within the group.** (Matthew 18:15-17)

- 15) **The importance of encouraging all team members to use and to flow in their unique spiritual gifts. (Romans 12:6-8) A team is most effective when all team members are operating in their area of gifting. Please refer to the teaching on “The Different Spiritual Gifts” in the TEACHINGS for weeks 12 to 17 manual.**

In relation to spiritual gifts, it is important to realise that:

- a) Our gifts are heaven sent (God given) – Every good gift and every perfect gift comes from God – So whatever gifts God has given to us are GOOD (**James 1:17**)
- b) It is God’s will to gift us (**James 1:17**) (**Romans 12:3**)
- c) We must not think that the gifts are for us. God gifts us for the benefit of others (**1 Corinthians 14:12**) (**1 Corinthians 12:7**)
- d) God has uniquely created us and gifted us for His plan for our life. We have been perfectly gifted for our calling and purpose for life (**Ephesians 2:10**)
- e) We must never compare ourselves with others
- f) Even our heritage (our background) is perfect for what God has called us to do in life
- g) Our acceptance and self worth must never come from our gifts and calling but from who we are in Christ (Loved and accepted by Him) – (**Ephesians 1:3-14**)
- h) It is important to be faithful stewards of the gifts that God has given us. That we use them to be a blessing for others. (**Romans 12:6-8**) (**Matthew 25:14-30**)
- i) As pastors and leaders, we need to encourage and empower people to flourish in their gifts. (**Ephesians 4:11-12**)
- j) We must never allow pride to creep in when God begins to use us mightily in our area of gifting. Pride always precedes a fall. (**Proverbs 16:18**) All that we achieve is because of God’s grace. (**Romans 12:3**) **AND**

- 16) **FINALLY, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ALL TEAM MEMBERS HAVE A GENUINE LOVE FOR CHRIST. When all team members have a genuine love for Christ there will be greater unity and harmony within the group. When those in the team have a genuine love for Christ:**

- **People will be quicker to forgive others when offences arise** (Luke 17:1) (Mark 11:25)
- **There will be a greater sense of love and acceptance within the group as each member reflects the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. The Apostle Paul wrote,**
“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (**Galatians 5:22-23**)
- **People will work together in greater unity** (Psalm 133:1-3)
- **Those in the group will invariably have a greater servant heart and will as a result have a greater ability to work together as a team**
- **Those in the group will be more effective in carrying out the purposes and plans of the team as the Holy Spirit empowers each team member to be more effective and efficient. The more intimate we are with the Lord, the easier it is to be instinctively led by the Holy Spirit in all that we do in life. (John 16:13) God’s ways are higher than our ways. (Isaiah 55:8-9)**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- For these many reasons it is good to incorporate in all of our team activities a time of prayer and worship. Those that pray together stay together. |
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