

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE SENIOR PASTOR'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES
IN LEADING A PASTORAL STAFF

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ABSTRACT

THE SENIOR PASTOR'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN LEADING A PASTORAL STAFF

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The Senior Pastor's position innately requires that he be able to lead his pastoral staff effectively. Current—and potential—Senior Pastors often enter their ministry assignments with no specific preparation for leading a pastoral staff. The purpose of this project is to enable a Senior Pastor to lead well from both a relationship-oriented perspective and a task-oriented perspective. The content of this project is based on research/literature review and personal interviews with Senior Pastors. In essence, this project might be compared to a manual, providing theoretical information and how-to help for the Senior Pastor.

Abstract length: 94 words

DEDICATION

To my wonderful wife, Rhonda, and my two beautiful daughters, Tabitha and Abigail

and

to my supportive church family at Mountain View Baptist Church

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Why This Project Is Needed

This thesis project focuses on the principles and practice of leading a pastoral staff in the local church. This particular topic is needed for two primary reasons. First, seminary graduates are entering churches with little—and usually no—experience or training when it comes to working with a pastoral staff. Like this writer, most pastors fresh out of seminary are fearful of the prospect of stepping into a ministry assignment in which associate pastors are under their care and leadership. Often, seminary graduates are called to churches where they serve alone as pastors of local churches. As they survey the future, they realize that they one day may be in a church where they are no longer the “lone ranger.” Either the church they are pastoring may grow to such an extent that new staff is needed, or God may call them to a church with an existing staff already in place. Either way, the prospect of overseeing and leading a staff is somewhat intimidating as they may be uncertain where to begin.

The scene playing out in the new—and inexperienced—Senior Pastor’s mind seldom ends blissfully: He enters the meeting room. Looking around the table, he sees the Minister of Music, the Youth Pastor, the Minister of Education, the Children’s Pastor, and perhaps a few others with whom he has yet to spend much time. All eyes are on him—the new Senior Pastor—wondering what great ideas he will bring to the church and

which current practices he might discontinue. What directional changes will he make with the church? Will he be easy to approach and accepting of input? Many other pertinent questions swirl through their minds. This Senior Pastor, in the meantime, is looking at them and thinking to himself, “What do I do now? Where do I begin? I must have missed the class when the pastoral ministry professor discussed the principles and practices of leading a pastoral staff.” A scenario like this provides the chief reason this thesis project is desperately needed.

The second reason this topic is needed is to enable churches to more effectively advance the kingdom of God. Even in churches where the Senior Pastor does have experience working with a pastoral staff, there is no guarantee he is leading effectively. While he may be getting the job done satisfactorily, he leaves plenty of room for improvement. Only God knows the number of churches that are falling far short of where they could be if only the Senior Pastor were more competent and prepared to lead his staff. Great responsibility rests on the shoulders of the Senior Pastor to ensure the men working under him and with him are serving to their maximum capabilities. God deserves the best from His servants, and the Senior Pastor should see to it that the church’s ministerial staff is doing its part to further the kingdom. This thesis project is needed to help fill this void in many *good* churches that could be *better*.

Why This Project Is of Interest to the Writer

The writer has pastored two Southern Baptist churches over the past eight years. In both of these churches, he has been the “lone ranger,” with no other pastoral staff members. In spite of this, he has been blessed with wonderful volunteers who have worked diligently in the areas of music, youth, and children. As he contemplates the

future possibility of working with and leading a pastoral staff, he realizes he knows very little about effectively leading staff members. Seminary training was highly beneficial, but it did not specifically address the topic of the everyday responsibilities of staff leadership. In addition, he has no experience with a multi-staff church. Recognizing this area of weakness serves as the impetus behind this project. Through this project, he has “rubbed shoulders” with Senior Pastors and gleaned from their knowledge and experience. This interaction, along with a thorough review of existing literature, will enable him to be an effective Senior Pastor in the years to come.

Statement of the Problem

Senior Pastors need a well-thought-out way to work effectively with their pastoral staff. To that end, this thesis project results in a straightforward approach to directing a pastoral staff with effectiveness so that the local church is blessed and the kingdom of God is advanced. In essence, this “manual” could be placed in the hands of a Senior Pastor as he embarks on a new adventure of serving in a multi-staff church. Even with very little previous experience, he will have a useful guide focusing on the practical aspects of leading his staff.

The terms “pastoral staff,” “ministerial staff,” and “staff” are used repeatedly throughout this project. Unless otherwise noted, these terms refer specifically to full-time, called-of-God, financially-compensated, ordained pastors who minister alongside the Senior Pastor. Every pastor realizes that without other staff persons, his work and the church’s advance would not be nearly as fruitful. However, this project focuses distinctly on what is generally recognized as the “pastoral staff.” Therefore, the staff-related terms

used throughout do not denote volunteer staff (lay persons) or supporting staff (administrative assistants, custodians, sound technicians, etc.).

Statement of Limitations

There are three specific areas not addressed in this project. First, this project does not focus on the process of searching for, hiring, and orienting new staff persons. While important, the topic of hiring staff would be enough to fulfill the requirements of a doctoral thesis project.

Secondly, the issues normally associated with personnel committees are not discussed. In most churches, a personnel committee fulfills the responsibility of creating job descriptions, personnel policies (work hours, pay periods, absences, vacation policy, sick leave, revivals, insurance plans, holidays, etc.), and compensation (salaries and benefits). This is not to say that the work of personnel committees is ignored; however, this project focuses on these issues only secondarily as they relate to the pastor leading his staff.

Thirdly, this project is steered towards churches with small- to medium-sized pastoral staffs. For purposes of this study, these staffs are comprised of between three and ten members. This range is designed to meet the staff leadership needs of roughly medium-sized churches (250 to 1,500 persons in regular attendance). Although this project does not speak directly to mega-church staffs, its contents yield information applicable to all sizes of churches and church staffs.

Theoretical Basis for the Project

Generally speaking, any time one person is in charge of others, there is a need for wise administration and leadership. This is true of all organizations—both secular and sacred. While those in secular positions of leadership are to lead wisely, it is especially the case that those in ministry positions must lead wisely. The Senior Pastor has a high and holy calling as he works with and directs the activities of his staff. Therefore, the primary theoretical basis for this project is biblical in nature. Perusing the pages of Scripture leads one to an awareness of how crucial it is that the Senior Pastor understands his calling and seeks to please the Lord by living out his calling in light of God's Word.

From the biblical terms used to describe the pastor of the local church ("elder," "overseer," and "shepherd"), a pastor should seek to accomplish three primary tasks in his ministry: 1) He should be an effective communicator of the whole counsel of God; 2) He should be a compassionate, caring shepherd of God's flock; and 3) He should be a wise administrator of the affairs of the church.¹ Succeeding in these tasks will insure that a pastor fulfills his divine calling. The topic of this thesis project falls under the third task—the pastor must be a wise administrator in the church. The biblical basis of this project is found in several verses of Scripture.

First, the pastor must recognize that his ministry is a divine calling. God's Word specifically teaches this crucial aspect in Eph. 4:11 where the Apostle Paul says that Jesus Christ "gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and

¹ Bill Bennett, "Introduction to Pastoral Ministry" class lecture, 27 April 2000, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest.

some as pastors and teachers” (NASB).² The pastor does what he does only because he has been called and set apart by the Lord Himself. Thus, the administrative tasks of the pastor are part of the divine call.

Second, those called by God to be Senior Pastors must recognize that their abilities to lead a pastoral staff are spiritual gifts given by God. This is addressed in two passages. In Rom. 12:8, the Apostle Paul lists various “gifts” in the church. In speaking of “he who leads,” Paul exhorts such a leader to do so “with diligence.” The Greek New Testament literally reads, “the one standing before or in front.” As those who “stand before” others, Senior Pastors merely exercise a spiritual gift; however, they must do so “with diligence.” They should earnestly put forth their very best in leading others, especially those who comprise the pastoral staff. First Corinthians 12:28 also briefly speaks to the spiritual gift that is manifested in the Senior Pastor’s role. Here, Paul writes of “gifts of . . . administrations.” Thus, there are administrative gifts God provides to those He calls to local church ministry. These gifts of leading and administration should drive the Senior Pastor to sharpen his skills in these areas so that he is most effective in working with his pastoral staff.

Further basis for this project is found in the scriptural words used to describe the pastor’s responsibilities. In Acts 20:28, the Apostle Paul meets with the “elders” of the church in Ephesus. His final words to these church leaders include the reminder: “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” These “overseers” literally look over and have regard for what happens in the church as

² Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible.

they “shepherd” the flock. The responsibility of overseeing the affairs of the church seems to align with the gifts of leading and administration—that the pastor is to be a wise administrator of the church. Similar wording is found in 1 Pet. 5:1-2 where the Apostle Peter writes to “exhort the elders” to “shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God.” As seen in the earlier reference, God clearly expects pastors to properly administer the affairs of the church while shepherding the flock. As these statements are found in God’s Holy Word, the pastor has no choice but to take seriously his call to lead his church—especially those Senior Pastors who “oversee” ministerial staff.

A final consideration with regard to a theoretical basis for this project is the writer’s conviction that ministerial work be done biblically. For the Senior Pastor, this means that he will go to great pains to take care of his family, his flock, and his staff. Paul requires this in his first letter to Timothy. In speaking of the qualifications for the “overseer,” he states that the pastor must manage his own household well. He then argues, “If a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?” (1 Tim. 3:5) Clearly implied in this argument is the expectation God has that a pastor will rightly “manage” or “take care” of the local church he is called to serve. In the case of a Senior Pastor, he is expected to manage the church well, beginning with his pastoral staff. As he strives to do so, two further thoughts should serve as healthy goads. First, God is not a God of confusion and disorder, but of peace and order (1 Cor. 14:33). He expects the Senior Pastor to lead in such a way that the relationships and tasks of the ministerial staff operate in the context of orderliness and harmony. Second, every Christian lives under the same banner to do all things to the

glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). This is true also of the Senior Pastor. He should serve his church—and lead his staff—to the glory of God. Every other reason to serve pales in comparison to this most important reason—that God be glorified in and through his ministry.

This thesis project rests on the above theoretical basis. God calls and uniquely gifts the Senior Pastor to be a wise administrator in the local church. As he exercises oversight, he is to do so in a God-honoring way so that the church is managed well and God receives glory. This project focuses specifically on the Senior Pastor's responsibility to exercise oversight in the context of his staff—to lead his staff biblically and effectively.

Statement of Methodology

This project is approached in two main ways: research/literature review and interviews. First, research was conducted generally in the area of church leadership and specifically in the area of staff organization and leadership. This research yielded mostly theoretical information to be applied to the project. Second, personal interviews were set up with ten pastors. These pastors represent a fairly broad spectrum of church sizes. The purpose of the interviews was to gather information regarding the specifics of day-to-day staff leadership. Specific documents used in their various ministries were also acquired. These interviews yielded mostly practical information to be applied to the project. Upon completion of the research and interviews, the best information and ideas have been compiled in an orderly manner. At this point, this writer (and others in pastoral ministry) has a ready plan for leading the ministerial staff of a healthy and growing church.

The content of this project is organized into five chapters:

1. Chapter one serves as an introduction to the project. As such, it familiarizes the reader with the writer and the thesis topic. This opening chapter includes a statement of the problem, a statement of limitations, the theoretical basis for the project, a statement of methodology, and a brief review of the literature.

2. Chapter two provides a review of the available literature—both books and journal articles. This review parallels the various sections of the thesis project.

3. Chapter three forms the bulk of the project as it is comprised of six sections. The *first* section focuses on what the pastoral staff's presence means in the local church and explains why a pastoral staff is found in many of today's churches. The *second* section focuses on the Senior Pastor's relationship with his staff. This section investigates what Senior Pastors want from their staffs and what staffs want from their Senior Pastors. The *third* section focuses on the Senior Pastor as the leader of his staff. Here, leadership styles and skills are examined. The *fourth* section focuses on the pastoral staff as a "team" working together to accomplish the objectives of the church. The *fifth* section focuses on the crucial role communication plays as staff members relate to one another and work together. The *final* section focuses on the reality of conflict that arises among staff members. Here, potential problems are discussed and principles for resolving conflict are described.

4. Chapter four addresses the Senior Pastor's role chiefly from a practical perspective. This chapter is comprised of three sections. The *first* section focuses on the proverbial "first 100 days" of a Senior Pastor's ministry in a local church setting. This section offers a workable outline for successfully leading a pastoral staff from day one. The *second* and *third* sections of this chapter focus on the pastoral staff meetings. These

sections address both the process of planning staff meetings and the specifics of actually conducting staff meetings. The process of planning staff meetings includes the basic logistics of who will meet, how often the staff will meet, when the staff will meet, and where the staff will meet. The specifics of conducting staff meetings instruct the Senior Pastor as to what he should do in staff meetings, helping him determine the most essential ingredients of an effective staff meeting.

5. Chapter five serves as a conclusion to the project. This chapter summarizes the project and offers recommendations for implementation.

Two appendices also are provided. The first appendix provides the interview form used to gather insights and information for the project. The second appendix offers biographical information on the various pastors interviewed for the project. This information should help the reader know better the situations from which the interviewees share their expertise and experiences.

Review of the Literature

The research material used for this project comes chiefly from books and journal articles. Many sources are available that address the various aspects of staff leadership. However, only a few sources are dedicated to the Senior Pastor's responsibilities for overseeing his staff. Books and journals listed under the following categories proved to be beneficial in completing this project. A more thorough analysis of the literature is provided in Chapter Two.

Staff Leadership

Among the many writings on leadership are several that speak more directly to the topic being considered in this project. First is an article by Robert D. Dale entitled, “Leader Style and Church Staff Mesh: Solving People Puzzles.”³ In this article, Dale lists and discusses five leadership styles in the context of local church ministry: a coach, a dictator, a joker, a hermit, and a workaholic. He explains how each of these styles affects the overall relationships between staff persons.

Myron Rush’s *Management: A Biblical Approach* also contains a helpful chapter on leadership style.⁴ He lists and discusses four primary leadership styles: the dictatorial style, the authoritative style, the consultative style, and the participative team style.

Another book containing superb information on staff leadership is Marvin T. Judy’s *The Multiple Staff Ministry*.⁵ His work contains a chapter on leadership principles with special emphasis on the senior minister’s role as the staff leader. He also adds a chapter simply titled “The Senior Minister” in which he discusses the various tasks the Senior Pastor has as he relates to his staff.

Multiple-staff Ministry

Several sources speak generally about multiple-staff ministry but also focus on the important topics of relationships, communication, and conflict. First is an article by

³ Robert D. Dale, “Leader Style and Church Staff Mesh: Solving People Puzzles,” *Review and Expositor* 78 (winter 1981): 15-27.

⁴ Myron Rush, *Management: A Biblical Approach* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983), 219-32.

⁵ Marvin T. Judy, *The Multiple Staff Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1969), 40-57, 92-110.

William P. Tuck entitled, “A Theology for Healthy Church Staff Relations.”⁶ He demonstrates how important healthy staff relations are not only for the staff but also for the church at large.

Two other articles speak directly to the topic of conflict among staff members: “Seven Reasons for Staff Conflict” by Wayne Jacobsen and “How to Resolve Conflict among Your Church Staff” by Joseph Umidi.⁷ Jacobsen focuses on specific areas that often cause conflict while Umidi offers guidelines for successful conflict resolution.

Three books that also provide helpful information on communication and conflict in staff relationships are Gary L. McIntosh’s *Staff Your Church for Growth*, Rush’s *Management: A Biblical Approach*, and Harold J. Westing’s *Multiple Church Staff Handbook*.⁸ These works offer simple and clear guidelines for staff members seeking to enjoy healthy relationships.

A final book that should be mentioned in this context is Jimmie Sheffield’s *How to Build a Shared Ministry Team*.⁹ Sheffield builds his entire work around the term “shared ministry.” In so doing, he offers highly practical advice that will help staff members relate to one another as they “share” ministry.

⁶ William P. Tuck, “A Theology for Healthy Church Staff Relations,” *Review and Expositor* 78 (winter 1981): 5-14.

⁷ Wayne Jacobsen, “Seven Reasons for Staff Conflict,” *Leadership* 4 (summer 1983): 34-39; Joseph Umidi, “How To Resolve Conflict Among Your Church Staff,” *Ministries Today* (January-February 1998): 35-38.

⁸ Gary L. McIntosh, *Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 2000), 151-70; Rush, 114-25, 202-15; Harold J. Westing, *Multiple Church Staff Handbook* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1985), 44-53.

⁹ Jimmie Sheffield, *How To Build a Shared Ministry Team: A Guide for Church Staff Meetings and Retreats* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1985).

Team Ministry

There are a great number of books and articles that address the concept of teamwork among organizational leaders. Several stand out as well in the area of team ministry. First is an article by Hardy Clemons entitled, “The Pastoral Staff as Ministry Team.”¹⁰ He discusses the historical and biblical foundations of team ministry and offers functional guidelines for those seeking to serve together as a team.

There are also four particular books that address teamwork in the context of pastoral ministry. One of the most recognizable is Jerry Brown’s *Church Staff Teams that Win*.¹¹ As stated in the title, this book uses “team” language to explain how the pastoral staff can work together successfully. Another great resource is found in chapter eleven of *Leaders on Leadership* edited by George Barna.¹² This chapter, written by Tom Phillips, offers twenty-two “Team-Building Principles” that are of utmost practical importance. John Maxwell also has authored two books on this topic: *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork* and *The 17 Essential Qualities of a Team Player*.¹³ Together, these two books offer beneficial principles for both the Senior Pastor (team leader) and his staff (team players).

¹⁰ Hardy Clemons, “The Pastoral Staff as Ministry Team,” *Review and Expositor* 78 (winter 1981): 51-57.

¹¹ Jerry W. Brown, *Church Staff Teams that Win* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1979).

¹² Tom Phillips, “Building a Team To Get the Job Done,” in *Leaders on Leadership: Wisdom, Advice and Encouragement on the Art of Leading God’s People*, ed. George Barna (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 1997), 213-38.

¹³ John C. Maxwell, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork: Embrace Them and Empower Your Team* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001); John C. Maxwell, *The 17 Essential Qualities of a Team Player: Becoming the Kind of Person Every Team Wants* (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2002).

Staff Meetings

While most of the works on multiple-staff ministry speak to the topic of staff meetings, only a few highlight the practical considerations of planning and conducting them. One of the most helpful pieces of information seldom found is the agenda a Senior Pastor might follow in conducting a pastoral staff meeting. Three resources offer help in this area. First, John Sommerville's article, "How to Run a Great Staff Meeting," offers "ground rules" for effective staff meetings and includes a sample staff meeting agenda.¹⁴ Second, Harold J. Westing's *Multiple Church Staff Handbook* addresses the details of what should be included in a staff meeting.¹⁵ Finally, Jimmie Sheffield's *How to Build a Shared Ministry Team* offers "suggestions" for staff meetings before listing four sample agendas for both ministry staff meetings and pastoral staff meetings.¹⁶ These samples offer invaluable help to Senior Pastors who are new to the pastoral staff meeting.

¹⁴ John Sommerville, "How to Run a Great Staff Meeting," *Leadership* 25 (winter 2004): 75-77.

¹⁵ Westing, 119-34.

¹⁶ Sheffield, 16-20.

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF PERTINENT LITERATURE

The following review of literature provides an overview of the written sources consulted for this project. The review is organized around the outline of the project and follows the order in which the main topics are presented.

The Pastoral Staff and the Local Church

Three books cited in this project provide basic information regarding the presence of a pastoral staff in the local church. First is Marvin T. Judy's *The Multiple Staff Ministry*. Unlike most sources, Judy spends the entire first chapter of his work developing a doctrine of the multiple staff ministry. From this theological perspective, he concludes, "The church staff is composed of a group of professional persons, presumably competent in their respective fields, who blend their services together to perform a ministry as a whole to the congregation."¹ The use of the term "professional" to describe staff members may not sit well with many who do not necessarily agree with the business-world overtones of the term. Nonetheless, he attempts to bring together both the functional roles of individuals on the staff and the unity of the staff working together. While this definition is not perfect, he starts where most do not—attempting to define what is meant by a "pastoral staff."

¹ Judy, 33.

The other two sources offer listings of various reasons local churches have pastoral staffs. In *The Church Staff and Its Work*, W. L. Howse lists and discusses eight factors that have influenced the growth of multiple-staff churches:

- The task of reaching the multitudes
- The demand for a higher quality of work
- The need for volunteer workers
- The growth of the educational organizations
- The correlation of the work
- The trend toward specialization
- The demands of growing churches
- The importance of the educational organizations²

In a somewhat simplified list, Gary L. McIntosh, in *Staff Your Church for Growth*, lists four chief reasons pastoral staffs exist:

- No one has all the gifts
- The loss of volunteers
- The change of roles from generalist to specialist
- The biblical examples of team ministry³

The Senior Pastor and His Staff

Grasping the relationship dynamic between the Senior Pastor and his staff begins with the Senior Pastor himself. In *The Pastor and His Work*, Homer A. Kent devotes the

² W. L. Howse, *The Church Staff and Its Work* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959), 19-26.

³ McIntosh, 12-16.

opening chapter to the Senior Pastor's personal life. He addresses his devotional life (Scripture reading, prayer, devotional reading, spiritual retreats), his health (rest, relaxation, vacation, exercise, good eating habits, physical examinations), his home (family time, homelife), his personal appearance (neat, clean), and his social conduct (good etiquette, courteous dealings, sympathetic spirit, sobriety of attitude, good listening habits, exemplary financial practices, punctuality in keeping appointments.)⁴ Douglas L. Fagerstrom, in *The Ministry Staff Member*, also addresses this topic in a chapter he entitles, "Developing a Plan for Lifelong Learning." To aid the Senior Pastor in this area, he provides a "Personal Evaluation for Lifelong Learning." This evaluation has five foci: family, ministry, education, personal health, and spiritual vitality.⁵

Nearly all writers recognize the need for healthy relationships between the Senior Pastor and his staff. In an article entitled, "The Need of a Philosophy of Church Staff Relationships or Facing 'Ecclesiastical Arteriosclerosis,'" Robert E. Bingham introduces the term "ecclesiastical arteriosclerosis" to describe the ailment afflicting some church staff relationships.⁶ He derives this term from the medical world to describe how the lack of good relationships can form a thickened wall between staff members. He speaks of the symptoms of the disease, the preliminary prognosis, the prescription, and the final prognosis.

⁴ Homer A. Kent Sr., *The Pastor and His Word* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1963), 13-26.

⁵ Douglas L. Fagerstrom, *The Ministry Staff Member: A Contemporary, Practical Handbook to Equip, Encourage, and Empower* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 130.

⁶ Robert E. Bingham, "The Need of a Philosophy of Church Staff Relationships or Facing 'Ecclesiastical Arteriosclerosis,'" *Search* 5 (fall 1974): 5.

At the beginning of his article, “A Theology for Healthy Church Staff Relations,” William P. Tuck states, “Many fine churches have been hurt, frustrated, often fragmented, and sometimes even destroyed by unhealthy staff relations.”⁷ He approaches the subject of healthy staff relationships from a theological perspective by focusing on two biblical concepts: reconciliation and the church as the body of Christ.

In *The Hyles Church Manual*, Jack Hyles includes a chapter entitled, “The Relationship of Pastor and His Staff.” He addresses this topic through a list of twelve “Rules for Handling the Staff.”⁸

At the end of his work, Howse shares a “Code of Ethics for Church Staff Members.” This “code” addresses the staff member’s call, his aims, his preparation, his conduct, and his interpersonal relationships.⁹

In *The Senior Minister*, Lyle E. Schaller addresses the issue of healthy relationships through a series of possible models pastoral staffs might follow. He identifies these as the hub and spoke model, the hierarchy model, the family model, the mentor-student relationship, the boss-subordinate model, the academic model, the military model, the team of specialists model, the competition model, the team of teams model, the winner-loser model, the mutual support group model, the rescuer model, and the rotating chair model.¹⁰

⁷ Tuck, 5.

⁸ Jack Hyles, *The Hyles Church Manual* (Murfreesboro, Tenn.: Sword of the Lord, 1968), 273-77.

⁹ Howse, 172-74.

¹⁰ Lyle E. Schaller, *The Senior Minister* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 60-74.

Thomas E. Brown's article, "A Concept of Church Staff Relationships," proposes that staff relationships are best viewed as "helping relationships." In this vein, he writes, "A staff relationship will be healthiest, will result in greatest creativity and productivity, and contribute most to the total life adjustment of staff members when one or more of the staff perceives the relationship as a helping relationship, oriented toward helping the other(s) find self-fulfillment through occupation."¹¹ This view, along with the aforementioned, demonstrates the crucial role relationships play among pastoral staff members.

Another aspect of the relationship between Senior Pastor and pastoral staff is the topic of expectations. Senior Pastors expect—and need—certain things from their staff members just as staff members expect—and need—certain things from the Senior Pastor. Several writers make a point to list specific expectations from both the Senior Pastor's perspective and the pastoral staff's perspective. In the article, "How Pastors and Associates Get Along," James Berkley says Senior Pastors most appreciate from their staffs three things: cooperation, loyalty, and ability. On the other hand, staff members most appreciate latitude, individuality, recognition, and support.¹² In similar succinct fashion, Anne Marie Nuechterlein, in *Improving Your Multiple Staff Ministry*, says Senior Pastors value competence, complementary skills, and trust; staff members mostly value

¹¹ Thomas E. Brown, "A Concept of Church Staff Relationships," *Religious Education* 61 (March-April 1966): 116.

¹² James Berkley, "How Pastors and Associates Get Along," *Leadership* 7 (winter 1986): 109-11.

shared responsibilities but do not necessarily believe personal relationships need to be a top priority.¹³

McIntosh says Senior Pastors mainly need loyalty, being informed, and recognition and acceptance. He states staff members mainly need to be taken seriously, authority with their responsibility, open communication, honest affirmation, open support, confrontation in private, and appropriate visibility.¹⁴

Arthur E. Hunt's article, "Liking Life under the Senior Pastor," focuses exclusively on the needs of staff members; however, the points he makes offer helpful information for Senior Pastors as well. He lists five "don'ts" and five "do's" in describing life under the Senior Pastor:

- Don't harbor negative feelings.
- Don't be blinded by another's weaknesses.
- Don't be drawn into unnecessary controversy.
- Don't make excuses.
- Don't view your present post as merely a prelude to something better.
- Do work to help make your boss a success.
- Do offer your insight and suggestions.
- Do allow God to help you be positive.
- Do keep the lines of communication open.

¹³ Anne Marie Nuechterlein, *Improving Your Multiple Staff Ministry: How to Work Together More Effectively* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 39-47.

¹⁴ McIntosh, 114-18.

- Do be loyal.¹⁵

Nuechterlein, in an article entitled “Building a Healthy Team Ministry,” offers seven points in the form of a covenant between Senior Pastors and their staffs. She believes the pastoral team should covenant:

- To believe in the hope and forgiveness of Christ.
- To be holy.
- To listen to each other.
- To discuss individual and group expectations.
- To discuss and set common goals.
- To interact intentionally with each other.
- To promote honest and open communication.¹⁶

One area oftentimes overlooked in the Senior Pastor’s relationship with his staff is the family members of his staff. Very few writers speak of—or even consider—the needs spouses and children of staff members have to be supported and encouraged. Chapter five of *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration* is devoted to this very topic. The chapter, entitled “Responsibility to Family Members,” is written by Marshall Shelley. In this chapter, Shelley issues reminders and practical ideas to help ministry leaders insure that family members are not being neglected. He speaks of bringing home a healthy attitude, of giving the family at least the same care any other

¹⁵ Arthur E. Hunt, “Liking Life under the Senior Pastor,” *Christianity Today*, 6 August 1982, 62.

¹⁶ Anne Marie Nuechterlein, “Building a Healthy Team Ministry,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 17 (April 1990): 103.

parishioner would get, of controlling the telephone, and of including the family in certain aspects of ministry.¹⁷ While these reminders and ideas apply to all ministry leaders, they provide a great resource for the Senior Pastor desiring to be an encouragement to the most important people in the lives of his staff members. Shelley also adds a section in this chapter regarding the unique needs pastors' children have—both young children and older children.¹⁸ Another section in the chapter, written by Louis McBurney, speaks of “Ministry’s Effect on Marriage.” McBurney primarily focuses on “marriage stressors” that often affect pastors’ marriages.¹⁹ Again, the content in these sections of the chapter provides insightful information for the Senior Pastor who values not only his staff members, but their families also.

The Senior Pastor as Staff Leader

Many resources address the topic of effective leadership. While many of the principles of general leadership apply to the Senior Pastor’s position, this project draws from resources designed with ministry leadership in mind. Accordingly, it becomes imperative that leadership qualities reflect biblical teaching. In a brief article found in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, Darrell Johnson speaks of

¹⁷ Marshall Shelley, “Responsibility to Family Members,” in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, ed. James D. Berkley (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1994), 50-51.

¹⁸ Ibid., 52-53.

¹⁹ Louis McBurney, “Ministry’s Effect on Marriage,” in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, ed. James D. Berkley (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1994), 54-55.

“Biblical Requirements of Leaders.” He comments on four qualifications: commitment, conviction, competency, and character.²⁰

Most writers also are quick to point out the importance of *servant* leadership. Most argue that to lead as Jesus led requires that one understand this critical framework for leadership. In *The Ministry Staff Member*, Douglas L. Fagerstrom includes a chapter entitled, “Becoming an Intentional Servant Leader.” In speaking of servant leadership, he describes what servant leadership is and is not, lists “Seven Practical Ways to Be a Servant Leader,” lists ten servant leader killers, and describes four characteristics of servant leaders—they are honest, present, flexible, and engaging.²¹

Another area demanding the attention of the Senior Pastor’s leadership responsibilities is the topic of leadership style. Various attempts have been made to identify and categorize the most common styles of pastoral leadership. One of the most extensive is found in Robert D. Dale’s article, “Leader Style and Church Staff Mesh: Solving People Puzzles.” He spends the fourteen pages of this article unpacking five “Leader Styles for Ministers” and shows how these styles “mesh” with follower styles and ministry structure. These five leader styles are:

- The coach – an effective style
- The dictator – an efficient style
- The joker – an entertaining style

²⁰ Darrell W. Johnson, “Biblical Requirements of Leaders,” in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, ed. James D. Berkley (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1994), 16-17.

²¹ Fagerstrom, 62-65.

- The hermit – an effacing style
- The workaholic – an eroding style²²

Kenneth E. Hayes, in “Pastoral Leadership in Multiple Staff Churches,” discusses four leadership styles:

- Directive (authoritarian task oriented)
- Democratic (relationships oriented)
- Balanced (emphasizes both the task and relationships)
- Laissez-faire (little or no emphasis on either task or relationships)²³

Ted Engstrom and Edward Dayton, in *The Art of Management for Christian Leaders*, identify four leadership styles:

- Bureaucratic
- Permissive
- Laissez-faire
- Participative²⁴

Myron Rush, in *Management: A Biblical Approach*, also identifies four styles:

- Dictatorial
- Authoritative
- Consultative

²² Dale, 17-20.

²³ Kenneth E. Hayes, “Pastoral Leadership in Multiple Staff Churches,” *The Quarterly Review* 39 (January-February-March 1979): 36.

²⁴ Ted W. Engstrom and Edward R. Dayton, *The Art of Management for Christian Leaders* (Waco: Word Books, 1976), 30-31.

- Participative team²⁵

Similarly, Douglas Fagerstrom, in *The Ministry Staff Member*, discusses four leadership styles:

- Imparting (telling) toward discovering
- Sharing (selling) toward participating
- Involving (participating) toward committing
- Delegating (entrusting) toward doing²⁶

Another attempt at identifying basic leadership styles is offered by Aubrey Malphurs. He writes a brief article, “Understanding Personality Types,” in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*. Using similar terms as those found above, he writes of four leadership styles:

- Autocratic
- Democratic
- Participatory
- Bureaucratic²⁷

One final resource deserving attention is Thom Rainer’s *High Expectations*. In a chapter entitled, “The Pastor and the High-Expectation Church,” Rainer speaks of four

²⁵ Rush, 221.

²⁶ Fagerstrom, 69.

²⁷ Aubrey Malphurs, “Understanding Personality Types,” in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, ed. James D. Berkley (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1994), 178-79.

leadership styles. Rather than assigning special names to these styles, he simply describes them using the language of “task” and “relationship”:

- High task/high relationship
- High task/low relationship
- Low task/high relationship
- Low task/low relationship²⁸

In addition to the topic of leadership styles, several other aspects of ministry leadership are discussed in various sources. In *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, Mark Dever shares a mnemonic device to help his readers remember the four aspects of Christ’s leadership. Using the term BOSS, he points out the four roles Jesus filled as a leader: Boss, Out front, Supply, Serve.²⁹ He argues these four aspects of leadership are to be reflected in today’s Christian leaders also.

For the Senior Pastor looking to organize his pastoral staff (and his church) around healthy core values, Aubrey Malphurs provides excellent insight and practical examples in two books: *Ministry Nuts and Bolts* and *Values-Driven Leadership*. *Ministry Nuts and Bolts* outlines the four concepts necessary for effective leadership and ministry: values, mission, vision, and strategy.³⁰ *Values-Driven Leadership* focuses exclusively on the concept of values. Especially helpful in this resource is “Appendix

²⁸ Thom S. Rainer, *High Expectations: The Remarkable Secret for Keeping People in Your Church* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 70-71.

²⁹ Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2000), 222-23.

³⁰ Aubrey Malphurs, *Ministry Nuts and Bolts: What They Don’t Teach Pastors in Seminary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1997), 13.

A,” where he shares values statements taken from well-known churches around the United States.³¹

One other ministry activity of significance to Senior Pastors is that of planning. Kenn Gangel’s *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry* includes a chapter entitled, “Planning for the Future.” He provides two helpful items in this chapter. First, he lists and discusses six foundational principles of planning:

- Planning invests time; it does not spend it.
- Planning requires careful attention to immediate choices.
- Planning is cyclically based on evaluation.
- Planning requires acting objectively toward goal realization.
- Planning should allow for maximal participation.
- Planning increases in specificity as the event draws nearer.³²

Second, Gangel provides a sample “Annual Planning Outline” a Senior Pastor could easily adapt to his own setting.³³

Robert N. Gray also includes a chapter on planning in his book, *Managing the Church*. In writing about “Planning for Effectiveness,” he discusses ten principles to keep in mind:

- The principle of primacy

³¹ Aubrey Malphurs, *Values-Driven Leadership: Discovering and Developing Your Core Values for Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 164-74.

³² Kenn Gangel, *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry: Using Multiple Gifts to Build a Unified Vision*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 290-92.

³³ *Ibid.*, 297.

- The principle of alternatives
- The principle of objectives
- The principle of contribution to mission
- The principle of maximum involvement
- The principle of work simplification
- The principle of waste reduction
- The principle of value analysis
- The principle of flexibility
- The principle of directional change³⁴

The Pastoral Staff as a Team

The concept of team ministry is extensively addressed in many resources. Several resources offer definitions of the term “team.” Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith, in *The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization*, define a team as “a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.”³⁵ The authors later speak of five categories within a “team performance curve”:

- Working group – A group for which there is *no significant incremental performance need* or opportunity that would require it to become a team.

³⁴ Robert N. Gray, *Managing the Church*, vol. 1, *Church Business Administration*. (Enid, Okla.: The Haymaker Press, 1976), 65-73.

³⁵ Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1999), 45.

- Pseudo-team – A group for which there could be a significant, incremental performance need or opportunity, but *it has not focused on collective performance and is not really trying to achieve it.*
- Potential team – A group for which there is a significant, incremental performance need, and *that really is trying to improve its performance impact.*
- Real team – A small group of people with complementary skills who *are equally committed to a common purpose, goals, and working approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.*
- High-performance team – A group that meets all the conditions of real teams, and has *members who are also deeply committed to one another's personal growth and success.*³⁶

In his article, “Five Group Dynamics in Team Ministry,” Joseph T. Kelley defines team ministry as “a group of two or more professionally trained lay or ordained ministers who choose to approach the parish, campus, hospital, or other faith community they serve with an explicit commitment to shared responsibility and mutual support in the pastoral care they provide.”³⁷ A main goal of team ministry is the growth and development of the ministerial team as a whole.

George Cladis, in *Leading the Team-Based Church*, argues that team-based churches are critically needed in today's postmodern society. He believes that a biblically and theologically sound leadership team has seven attributes: covenanting, visionary, collaborative, culture-creating, trusting, empowering, and learning.³⁸ His book is organized around these attributes.

³⁶ Ibid., 90-92.

³⁷ Joseph T. Kelley, “Five Group Dynamics in Team Ministry,” *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 48 (summer 1994): 118.

³⁸ George Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church: How Pastors and Church*

Kenneth R. Mitchell, in *Multiple Staff Ministries*, believes a “pure” team approach may not be an acceptable way to describe a pastoral staff team. He prefers the term “modified team” to describe the best way to approach multi-staff ministry. He emphasizes that a modified team, unlike a pure team, has a definite leader to whom “others on the team are in some significant way accountable.”³⁹

Teamwork among the pastoral staff is a non-issue if the concept is not biblical. In his article entitled, “The Pastoral Staff as Ministry Team,” Hardy Clemons addresses the biblical foundation of team ministry. He begins by referencing Jesus’ teaching that effective leadership does not consist of lording it over others with one’s authority, but of serving others (Mk. 10:42-45). He next points out Paul’s conception of himself and his companions as “fellow workers” (1 Cor. 3:5-9)—working together for God, all the while knowing that God alone causes the growth.⁴⁰

H. Joseph Miller, in *Building the Church: A Comprehensive Manual for Church Administration*, addresses some of the relational aspects involved in team ministry. In summary fashion, he speaks of three vital connections:

- A heart connection – Do we have the same passion?
- A head connection – Are we on the same page?

Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999), xi.

³⁹ Kenneth R. Mitchell, *Multiple Staff Ministries* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 150.

⁴⁰ Clemons, 52.

- A hand connection – Are we working as partners?⁴¹

He also speaks directly to the Senior Pastor as he answers the question, “What does every team member need from the head coach?” He used the word COACH to address five needs:

- Commitment . . . to the team and to the task
- Opportunity . . . to develop and contribute
- Affirmation . . . of contribution and accomplishment
- Communication . . . of the purpose and the priorities
- Hope . . . in the future⁴²

Many writers discuss basic principles for effective team ministry among ministry leaders. Gary L. McIntosh, in *Staff Your Church for Growth*, lists and discusses six “Keys to an Effective Team”:

- Clear communication
- Shared goals
- Collaborative atmosphere
- Responsibility and involvement
- Flexible process
- Collegial support⁴³

⁴¹ H. Joseph Miller, *Building the Church: A Comprehensive Manual for Church Administration*, vol. 2 (Greenville: BJU Press, 2003), 853-54.

⁴² Ibid., 806-10.

⁴³ McIntosh, 96-99.

Rick Warren, in an article entitled, “Building a Team Spirit in Your Staff,” uses the word TEAMWORK to discuss eight characteristics of “team-spirited staffs”:

- Trust
- Economy of energy
- Affirmation and appreciation
- Management of mistakes
- Weekly staff meetings
- Open communication
- Recognition
- Keep on learning⁴⁴

John Maxwell, in *Developing the Leaders Around You*, lists and discusses ten “Qualities of a Dream Team”:

- The team members care for one another.
- The team members know what is important.
- The team members communicate with one another.
- The team members grow together.
- There is a team fit.
- The team members place their individual rights beneath the best interest of the team.
- Each team member plays a special role.
- An effective team has a good bench.
- The team members know exactly where the team stands.

⁴⁴ Rick Warren, “Building a Team Spirit in Your Staff,” *Ministry Advantage* 8 (winter 1998): 6.

- The team members are willing to pay the price.⁴⁵

Harold J. Westing, in *Multiple Church Staff Handbook*, provides seven statements pertaining to “Staff Philosophy”:

- We are the people of God before we are the servants of God.
- We share our personal lives together.
- We are committed to the whole church’s ministry, rather than to our individual ministry. We see everyone and every part as equally important.
- We concentrate on a common philosophy of ministry.
- We work on a consensus rather than on a majority.
- We see differences as strengths in personalities.
- We believe that it can’t happen through us until it happens to us.⁴⁶

In a much lengthier list, Tom Phillips, in a chapter written for George Barna’s *Leaders on Leadership*, lists and briefly discusses twenty-two “Team-building Principles”:

- A team must have a gifted and committed leader.
- A team must bring together a holy “band of men, whose hearts God had touched” (1 Sam. 10:26 KJV).
- A team is a group of people who are united under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- A team has a focus that is so easily discernible that the devil, who is the author of confusion, can never interrupt the direction of ministry.
- Gifted people on the team are chosen to get specific jobs done.

⁴⁵ John Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 137-49.

⁴⁶ Westing, 120-25.

- A team needs people who have “*Nike* hearts.”
- A gifted team strategically trains its people, but most of the time, these capable and godly people are trained on the job.
- Great teams use “participative management.”
- Service is more important than position.
- Team members must show respect for the leader and for other team members.
- A team is only as strong as it is disciplined.
- Effective teams realize that failure may be a step toward success.
- Teams must achieve a significant comfort level within the familial organization scheme.
- Communication is critical.
- Great teams respond to change by remaining flexible.
- Team leaders delegate; they do not abdicate.
- Attitude matters. Great teams exhibit sincerity, transparency and vulnerability.
- Within familial organizations, there is recourse.
- Unity drives impact.
- Each person within the team is a coach and/or player/coach for those around and below.
- Nonparticipatory team members could and should be removed.
- Stay focused on the goal; accept nothing less.⁴⁷

Another book by John Maxwell, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork*, includes a list of 12 covenants used by Lou Holtz, then football coach at the University of South

⁴⁷ Phillips, 220-31.

Carolina. While this covenant cannot be applied absolutely to the Senior Pastor and his pastoral staff, it does provide some applicable principles. At the beginning of each season, Holtz introduced the following “twelve covenants” to his players:

- We will accomplish what we do together. We share our success, and we never let any one of us fail alone.
- We are all fully grown adults. We will act as such, and expect the same from the people around us.
- We will not keep secrets. Information that affects us all will be shared by all of us, and we will quickly and openly work to separate fact from fiction.
- We will not lie to ourselves or to each other. None of us will tolerate any of us doing so. We will depend on each other for the truth.
- We will keep our word. We will say what we mean, and do what we say. We trust the word of others to be good as well.
- We will keep our head. We will not panic in the face of tough times. We will always choose to roll up our sleeves rather than wring our hands.
- We will develop our abilities and take pride in them. We will set our own standards higher than our most challenging opponent, and we will please our fans by pleasing ourselves.
- We will treat our locker room like home and our teammates like friends. We spend too much time together to allow these things to go bad.
- We will be unselfish and expect that everyone else will exhibit this same quality. We will care about each other without expectations.
- We will look out for each other. We truly believe that we are our brother’s keeper.
- We are students at USC, and as such we will strive to graduate. We take pride in our grade point average and expect our teammates to do the same.

- Losing cannot and will not be tolerated in anything we do. Losing to us is to be shamed, embarrassed, and humiliated. There is no excuse for losing a football game at USC.⁴⁸

From a slightly more personal perspective, Frank R. Lewis, in *The Team Builder*, provides a “quick list” of nineteen pointers for team builders:

- Minister to each member of your team.
- Minister to the family members of your team.
- Know when to use Extreme Pastoral Care.
- Encourage your team members often.
- Affirm your team members weekly.
- Insist on personal mini-retreats.
- Take special days off.
- Commemorate special days.
- Recognize ministerial competency.
- Provide opportunities for growth and development.
- Provide ministry tools and resources.
- Be open to suggestions.
- Laugh at yourself and with your team.
- Take your team out for desert following worship on a Sunday night.
- Send appropriate cards for birthdays and anniversaries.
- Use your influence with the appropriate committees at budget time.
- Use “non-platform” team members once in awhile as “platform speakers.”

⁴⁸ Maxwell, *17 Indisputable Laws*, 122-24.

- Let team members see their mistakes, but work quickly to resolve problems and move forward.
- Do everything you can to make your team members win.⁴⁹

Kenn Gangel, in *Feeding and Leading*, offers helpful reminders in the context of effective team decision-making. He writes:

- Each member has one voice.
- Each member has a responsibility to express his or her opinion.
- Each member must listen respectfully to all other options.
- Each member must detach himself emotionally from his own ideas.
- Each member must publicly support the group's decision.
- Each member must keep group processes confidential.⁵⁰

Two other resources merit attention in the context of “teamwork” among the pastoral staff. First is Patrick Lencioni’s *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*. Lencioni argues that because teams are “made up of imperfect human beings, they are inherently dysfunctional.”⁵¹ His book focuses exclusively on five “dysfunctions”:

- Absence of trust
- Fear of conflict
- Lack of commitment

⁴⁹ Frank R. Lewis, *The Team Builder* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1998), 84-89.

⁵⁰ Kenn Gangel, *Feeding and Leading* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1989), 195-98.

⁵¹ Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), vii.

- Avoidance of accountability
- Inattention to results

On the flip side, he believes “truly cohesive teams” reflect the opposite of these dysfunctions:

- They trust one another.
- They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas.
- They commit to decisions and plans of action.
- They hold one another accountable for delivering against those plans.
- They focus on the achievement of collective results.⁵²

Another work that warns of potential harm to team ministry is Douglas L.

Fagerstrom’s *The Ministry Staff Member*. In the chapter entitled, “Building an Effective Team,” he provides an inset in which he lists “Eight Ways a Team Member Can Sabotage Teamwork”:

- Do all of the talking.
- Never ask anyone else an open-ended question.
- Subtly put down or ignore a divergent view or opinion by another staff member.
- Attempt to “save the day” by enthusiastically having the best answer and pressuring the team toward immediate closure.
- Demand that we fix and solve this problem right now.
- Never give up your position or ministry role in the discussion.
- Talk before and after the meeting, not during the meeting.

⁵² Ibid., 188-90.

- Hang on to rigid policies, being sure to say, “We can’t do that!”⁵³

The “C” Word: Communication

The all-important topic of communication is given substantial attention in several resources. Kenn Gangel, in *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry*, reproduces the “Ely Communication Model” as a simple and effective way to understand the process of communication. Using this model, he discusses the basic components of communication: the message, the source, encoding, decoding, the receiver, feedback, and the field of experience.⁵⁴ He also lists what he calls “The Messages of Communication”:

- What the source intends to say
- What the source actually says
- What the source thinks he has said
- What the receiver wants to hear
- What the receiver hears
- What the receiver thinks he heard⁵⁵

David Cormack, in *Team Spirit*, reminds his readers that communication is far more than mere words. In a diagram, he presents the various nonverbal aspects of communication:

- Bodily posture
- Bodily contact (e.g., hand shakes)

⁵³ Fagerstrom, 301.

⁵⁴ Gangel, *Team Leadership*, 404-10.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 410-13.

- Words (different meanings)
- Tone and volume of voice
- Style of speech
- Appearance
- Physical proximity
- Eye contact
- Facial expression
- Gestures (e.g., head nods)⁵⁶

In *Management: A Biblical Approach*, Myron Rush identifies the most common communication barriers:

- Tuning people out and hearing only what we want to hear
- Allowing personal emotions to distort the information
- A lack of trust in the other person's motives
- Noise or other distractions
- Differing value systems and perceptions
- Unwillingness to receive information that conflicts with predetermined convictions or viewpoints
- Words that have several meanings
- People's actions not corresponding with what is being said⁵⁷

He also lists techniques for minimizing these communication barriers:

- Whenever possible use face-to-face communication.

⁵⁶ David Cormack, *Team Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 89.

⁵⁷ Rush, 121.

- Use direct, simple words (don't try to impress people with your grasp of the language).
- Solicit feedback from the listener.
- Give your full attention to the speaker.
- Never interrupt the speaker (who is not ready to listen to you until he has said what he is thinking and feeling).
- Encourage freedom of expression (agree to disagree; be willing to accept the other person's ideas and feelings as his or her own whether you agree with them or not).⁵⁸

Anne Marie Nuechterlein, in *Improving Your Multiple Staff Ministry*, includes a chapter entitled, "Discovering Your Negative Communication Styles." She identifies and explains four communication styles that are certain to interfere with good staff relations:

- Placating
- Blaming
- Being overly reasonable
- Being irrelevant⁵⁹

To counteract these harmful styles, she argues for a form of open communication called "Congruent Communication." She says congruent communication is present when six skills are implemented:

- Be more aware of the context.
- Develop more directness in your communication.
- Practice good listening skills.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Nuechterlein, 125-30.

- Share information.
- Be intentional in your communication.
- Meet weekly.⁶⁰

One final resource providing helpful information in the area of communication is Ted W. Engstrom's *Your Gift of Administration*. He includes a chapter entitled, "Adminstrating through Communication." From a more personal perspective, he lists "Six Key Questions" that help one do a better job of communicating:

- What do I *intend* to say or write?
- What do I *in reality* say or write, sometimes in spite of my good intentions?
- What will be the emotional *impact* upon the recipient of what I say or write?
- What does the person *expect* to hear or read?
- What will the person *actually* read or hear, at times despite what is actually spoken or written?
- How will the person *feel* about what is read or heard?⁶¹

The Other "C" Word: Conflict

Most writers that address the topic of conflict speak of both the causes of conflict and healthy approaches to resolving conflict. Gary L. McIntosh, in *Staff Your Church for Growth*, identifies four basic categories of staff conflicts:

- Motivational problems – free riding, groupthink, and social loafing

⁶⁰ Ibid., 136-42.

⁶¹ Ted W. Engstrom, *Your Gift of Administration: How to Discover and Use It* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 108-9.

- Communicational problems – lack of communication among team members and harmful communication
- Organizational problems – overly controlling, misunderstanding team roles, inequity in compensation
- Relational problems – lack of trust, territorial attitudes, and unhappy spouses or families⁶²

Harold J. Westing, in *Multiple Church Staff Handbook*, discusses simple

“potential team problems” that often cause conflict:

- Role and title misunderstandings
- Envy and pride
- Failure to be open
- Failure to communicate
- Defective covenants⁶³

Wayne Jacobsen, in an article entitled “Seven Reasons for Staff Conflict,” says,

“If you don’t see eye to eye, it’s not always because of stiff necks.”⁶⁴ He writes of seven major areas of conflict:

- Generational differences
- Theological disagreements
- Miscommunication
- Diversity in perspective
- Majoring in minors

⁶² McIntosh, 152-65.

⁶³ Westing, 44-53.

⁶⁴ Jacobsen, 34.

- Environment
- Lack of relationships⁶⁵

Building from an ingenious title, Craig and Carolyn Williford address the issue of staff conflict in their book, *How to Treat a Staff Infection*. Using medical terminology, they address fourteen conditions that often afflict both pastoral and general church staffs:

- Temporary Paralysis – Widespread inability to make decisions
- Permanent Dilation of the Pupils – An extravagant taste for the spectacular and most expensive
- Stiff Neck – Ownership of a specific church program
- Swollen Brain – A firm belief that “I pretty much know it all already”
- Underdeveloped Brain – It’s gotta be new to be good
- High Blood Pressure – A belief in reaching people for Christ through outrageous activities
- Flaccidity of the Lips – Gossip is passed off as “prayer requests”
- Lack of Large Motor Coordination – A habitual pattern of arriving late
- Permanent Paralysis – An urgent ministry need merely leads to . . . inertia
- Narcissism – What do you do when you are the problem?
- Central Nervous System Disorder – When the board and the leadership team are out of sync
- Conjunctivitis – An attitude that volunteers are not dependable
- Rigidity of the Body – Too fixed in one place to budge—even an inch
- Blocked Carotid Arteries – When the supervisor is the problem⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Ibid., 34-39.

⁶⁶ Craig Williford and Carolyn Williford, *How to Treat a Staff Infection*:

The authors thoroughly describe the symptoms of these conditions in a chapter-by-chapter fashion. They also include a chapter comprised of twenty-four principles to help the reader diagnose, treat, and prevent the occurrence of a “staff infection.”

While many writers discuss the underlying causes of staff conflict, Tommy Tenney, in *God’s Dream Team*, focuses on a purely biblical perspective of conflict. He emphasizes the crucial topic of unity among staff members. In so doing, he views “conflict” as basically synonymous with “disunity.” In discussing the causes of disunity, he draws three main causes from the Apostle Paul’s words in Phil. 2:3-5. He believes these causes are selfish ambition, personal prestige, and concentration on self (selfishness).⁶⁷

In *Management: A Biblical Approach*, Myron Rush speaks of both negative results and positive aspects of conflict. As for the negative results, he writes:

- Conflict causes us to fabricate and magnify faults and weaknesses in others.
- Conflict creates divisions within the organization.
- Conflict causes us to expend our energies on nonproductive activities.

He then lists the positive aspects:

- Disagreement can lead to individual and organizational growth.
- Disagreement can reveal the need for change.

Resolving Problems in Your Church or Ministry Team (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 7-8.

⁶⁷ Tommy Tenney, *God’s Dream Team: A Call to Unity* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 1999), 43-46.

- Disagreement can help make us more tolerant of opposing views.⁶⁸

Several resources provide insight into resolving conflict. First, Douglas Fagerstrom, in *The Ministry Staff Member*, states that conflict generally falls into one of the following categories:

- Perceived conflicts
- Potential conflicts
- Real conflicts which can be resolved
- Real conflicts which cannot be resolved⁶⁹

When embarking on the conflict-resolving journey, Joseph Umidi offers the following guidelines:

- Value healthy conflict interactions.
- Handle conflict in its early stages.
- Model healthy communication.
- Choose from a range of peacemaker strategies – avoidance, accommodation, competition, collaboration.⁷⁰

When working through conflict, various approaches are available. Rush offers the following summary of options:

- Attempting to avoid conflict by retreating from it
- Attempting to avoid conflict by circumventing the major issues and focusing on minor points.

⁶⁸ Rush, 204-7.

⁶⁹ Fagerstrom, 115.

⁷⁰ Umidi, 35-40.

- Attempting to avoid conflict by dealing with side issues.
- Identifying the real issues of the conflict and working our way through them to a satisfactory resolution.⁷¹

David Cormack, in *Team Spirit*, provides a succinct list of approaches to conflict resolution. He says the main available strategies are:

- Submission
- Collaboration
- Avoidance
- Non-cooperation
- Competition
- *Pax Romana*
- Confrontation
- Joint problem solving⁷²

Gary L. McIntosh's *Staff Your Church for Growth* lists four simple reminders when attempting to resolve staff conflict:

- Allow for healthy conflict.
- Deal with conflict as early as possible.
- Practice healthy communication.
- Select the proper approach (win/win option, win/lose option, lose/yield option, lose/lose option, and the compromise option).⁷³

⁷¹ Rush, 207-8.

⁷² Cormack, 207.

⁷³ McIntosh, 165-68.

A final resource of considerable help in the area of staff conflict is H. Joseph Miller's *Building the Church*. In addition to the topics of defining and resolving conflict, Miller strives to help pastors survive conflict. He does so by offering six "affirmations":

- I will learn from this conflict. (An opportunity to grow in wisdom)
- I will live above this conflict. (An opportunity to grow in grace)
- I will lead through this conflict. (An opportunity to grow in leadership)
- I will look beyond this conflict. (An opportunity to grow in faith)
- I will link up with others in this conflict. (An opportunity to grow in relationships)
- I will last after this conflict. (An opportunity to grow in patience)⁷⁴

The First 100 Days

The idea of considering the proverbial "first 100 days" of a Senior Pastor's ministry in a local church setting arose in the writer's mind independent of any outside influence. He did not expect to find resources addressing the topic. To his surprise, he did find one book including a chapter entitled, "The First 100 Days." This book is *The Ministry Staff Member*, by Douglas L. Fagerstrom. Fagerstrom lists five "Leadership Challenges for a Healthy Start":

- Learn the culture.
- Win people over right away.
- Ask the right questions.
- Let everyone know that you love your new role.

⁷⁴ Miller, 719.

- Do what you can to build trust.⁷⁵

Fagerstrom also includes a sample schedule of the first 100 days. In this schedule, he divides these 100 days into blocks of time. For each block, he gives practical ideas as to what needs to be done to facilitate a great start to one's ministry.

Planning Staff Meetings

There are two halves that comprise the whole of staff meetings: planning the meetings and conducting the meetings. The Senior Pastor must first understand the purposes behind the staff meeting before he can accomplish either the planning or conducting. Two resources offer explanations as to why staff meetings are necessary. Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont share six purposes of staff meetings in *When Moses Meets Aaron*:

- Missional alignment
- Developing community
- Information sharing (“No surprises”)
- Supervision of group work
- Role renegotiation
- Developing staff (and congregational) culture⁷⁶

Jimmie Sheffield, writing in the *Personnel Administration Guide for Southern Baptist Churches*, also lists purposes (“benefits”) of staff meetings:

⁷⁵ Fagerstrom, 25-27.

⁷⁶ Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont, *When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations* (Herndon, Va.: The Alban Institute, 2007), 189-95.

- Building team spirit
- Enhancing spiritual growth
- Improving communication among staff members
- Establishing atmosphere for creative planning
- Providing opportunities to coordinate activities
- Giving opportunity for evaluation of ministries
- Providing a good setting to resolve conflicts
- Providing a time and place to disseminate information
- Giving staff members an opportunity to share burdens and blessings
- Providing a good setting for discussing mutual problems⁷⁷

Jerry W. Brown, in *Church Staff Teams That Win*, directly addresses the Senior Pastor's responsibility in preparing for staff meetings. He lists eight functions of the Senior Pastor:

- Facilitating the development of the meeting's agenda
- Initiating specific agenda items
- Gathering information on an issue of discussion
- Encouraging elaboration on issues
- Coordinating the ideas of others in the group
- Evaluating ideas
- Energizing the group

⁷⁷ Jimmie Sheffield, "Leading," in *Personnel Administration Guide for Southern Baptist Churches*, comp. Tim J. Holcomb (Nashville: Convention Press, 1988), 73.

- Structuring the group interaction⁷⁸

John Sommerville, in his article entitled “How To Run a Great Staff Meeting,” provides a list of “Ground Rules” that he believes need to be in place for effective staff meetings:

- Have a regular time and place (and don’t cancel!).
- Start (and end) on time.
- Have an agenda and stick to it (most of the time).
- Be prepared.
- Have an established leader.
- If possible, decide.
- Maintain task orientation (with human sensitivity).
- Be realistic.
- Set aside additional time for experiences and long-term thinking.
- Keep confidentiality.
- Be unified.⁷⁹

There are some logistical questions that must be considered in preparing for regular staff meetings. Rendle and Beaumont provide answers to the following:

- How long should a staff meeting last?
- Should our staff meeting include worship, study, and play?
- Are there ways to abbreviate the routine work required in a staff meeting?

⁷⁸ Brown, *Church Staff Teams that Win*, 115-16.

⁷⁹ Sommerville, 76-77.

- Should part-time staff be required to attend?⁸⁰

Jimmie Sheffield, in *How to Build a Shared Ministry Team*, also addresses several logistical questions:

- Who should attend staff meetings?
- How often should staff meetings be held?
- When should the staff meet?
- Where should the staff meeting be held?⁸¹

A final resource to be mentioned is *Energizing Staff Meetings*, by Sheila and John Eller. Rather than focusing on leadership in a church setting, this book provides information for leadership in an educational (school) setting. However, some of the ideas easily apply to the pastoral staff of a local church. To discourage boredom from becoming a factor, the authors argue that staff meetings need to be “energized.” They write, “An energized, effective staff meeting is an experience in which team members are engaged and actively involved in the content and substance of the meeting.”⁸² The authors also discuss ways of making appropriate use of time and insuring that agendas are properly planned and implemented.

Conducting Staff Meetings

Several resources address the “nuts and bolts” involved in conducting pastoral staff meetings. Most of this material centers on the agenda, or process of walking

⁸⁰ Rendle and Beaumont, 197-200.

⁸¹ Sheffield, *Shared Ministry Team*, 17-18.

⁸² Sheila Eller and John Eller, *Energizing Staff Meetings* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin Press, 2006), 2.

through an organized staff meeting. Rendle and Beaumont, in *When Moses Meets Aaron*, offer three examples of staff meetings. First is the “informal” meeting—gathering, calendaring, member care, and agenda items. Second is the “questions format”—gathering, the protocol of questions, and next steps. Third is “selective participation”—the meeting time is divided among specific groups of people who are present only as needed: all staff, pastoral care, the program team, and the worship team.⁸³

Three resources provide detailed samples of staff meeting agendas. Jimmie Sheffield’s *How to Build a Shared Ministry Team* gives sample agendas for both general staff meetings and pastoral staff meetings. His sample agenda for a general staff meeting includes Worship/prayer/celebration, Program and calendar update, Administrative update, and Recognitions. His sample agenda for a pastoral staff meeting includes Pastor’s time, Program update, and Administrative update.⁸⁴

Speaking from his own church setting and experience, John Sommerville, in his article, “How to Run a Great Staff Meeting,” also offers a sample pastoral staff meeting agenda: Prayer, Repeating agenda items, Priority business, New business, and Reports.⁸⁵ His approach to the staff meeting is somewhat reflective of what most churches follow in the classic “quarterly business meeting.”

A more detailed and lengthy example of a staff meeting agenda is found in Harold J. Westing’s *Multiple Church Staff Handbook*. The sample he provides consists of five segments:

⁸³ Rendle and Beaumont, 201-3.

⁸⁴ Sheffield, *Shared Ministry Team*, 19-20.

⁸⁵ Sommerville, 76.

- 8:00-9:00 a.m. – Groups of sharing, study, and prayer
- 9:00-10:00 a.m. – Staff relations
- 10:00-11:00 a.m. – Business
- 11:00-12:00 noon – Enrichment section
- 12:00-1:00 p.m. – Lunch together⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Westing, 125-32.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SENIOR PASTOR'S RELATIONSHIP-ORIENTED ROLE

Chapters three and four of this project focus on two main aspects of the Senior Pastor's role in connection with the pastoral staff—his relationships and his tasks. While there is some necessary overlap, Chapter Three primarily describes the Senior Pastor's *relationships* with his staff members while Chapter Four describes his *tasks* as he leads his staff members.

The Pastoral Staff and the Local Church

Seeking to understand the Senior Pastor's role and responsibilities in leading a pastoral staff begins by understanding the staff's importance to the local church. In recent decades, increased attention has been given to the pastoral staff as more churches are being led by a team of ordained, full-time ministers. In addition to the Senior Pastor, churches now might have an Executive Pastor, an Associate Pastor, a Music Minister, a Minister of Education, a Youth Pastor, a Missions Pastor, a Children's Pastor, a Singles Pastor, a Pastor of Counseling, and the like. The Senior Pastor and his staff play a vital part in the health and growth of the local church.

The past twenty-five years have revealed a growing trend among church-goers as increasing numbers attend multi-staffed churches. In the mid-1980s, it was estimated that fifty percent of American church-goers were going to churches with a multiple staff in

place.¹ For some, this trend suggests that “the day of the small congregation pastored by one person may be as foreign to American culture in the future as the small family business.”² A look at recent history shows that this has not always been the case. Historically, relatively few churches have been large enough to employ multiple staff members. Most of those churches large enough to employ a staff did not arise until after the Industrial Age of the 1800s. Even so, multiple-staff situations did not become fairly common until the 1950s. Today, a multiple staff is found in approximately half of all the churches in the United States.³

The prevalence of churches large enough to have a staff has changed the look and feel of the pastoral ministry. Historically, the pastor of a local church has been sort of a “jack-of-all-trades.” However, he now is frequently known as the “Senior Pastor” with responsibilities over other pastoral staff members. Practically, this means, “Once a pastor did administration; now there is a pastor of administration. Once a pastor did counseling; now there is a pastor of counseling. Once there was volunteer support staff; now there is a professional support staff.”⁴

Defining the Pastoral Staff

While most people are quick to recognize a pastoral staff as such, few attempt to offer a definition of the “pastoral staff.” One writer doing so is Marvin T. Judy.

¹ Westing, 145.

² Ibid.

³ McIntosh, 12.

⁴ Ibid. 87.

According to Judy, “The church staff is composed of a group of professional persons, presumably competent in their respective fields, who blend their services together to perform a ministry as a whole to the congregation.”⁵ As mentioned in chapter two of this project, not everyone is comfortable describing ministers as “professional persons.”

However, Judy’s definition does touch on some of the pertinent areas to be addressed in this project: the calling and giftedness of pastoral staff members, the importance of team ministry, and the purpose of edifying the body of Christ.

Reasons for Multiple-Staff Ministry

Since churches have not always been led by a multiple staff, one must ask why there is an increase in the number of such churches today. Various answers might be given, but two are worthy of mention. First, plainly stated, the pastor needs help. As the church grows, the demands grow. One pastors alone is not able to effectively handle the ministry load. Those who attempt this feat usually do so to the detriment of their personal lives, their families, and their ministries. The wise pastor views this inability not as a weakness, but as an opportunity to engage other spiritually-gifted leaders in service to the Lord. Jerry W. Brown, in the first paragraph of the preface to *Church Staff Teams That Win*, shares briefly about his pastoral ministry experiences. Speaking of his duties in a one-staff-member church, he candidly writes, “I often longed for a fellow staff member with whom I could share the work, the pain, and the joy of leading a

⁵ Judy, 33.

congregation.”⁶ Many pastors feel the same way but sometimes are reluctant to be quite as honest.

The second answer often given as to why a greater number of today’s churches are led by multiple staff pertains to the change from a generalist to a specialist perspective. This shift is most readily observed in the field of medicine. Whereas general practitioners or family doctors once diagnosed and attempted to treat most ailments, today’s patients are frequently referred to one or more “specialists” for treatment. Good or bad, this mentality is now found in local churches as church members expect “specialists” for senior adults, married couples, singles, youth, children, music, administration, and other ministry areas. This trend is so common that Gary L. McIntosh writes, “Gone are the days when a pastor could focus on a simple homogeneous family church and offer a ministry package of one worship service, men’s and women’s programs, youth and children’s programs, a foreign missions group, and Sunday school.”⁷ Church-goers today expect—and sometimes demand—a broad range of specialized ministries. Accordingly, churches are striving to meet these needs through multiple staff ministers.

The Purpose and Role of the Multiple Staff

Both the pastoral staff and the local church membership need to understand the purpose and role of the pastoral staff. Judy offers the following summary of the staff’s purpose: “It [the staff] has its mission in sharing of responsibility, of mutual concern and

⁶ Brown, *Church Staff Teams that Win*, v.

⁷ McIntosh, 13.

support of one another as it assists, directs, and participates in a local congregation of Christian believers as they assemble for worship and nurture and are dispersed for work and service in the world.”⁸ Even more simply put is Leonard E. Wedel’s assessment: “The church’s mission is the staff’s mission. The church’s goals are the staff’s goals.”⁹

Any description of the pastoral staff’s purpose and role should be built off of the Apostle Paul’s words in Eph. 4:11-12. In these verses, Paul speaks of certain persons as spiritual gifts to the body of Christ: “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.” The pastoral staff’s job description is to equip, to support, to enable fellow Christians to do ministry. Several pertinent statements have been written along these lines:

- “Our role as Christian leaders is to equip saints to do what saints are supposed to do.”¹⁰
- “The staff is not to minister for or in place of the members but to minister to them in order that members may more effectively carry out their ministry in the world. It is the duty of the ministerial staff to lead, guide, supply resources, instruct, initiate, assist, and act as agents in the execution of church policies and programs.”¹¹
- “. . . we seek to lead our people to see that the terms ‘Christian,’ ‘church member,’ and ‘minister’ are theological synonyms. We frequently emphasize that we have a pastoral team of six members but a team of

⁸ Judy, 240.

⁹ Leonard E. Wedel, *Church Staff Administration: Practical Approaches* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1978), 10.

¹⁰ Fagerstrom, 52.

¹¹ Mark Short, “Organizing,” in *Personnel Administration Guide for Southern Baptist Churches*, comp. Tim J. Holcomb (Nashville: Convention Press, 1988), 96.

ministers numbering about 1200. We say: ‘As a team of pastors, we will minister to you, with you, through you, or for you; but never instead of you!’”¹²

A self-understanding of the pastoral staff’s role and the congregation’s understanding of that role will sometimes be quite different. Judy offers two specific ways to help the congregation view the pastoral staff’s role biblically. First, he suggests that an informational brochure be prepared and made available. This brochure would explain the staff’s scriptural mandate and also describe each particular staff member’s ministry. Second, he believes it would be helpful to occasionally spend a few minutes of the Sunday morning service highlighting the ministry responsibilities of specific members of the staff.¹³ Done correctly, these communication opportunities would provide a great boost in aiding the pastoral staff and congregation to be “on the same page” theologically and philosophically.

The Pastoral Staff as a Model for the Church

Often overlooked is the impact a pastoral staff makes on the church as it models the essence of good relationships and quality ministry. This impact can be positive or negative. Kent R. Hunter knows this to be true as he witnessed an example of the way staff relations can make a negative impact:

One friend of mine took the leap of faith. He is an excellent pastor, and had spent several years building the spiritual depth of his congregation. He introduced an evangelism program and trained lay people for outreach. The result was a growing church. Soon he couldn’t handle the workload, and he knew a multiple staff was the best alternative. But he’d always ministered to small churches; he had no experience

¹² Clemons, 53.

¹³ Judy, 79.

with a multiple staff. He knew of several multiple staff churches, but he also knew there were many problems. To put it bluntly, he was scared.

Thus, with incredible patience and caution, he spent an entire year interviewing candidates for the position of his associate. The choice was made; the man joined the staff; and two years later both men are miserable. They rarely speak to one another, and both are seeking positions elsewhere. The bottom line, of course, is the fact that *the congregation suffers from the whole situation* [emphasis mine].¹⁴

Perhaps the best way to summarize the link between staff and church is provided by Judy in his chapter entitled, “The Church Reflects the Staff.” He opens the chapter with the statement, “The ancient saying, ‘like priest, like people,’ to a large degree can be applied to the church staff—‘like staff, like church.’”¹⁵ He spends this entire chapter discussing the importance of the staff-church connection as it pertains to meaningful worship, nurture, morality, and community impact. He feels these are basic areas the staff must get right as it sets the pace for the congregation.¹⁶

The term “microcosm” provides another way of expressing the importance of the pastoral staff’s presence in the local church. Brown refers to this as “The Microcosm Concept.”¹⁷ As a microcosm, the pastoral staff is the small-scale version of the church in its relationships and tasks. With this understanding, Harold J. Westing describes the pastoral staff as “a church in miniature.”¹⁸

¹⁴ Kent R. Hunter, “A Model for Multiple Staff Management,” *Leadership* 2 (summer 1981): 100.

¹⁵ Judy, 236.

¹⁶ Ibid., 236-40.

¹⁷ Brown, *Church Staff Teams that Win*, 119.

¹⁸ Westing, 11.

All of this discussion of the church reflecting the staff and the staff as a microcosm merely highlights the fact that the pastoral staff sets the example in the church, and its example needs to be a good one. In more technical language, Kenneth R. Mitchell explains that “when a subsystem takes leadership in a larger system, the smaller system’s management of relationships is likely to be taken by members of the larger system as the norm for relationships.”¹⁹ This means the congregation is constantly watching (and learning) from the example set by its spiritual leaders. William P. Tuck makes it more concrete when he states, “If church members see staff workers who are constantly putting each other down, circumventing each other for a place of greater recognition in the church, and unable to relate well with their fellow ministers, they will have great difficulty in understanding what it means to be servants in Christ's name.”²⁰

In light of what has been said on this point, pastoral staff members would do well to heed the Apostle Paul’s advice to young Timothy: “Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe” (1 Tim. 4:12). Pastoral leaders must model these virtues; the people in the pews are surely watching.

¹⁹ Mitchell, 135.

²⁰ Tuck, 10.

The Senior Pastor and His Staff

The Centrality of Relationships

The Senior Pastor's relationship with his staff is of utmost importance. Without reservation, John Maxwell believes, "Relationships are the glue that holds team members together."²¹ The Senior Pastor depends on his staff more than most people realize. Kenn Gangel candidly states, "I have often said I live and die by my staff, and that is no exaggeration. I select my staff carefully, train them vigorously, and depend upon them completely."²² If the connection between Senior Pastor and staff is this strong, the relationship between the two must be strong and healthy as well. Comments regarding the impact of this relationship are numerous. Following are some examples:

- "A local church's ministry in every area will be hurt by poor staff relationships."²³
- "Harmonious relationships within the staff are imperative. The ability to work with others in close personal relationships is one of the indispensable qualifications of a staff member. Churches have been severely handicapped and even divided because of wrong relationships among staff members."²⁴
- "The following are both true statements: Serving with staff has been one of the most remarkable, rewarding, and enjoyable aspects of my thirty years of vocational ministry. Serving with staff has been one of the most

²¹ Maxwell, *17 Essential Qualities*, 110.

²² Gangel, *Team Leadership*, 123.

²³ Frank R. Campbell, "Developing a Philosophy of Leadership for a Church Staff" (D.Min. Thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1974), 140.

²⁴ Howse, 148.

challenging, draining, and frustrating aspects of my thirty years of vocational ministry.”²⁵

- “Staff relations can lead to triumph and tragedy. Some of my best friends are fellow staff members. Their presence, support and stimulation bring me great joy. They also often make me look good. I love being with them. I love to see them succeed. My team is made up of some of my favorite people. My deepest wounds in ministry have also come from people on my staff. Those closest to us can hurt us most. To be vulnerable with colleagues, sets us up to be hurt. It is part of the risk in leadership.”²⁶
- “Many fine churches have been hurt, frustrated, often fragmented, and sometimes even destroyed by unhealthy staff relations.”²⁷
- “Few congregations in our day split over doctrine; church fights much more commonly develop over relationships.”²⁸
- Consider the experience shared by Calvin Miller: “One pastor of my acquaintance, when questioned why he resigned, said it was because of sickness. ‘Sickness?’ he was asked. ‘Yes, they were sick of me and I was sick of them.’”²⁹

Robert E. Bingham introduces a unique term in his discussion of negative staff relationships: Ecclesiastical Arteriosclerosis. Medically, arteriosclerosis occurs as a thickening of the walls of the arteries, thus preventing sufficient blood flow to the body. Similarly, Bingham says that “lack of good relationships between church staff members

²⁵ Williford and Williford, 9.

²⁶ Donald L. Bubna, foreword to Harold J. Westing, *Multiple Church Staff Handbook* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1985), 9.

²⁷ Tuck, 5.

²⁸ Kenn Gangel, *Coaching Ministry Teams: Leadership and Management in Christian Organizations* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000), 109.

²⁹ Calvin Miller, “Fiddlin’ with the Staff,” *Leadership* 7 (winter 1986): 105-6.

forms a thickened wall between them.”³⁰ Over time, churches can die from this “disease.” Unfortunately, it is often not recognized and does its damage before corrective actions are taken. When it occurs among the pastoral leadership of the church, this ailment is well on its way to “infecting” the entire church body.

To avoid such a negative impact upon the church body, the Senior Pastor and pastoral staff must daily relate to one another in a healthy manner. Martin Anderson provides a pertinent reminder that “technique and good structuring are not enough to make a staff work together harmoniously and effectively.”³¹ Rather, the work of cultivating healthy relationships goes much further. The ideal is found in Scripture. In Eph. 4:1-3, the Apostle Paul gives succinct instructions that are applicable to the pastoral staff. He writes, “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Problems will be far less frequent and far less acute if working relationships are characterized by humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, love, unity, and peace.

One constant in every healthy relationship is the foundation of trust. Only with great difficulty can one even begin to picture a healthy relationship that is not built on trust. Several writers make pointed statements regarding the crucial role trust plays in relationships:

³⁰ Bingham, 5.

³¹ Martin Anderson, *Multiple Ministries: Staffing the Local Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1965), 35.

- “Trust is the most important element in the development and maintenance of a productive work environment.”³²
- “I have learned that trust is the single most important factor in building personal and professional relationships.”³³
- “There is no more powerful way to break up relationships than to break trust. Merely the suspicion that a person cannot be trusted can result in severe fragmentation.”³⁴
- “It can take months or years to build another’s trust, and only one phrase or ill-conceived act to destroy it. Trust is established by making good promises and keeping them.”³⁵
- “People never respect a person they cannot trust.”³⁶

By virtue of his leadership position, the Senior Pastor sets the example for the rest of his pastoral staff; trust begins with him. He can expect *from* his staff only what he models *for* his staff. To help the Senior Pastor—and the staff—develop an atmosphere of trust, Douglas Fagerstrom lists “20 Trust Builders”:

1. Keep appointments (write them down).
2. Keep promises (write them down too).
3. Always be on time, better to be early.
4. Don’t take sick days unless you are sick.
5. Don’t whine and complain . . . you are perceived as a leader.

³² Rush, 34.

³³ Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 67.

³⁴ Cladis, 14.

³⁵ Fagerstrom, 26.

³⁶ Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 163.

6. Know your limitations and be willing to share them.
7. Do not overextend yourself or you will let people down.
8. Treat confidence as a precious jewel or a tender child.
9. Resist exaggeration and putting a positive spin on modest results.
10. Ask others to point out your blind spots and respond with gratitude.
11. Forget counting hours so that people can count on you.
12. Know the difference between dreams and reality.
13. Don't look for excuses, blame, or shortcuts.
14. Learn to initiate the words "I am sorry" and "Will you forgive me?"
15. Show up for the Christmas party and stay toward the end, even if you hate parties.
16. Read, read, and read . . . then contribute when you know that what you are talking about has substance and meaning (charm only lasts for seconds).
17. When being vulnerable is appropriate, be vulnerable.
18. Make sure you have someone in your life to "dump on."
19. "Don't put off until tomorrow . . ." (you know the rest).
20. You know when you are not honest; confess and repent when you have not been honest or truthful.³⁷

Nurturing Relationships

Often overlooked by Senior Pastors are the little things one can do to nurture relationships with staff members. The Senior Pastor has a great responsibility to develop healthy relationships with his co-workers. Most would benefit from the perspective

³⁷ Fagerstrom, 27.

offered by Fagerstrom. Speaking to the Senior Pastor, he writes, “The staff members serving in your ministry are your responsibility before God and others. Treat them as gifts from God. Treat them as you would desire to be treated.”³⁸

Just as the pastoral staff works together, it needs to play together. As the ancient saying goes, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” Pastoral staff relationships will greatly benefit from times of fellowship and fun. Examples include regular meals together, times of praying together, staff parties, staff picnics, and recreational outings. McIntosh reminds his readers, “The more we pray and play together, the more we stay together.”³⁹

Responsibility rests on the Senior Pastor to ensure enriching times of fellowship. He must not underestimate the value of these times. In a discussion with Howard Hendricks, personnel with *Leadership* journal spoke of a pastor of a large church who said, “People are not responding to my leadership and I don’t know why.” The *Leadership* personnel then asked, “What’s your relationship with the board? When’s the last time you had a board member and his wife over for dinner?” The pastor could not remember.⁴⁰ As stated before, even small things make a significant contribution to the overall health of staff relationships.

Another opportunity for nurturing relationships occurs during staff retreats. Lyle Schaller relates the story of a pastor who was asked, “What’s the best thing you’ve done

³⁸ Ibid., 17.

³⁹ McIntosh, 109.

⁴⁰ Howard Hendricks, “At the Planning Retreat: Discussing First Things First,” interview by Paul Robbins, Terry Muck, and Harold Myra, *Leadership* 1 (summer 1980): 106.

to enhance your ministry since coming to First Church?” The pastor responded, “That’s an easy question. In my second year we started having an annual staff retreat that runs from after lunch on Tuesday through lunch on Thursday.”⁴¹ These retreats provide the staff (and their families) a time to get away for both work and play. Important work is often done in terms of long-range planning. However, the greatest benefit may be the increased quality of relationships among staff members and staff families during times of fellowship, personal growth, and interaction.⁴²

Equally Ministers

The Senior Pastor and the pastoral staff are to be viewed equally as God-called ministers both in their own eyes and in the eyes of the congregation. Douglas Fagerstrom shares a personal experience from his days as an associate minister. Upon performing a baptism, a prominent leader in the church approached the Senior Pastor and pointedly asked, “Did the baptisms performed by Doug this evening count?” This was not the only time he would undergo this experience. He recalls how church members would

⁴¹ Schaller, *The Senior Minister*, 98.

⁴² As this thesis project does not focus on staff retreats per se, interested readers will find helpful information on both preparing for and conducting retreats in the following sources: Jimmie Sheffield, *How to Build a Shared Ministry Team: A Guide for Church Staff Meetings and Retreats* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1985), 21-28; Frank R. Lewis, *The Team Builder* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1998), 113-22; Harold J. Westing, *Multiple Church Staff Handbook* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1985), 136-43; Jimmie Sheffield, “Leading,” in *Personnel Administration Guide for Southern Baptist Churches*, comp. Tim J. Holcomb (Nashville: Convention Press, 1988), 76-78.

sometimes ask, “When are you going to become a real pastor?” or, “When are you going to get your own church?”⁴³

Oftentimes, it may be difficult to train others to accept all pastoral staff members as legitimate pastors. A helpful comparison has been made between doctors and pastors: “A doctor is no less a doctor because he specializes; a minister is no less a minister because he specializes in music, education, administration, or preaching.”⁴⁴ Rather than viewing the Senior Pastor as the boss and the staff members as workers, they both should be viewed as equal ministers with a certain call from God upon their lives for full-time ministry. This sense of equality in ministry contributes to better relationships as co-servants of Christ and His church.

Personal Growth of the Senior Pastor and the Staff Members

Personal growth (both professional and spiritual) is essential as pastoral leaders minister in the local church. John Maxwell writes, “As you and I grow and improve as leaders, so will those we lead. We need to remember that when people follow us, they can only go as far as we go. If our growth stops, our ability to lead will stop along with it. Neither personality nor methodology can substitute for personal growth. We cannot model what we do not possess.”⁴⁵ First, the Senior Pastor must be growing before he can expect the same of his staff. Second, the staff member must be growing before he can

⁴³ Fagerstrom, 15.

⁴⁴ John M. McBain, “We Minister as a Team,” *Church Administration* (September 1975): 3; quoted in Jerry W. Brown, *Church Staff Teams That Win*, (Nashville: Convention Press, 1979), 25.

⁴⁵ Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 20.

expect the same of those he leads. W. L. Howse best sums up this thought: “If a person is to lead others in spiritual things, his own spiritual life must have constant attention.”⁴⁶

As important as personal growth is, relatively few spiritual leaders actually prepare and follow a personal growth plan. The Senior Pastor must have such a plan as he models healthy personal growth. In all likelihood, his plan should cover the same basic areas as the one his staff members follow. Following are some of the essential areas of growth deserving the minister’s attention:

- Spiritual Vitality – intimacy with the Father, in love with Jesus, responsive to the Holy Spirit, regular (daily) devotional reading of Scripture, maturity and depth in prayer, fasting as led by God, other spiritual disciplines
- Family – greater closeness and trust, quality time and quantity time, regular vacations, support of the children’s activities, not giving the spouse and children “leftovers”
- Personal Health – regular medical and dental checkups, regular exercise, good eating habits, adequate nightly rest, “Sabbath” rest each week
- Ministry – future ministry goals, networking with other ministry leaders
- Education – intellectual growth, reading of challenging books and articles, attendance at training events⁴⁷

As the Senior Pastor engages in the task of personal growth, he is setting an example for his staff. He also needs to be ready to help staff members prepare and adhere to a plan for personal growth. During regular meetings with staff, he has complete freedom to share about his own experience in areas such as the five listed

⁴⁶ Howse, 111.

⁴⁷ Fagerstrom, 130.

above. In addition, he has complete freedom to hold staff members accountable by calling on them to share how God has been at work in their lives in these areas.

Expectations

What does the Senior Pastor expect and need from his staff? What does the staff expect and need from the Senior Pastor? The answers to both of these questions lie at the heart of healthy relationships among the pastoral staff.

Several key words appear in lists describing what Senior Pastors expect from their staff members. Frank Lewis's brief list is representative of what is found in several written sources. He believes the Senior Pastor has but three chief expectations of his staff: loyalty, hard work, and integrity.⁴⁸ The best way to know what Senior Pastors are looking for from staff members is to ask those currently serving as Senior Pastors. The following comments are from personal interviews with current Senior Pastors:

- Ronnie Brown, Senior Pastor of Swift Creek Baptist Church (Midlothian, VA)
 - Pray for me.
 - Tell me the truth (not what you think I want to hear).
 - Be clear.
 - Be loyal (speak of me in a positive light before others).
 - If there are personal issues, deal with them privately.
 - Keep me from being blindsided.⁴⁹
- Mark Becton, Senior Pastor of Grove Avenue Baptist Church (Richmond, VA)
 - Serve according to Ps. 78:72 ("So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them with his skillful hands").

⁴⁸ Lewis, 65-67.

⁴⁹ Ronnie Brown, Senior Pastor of Swift Creek Baptist Church in Midlothian, Va., interview by author, 24 July 2009, Midlothian, Va.

- From this verse, there are but two crucial needs: be godly and be responsible.⁵⁰
- Jason Barber, Senior Pastor of North Main Baptist Church (Danville, VA)
 - Prepare ministry plans and be focused on their goals for the year.
 - Do not let someone run down the Senior Pastor.⁵¹
- Thurman Hayes, Senior Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church (Yorktown, VA)
 - Be loyal.
 - Be supportive.
 - Work hard.
 - Work smart.⁵²
- Jeff Ginn, Executive Director of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, and past Senior Pastor of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church (Colonial Heights, VA)
 - Loyalty is important, but never ask for it as it cannot be demanded; the staff gives you loyalty when they respect you.
 - Walk with God.
 - Love your wife.
 - Do well in your ministry.
 - Minister by the Golden Rule.⁵³
- Tim Hight, Senior Pastor of Main Street Baptist Church (Christiansburg, VA)
 - Work hard; have a good work ethic.
 - Run things by me (keep me in the loop).⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Mark Becton, Senior Pastor of Grove Avenue Baptist Church in Richmond, Va., interview by author, 29 July 2009, Richmond, Va.

⁵¹ Jason Barber, Senior Pastor of North Main Baptist Church in Danville, Va., interview by author, 6 August 2009, Hanover, Va.

⁵² Thurman Hayes, Senior Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Yorktown, Va., interview by author, 13 August 2009, King George, Va.

⁵³ Jeff Ginn, Executive Director of The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia in Richmond, Va., interview by author, 16 August 2009, Fredericksburg, Va.

⁵⁴ Tim Hight, Senior Pastor of Main Street Baptist Church in Christiansburg, Va., interview by author, 18 August 2009, Manassas, Va.

- Drew Landry, Senior Pastor of Spotswood Baptist Church (Fredericksburg, VA)
 - Practice good communication.
 - Be transparent.
 - I do not like surprises; I despise surprises.⁵⁵
- Ernie Myers, Senior Pastor of Deep Creek Baptist Church (Chesapeake, VA)
 - Do not cause me trouble.
 - Do your job.
 - Grow your ministry.
 - Make my job easier.⁵⁶

From the opposite perspective, staff members also desire—and expect—certain things from the Senior Pastor. Senior Pastors should recognize that the basic needs of people in general apply just as well to the staff: recognition, security, opportunity, and belonging.⁵⁷ Similarly, using the analogy of an athletic coach and his players, H. Joseph Miller lists “what every team member needs from the head coach”:

- Commitment . . . to the team and to the task
- Opportunity . . . to develop and contribute
- Affirmation . . . of contribution and accomplishment
- Communication . . . of the purpose and the priorities
- Hope . . . in the future⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Drew Landry, Senior Pastor of Spotswood Baptist Church in Fredericksburg, Va., interview by author, 20 August 2009, Fredericksburg, Va.

⁵⁶ Ernie Myers, Senior Pastor of Deep Creek Baptist Church in Chesapeake, Va., interview by author, 20 August 2009, King George, Va.

⁵⁷ Elam G. Wiest, *How to Organize Your Church Staff* (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1962), 24.

⁵⁸ Miller, *Building the Church*, 804-11.

Especially important and mentioned by many writers is the importance of responsibility and freedom. Staff members long for significant responsibility. They want to know they are making a difference for the Lord through the local church in the lives of fellow believers. However, along with this responsibility, they want freedom to fulfill their duties using their own creativity and abilities. They absolutely do not want to be micromanaged. Speaking to this need for autonomy, Judy says, “They should be like chief petty officers in the Navy. The captain of the ship issues general instructions but virtually never interferes with the chief’s job or tells him how to do it.”⁵⁹

In addition to thoughts taken from written sources are suggestions provided by Senior Pastors through personal interviews:

- Rodney Autry, Senior Pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church (Manassas, VA)
 - Staff members all need something different. Some do not want you to poke, prod, or police them—they want freedom to do the job; some want you to lead them by the hand. Some want zero affirmation while others want it all the time.⁶⁰
- Randy Hahn, Senior Pastor of Colonial Heights Baptist Church (Colonial Heights, VA)
 - The Senior Pastor’s job is to help your staff be successful. When they are successful, you are successful.⁶¹
- Ronnie Brown
 - Pray for them.
 - Tell them the truth.
 - Be clear (especially about expectations).

⁵⁹ Judy, 135.

⁶⁰ Rodney Autry, Senior Pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Manassas, Va., interview by author, 22 July 2009, Manassas, Va.

⁶¹ Randy Hahn, Senior Pastor of Colonial Heights Baptist Church in Colonial Heights, Va., interview by author, 24 July 2009, Colonial Heights, Va.

- Express loyalty in front of others.
- Deal with personal issues in private.
- Keep them from being blindsided.
- Show them you care.⁶²
- Mark Becton
 - As with the Senior Pastor's needs, the staff needs the Senior Pastor to serve according to Ps. 78:72. This means he should be godly and be responsible.⁶³
- Thurman Hayes
 - Be loyal.
 - Be an encouragement.
 - Be a servant leader.
 - Be a good listener . . . but be decisive (make decisions).
 - Have a clear vision (staff members are frustrated when the Senior Pastor is unclear).⁶⁴
- Tim Hight
 - The staff needs to hear the Senior Pastor's vision.
 - They need to understand that God leads through their pastor.⁶⁵
- Drew Landry
 - I've got their back.⁶⁶
- Ernie Myers
 - Help them become all they can be.
 - Add value to them.⁶⁷

⁶² Brown, interview.

⁶³ Becton, interview.

⁶⁴ Hayes, interview.

⁶⁵ Hight, interview.

⁶⁶ Landry, interview.

⁶⁷ Myers, interview.

Two final excerpts from written sources provide a fitting summary to the area of expectations. First is a list of responses every Senior Pastor would like to hear one day from his staff members:

- You've given us a sense of belonging.
- You've thanked us for our efforts.
- You've showered us with attention.
- You've taken interest in our personal lives.
- You've praised, recognized, and rewarded our achievements.
- You've been careful not to criticize too much.
- You've remained loyal to us in defeat as well as in victory.
- You've encouraged us.
- You've expanded our responsibilities.
- You've displayed a positive optimistic attitude.
- You've kept us informed about the church's affairs.
- You've urged us to strive for excellence in all that we do.
- You've appealed to people's emotions as well as their logic.
- You've helped us to remove obstacles and deal with problems that get in our way.
- You've supported us by providing the tools, training, and money that we need to do our jobs.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Gangel, *Team Leadership*, 230-31.

Second is a hypothetical letter written by Dan Odle, Associate Pastor of Music and Worship at Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky. He entitles the piece, “From a ‘Happy’ Staff Member: A Letter to Pastors.”

We love being on your staff. It is a great joy for us to serve you, but you may have noticed there are times when the great relationship we have can be strained. You may have even wondered during those times exactly what we expect from you. Here are just a few things we really need from you to make us “happy” staff members.

Clarity. The first thing we look for from you is clear direction. We all want to follow someone who knows where he’s going, and when you chart a clear course for the future, it gives us confidence and focus. When that message is communicated clearly and consistently (thought you would like the alliteration), we work more intentionally and with greater purpose.

Input. We serve on your team, but we also want you to value our input for key decisions. When you include us in the discussion – instead of simply handing down decisions – it helps us buy in much more quickly. We will honor the final decision as the will of the team, but knowing you have sought out – and listened to – our input is invaluable to us.

Protection. While we value the freedom you give us to run our ministries, we also need to know that we’re operating under your authority and your protection. We’re willing to stand with you in difficult and even unpopular decisions, but it’s imperative that you stand with us as well. It emboldens our service when we know you support, both publicly and privately, the work we do. In a very real sense, the protection you give us by your blessing on our ministry is the very source of the freedom we desire.

A pastor. Finally, we need you to be our pastor, too. We want you to hold us accountable, to disciple us, and to minister to us – to pray with us and for us in good times and in difficult situations. Often, our families can get caught in the crossfire of our busy schedules and the needs of so many other church members. You can be a great source of encouragement for them as you lead them and pastor them as well.

In the end, this is much more than just a professional relationship; we are co-laborers in Christ. We love being part of this ministry team, but we know that every great team needs a great leader. We understand that you are the pastor. We not only respect that, we need it.

Sincerely,
Your Staff⁶⁹

Praise and Appreciation

One of the simplest, easiest, and most efficient ways of maintaining good staff relationships is the use of affirmation. Too often, this simple practice is overlooked, perhaps because criticizing comes much easier than affirming for some people. Myron Rush writes, “Giving recognition costs nothing. Yet it is one of the most overlooked and least used tools of motivation a leader has at his disposal.”⁷⁰ The Senior Pastor can only increase his leadership effectiveness when he applauds his staff. By definition, the Latin word from which the word affirmation comes means “to make firm, to give strength, to make strong.”⁷¹ Such strengthening should be a priority for the Senior Pastor.

There are many good ways for a Senior Pastor to say “Good job!” Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson, speaking of “The One Minute Praising,” list seven ways to make affirmation work well:

1. Tell people up front that you are going to let them know how they are doing.
2. Praise people immediately.
3. Tell people what they did right—be specific.

⁶⁹ Dan Odle, *From a “Happy” Staff Member: A Letter to Pastors*, Compass, ed. Matthew V. Briggs, vol. 2 (Louisville: Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008), 2.

⁷⁰ Rush, 44.

⁷¹ Thomas Kane, *The Healing Touch of Affirmation* (Whitensville: Affirmation Books, 1976), 22; quoted in Doran C. McCarty, *Working with People* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1986), 59.

4. Tell people how good you feel about what they did right, and how it helps the organization and the other people who work there.
5. Stop for a moment of silence to let them “*feel*” how good you feel.
6. Encourage them to do more of the same.
7. Shake hands or touch people in a way that makes it clear that you support their success in the organization.⁷²

Ted Engstrom and Edward Dayton provide an “Appreciation Checklist” to help the Senior Pastor succeed at affirmation:

- _____ I have written a personal note of appreciation to a staff member this week.
- _____ I usually remember people’s birthdays.
- _____ I know how long each person reporting to me has been with the organization.
- _____ I have discussed a *personal* problem with a staff member in the last two weeks.
- _____ I discuss personal performances with each of my staff members at least once a year.
- _____ I have thought about and have goals for the personal growth of those reporting to me.
- _____ I have had lunch with a member of my staff in the last week.
- _____ Our organization is continuously analyzing cost-of-living against present salaries.
- _____ We supply training opportunities to qualified staff.⁷³

⁷² Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson, *The One Minute Manager* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1982), 44.

⁷³ Engstrom and Dayton, 163.

While most, if not all, Senior Pastors acknowledge the importance of affirming staff members, some still may fail to act on what they know. Senior Pastors would do well to develop patterns of praising and appreciating their pastoral associates. Failure to do so may lead to a less-than-desirable outcome. Speaking in the context of rewards and recognition, Kenn Gangel bluntly gives one such consequence when he writes, “Christian organizations that do not take care of their people deserve to lose them.”⁷⁴

Shepherding the Staff

Who pastors the pastors? For the Senior Pastor, he truly has no pastor although he may have other pastor friends he turns to when needed. However, he is in a position to pastor the pastoral staff just as he would members of the church family. As Frank Campbell writes, “Staff members need a pastor as much as any of the lay people in the church.”⁷⁵

As the Senior Pastor faithfully ministers to his staff, he is providing an up-close and personal model for the staff as they minister to others. The staff member may minister even more faithfully as a result of receiving excellent pastoral care. His duties toward his staff parallel the pastoral needs of the congregation: visiting staff members and their families; being willing to share the burden of personal problems; being present during times of joy, heartaches, and sorrows; visiting them in the hospital; praying with

⁷⁴ Gangel, *Team Leadership*, 387.

⁷⁵ Campbell, 142.

them individually. These aspects of pastoral ministry are routine with members of the congregation but often are forgotten with members of the church staff.⁷⁶

Family Members of the Pastoral Staff

The Senior Pastor must be careful not to forget that others are intimately involved in the lives of his pastoral staff, and they too need to be acknowledged and supported. In short, the Senior Pastor needs to “be very good to the spouse and children of the staff person.”⁷⁷ Just as he is the pastor of the staff member, he is to be the pastor of the staff member’s family.

Ministry to a staff member’s family begins by leading the staff member to see that his relationship to his wife and children are the most important relationships and responsibilities he has. Ruth Senter puts the concept in the proper perspective when she writes, “Ministry couples who avoid burnout are the ones who have learned this important fact: No matter how long your tenure with any one congregation, your relationship with the people in that congregation is temporary, compared to your relationship with your family.”⁷⁸ No doubt, ministry responsibilities can take a noticeable toll on marriage and the home. As unthinkable as it may sound, Satan can and does use the stresses of ministry to attack the first and most important institution of society—the family.

⁷⁶ Judy, 109-10.

⁷⁷ Bennett, 46.

⁷⁸ Ruth Senter, “A Spouse’s Choice of Role,” in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, ed. James D. Berkley (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1994), 59.

The following six principles provide the Senior Pastor with a way to indirectly strengthen the family relationships of those on his staff. Obviously, he should also model these as he instructs his staff with practical ways to prioritize their family life.

1. At the end of the day, bring home a healthy attitude.
2. Make a mental switch on the way home (or do something once you arrive that signals to yourself and your family that you are home at last).
3. Let the family know you've been thinking about them in your absence.
4. Remember the family deserves at least the same care any other parishioner would get.
5. Control the telephone.
6. Include the family in aspects of the ministry.⁷⁹

The following ideas of ministering to family members of staff were shared during the personal interviews with Senior Pastors:

- If school is not meeting a particular day, neither is the staff meeting. Stay home and enjoy family time.⁸⁰
- If a staff member has had an unusually difficult and time-consuming week or two, tell them to go home and cut grass or something.⁸¹
- Have the staff and their families in your home. Be sure to stop in the hallway and speak to the children of staff members; express an interest in their lives.⁸²

⁷⁹ Shelley, 50-51.

⁸⁰ Autry, interview.

⁸¹ Hahn, interview.

⁸² Becton, interview.

- Hang out together as families. Enjoy a cookout together. Pray and worship as families.⁸³
- Allot funds for spouses to attend meetings/conventions. Attend staff retreats as families.⁸⁴
- Know the wives' birthdays and remind staff members to get them something better this year than last year. Go on an annual staff trip (all expenses paid). If a staff member has to choose between their kid's ballgame or a committee meeting, they better go to the ballgame.⁸⁵

A Concluding Summary

George Cladis provides his readers with the "Staff Team Covenant" of Noroton Presbyterian Church in Darien, Connecticut. The final section of this covenant contains a list of statements to which staff members are expected to ascribe. This list serves as a suitable summary to this section on the Senior Pastor and his staff. The pastoral staff covenants to do the following:

- Seek to appreciate and live out our God-given individual blessings with a sense of awe.
- Intentionally encourage and bless one another.
- Draw out each other's gifts while making the weaknesses irrelevant.
- Put an emphasis on self-grace and grace with one another rather than perfection.
- Speak well of fellow staff to others.
- Forgive ourselves and one another.

⁸³ Hayes, interview.

⁸⁴ Ginn, interview.

⁸⁵ Landry, interview.

- Work through problems rather than bury issues.
- Disagree openly, avoiding triangulation and speaking unkindly of others.
- View all ministries as an interlinking circle; no beginning, no ending, no one more important than the other.
- Like the potter and the clay, be willing to be molded and changed.
- Communicate, both to each other and to the congregation.
- Make time for fellowship, worship, and prayer together.
- Respect, honor, and trust each other.⁸⁶

The Senior Pastor as Staff Leader

Importance of the Senior Pastor's Leadership

By virtue of his position alone, the congregation looks to and expects the Senior Pastor to be the leader of both the staff and congregation. Does the Senior Pastor adequately realize what this means? Perhaps many do not. Those who read leadership books by John Maxwell will undoubtedly come across the statement, "Everything rises and falls on leadership."⁸⁷ Assuming this statement is true, the Senior Pastor finds that being the "leader of his leaders" is a monumental undertaking with implications for both the local church and the kingdom of God. In this vein, Lyle Schaller tells his readers that he writes "based on the assumption that the most critical single factor in determining the effectiveness, vitality, morale, attractiveness, numerical growth or decline, community

⁸⁶ Cladis, 161.

⁸⁷ Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 6.

image, and outreach of the large congregation is the senior minister.”⁸⁸ One may correctly apply this sentiment to both the small and mid-sized congregation as well.

In typical “Swindoll fashion,” Charles Swindoll makes even more concrete the crucial role a leader has among his people. He writes that a great leader is “essential for motivation and direction. Essential for evaluation and accomplishment. It is the one ingredient essential for the success of any organization. Take away leadership and it isn’t long before confusion replaces vision. Volunteers or employees who once dedicated themselves to their tasks begin to drift without leadership. Morale erodes. Enthusiasm fades. The whole system finally grinds to a halt.”⁸⁹ A Senior Pastor cannot afford to “drop the ball” when so much of the church’s vitality rests on his leadership.

Defining Leadership

The many facets of leadership present quite a challenge to those attempting to offer a definition. However, it is incumbent upon authors to do so. The following definitions/statements are a sampling of what one finds in books on church leadership.

- “I consider leadership to be the exercise of one’s spiritual gifts under the call of God to serve a certain group of people in achieving the goals God has given them toward the end of glorifying Christ.”⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Schaller, *The Senior Minister*, 10-11.

⁸⁹ Charles R. Swindoll, *Leadership* (Waco: Word, 1985), 7; quoted in Gary L. McIntosh, *Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 2000), 71.

⁹⁰ Kenneth O. Gangel, “What Leaders Do,” in *Leaders on Leadership: Wisdom, Advice and Encouragement on the Art of Leading God’s People*, ed. George Barna (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 1997), 31.

- “I define a Christian leader as a godly person who knows where he or she is going and who has followers.”⁹¹
- “Leadership . . . involves co-ordinating the interests, abilities, and energies of individuals into channels of activity which will enable them to accomplish their desired goals.”⁹²

Leadership Qualifications and Characteristics

Based on “chief biblical texts that develop the requirements of leaders” (1 Tim. 3:1-13, 2 Tim. 2:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, Acts 6:1-6, Ex. 18:21-22), Darrell W. Johnson lists four words describing qualifications for pastoral leaders:

- Commitment – Leaders must be committed to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. “There must be evidence of a fire to know and obey the Crucified and Risen One.”
- Conviction – Leaders must have biblical convictions regarding the chief doctrines of the Christian faith. They must learn to “think Christianly” about every dimension of their lives.
- Competency – Leaders must know their way through the Scriptures and be able to help others do so. They must know and utilize their spiritual gifts. They must exercise relational skills as they work with others.
- Character – Leaders must be taking on the character of Jesus, becoming more and more Christlike. “The biblical qualifications of a leader are commitment, conviction, competency, and character. The greatest of these is character.”⁹³

George Barna believes there are but three characteristics that describe every Christian leader:

⁹¹ Malphurs, *Ministry Nuts and Bolts*, 105.

⁹² Howse, 101.

⁹³ Johnson, 16-17.

- A Christian leader is *called by God*. – There must be an unmistakable sense that God Himself has led and equipped the leader for his task. “Like Moses, each staff member must have his ‘burning bush.’”⁹⁴
- A Christian leader is a person of *Christlike character*. – His personal attributes must reflect the nature of God.
- A Christian leader possesses *functional competencies*. – His abilities must allow him to perform the tasks demanded of his position.⁹⁵

Barna describes the *Christlike character* of a leader with the following words: a servant’s heart, honesty, loyalty, perseverance, trustworthiness, courage, humility, sensitivity, teachability, values driven, optimistic, even tempered, joyful, gentle, consistent, spiritual depth, forgiving, compassionate, energetic, faithful, self-controlled, loving, wise, discerning, encouraging, passionate, fair, patient, kind, merciful, and reliable.⁹⁶

Barna similarly provides a list of terms describing the *functional competencies* of a Christian leader: effective communication, identifying/articulating/casting vision, motivating people, coaching and developing people, synthesizing information, persuading people, initiating strategic action, engaging in strategic thinking, resolving conflict, developing resources, delegating authority and responsibility, reinforcing commitment, celebrating successes, decision making, team building, instigating evaluation, creating a viable corporate culture, maintaining focus and priorities,

⁹⁴ Howse, 102.

⁹⁵ George Barna, “Nothing Is More Important Than Leadership,” in *Leaders on Leadership: Wisdom, Advice and Encouragement on the Art of Leading God’s People*, ed. George Barna (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 1997), 24.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 23.

upholding accountability, identifying opportunities for influence, relating everything back to God's plans and principles, modeling the spiritual disciplines, and managing key leaders.⁹⁷

Leadership Styles

Myron Rush writes, "Leadership styles can be identified and categorized according to the way authority is used, how people's minds and muscles are used, and how the leader relates to and communicates with those under him."⁹⁸ One will usually find that leadership is divided into three or four styles; some writers go further, identifying up to six different styles. Kenneth E. Hayes offers a sufficient description of leadership styles and does so in the context of pastoral leadership. He identifies four styles:

- Directive Pastoral Leadership – This style is often termed an authoritarian or autocratic style. In this style, the Senior Pastor directly sets standards and guidelines for his staff, insuring they know exactly what he expects of them. As such, he is primarily task-oriented.
- Democratic Pastoral Leadership – In this style, the Senior Pastor is primarily relationship-oriented. He shares his leadership responsibilities with his staff and is described as flexible, approachable, and friendly.
- Balanced Pastoral Leadership – In this style, the Senior Pastor places strong emphasis on both the job that needs to be done and his relationship with staff members responsible for getting the job done.
- Pastoral Leadership with Little or No Emphasis – This style of leadership is often termed *laissez-faire*. In this style, the Senior Pastor "provides the minimum of direction for his staff, and places very little emphasis on the

⁹⁷ Ibid., 23-24.

⁹⁸ Rush, 221.

relationships which develop among the group.” Some say this is really no leadership style at all.⁹⁹

If the Senior Pastor identifies with one of these styles and tries to maintain it, he may find that he runs into difficulty. Rather, he is wise to recognize that not all circumstances call for the same leadership style. Drew Landry says the Senior Pastor needs discernment to know when to lead in what style. He may not like it, but there are times he will need to be autocratic.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, C. Peter Wagner believes there is no single leadership style that fits every situation the Senior Pastor will face. He concludes, “My observation is that God blesses many different church leadership styles as long as they are implemented in a Christian way.”¹⁰¹

The writer of this project has chosen to adopt Thom Rainer’s categories of pastoral leadership styles, based on combinations of the two terms, “task” and “relationship.” Rainer discusses four styles:

- High task/high relationship – emphasizes both relationships and “getting things done;” a team captain who participates in the game.
- High task/low relationship – higher interest in production and “getting things done” than in relationships with people; a commander who pushes others to reach goals.
- Low task/high relationship – emphasizes people, feelings, and fellowship more than “getting things done;” a caregiver who primarily ministers to his congregation.

⁹⁹ Hayes, 36-37.

¹⁰⁰ Landry, interview.

¹⁰¹ C. Peter Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1984), 98.

- Low task/low relationship – focuses little on developing relationships or on “getting things done;” a recluse who often retreats from the leadership role.¹⁰²

Through his research, Rainer discovered that 83.7% of the pastors surveyed chose “high task/high relationship” as best describing their leadership style; 9.2% chose low task/high relationship; 7.1% chose high task/low relationship; and, none chose low task/low relationship.¹⁰³

Using a similar concept but different words, Gary McIntosh prefers to speak of two dimensions of leadership: the nomothetic dimension (task-oriented) and the idiographic dimension (relational-oriented). McIntosh uses the following comparison chart to demonstrate the two dimensions:

Nomothetic Dimension

Task orientation
Focus on achievement
Formal structures
Organizational needs
Effectiveness desired
Initiate new ministries
Concern for the organization

Idiographic Dimension

Relational orientation
Focus on maintenance
Informal structures
Individual needs
Efficiency desired
Improve old ministries
Concern for the person¹⁰⁴

The order in which one prioritizes these two aspects of leadership style will have a noticeable impact on one’s leadership effectiveness. Many writers point out this truth:

- “Being the leader of a staff means, above all, relating to people. . . . Leaders who rely on mechanisms and organization alone will not be

¹⁰² Rainer, 70-71.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 72.

¹⁰⁴ McIntosh, 29.

effective. Good leaders help people grow and treat them with reverence and dignity.¹⁰⁵

- “All management and leadership skills—planning, organizing, leading, staffing, and evaluating—have good working relationships as their foundation.”¹⁰⁶
- “Leadership begins with being, not doing.”¹⁰⁷
- “If the staff cannot maintain its own interpersonal relationships, it will not be able effectively to perform its task functions.”¹⁰⁸
- “After twenty years of ministry involving a lot of trial and error, I have come to a rock-solid conviction that has revolutionized my ministry: if a church is to succeed in carrying out a healthy ministry and developing a good Christian community there must be stable and high-quality relationships among the members of the principal leadership team.”¹⁰⁹
- “Whether one is managing a complicated task, or seeking to rally a group behind an important cause, or preaching a sermon, the thing which will have the single greatest impact on the effectiveness of the leadership offered is the quality of relationship between yourself and those you are trying to lead. Common sense says, and research verifies, that a leader who is well liked and respected does not need coercive power to influence subordinates and peers.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Doran C. McCarty, *Working with People* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1986), 97-98.

¹⁰⁶ Rush, 64-65.

¹⁰⁷ Miller, *Building the Church*, 667.

¹⁰⁸ Brown, *Church Staff Teams that Win*, 27.

¹⁰⁹ Cladis, ix.

¹¹⁰ James D. Anderson and Ezra Earl Jones, *The Management of Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 167.

- “There is no substitute for a relational foundation with people. . . . In all my life, I have never met a great leader who did not possess good relational skills. They are the most important abilities in leadership.”¹¹¹

All ten Senior Pastors interviewed for this project agree that an effective leadership style must be both relationship-driven and task-driven. However, all ten also emphasized the priority of relationship. Randy Hahn attempted to assign a value to the concept when he stated that he spends 98% of his time with pastoral staff members as co-laborers and friends (relationship-driven). He added that Senior Pastors have not always had this same priority. At one time, Senior Pastors were a bit aloof and more task-driven. However, most people today no longer respond as well to that type of leadership; they highly value relationship. Thus, today’s Senior Pastor must adjust as necessary to prioritize relationships as he leads members of his staff in accomplishing tasks.¹¹²

Jason Barber believes “everything is relational.” Regarding the balance of relationship and task, he stated, “Efficiency and excellence in the task is based on intimacy in the relationship.”¹¹³ While the task remains important, the task most likely will not be accomplished with excellence if healthy relationships are not maintained.

As the Senior Pastor builds relationships with staff members, he will be creating an atmosphere conducive to effective and unified ministry. If he is leading his pastoral staff appropriately, he should never hear statements such as the ones presented by Wayne Jacobsen:

¹¹¹ Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 184, 199.

¹¹² Hahn, interview.

¹¹³ Barber, interview.

- “I could count on one hand the number of times we as a staff really prayed together other than to cover church prayer requests.”
- “In six years I have never been invited to my pastor’s home for anything but church business.”
- “I want to share with him what I’m going through, but my struggles are always misunderstood as a lack of personal support.”¹¹⁴

Servant Leadership

In the midst of all the talk and writing about leadership and leadership styles, the Christian leader must not forget that the baseline for leadership is found in the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. Most writers describe this crucial component as “servant leadership.” Jesus defined such leadership in Matthew 20, where the mother of the James and John made a special request of Jesus. She asked Jesus to command that her two sons be given special places of preferment in His kingdom—one sitting to the right of His throne and the other sitting on His left. When the others heard this request, they became indignant at James and John. Jesus then used this teaching opportunity to explain the heart of leadership. In verses twenty-five through twenty-eight, He responded, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

¹¹⁴ Jacobsen, 39.

Peter further emphasizes this in his instruction to pastoral leaders: “Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock” (1 Pet. 5:1-3).

The Senior Pastor needs to understand that he is “the leading servant of a church.”¹¹⁵ While his position naturally entails an appropriate level of authority and power, he is at his best when he leads with the heart of a servant. To aid the Senior Pastor in understanding what it means to lead with the heart of a servant, Greg Ogden lists six characteristics:

- *Servant leaders are secure, knowing God values them.* If affirming others somehow diminishes our sense of importance, servant leadership will be seen as a personal threat, and we will not practice it.
- *Servant leaders find joy in encouraging and supporting staff and team members.*
- *Servant leaders don’t need credit for their ideas or visions.* How much good could be accomplished for the kingdom of God if it mattered not who gets the credit!
- *Servant leaders are high on relationships and low on control and coercion.* People are motivated by genuine care and “heart connection” rather than by fear and judgment.
- *Servant leaders shun the trappings of authority and status.* They avoid titles that support hierarchical pecking orders. They are cautious about perks, such as larger-sized offices and specially marked parking spaces.

¹¹⁵ Charles A. Tidwell, “The Church Staff as a Ministering Team,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 29 (spring 1987): 30.

- *Servant leaders base their authority on character, not the position they occupy.* True leaders, rather than forcing or coercing people to do their bidding, give followers an attractive model that they will want to emulate.¹¹⁶

To improve the Senior Pastor's ability to lead as a servant, Douglas Fagerstrom draws attention to actions that will detract from one's leadership ability. He calls these the "Ten Servant Leader Killers":

1. Don't listen, keep talking.
2. Give everyone all of the reasons why they should follow you.
3. Don't respond; just sit there, maintaining perfect composure.
4. Believe that exaggeration is better than bad news.
5. Keep everything close to your chest.
6. Don't let others step up to the plate.
7. Business sense is nonsense in ministry.
8. Make sure you always win.
9. When you are losing, get real loud or real quiet, your choice.
10. Hide and make people find you.¹¹⁷

The Senior Pastor's Role as Staff Leader

While the Senior Pastor should give great priority to the relational aspects of leadership, he must remember that there are specific tasks that demand his attention. A

¹¹⁶ Greg Ogden, "Servant Leadership," in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, ed. James D. Berkley (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1994), 150-51.

¹¹⁷ Fagerstrom, 64.

primary task—that of preparing for and conducting staff meetings—will be the subject of Chapter Four. However, a word concerning his role is warranted in concluding this section on leadership.

Marvin Judy sums up the Senior Pastor's task as he writes, "The task of the senior minister is to help create a climate within the congregation, and more especially the employed staff, which will bring about maximum participation of each person involved."¹¹⁸ Echoing this thought, John Maxwell states, "I believe a leader's success can be defined as the maximum utilization of the abilities of those under him."¹¹⁹ As stated earlier, staff members long for responsibility, but they want this responsibility to come with the freedom to accomplish their tasks. Senior Pastors who believe their task is to micromanage others will greatly inhibit creativity, productivity, and ministerial excellence.

Senior Pastors interviewed for this project were questioned about the most important issues they deal with on a regular basis. Most answered the question in terms of the most important *tasks* they have as Senior Pastors. Mark Becton said the Senior Pastor has three tasks he must do well: 1) Be well-prepared for Sunday's sermon; 2) Communicate the church's mission and vision; and 3) Minister to the body.¹²⁰ Jason Barber said there are but two chief tasks the Senior Pastor has: 1) Guard his study time

¹¹⁸ Judy, 97.

¹¹⁹ Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 15.

¹²⁰ Becton, interview.

and 2) Guard the church's vision.¹²¹ Thurman Hayes said there are two tasks the Senior Pastor cannot delegate: 1) Pulpit ministry—he views this as the rudder that steers the ship, and 2) Providing general direction for the church.¹²² Similarly, Ernie Myers said the Senior Pastor has two chief tasks: 1) Preach—he is the only one specifically called to do that, and 2) Keep the staff moving toward the goal.¹²³

From these statements, two specific tasks rise to the top: preaching the Word and guiding the staff (and church) to be vision-focused. The Senior Pastor must protect sufficient time for in-depth biblical study. His sermons should be driven by the text as he teaches and applies the truth of God's Word. The Senior Pastor also must lead in accordance with the church's God-given mission as he keeps the ministries of the church in line with God's vision for the church. This project is not designed to spend a substantial amount of space on terms like "mission" and "vision." However, a brief definition of key terms will suffice to help the Senior Pastor—as the visionary leader—identify the most foundational elements as he guards the vision of the church. Aubrey Malphurs provides invaluable assistance to the Senior Pastor as he writes of core values, mission, vision, and strategy. Below are his definitions of each:

- Core Values – The constant, passionate, biblical core beliefs that drive the ministry.
- Mission – A broad, brief, biblical statement of what the organization is supposed to be doing.

¹²¹ Barber, interview.

¹²² Hayes, interview.

¹²³ Myers, interview.

- Vision – A clear, challenging picture of the future of the ministry as it can and must be.
- Strategy – The process that determines how you will accomplish the mission of your ministry.¹²⁴

Another aspect of the Senior Pastor's leadership role deserving special mention is his responsibility to evaluate staff members. Myron Rush unreservedly states, "Of all the tools at the manager's disposal, the performance evaluation is one of the most important and valuable."¹²⁵ Unfortunately, the evaluation process is sometimes overlooked or outright neglected. Staff members deserve and need to have feedback. J. Clemmer recounts a story illustrating this need:

A man walked into a local drug store and asked the druggist if he could use the telephone. The druggist overheard the following conversation: "Hello, Consolidated Foods? About six months ago, I saw an opening for a sales position. Is it still available?" After a pause, the man continued. "Oh, you filled it five months ago. How is he working out?" After another pause, the man said, "Thank you. Bye."

Following the call, the druggist expressed his sympathy to the man for not being able to obtain the position he inquired about. The man replied, "Oh, I am the one who got that job. I was just calling to find out how I'm doing!"¹²⁶

Allen W. Graves points out the positive benefits of staff evaluation by viewing the evaluation process as "an opportunity that will give meaning, purpose, affirmation and

¹²⁴ Malphurs, *Ministry Nuts and Bolts*, 20, 63, 92, 137. In this book, Malphurs provides a detailed explanation of these four foundational components.

¹²⁵ Rush, 186.

¹²⁶ J. Clemmer, *Firing on All Cylinders* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992); quoted in H. Joseph Miller, *Building the Church: A Comprehensive Manual for Church Administration*, vol. 2 (Greenville: BJU Press, 2003), 746-47.

clarification to the staff member's work.”¹²⁷ If this is to be the case, how should the Senior Pastor proceed? Miller provides an acrostic that will help in this regard:

E – First, we seek to Encourage them.

Q – Second, we address their Questions concerning their ministry.

U – Third, we strive to Understand their ministry effectiveness.

I – Fourth, we attempt to Identify specific gains and goals achieved.

P – Finally, we Propose action steps for continued growth.¹²⁸

To help the Senior Pastor put into practice an evaluation process with positive results, David Cormack emphasizes that the “personal evaluation is a wholly *positive* activity aimed at reviewing and improving the team member’s performance.”¹²⁹ He then provides an outline of questions that form the core of the evaluation:

1. Present Contribution to the Team
 - (a) Set down in order of importance a brief list of what you consider to have been your main tasks and contributions to the team during the past year.
 - (b) Which of your skills showed themselves most clearly in the team during the last year? How could these strengths be exploited?
 - (c) What have you done least well? How could these weaknesses be overcome?
2. Future Contribution to the Team
 - (a) Were there any obstacles which hindered you from achieving what you intended? Are they likely to recur? If so, how could they be eliminated?
 - (b) If you were team leader, what changes would you make in the way your talents and gifts are used?

¹²⁷ Allen W. Graves, “Factors in Church Staff Effectiveness for Today’s Churches,” *Review and Expositor* 78 (winter 1981): 32.

¹²⁸ Miller, *Building the Church*, 799.

¹²⁹ Cormack, 175.

- (c) What action can you take to improve your contribution to the team?
 - (d) What additional things might the team do to help you improve your value to the team?
3. Work Plans
 - (a) What do you think should be the main targets in your work for the team in the next year?
 - (b) What standards do you think we should use to assess your performance during the coming year?
 4. Development
 - (a) Do you think that you need more training or experience to enable you to function better in the team? If so, of what kind?
 - (b) What do you hope to be doing in (say) three years' time within the organization/church? Is there any training that you feel you need to prepare you for the future?
 5. Other Points – Are there any other issues you wish to raise in relation to your work in the team?¹³⁰

The Senior Pastor should conduct an evaluation of his staff members annually. In addition, he may find it beneficial to conduct mid-year evaluations and possibly even quarterly evaluations. Upon completion of his Doctor of Ministry thesis project, Frank Campbell discovered that the greatest value of his project was the writing of monthly reports.¹³¹ These reports are not as detailed as annual evaluations might be; however, they produce a regular, personal analysis of one's work and provide monthly accountability. The monthly report is simply a review of one's work for the past month. Campbell required that the report include at least some of the following:

1. The actual activities engaged in and an evaluation of them.
2. New programs or projects.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 178-80.

¹³¹ Campbell, 141.

3. Evaluation of whether or not your time is being utilized wisely.
4. Activities which seem unimportant.
5. Relation of your work to other staff members and programs.

* Please feel free to offer any suggestions or report on anything related to your work.¹³²

The Pastoral Staff as a Team

The Importance of Teamwork

The concept of teamwork is very popular, as evidenced by the large quantity of books on the topic. This holds true as well for teamwork in ministry. All ten Senior Pastors interviewed for this project give prominence to teamwork as they serve alongside their pastoral staffs. When asked whether or not he views his pastoral staff as a ministry team, Ernie Myers simply responded, “What other way can you look at it?”¹³³ From more of a business perspective, Patrick Lencioni writes, “Not finance. Not strategy. Not technology. It is teamwork that remains the ultimate competitive advantage, both because it is so powerful and so rare.”¹³⁴

A modern-day example of the importance of teamwork came in 2006, courtesy of Disney Pixar’s *Cars* movie. As the movie begins, the main character (“Lightning McQueen”) is heard speaking to himself regarding his greatness. His words make it obvious he sees himself as a flashy one-man show: “Okay, here we go. Focus. Speed. I

¹³² Ibid., 146.

¹³³ Myers, interview.

¹³⁴ Lencioni, vii.

am speed. One winner. Forty-two losers. I eat losers for breakfast....Speed. I'm faster than fast, quicker than quick. I am Lightning." At the conclusion of the opening race in the movie, a reporter asks him, "Are you sorry you didn't have a crew chief out there?" After a few prideful comments, Lightning responds, "Am I sorry I don't have a crew chief? No, I'm not, because I'm a one-man show."¹³⁵ As the movie unfolds, Lightning McQueen learns that being a "one-man-show" will not bring him success on the racetrack. Rather, winning requires teamwork.

Teamwork is critical in multiple-staff ministry. In the words of one writer, if ministry partners do not "team up," someone may "steam up," resulting in a loss of energy for the important work at hand.¹³⁶ Without properly understanding and implementing principles of teamwork, the Senior Pastor and his staff likely will fail both in their relationships and in their tasks. They would do well to remember the commonly-recognized acronym, TEAM: Together Everyone Accomplishes More.¹³⁷

Defining Teamwork

Jerry Brown summarizes what most writers discover when they attempt to define teamwork: "A staff team is easier to describe than it is to define."¹³⁸ In addition to recognizing that "together everyone accomplishes more," several helpful definitions are available:

¹³⁵ *Cars*, prod. Darla K. Anderson, 116 min., Disney/Pixar, 2006, DVD.

¹³⁶ Wiest, 44.

¹³⁷ Lewis, 83.

¹³⁸ Brown, *Church Staff Teams that Win*, 23.

- A team is “a group of Christian persons who in response to a divine and ecclesiastical calling willingly covenant with God, a local congregation, and one another to live out their vocational mission sharing responsibility and authority for enabling the church in its mission.”¹³⁹
- A high-performance team is “a small number of people with complementary skills who are equally committed to a common purpose, goals, and working approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable . . . and has members who are also deeply committed to one another’s personal growth and success.”¹⁴⁰
- “A team can be defined as two or more people moving along a path of interaction toward a common goal. . . . First, a team consists of ‘two or more people.’ Second, the group is ‘interacting’ and communicating. Third, the team has ‘a common goal.’ Unless these three elements are present, a team does not exist.”¹⁴¹
- “A team is a group of God’s people which utilizes to the ultimate the gifts God has given them and which works in beautiful fellowship connection within itself.”¹⁴²
- “*Team ministry* usually refers to a group of two or more professionally trained lay or ordained ministers who choose to approach the parish, campus, hospital, or other faith community they serve with an explicit commitment to shared responsibility and mutual support in the pastoral care they provide. People who understand themselves to be engaged in team ministry dedicate themselves not only to the work of the ministry but to the growth and development of the ministerial team.”¹⁴³

One of the most obvious observations from these definitions is that merely having persons working together does not necessarily constitute a team. A genuine team not

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Katzenbach and Smith, 92.

¹⁴¹ Rush, 48.

¹⁴² Westing, 16.

¹⁴³ Kelley, 118.

only accomplishes its task with excellence and efficiency; it also places high priority on personal relationships (mutual growth, support, and development).

A Biblical Basis for Teamwork

The most important concern regarding teamwork in ministry is whether or not the concept is biblical. Does the Bible teach and support teamwork as a legitimate and proper ministry model? The answer is a resounding “Yes!” Several places in Scripture support this conclusion.

Old Testament examples are found in the lives of men like Moses, David, and Nehemiah. In today’s terms, Moses operated with a multiple staff as he worked alongside Aaron, Hur, Joshua, the twelve spies, and the seventy elders. David’s supportive team included men like Ittai, Zadok, Abiathar, Hushai, and Ziba. Nehemiah’s labor team consisted of men like Ezra, Hanani and Hananiah, Shelemiah, Zadok, Pedaiiah, and Hunan.¹⁴⁴

In the New Testament, readers discover that Jesus and His twelve Apostles functioned very much like a multiple-staff team. The Apostle Paul also had a team of coworkers and church planters in people like Barnabas, John Mark, Timothy, Luke, Titus, Erastus, Prisca and Aquila, and Silas. In his epistles, Paul describes his ministry using team-related concepts. He writes in 1 Cor. 3:5-9, “What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. . . . Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his

¹⁴⁴ McIntosh, 87-88.

own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building." Paul clearly viewed Apollos and himself as "fellow workers," or ones working side by side towards the same goal. Such observations have led one writer to conclude, "The Bible knows nothing of solo ministry, only team ministry."¹⁴⁵

Describing Teamwork

As stated earlier, some find it easier to *describe* team ministry than to *define* it. Various lists of team characteristics are available in written sources. Following are five statements this writer feels are of primary significance to understanding teamwork among the pastoral staff.

1. We are a team, not a pyramid.

The Senior Pastor and members of his staff must see themselves as co-laborers rather than persons on various levels of a hierarchical pyramid. In ancient times, it was common for leadership to be defined in terms of a hierarchy. Thus, the pyramid became the symbol of choice when describing the best way to accomplish tasks.¹⁴⁶ In the context of pastoral ministry, a hierarchical structure would mean the Senior Pastor sits at the top of a pyramid and essentially uses the rest of the staff as extensions of himself.¹⁴⁷ Such a setup stands in stark contrast to what is needed in team ministry.

¹⁴⁵ Leonard Sweet, quoted in Gary L. McIntosh, *Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry in the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 2000), 9.

¹⁴⁶ Clemons, 51.

¹⁴⁷ Mitchell, 151.

Senior Pastors often struggle with the concept of serving as both staff leader and co-worker. To alleviate this struggle, Charles Tidwell believes the Senior Pastor must be seen as “the chief among equals.”¹⁴⁸ No doubt, even on a perfectly balanced and efficient team, there must be one who gives direction to the team. As Robert Bingham reminds his readers, “Two men may ride a horse, but one must ride in front.”¹⁴⁹ Gary McIntosh prefers to compare the pastoral team to a van:

When several people ride together in a van, they all can give advice, plan, and work together to determine the direction the van goes. Of course, only one person can drive at a time. A church staff is on a journey and everyone can offer advice, help plan, and formulate direction. However, only one person can drive, usually the senior pastor. At times other staff members may take over the wheel, depending on the needs of the moment and the giftedness of the staff members. In most situations, however, the driver is the senior pastor and he has the responsibility of guiding and pacing the staff so they arrive safely at their destination.¹⁵⁰

On a pastoral team, each member is essential. Hardy Clemons puts it this way: “Each person on the pastoral team is seen as a pastor rather than as an assistant. Each person is a first teamer; we have no second team.”¹⁵¹ Similarly, Martin Anderson states, “It is not to be a first-class ministry for one and a second-class ministry for the other.”¹⁵² In no-holds-barred fashion, Jack Hyles states the issue clearly:

The staff members must have a feeling of equality. There is no place for a caste system on a staff. The pastor should realize that the staff members should be as high socially as is he. He should treat them as his equals. This does not mean that he

¹⁴⁸ Tidwell, 33.

¹⁴⁹ Bingham, 8.

¹⁵⁰ McIntosh, 173.

¹⁵¹ Clemons, 56.

¹⁵² Anderson, 31.

loses his authority over them. It simply means that it is his position that gives him authority and not his superiority. The staff members should never feel that they are beneath the pastor. They should feel that the pastor needs them and that each is making a contribution to the pastoral work of the church.¹⁵³

2. We work as a unified team, not as separated individuals.

Two words in this statement are worthy of discussion. First is the word “unified.” All true teams are unified teams. Unity means “pulling together, growing together, working together.”¹⁵⁴ Football coach Vince Lombardi once said, “The challenge of every organization is to build a feeling of oneness, of dependence on one another . . . because the question is usually not how well each person works, but how well they work together.”¹⁵⁵ Two of the Senior Pastors interviewed for this project shared insights from their personal experience. Rodney Autry spoke of team unity by emphasizing the word “together”: “We arrive at the game plan together; we play the game plan together; we support the game plan together.”¹⁵⁶ Drew Landry shared but one statement that speaks to his determination to arrive at unified decisions: “We might beat something to death behind closed doors, but we come out of it with everyone on board.”¹⁵⁷

H. Joseph Miller attempts to explain the ingredients for unity using the concept of “connections.” He speaks of three connections that are necessary for successful teams:

¹⁵³ Hyles, 276.

¹⁵⁴ Wiest, 23.

¹⁵⁵ Miller, *Building the Church*, 847.

¹⁵⁶ Autry, interview.

¹⁵⁷ Landry, interview.

- A Heart Connection – Do we have the same passion?
- A Head Connection – Are we on the same page?
- A Hand Connection – Are we working as partners?¹⁵⁸

The Senior Pastor and his staff must experience healthy “connections” as they strive for unity. They must not underestimate its impact. As Frank Lewis reminds his readers, “People are encouraged and are made to feel secure when they see their spiritual leaders working and walking together as a united team.”¹⁵⁹

The second word worthy of discussion is “individuals.” Obviously, members of the pastoral team are *separate* individuals; however, they must not be *separated* individuals who neglect the team for their own personal benefit. The pastoral team must adopt the understanding, “We are committed to the whole church’s ministry, rather than to our individual ministry.”¹⁶⁰ This does not mean team members do not excel in their particular areas of spiritual giftedness; but, it does mean they give priority to the best interest of the team. As John Maxwell writes, “Individualism wins trophies, but teamwork wins pennants.”¹⁶¹ Rigid individualism—though given great prominence in society—can prove to be detrimental to any team’s effectiveness.

Two of the Senior Pastors interviewed for this project recognize the importance of teamwork while not detracting from individual effort. Tim Hight views the pastoral team

¹⁵⁸ Miller, *Building the Church*, 853-54.

¹⁵⁹ Lewis, 67.

¹⁶⁰ Westing, 121.

¹⁶¹ Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 143.

as an orchestra, where each is playing different notes but the same music.¹⁶² Ernie Myers compares the pastoral team to a baseball team. In baseball, each team member has a well-defined responsibility. For example, the first basemen and pitcher are talented in different ways. They each have a position to play that is suited to their individual abilities. The same is true for all nine players on the field. The first basemen would be foolish to swap positions with the pitcher in the middle of a game! The team members play their positions with the understanding that they win as a team and they lose as a team.¹⁶³

If the members of the pastoral staff work together as a unified team rather than as separated individuals, they will find that the word “I” is often replaced by the word “we.” From his experience, Peter Drucker concludes, “The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say ‘I.’ And that’s not because they have trained themselves not to say ‘I.’ They don’t *think* ‘I.’ They think ‘we’; they think ‘team.’ They understand their job to be to make the team function.”¹⁶⁴

David Cormack found this same sentiment expressed in a list of statements he once saw on a senior manager’s office wall:

The six most important words:
“I ADMIT I MADE A MISTAKE.”

The five most important words:
“YOU DID A GOOD JOB.”

¹⁶² Hight, interview.

¹⁶³ Myers, interview.

¹⁶⁴ Peter F. Drucker, *Managing the Non-profit Organization: Practices and Principles* (New York: HarperBusiness, 1990), 18-19.

The four most important words:
 “WHAT IS YOUR OPINION.”

The three most important words:
 “IF YOU PLEASE.”

The two most important words:
 “THANK YOU.”

The one most important word:
 “WE.”

The least important word:
 “I.”¹⁶⁵

Jeff Ginn shares a final story that serves to illustrate the priority of the team over the individual:

A journeyman player in the NBA spent his career being traded from team to team. Fortunately, at one juncture, he found himself on the Chicago Bulls, a teammate of the great Michael Jordan.

One game, the player watched in amazement from the bench as Michael Jordan scorched the opponents for sixty-nine points. As the game neared its conclusion, the coach inserted the journeyman. The sub made one free throw before the horn sounded.

Sometime later he was asked about his NBA career: “What was your most memorable moment?” He pondered this for a moment and then, with a twinkle in his eye, he responded: “I would have to say that it was the night that Michael Jordan and I combined for 70 points.”¹⁶⁶

3. We collaborate; we do not compete.

On an effective team, there is no room for competition among team members.

Team members must collaborate, not compete. In this regard, the old saying rings true:

¹⁶⁵ Cormack, 203.

¹⁶⁶ Jeff Ginn, “Michael Jordan and I,” *Empowered with Dr. Jeff Ginn*, 24 February 2009 [E-mail].

“Either we’re pulling together or we’re pulling apart.”¹⁶⁷ Truly, teams enable persons to “pull together” and accomplish more than they could individually. However, this can never be the case when team members engage in competition with one another. Kenn Gangel writes, “Members of a team don’t excel over each other; we depend on each other.”¹⁶⁸ Similarly, John Maxwell writes, “To collaborative team members, completing one another is more important than competing with one another.”¹⁶⁹ Team members with a competitive spirit might internally be thinking, “What’s in it for me?” They operate out of self-absorbed concern for their own image and reputation, and they are eager for the credit when success occurs.

Often, the word “jealousy” can be an apt term for describing the root cause of competition. Some people experience a great struggle when coworkers succeed. They might be jealous of any number of things—another’s position, another’s abilities, or another’s accomplishments. Rather than carrying such a negative attitude, the pastoral staff must recognize—and believe—that they all have the same call of God, but different roles.¹⁷⁰ This negative attitude can affect the Senior Pastor as well. He may allow his position of leadership to go to his head, forgetting that members of his pastoral staff are also God-called pastors. Instead of succumbing to feelings of jealousy, the Senior Pastor will discover that he may need to follow the counsel and direction of others on his staff at

¹⁶⁷ Maxwell, *17 Indisputable Laws*, 128.

¹⁶⁸ Gangel, *Team Leadership*, 167.

¹⁶⁹ Maxwell, *17 Essential Qualities*, 14.

¹⁷⁰ Hahn, interview.

times. Jason Barber practices this aspect of teamwork in his ministry. When a special event is being planned, he states to the staff member overseeing it, “Tell us what you need us to do.” With this statement, he is reiterating two principles. First, they serve one another as needs arise—this includes the Senior Pastor. No single staff member is above another. Second, the word “us” reminds them all that they are a team working together. When one staff member needs help or support, they all come to his aid.¹⁷¹ Insuring that collaboration trumps competition will help the pastoral staff follow and model the Apostle Paul’s instructions in Phil. 2:3-4, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

4. We are steadfastly loyal to one another.

Teamwork among the members of a pastoral staff inherently means they live and die by loyalty. Such loyalty will naturally build trust. When a decision has been made, the team members get behind it and support it without reservations. When asked about the importance of teamwork among his pastoral staff, Rodney Autry stated that one thing he will not tolerate is disloyalty. He went on to say, “Even if you don’t like the plan, you better support it; don’t turn on each other. I would rather them turn on me than on each other. I am not wearing a zebra suit with a whistle around my neck.”¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Barber, interview.

¹⁷² Autry, interview.

In the Review of Pertinent Literature (Chapter Two), reference was made to the “twelve covenants” developed by Coach Lou Holtz. Three of those statements directly apply to a discussion of team loyalty:

- We will accomplish what we do together. We share our success, and we never let any one of us fail alone.
- We will keep our word. We will say what we mean, and do what we say. We trust the word of others to be good as well.
- We will look out for each other. We truly believe that we are our brother’s keeper.¹⁷³

Not failing alone, keeping one’s word, looking out for each other—these phrases speak of loyalty. They are good for a successful college football team; they are also good for a Senior Pastor and his pastoral staff.

Loyalty means team members are there for one another, and they will support one another and be there for one another through both the good and the difficult. The Senior Pastor and his staff have one another’s back. They do not allow each other to be run down by anyone else. To attack a member of the team is to attack the team; to praise a member of the team is to praise the team. The Apostle Paul’s instruction to the church at large also applies to the pastoral staff: “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it” (1 Cor. 12:26).

5. We communicate openly and honestly.

The topic of communication will receive attention in the next section of this project. However, it needs to be said that open and honest communication is a must for

¹⁷³ Maxwell, *17 Indisputable Laws*, 123-24.

healthy ministry teams. Here again, Coach Holtz’s “twelve covenants” are instructive.

Two of the twelve statements directly target the team’s communication:

- We will not keep secrets. Information that affects us all will be shared by all of us, and we will quickly and openly work to separate fact from fiction.
- We will not lie to ourselves or to each other. None of us will tolerate any of us doing so. We will depend on each other for the truth.¹⁷⁴

On a healthy team, open and honest communication should flow freely—in all directions. “Team members experience a climate of trust and are encouraged to openly express ideas, opinions, discouragement, and disagreements. Questions are welcome. All members may say whatever they want, within reason, without people becoming upset.”¹⁷⁵ Much more about communication will be discussed in the next section.

A fitting summary of this description of teamwork is found in an article authored by Rick Warren. Warren asks the question, “What is it that makes a team?” He states that the two necessary ingredients are a common goal and good communication. He then proceeds to list eight characteristics of teamwork using the word “teamwork” as an acronym:

- Trust – the most important element in building team spirit
- Economy of Energy – the quickest way to destroy team spirit is to burn out your staff
- Affirmation and Appreciation – give more strokes than pokes

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 123.

¹⁷⁵ Daniel R. Reeves, “Mega-shifting to Team Ministry,” *Ministry Advantage* 8 (winter 1998): 2.

- Management of Mistakes – make at least one new mistake each week, but don’t call it a mistake; call it an experiment
- Weekly Staff Meetings – regularly share, coordinate, build into each other’s lives, and communicate
- Open Communication – people tend to be down on things they’re not up on
- Recognition – let others have the credit
- Keep on Learning – the moment you stop learning is the moment you stop leading¹⁷⁶

Unhealthy Teams

Generally speaking, teams are unhealthy when any of the five statements given above are not followed. In addition, Myron Rush lists four “anti-team” roles that will hinder team progress. Team members must avoid assuming these roles:

- Dominator – He tries to control conversation, ideas, and actions within the team.
- Blocker – He delays, sidetracks, or stops progress within the team.
- Attention-seeker – He tries to get people to focus on him continually and recognize him for his accomplishments.
- Avoider – He refuses to deal with issues, facts, and personal obligations within the team.¹⁷⁷

A helpful test for evaluating whether one’s impact on a team is positive or negative is reflected in a list of c-words compiled by John Maxwell:

- Character - Is your integrity unquestioned?

¹⁷⁶ Warren, 6.

¹⁷⁷ Rush, 60.

- Competence – Do you perform your work with excellence?
- Commitment – Are you dedicated to the team’s success?
- Consistency – Can you be depended on every time?
- Cohesion – Do your actions bring the team together?¹⁷⁸

Finally, Kenn Gangel provides a lengthy but concrete list of characteristics that contrast healthy and sick teams:

A team is healthy when:

1. All the members speak up about what they think.
2. Decisions are worked through until a general consensus of agreement is reached.
3. Well-informed members contribute ideas in the area of their competence.
4. A member’s value is judged by the merit of his idea.
5. The whole group handles questions that concern the whole group.
6. Major issues get major time.
7. Major issues evoke mature approaches to change and “working through.”
8. Minor issues are settled with the attention they deserve.

A team is sick when:

1. A few members do all the talking.
2. Most members mumble assent.
3. Competent people sit silently by.
4. New people with good ideas are not listened to.
5. Decision making is quickly referred to committees.
6. Minor issues consume the major time.
7. Minor and simple issues make people seethe or boil.
8. Major issues are passed over.

¹⁷⁸ Maxwell, *17 Indisputable Laws*, 131.

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|--|---|
| 9. Decisions reached by thorough participation are final and satisfactory. | 9. The same subjects, supposedly settled, keep coming up again. |
| 10. Members really understand one another's ideas, plans, and proposals. | 10. Quick judgments are passed on issues people do not understand. |
| 11. Members objectively center interest on goals and tasks. | 11. Members subjectively talk about people in scapegoating fashion. |
| 12. The group carries forward in the performance of tasks and the achievement of goals. | 12. The group accomplishes little in the absence of its chairperson. |
| 13. The group works goalwise toward change. | 13. The group is afraid to change. |
| 14. Rewards and criticism are shared. | 14. Rewards and criticism are concentrated on a few. |
| 15. Initiative and responsibility are encouraged by growth in a sense of personal confidence, competence, and worth. | 15. Initiative and responsibility are stifled by dependence. |
| 16. Search for help from all sources is continuous. | 16. No resources outside the group are drawn upon. |
| 17. Information is fed back into the group. | 17. Little is told to the group. |
| 18. The worth of persons is respected. | 18. The person is squelched in his expression and stunted in his growth. |
| 19. Experience is considered the occasion for growth in responsibility and love. | 19. Action lacks altitude and depth, remaining on the horizontal plane without the vertical relationships to God. |
| 20. Action is God-related. | 20. Action is self-centered. ¹⁷⁹ |

¹⁷⁹ Gangel, *Team Leadership*, 157-59.

The Senior Pastor's Role

The conclusion of this section on teamwork briefly focuses on the Senior Pastor's role in developing and fostering a healthy team spirit among his staff. In one word, the Senior Pastor must be *intentional*. Teams do not happen automatically. Using a sports analogy, H. Joseph Miller asks, "Does wearing the same uniform, riding the same bus, or sharing the same locker room produce teamwork? Of course not! No more does wearing the same embroidered shirts, working in the same office complex, or ministering in the same community guarantee teamwork in the local church! It is not automatic. It must be intentional."¹⁸⁰

As the Senior Pastor assumes the role of team leader, he must intentionally implement sound principles and intentionally work to avoid team failure. He plays the most important role in producing a healthy team. General Dwight D. Eisenhower's observations during World War II are pertinent: "I have developed almost an obsession as to the certainty with which you can judge a division, or any other large unit, merely by knowing its commander intimately. Of course, we have had pounded into us all through our school courses that the exact level of a commander's personality and ability is always reflected in his unit—but I did not realize, until opportunity came for comparisons on a rather large scale, how infallibly the commander and unit are almost one and the same thing."¹⁸¹ The Senior Pastor's responsibility to lead his pastoral staff as a team is of

¹⁸⁰ Miller, *Building the Church*, 847.

¹⁸¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1967), 253.

utmost importance. He should lead in such a way that his staff members might one day say about their experience,

The staff I serve on operates more like a team. I am an equal partner collaborating together in the gospel with the rest of the staff. The senior pastor oversees and supervises each of us as a “first” among equals. I’ve never seen him acting superior, but functionally he is ultimately responsible for the overall direction of the church and staff. I minister within a clearly defined job description that matches my passions and gifts. What I enjoy the most is that the senior pastor gives me a lot of freedom to develop my particular area of ministry. Of course, he does work closely with me, offering suggestions, acting as a sounding board, and holding me to my goals.¹⁸²

The “C” Word: Communication

The final two sections of this chapter focus on communication and conflict. Both of these topics rightfully receive much attention in written sources. They are two areas most deserving of the Senior Pastor’s attention as he seeks to effectively lead his pastoral staff.

The Importance of Communication

One has only to peruse statements regarding communication to appreciate the crucial place communication has among members of healthy pastoral staffs:

- “Good communication, not structure, is the cement that holds any organization together.”¹⁸³
- Communication is the “life-blood of the team.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² McIntosh, 172.

¹⁸³ Engstrom and Dayton, 109.

¹⁸⁴ C. S. J. Dody Donnelly, *Team: Theory and Practice of Team Ministry* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 69.

- “Without communication, you don’t have a team; you have a collection of individuals.”¹⁸⁵
- “Communication is one of the most difficult tasks within the church staff.”¹⁸⁶
- “‘All conflicts are communication problems’ may be a bit overstated, but miscommunication sure accounts for its share.”¹⁸⁷
- “Perhaps you are familiar with my books on leadership; then you know that I believe everything rises and falls on leadership. What I haven’t mentioned before is that leadership rises and falls on communication. You must be able to communicate to lead others effectively.”¹⁸⁸
- “Without communication, leadership cannot exist.”¹⁸⁹
- “There is hardly anything so powerfully destructive in a system as the shutting down of communication or the development and maintenance of secrets.”¹⁹⁰
- “Counselors suggest that 86% of American divorces are brought about by poor communication. We are convinced that the percentage would be similar in the breakdown of staff relationships.”¹⁹¹

Although this list is somewhat lengthy, it nonetheless accomplishes its purpose of demonstrating how important great communication is among pastoral staff members.

¹⁸⁵ Maxwell, *17 Essential Qualities*, 32.

¹⁸⁶ Judy, 106.

¹⁸⁷ Jacobsen, 36.

¹⁸⁸ Maxwell, *17 Indisputable Laws*, 201.

¹⁸⁹ David L. Hocking, *Be a Leader People Follow* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1980), 32; quoted in John E. Neyman Jr., “The Hiring and Supervising of Professional Church Staff” (M.A. thesis, Liberty Baptist Seminary, 1983), 55.

¹⁹⁰ Mitchell, 130.

¹⁹¹ Westing, 35.

Defining Communication

Myron Rush defines communication as “the process we go through to convey understanding from one person or group to another.”¹⁹² One must not make the mistake of believing that communication is only about words. Any understanding of communication must take into consideration that communication is comprised of both a verbal component and a nonverbal component. In addition to the actual words used, there are other sometimes subtle methods of communicating that are not directly spoken: tone and volume of voice, style of speech, appearance, physical proximity, eye contact, facial expression, gestures (e.g. head nods), bodily posture, and bodily contact (e.g. hand shakes).¹⁹³ Many people may not realize just how lop-sided the balance between the verbal and nonverbal is. In some situations, a whopping ninety-three percent of the message is received through nonverbal action or expression, meaning that the words themselves account for only seven percent of the communication process.¹⁹⁴

Communication can also be defined using any one of various communication models. One of the clearest and simplest models of communication is the one devised by Donald Ely. The Ely Communication Model consists of seven parts: the message, the source, encoding, decoding, the receiver, feedback, and the field of experience. The *message* is central to the model as it is what is being communicated. The *source* is the starting place of communication, usually the mind of the communicator. *Encoding*

¹⁹² Rush, 115.

¹⁹³ Cormack, 89.

¹⁹⁴ Rush, 125.

occurs when the message is verbalized or symbolized so it can be communicated to others. *Decoding* occurs when the message is received and comprehended by the receiver. The *receiver* is the person or group for whom the message is intended. *Feedback* enables the communicator to discern whether or not the message has been understood. Finally, the *field of experience* refers to the total context or environment in which the message is given and received.¹⁹⁵

A Lack of Communication

Jimmie Sheffield, in somewhat of a warning, states, “You should immediately recognize that communication or lack of communication is probably one of the biggest problems in staff relations.”¹⁹⁶ As team leader, the Senior Pastor cannot afford to allow healthy communication to “slip through the cracks.” It sounds simple, but communication alone can make or break a ministry team’s cohesion and effectiveness.

Myron Rush points out an interesting biblical example of how lack of communication can have a detrimental impact on teamwork. In the eleventh chapter of Genesis is the account of the Tower of Babel. Verse one relates that “the whole earth used the same language and the same words.” In the land of Shinar, the people decide to build a tower “whose top will reach into heaven.” At this point, God decides to act in order to disrupt their plans. How does he disrupt their plans? In verse seven, God says, “Let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” Rush concludes, “He disrupted their communication system. Once

¹⁹⁵ Gangel, *Team Leadership*, 404-10.

¹⁹⁶ Sheffield, *Shared Ministry Team*, 13.

their communication broke down, their commitment to the project and their group unity were destroyed and the entire project failed.”¹⁹⁷ While the context of this story differs from the situation of a Senior Pastor and his staff, similar results are likely to occur when there is a lack of communication.

In this chapter focusing on the Senior Pastor’s relationship-oriented role, the Senior Pastor needs to know that poor communication will lead to poor relationships. Jerry Brown states it this way: “Clogged-up communication lines between staff members contribute to all kinds of relational problems, such as distancing, power struggles, jealousy, and lack of understanding of one another and his work. . . . Most staff problems come from a breakdown in talking with one another.”¹⁹⁸ The wise Senior Pastor will carefully put into practice principles that contribute to healthy communication.

Practicing Good Communication

The following three statements serve as helpful reminders to pastoral staff members as they seek to engage in healthy communication.

1. Be prepared to communicate well.

Good communication does not happen by accident. It requires some preparation on the part of the communicator. At the least, there should be an understanding of the basic components comprising the communication process (e.g., the Ely Communication

¹⁹⁷ Rush, 16.

¹⁹⁸ Brown, *Church Staff Teams that Win*, 84.

Model). Beyond this, one should understand the various “messages” inherent in any communication attempt. Kenn Gangel lists and discusses six such “messages”:

- *What the Source Intends to Say* – The message needs to be clear in the mind of the speaker even before a word is spoken. He is the only one who knows exactly what is going to be communicated.
- *What the Source Actually Says* – Something can easily go awry as the message moves from one’s intention to one’s speech. When there is a mismatch between the two, confusion ensues.
- *What the Source Thinks He Has Said* – The one speaking can feel confident that he has spoken clearly. However, other factors (the receiver’s field of experience, deficiencies during encoding/decoding, and other factors perhaps beyond his control) can negate this.
- *What the Receiver Wants to Hear* – The person receiving the message often already has an expectation as to what he will hear. This can occur as a result of personal desires, the prompting of others, or the reputation of the speaker. Regardless, this expectation can skew the intended message.
- *What the Receiver Hears* – As difficult as it may be to believe, what the speaker says and what the hearer hears may not be the same. Factors in the encoding/decoding process can cause this.
- *What the Receiver Thinks He Hears* – Again, what the receiver hears and what he thinks he hears can be different. He will react not to what he hears, but to what he thinks he hears.¹⁹⁹

2. Aim for understanding.

Communication could nearly be defined by the lone word, “understanding.” In Rush’s definition of communication (cited above), the key term is “understanding.” One communicates not merely to convey words or information, but to convey understanding. After stating his definition, Rush adds, “Unless understanding occurs, we have not

¹⁹⁹ Gangel, *Team Leadership*, 410-12.

communicated.”²⁰⁰ Technically, communication *has* occurred; however, what is sent and what is received will not be the same. The following statements are often heard when understanding has not occurred during the communication process:

- “What did you say?”
- “That’s not what I understood you to say!”
- “You’re not listening to me!”
- “I didn’t know we were supposed to do this.”
- “I heard her say something else.”²⁰¹

Senior Pastors might do well to heed the words seen on a sign in an office: “The greatest problem in communication is the illusion that it has already been achieved.”²⁰² Sylvia Nash shares a humorous story illustrating a lack of understanding (and thus, lack of communication): “Lorissa, all of 6 years old, was flying alone when the flight attendant asked her if she needed to go to the lavatory. She answered no. Asked why she had turned her light on, Lorissa responded, ‘Because I have to go to the bathroom.’” Nash then adds, “Communication is complete only when *both* parties understand what is being said.”²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Rush, 115.

²⁰¹ Sheffield, “Leading,” 57.

²⁰² Ronald W. Wiebe and Bruce A. Rowlison, *Let’s Talk About Church Staff Relationships* (Alhambra, Calif.: Green Leaf Press, 1983), 8.

²⁰³ Sylvia Nash, “Staff Relationships and Communication,” in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, ed. James D. Berkley (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1994), 215.

As Senior Pastors and staff members communicate with each other, they must insure their communication is clear—and clearly understood. A Senior Pastor sometimes realizes too late that he “expected too much and explained too little” as he led his staff.²⁰⁴ However, just as staff members expect clear communication from the Senior Pastor, the Senior Pastor expects clear communication from his staff. When asked about the importance of clear communication from his staff, Drew Landry said a staff member must “*make sure* I understand what they are saying; make sure I got it.”²⁰⁵

As they communicate, the Senior Pastor and his staff will want to check and check again to verify that the message intended is the message received. Since confusion “can and will occur, . . . repeated, careful conversations are necessary.”²⁰⁶ After discussing a matter, it may even be helpful to state, “Now that we are done with this meeting, a need to ask clarifying questions or to share other information may arise later. Please come see me, call, or email so that any misunderstandings are not allowed to intensify. Also, if you think you were misunderstood, you misunderstood my remarks, or you simply need to talk, let’s get together ASAP.”²⁰⁷ Tim Hight offers a pertinent

²⁰⁴ David B. Smith, “No, I’m Not Your Best Friend,” *Leadership* 26 (fall 2005): 102.

²⁰⁵ Landry, Interview.

²⁰⁶ Williford and Williford, 177.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

summary statement: “The more you communicate, the better; I don’t know [if] you can ever over-communicate.”²⁰⁸

3. Communicate openly and honestly.

Most people want to know what is really going on—even if it is not pleasant to hear. They long for someone to simply be open and honest. Pastors are no different. In the words of one of the Senior Pastors interviewed, there must be a “culture of openness,” where each staff member gives his input and is free to speak.²⁰⁹

Honest, open communication is sometimes called “congruent communication.” Such communication is undoubtedly supportive in nature, but it can also be confrontational and challenging at times.²¹⁰ Both the positive and the negative are necessary components of healthy communication, and staff members should feel free to share both. Robert Bingham writes, “The real leader respects his associates for speaking their minds. No one really needs a yes man.”²¹¹ In working with his pastoral staff, Jason Barber tells them not to “skirt the issue;” he expects them to address problems and issues directly.²¹²

Failure to communicate openly and honestly will damage interpersonal relationships between staff members. To build trust, one must communicate tactfully yet

²⁰⁸ Hight, interview.

²⁰⁹ Hayes, interview.

²¹⁰ Nuechterlein, 132.

²¹¹ Bingham, 10.

²¹² Barber, interview.

truthfully. To emphasize the importance of candid communication, John Maxwell writes, “Having hidden agendas, communicating to people via a third party, and sugarcoating bad news hurt team relationships. . . . Your goal should be to speak truthfully but kindly to your teammates.”²¹³ As the Senior Pastor and pastoral staff set the tone for the church body, they must practice and model healthy communication among themselves.

Communicating Can Be Challenging

The topic of communication is given particular attention in this thesis project because it can be quite challenging. Most written sources, along with the Senior Pastors interviewed, agree that communication is a regular issue of concern among the pastoral staff. Myron Rush makes an interesting observation as he compares advanced technology to the basics of communication:

As our rapid-paced, jet-propelled society rockets into the 21st century, it possesses the most sophisticated means of communication ever known to man. Modern electronic technology has made it possible for a man on the moon to converse with people on earth. And computer science is making it possible for man to converse with computers, which store and retrieve information in seconds that only a few short years ago took days and even weeks to process.

But even though man has developed highly sophisticated electronic communication machinery, he still has problems with personal, face-to-face communication.²¹⁴

Unfortunately, a lapse in communication is not merely unfruitful; it can be downright harmful. Gary McIntosh paints a picture of just how ugly circumstances can be when communication turns harmful: “Harmful communication may become a silent epidemic as team members regularly spread malicious rumors, become involved in back

²¹³ Maxwell, *17 Essential Qualities*, 35.

²¹⁴ Rush, 114.

stabbing, or simply give each other the silent treatment.”²¹⁵ He then proceeds to list concrete examples of harmful communication:

- Talking about someone behind her back
- Interrupting others when they are speaking or working
- Belittling someone’s opinion to others
- Failing to return phone calls or respond to memos
- Giving others the silent treatment
- Insults, yelling, and shouting
- Staring, dirty looks, or other negative eye contact
- Intentionally damning with faint praise²¹⁶

These are but a sampling of the communicative actions Senior Pastors and pastoral staff members must avoid as they strive to build healthy relationships and minister effectively as a unified team.

The Other “C” Word: Conflict

The final section of this chapter focuses on a negative topic—but a necessary one. If the first crucial “c” word is communication, the second crucial “c” word has to be conflict. Again, most written sources, along with the Senior Pastors interviewed, agree that conflict is a regular issue of concern among pastoral staff members. When asked

²¹⁵ McIntosh, 156.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 156-57.

about conflict, one Senior Pastor bluntly stated, “Conflict is monstrous; some is of the thermonuclear variety.”²¹⁷

The Prevalence of Conflict

Unfortunately, problems can easily arise in multiple-staff situations. Writing about conflict among church staff, Joseph Umidi states, “Interstaff conflict has become a common land mine in the church at large, wounding many of our best emerging leaders. Research from hundreds of pastors, denominational leaders and clergy retreat centers confirm that more staff relationships are maimed and handicapped by unhealthy conflict resolution practices than by anything else in the enemy’s arsenal.”²¹⁸ Marvin Judy recalls the words he once heard from a frustrated Senior Pastor: “We haven’t been able to have a staff meeting for six months. There is so much bickering between the director of education and our minister of music that we can’t get any work done in a meeting.”²¹⁹

From a unique yet helpful perspective, Aubrey Malphurs compares staff conflict to flying in an airplane:

Anyone who has flown a few times in an airplane has experienced this familiar scenario. The big jet quickly lifts off the runway, noses upward, and rapidly climbs to its designated altitude with both the No Smoking and Fasten Seatbelt signs brightly lit. When the plane arrives at the proper, assigned altitude, the captain makes a few announcements and then turns the signs off, allowing you to walk around the cabin if necessary. Somewhere between takeoff and landing, however, the plane begins to shake, jerk, and bounce in midair as if some invisible hand of a giant baby boy clutches it and is playing with it as though it were a toy. The signs go back on, the pilot announces that the plane is not in serious jeopardy but is passing

²¹⁷ Autry, interview.

²¹⁸ Umidi, 35.

²¹⁹ Judy, 40.

through some turbulence due to weather, and he asks that you stay seated for the present.

Flying in an airplane has much in common with leading an organization. There are times when the ministry glides along smoothly without a hitch and times when it experiences some turbulence. When leaders fly through ministry turbulence, they must tightly fasten their seat belts.²²⁰

Defining Conflict

Myron Rush defines conflict rather simply as “open and hostile opposition occurring as a result of differing viewpoints.”²²¹ Senior Pastors cringe at the thought that “open and hostile opposition” could ever occur between staff members or between themselves and staff members. Jim Van Yperen also reminds his readers of the overt negative aspects of conflict. Biblically speaking, he writes that conflict is “a place of contest, the arena where adversaries compete.”²²² Again, no Senior Pastor wants to imagine that a meeting room could become “a place of contest,” and he certainly would not want to view his pastoral staff members as “adversaries.” Even for conflict that does not measure up to these frightful statements, all would agree that the presence of conflict, no matter how mild or wild, can be agonizing. In fact, the etymology of the word “conflict” speaks to this truth as the Greek word for conflict, *agon*, serves as the root of the English word “agony.”²²³

²²⁰ Malphurs, *Values-Driven Leadership*, 143.

²²¹ Rush, 202.

²²² Jim Van Yperen, “Conflict: The Refining Fire of Leadership,” in *Leaders on Leadership: Wisdom, Advice and Encouragement on the Art of Leading God’s People*, ed. George Barna (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 1997), 240.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 240-41.

In defining conflict, one must be careful not to confuse conflict with disagreement; they are not the same. While disagreement can lead to conflict, it does not have to. A Senior Pastor and his pastoral staff may find themselves engaging in healthy disagreement on occasion. This does not pose a problem; it may even prove to be quite beneficial as the best ideas ultimately surface. However, there are “agonizing” times when genuine conflict is present, a truly divisive spirit than can produce damaging results.

Causes of Conflict

A great number of variables are often responsible for the presence of conflict—some of these can be quite significant. Several writers list and discuss basic causes of conflict among pastoral staff members. One of the most extensive discussions is found in *How to Treat a Staff Infection*. In this work, the authors couch staff conflict in medical terms. As listed in Chapter Two of this project, fourteen “symptoms” of a staff infection are discussed at length.²²⁴

A list of causes that is representative of what other writers also provide is found in an article by Wayne Jacobsen. Jacobsen discusses seven reasons most conflict arises:

1. Generational Differences – Differences in age, cultural background, and experience seem to consistently transform relatively minor differences into major conflicts. Many times, these differences stem from what may be termed “contemporary” vs. “traditional” approaches to ministry.
2. Theological Disagreements – Differences in biblical interpretation can lead to conflict. These differences do not usually occur in regard to theological essentials (e.g., deity of Christ, infallibility of Scripture, salvation by grace through faith); rather, they appear when trying to apply

²²⁴ Williford and Williford, 7-8.

theological truth to twenty-first century living (e.g., role of women, divorce, worship styles, modern-day expression of spiritual gifts). Even so, most conflict among staff members is not doctrinal or theological; it is usually more practical in nature.²²⁵

3. Miscommunication – As shown in the previous section of this project, communication (or lack thereof) lies at the root of much conflict. Problems will surface when communication is not open and honest.
4. Diversity in Perspective – While diversity is often beneficial, it sometimes can lead to problems. This is primarily because each member of the pastoral staff views matters (e.g., budget, methodology, personnel, crisis resolution) from a different angle. If one is perceived as “pushing” his own perspective onto others, friction may result.
5. Majoring in Minors – As one’s focus turns to secondary issues (e.g., buildings, budgets, recognition), the primary task of ministry will suffer. This can happen when egos take center stage and staff members become preoccupied with power and control. William Tuck writes, “Probably no area in church staff relationships has caused more problems than the question of authority and power.”²²⁶ It is never good when staff members begin to compete with one another for power or prestige. Such competition is seen when a staff member thinks, “More people go to him for counseling than to me,” or “More attend his Bible studies than mine.”²²⁷
6. Environment – The environment of staff relations refers primarily to the structure from which staff members relate to one another. A hierarchical structure can lead to conflict as staff members experience limited freedom to minister. They may even have difficulty respecting one another’s calling, training, skills, and work.²²⁸ Staff members need freedom with appropriate accountability. Oftentimes, Senior Pastors struggle with letting staff members do their jobs. Becoming a micromanager can contribute to conflict as the Senior Pastor hovers over a staff member,

²²⁵ Landry, interview.

²²⁶ Tuck, 10.

²²⁷ Wiebe and Rowlison, 27.

²²⁸ Brown, *Church Staff Teams that Win*, 8.

“constantly checking and rechecking, giving directions, making changes, and generally running the show.”²²⁹

7. Lack of Relationships – Pastoral staff members long for strong, personal relationships built on trust. Deteriorating relationships will inevitably lead to conflict; such conflict has a great tendency to destroy ministry. As the ministry team leader, the Senior Pastor must not allow relationships to slip into mere professionalism. Instead, he should strive to cultivate an environment of brotherly love and support of one another.²³⁰

There has been much discussion (and writing) concerning the causes of staff conflict. Existing lists of causes can be produced, and new lists could be developed. However, proper diagnosis must not overlook the root cause as revealed in Scripture. One of the ten Senior Pastors interviewed for this project stated that he views all conflict in light of man’s innate sinfulness, as conflict originates in the sin nature.²³¹ His statement is a timeless reminder that conflict is a definite result of the Fall of man.

In discussing “The Causes of Disunity,” Tommy Tenney bases his discussion solely on the scriptural admonition in Phil. 2:3-5. In that passage, the Apostle Paul writes, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, . . .” In these verses, Tenney finds three main causes of disunity/conflict: selfish ambition, personal prestige, and concentration on self

²²⁹ McIntosh, 158.

²³⁰ Jacobsen, 34-39.

²³¹ Brown, interview.

(selfishness).²³² These few causes may be found to lie at the heart of most staff conflict. This view is supported as well by James as he writes, “What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?” (James 4:1) On the basis of this biblical teaching, Myron Rush concludes, “In a conflict the emphasis is always on self. We focus on ‘me’ and ‘mine’—my ideas, my rights, and my feelings.”²³³ Unfortunately, conflict will be present as long as the sin nature exists.

Resolving Conflict

Resolving staff conflict is usually not easy or fun. Gary McIntosh classifies it as “one of the most frustrating, exasperating, and demanding aspects of leadership.”²³⁴ When questioned about conflict, Drew Landry stated that the Senior Pastor cannot assume an “ostrich mentality” in which he buries his head in the sand; rather, he must deal with conflict as it arises.²³⁵ Douglas Fagerstrom agrees. He writes, “The easiest and least painful immediate response to any conflict is avoidance. In ministry situations we are more prone to ‘flight’ than ‘fight,’ likely due to the idea that we think conflict is un-Christian or because we have not been taught conflict resolution skills. However, as

²³² Tenney, 43.

²³³ Rush, 203.

²³⁴ McIntosh, 165.

²³⁵ Landry, interview.

appealing as quitting or running away from a difficult situation seems, it is usually far more detrimental in the long run.”²³⁶

As the Senior Pastor deals directly with conflict, he should implement the following principles.

1. Deal with conflict early-on.

Perhaps the most often-heard principle for dealing with conflict is to handle it in its earliest stages. Using Thurman Hayes’s words, the Senior Pastor must “nip it quickly.”²³⁷ Failure to do so allows the problem to fester, increasing the likelihood that it may turn into a “live land mine.”²³⁸ John Maxwell shares personal reasons he confronts quickly when problems surface: “The longer I wait, the less likely I am to do what must be done. Another benefit to confronting immediately is that I am not likely to have to argue with the person over details.”²³⁹ Maxwell also shares a principle he calls the “Twenty-Four-Hour Rule.” He describes the rule this way: “If you have any kind of difficulty or conflict with a teammate, don’t let more than twenty-four hours go by without addressing it.”²⁴⁰

²³⁶ Fagerstrom, 118.

²³⁷ Hayes, interview.

²³⁸ Umidi, 36.

²³⁹ Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 126.

²⁴⁰ Maxwell, *17 Essential Qualities*, 33.

2. Confront privately.

Sylvia Nash shares wise advice for handling conflict: “We should practice affirming loudly but correcting quietly. Praise is public, and reprimand is private.”²⁴¹ When conflict involves the entire pastoral team, it should be dealt with behind closed doors. Likewise, when conflict involves an individual, it should be dealt with personally in a confidential setting.

3. Relationships are key.

Wayne Jacobsen accurately states, “Where conflict destroys ministry, you can be sure that relationships have deteriorated.”²⁴² Strong relationships are crucial before conflict occurs, as it occurs, and after it occurs. If relationships are not healthy leading into a confrontation, it is highly doubtful that the outcome will be positive.

4. Conflict resolution should be redemptive.

Conflict must be approached with a redemptive purpose in mind. There is no room for a vindictive spirit. Lawrence Childs believes the Golden Rule to be a “must.” A basic question to be considered is, “How would I want to be treated if I were in this situation?”²⁴³

²⁴¹ Nash, 215.

²⁴² Wayne Jacobsen, “Mediating Disputes,” in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, ed. James D. Berkley (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1994), 255.

²⁴³ S. Lawrence Childs Jr., “When Staff Members Go Wrong,” *Church Administration* 19 (September 1977): 15.

5. Communication must be healthy.

As stated in the previous section of this chapter, communication among staff members needs to be open and honest. This applies especially in the context of conflict resolution. Gary McIntosh lists several guidelines that will help one engage in healthy communication: “focus on the issue or act rather than on the person, avoid generalities and exaggeration, spell out specific remedies, choose the right time to talk, and follow up to keep communication open.”²⁴⁴

One should also remember that communicating openly and honestly does not imply rudeness is acceptable. Truth should be spoken, but it should always be spoken in love (Eph. 4:15). Speech received as rude or mean will only exacerbate the problem at hand. In this regard, Joseph Umidi makes a pertinent observation: “Even when God knew what Adam had done and where he was hiding, He didn’t come out with both guns blazing, bellowing, ‘There you are, you sinner. Come out!’ Rather, the Great Communicator’s approach of asking, ‘Where are you?’ (Gen. 3:9) models the way leaders are to communicate during conflict tensions.”²⁴⁵

6. Give the benefit of the doubt.

One of the best ways to minimize tension in confrontation is to give the other party the benefit of the doubt. John Maxwell shares his personal approach to confronting others: “I always try to start from the assumption that people’s motives are right and work from there. If I can give them the benefit of the doubt, I do—especially in areas

²⁴⁴ McIntosh, 167.

²⁴⁵ Umidi, 37.

that are open to interpretation or unclear.²⁴⁶ Maxwell identifies this approach as taking “the high road.”²⁴⁷ When asked about conflict resolution, Jason Barber also emphasized this principle. He said it is wise to take some of the blame. One way of doing this is to willingly say to the other party, “Maybe I wasn’t clear about what I wanted.”²⁴⁸

In addition to these general principles, Douglas Fagerstrom suggests specific steps to help leaders resolve conflict.

1. Pray. . . . Prayer should be the first action taken. In prayer, ask God for insight, wisdom, and courage to uphold truth.
2. Write down the specific conflict issues. . . . Until the issue is clearly defined, it is very difficult to proceed in a way that will address the issue properly.
3. Write down a desired outcome. . . . Putting the desired outcome in writing enables all suggestions and ideas to be given fair consideration. Be sure to include current results, desired results, and the future potential results if the conflict is not resolved.²⁴⁹

Results of Conflict

Conflict is certain. Every Senior Pastor must recognize that he will deal with problems as he and his staff serve together. Consider the following statements:

- “I would like to paraphrase a common saying about Baptists: ‘Put two staff members together, and you get three opinions.’ Inevitably, conflict

²⁴⁶ Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 126.

²⁴⁷ Maxwell, *17 Indisputable Laws*, 115.

²⁴⁸ Barber, interview.

²⁴⁹ Fagerstrom, 118.

occurs among staff members. If you think everyone will always agree, you are in for a rude awakening.”²⁵⁰

- “Staff problems are neither new nor unusual. Jesus even had a problem staff—the twelve. Simon Peter was so impetuous that his colleagues never knew what he would do or say next. James and John tried to put one over and gain leadership prominence. And, of course, there was Judas. Was it in exasperation that Jesus once said to them, ‘How long shall I put up with you?’ (Mark 9:19)”²⁵¹
- “If death and taxes are the first two certainties of life, conflict is the third.”²⁵²

While conflict is certain, the results of conflict can go one of two ways—results can be either constructive or destructive.²⁵³ The Senior Pastor’s main concern is to avoid destruction and work in constructive ways when handling conflict. Jimmie Sheffield writes, “We need to learn that conflict is neither good nor bad. It is made good or bad by the way we handle it.”²⁵⁴ In Chuck Swindoll’s words, “Conflict is inevitable, but misery is optional.”²⁵⁵

Myron Rush discusses both the negative and positive results of conflict. First, he lists three primary results that are detrimental to the pastoral team:

1. *Conflict causes us to fabricate and magnify faults and weaknesses in others.* Negative feelings and thoughts toward others surface as one

²⁵⁰ Sheffield, “Leading,” 62.

²⁵¹ McCarty, 67.

²⁵² Yperen, 241.

²⁵³ Nuechterlein, 143.

²⁵⁴ Sheffield, *Shared Ministry Team*, 14.

²⁵⁵ Hight, interview.

person seeks to “win.” This becomes a classic case of attacking the person rather than the problem.

2. *Conflict creates divisions within the organization.* Examples include church splits, labor strikes, and divorces. Jesus addressed this negative result as He taught His followers, “Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand.” (Matt. 12:25)
3. *Conflict causes us to expend our energies on nonproductive activities.* Conflict leaves people drained, both physically and emotionally. Dealing with conflict takes valuable attention and time from more productive activities.²⁵⁶

Next, Rush succinctly lists three positive aspects of conflict:

1. *Disagreement can lead to individual and organizational growth.* People and organizations grow and improve as they learn new and creative ways to work through confrontation.
2. *Disagreement can reveal the need for change.* Conflict forces leaders to evaluate current circumstances and initiate changes where needed. As an added benefit, these needed changes will usually result in further growth.
3. *Disagreement can help make us more tolerant of opposing views.* While no Senior Pastor—or pastoral staff member—is ever to disobey scriptural teaching for the sake of agreement, conflict does provide an opportunity for character development as leaders “agree to disagree.” Also, persons properly dealing with conflict do not develop a critical attitude of others; rather, they learn to accept criticism without retaliating.²⁵⁷

As stated previously, resolving staff conflict is usually not easy or fun. However, since conflict is inevitable, and there is potential for positive results, the Senior Pastor must not shrink away from the challenge. Umidi writes, “Too many leaders avoid the potential benefits of healthy conflict interactions because of the stomach knots and heart

²⁵⁶ Rush, 204-6.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 206-7.

palpitations that accompany such tensions. . . . Yet Scripture reveals that the blessing of God is found on the other side of facing—not avoiding—conflict.”²⁵⁸

Encouragement in the Face of Conflict

Before turning to the next chapter, a final word of encouragement is in order as the Senior Pastor contemplates this other “c” word, conflict. This encouragement comes from H. Joseph Miller. Miller provides a brilliant list of “Six Affirmations for Surviving Conflict”:

1. *I will learn from this conflict* – The conflict is an opportunity to grow in wisdom.
2. *I will live above this conflict* – The conflict is an opportunity to grow in grace.
3. *I will lead through this conflict* – The conflict is an opportunity to grow in leadership.
4. *I will look beyond this conflict* – The conflict is an opportunity to grow in faith.
5. *I will link up with others in this conflict* – The conflict is an opportunity to grow in relationships.
6. *I will last after this conflict* – The conflict is an opportunity to grow in patience.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ Umidi, 35-36.

²⁵⁹ Miller, *Building the Church*, 719.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SENIOR PASTOR'S TASK-ORIENTED ROLE

As stated at the beginning of Chapter Three, chapters three and four of this project focus on two main aspects of the Senior Pastor's role in connection with the pastoral staff—his relationships and his tasks. While Chapter Three primarily describes the Senior Pastor's *relationships* with his staff members, Chapter Four describes his *tasks* as he leads his staff members.

The First 100 Days

Much importance has historically been attached to the first 100 days of a new leader's tenure. This is especially observed by media pundits as a new U.S. President takes office. A Senior Pastor's first several months at a new ministry location are not usually viewed in light of the proverbial "First 100 Days." However, the principle remains that the beginning of a Senior Pastor's tenure is critical to his longevity and future ministry at that particular local church.¹

There are three areas deserving particular attention as the Senior Pastor begins his ministry at a new church: the church at large, the pastoral staff collectively, and the pastoral staff members individually. These three areas are not entirely exclusive of one

¹ During interviews, both Rodney Autrey and Randy Hahn emphasized that the days leading up to the first 100 days are as important as the first 100 days themselves.

another, but they do provide a simple way for the Senior Pastor to think about beginning a new ministry.

The Church At Large

When a Senior Pastor begins his ministry at a new church, the best action he can take is simply to “look around” and evaluate.² Douglas Fagerstrom calls this “learning the culture.” As “every ministry has its own personality, beliefs, and ‘tribal customs,’ . . . the new staff member will do well to learn the ministry’s DNA sooner than later.”³

When asked about the first 100 days, Mark Becton said the Senior Pastor needs to spend time “deducing the real depth of the water.” He then explained what he meant by this statement: A person can look at a photo of a lake and get some idea of how large the lake is. However, no matter how long one studies the photo, he or she cannot determine how deep the water is. Similarly, a Senior Pastor may speak with people who know the church (including former ministers and denominational leaders). Upon asking specific questions, he may indeed put together a good picture of the “lake.” However, no matter how many questions he asks, he still will not know how “deep” it is. Becton believes that in those first 100 days, the Senior Pastor’s job is to figure out how “deep” it is.⁴

Part of the Senior Pastor’s goal in “looking around” is to familiarize himself with the key leadership of the church. Rodney Autry believes the most important task of the

² Myers, interview.

³ Fagerstrom, 25.

⁴ Becton, interview. Using a similar idea but different terminology, Tim Hight said the Senior Pastor’s job is to determine “the nature of the soil” in his first 100 days.

first 100 days is to invest in the key leaders (key influencers) in the church, with the goal of “getting them on the same page” with the Senior Pastor.⁵ To “get the key leaders on the same page,” the Senior Pastor must first be able to recognize who they are. Mark Becton encourages Senior Pastors to discover the “real leadership” of the church. As this may not necessarily be the search committee, he suggests asking the question, “When there is a decision to make, whose opinion do you want to hear?” Once he receives an answer to this question, he goes to those persons and asks the same question. This process should eventually lead to the “real leadership”—the key influencers—of the church.⁶

As the Senior Pastor “looks around” and gets to know the key leaders of the church, he would be wise to avoid making significant changes as he begins his ministry. This does not mean he will make *no* changes initially; however, it does mean he will be careful with changes he does make. Ernie Myers’s suggestion is to “go slow” in a new ministry position.⁷ Jeff Ginn agrees. When he first entered the ministry, a dear friend gave him three pieces of advice: “Love the people, preach the Word, and don’t change anything for a year.”⁸ Again, this may not be a hard and fast rule; however, it is a wise principle.

⁵ Autry, interview.

⁶ Becton, interview.

⁷ Myers, interview.

⁸ Ginn, interview.

As stated in Chapter Two, this writer did not expect to find resources focusing on a Senior Pastor's first 100 days on a new church field. However, one resource was found. In *The Ministry Staff Member: A Contemporary, Practical Handbook to Equip, Encourage, and Empower*, Douglas Fagerstrom provides a sample schedule that details what the first 100 days might look like. Fagerstrom realizes the schedule is hypothetical, but he intends for it to serve as a helpful overview of priorities and foci for the Senior Pastor's first days on the job. The sample schedule is reproduced below:

Days 1-21

Get to know the ministry staff, board, and key volunteers. Read two or three books in your related area of ministry and read available documents on the ministry's history and current status. Establish new personal disciplines of prayer and fasting for the ministry.

Days 22-35

Create several small-group forums to learn about the current ministry as well as people's dreams and needs. Follow up with one-on-one meetings. Initiate numerous lunch and dinner "gatherings" with ministry participants. Establish times to pray with these people.

Days 36-49

Learn about similar ministries in your region. Get to know the leadership of those ministries. Identify and take key leaders on one or two "vision trips" to these similar ministries in your geographic area. Go with the intent to learn and create a new dialogue with your ministry team.

Days 50-72

Develop a basic training program for new and current leaders. Encourage current and future leaders to read the same books and magazines and view the same videos that have impacted your ministry values and objectives. Create a dialogue with your people about core values.

Days 73-94

Present the biblical core values for the ministry to ministry leaders and participants as well as boards, committees, other staff, and your target audience.

Days 95-100

Create one new event which brings people together to give a taste of a new vision for the future. Pray together.⁹

As Fagerstrom reiterates, this schedule is hypothetical. Parts of it may or may not fit each Senior Pastor's ministry situation. However, it provides an organized model for how the first 100 days may be approached as the Senior Pastor seeks to start out on a healthy note.

The Pastoral Staff Collectively

The highest priority the Senior Pastor has in regard to his pastoral staff is to build healthy relationships. Such relationships are important in the context of the church at large, but they are especially crucial in the context of the ones with whom the Senior Pastor will work most closely. The Senior Pastor will build a firm relational foundation by simply expressing care and love for his staff.¹⁰ This building of relationships should occur both *within* staff meetings and *outside* of staff meetings. An interview with Randy Hahn revealed five actions he would take in his initial contact with his pastoral staff:

1. Clearly explain that your role is to give them authority and the resources to fulfill God's call on their lives.
2. Emphasize that they will work together as a team.
3. Emphasize the importance of relationship.
4. Have the entire staff in your home (e.g., for a cookout). This provides an opportunity for the staff members and their families to fellowship and build relationships with one another.

⁹ Fagerstrom, 24.

¹⁰ Hayes, interview.

5. Look for opportunities to let them be in control (e.g., Where can I serve you? How can I help you accomplish your work?).¹¹

One final consideration for the Senior Pastor as he begins his ministry alongside his pastoral staff is the development of a staff covenant. While this is not a necessity, some type of document outlining the basics of healthy relationships will help set the desired tone as the Senior Pastor and pastoral staff begin their ministry together.

Following is a sample “Behavioral Covenant” provided by Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont:

- We promise to value our ministry of leadership to our congregation as a team and to offer our primary loyalty to that team.
- We promise to express criticism and negative feelings first to the person, not to others.
- We promise to refuse to talk with a complainer until that person addresses the person she or he is complaining about.
- We promise to maintain confidentiality in staff conversations and meetings.
- We promise to explain clearly to people who bring staff complaints that we will be sharing the conversation with staff.
- We promise to commit to processing information about personality differences among staff and to give feedback to one another in order to support strengths and to balance weaknesses.
- We promise to openly discuss our personal strategies and investments in proposals being made.
- We promise to accept the fact that disagreements are expected and are to take place behind closed staff doors; in public we present ourselves as a team.¹²

¹¹ Hahn, interview.

¹² Rendle and Beaumont, 216.

The Pastoral Staff Members Individually

As a whole, the pastoral staff deserves quantity and quality time from the new Senior Pastor. However, the Senior Pastor will be missing a critical component of his first 100 days if he does not also spend quantity and quality time with the individual members of his pastoral staff. The Senior Pastor must find time—especially during his earliest days at a church—for one-on-one interaction with his staff. This interaction will serve as an invaluable investment in the health of interpersonal relationships. The Senior Pastor will often find that meeting together for lunch provides a perfect setting to get to know his staff members on a personal level.¹³

As the Senior Pastor meets with staff members, his main purpose is to get to know them on both a professional and personal level. John Maxwell writes, “To build relationships, begin by listening to people’s life story, their journey so far.”¹⁴ The Senior Pastor will want to know where his co laborers have been and how they arrived at their current position. He must not be afraid of asking questions as he develops and deepens the relationship. Several helpful questions have been utilized to aid in this process.

Frank Lewis suggests the following questions:

- What do you think the top three priorities of our church should be right now and why?
- How would the people in our church answer that question?
- What can I do to help you accomplish your top three professional or personal goals in the coming six months?

¹³ Hayes, interview.

¹⁴ Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 93.

- Where are you struggling in your work?
- What are you doing to nurture yourself spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically?
- How can I pray for you in the coming month?¹⁵

Tim Hight suggests the following questions:

- What do you see God doing in the church?
- What part of your job do you love?
- What part of your job do you hate?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?¹⁶

Finally, John Maxwell suggests the following questions:

- What makes you smile?
- What makes you cry?
- What do you dream about?¹⁷

One last consideration for the Senior Pastor as he meets with his staff members is practiced by Jason Barber. From the start of his ministry at a church, Barber requires that each staff member complete a “Ministry Action Plan” (MAP). He acknowledges that developing the MAP is a tedious and thoughtful process. However, it helps the staff member engage in strategic planning. The plan also provides a baseline for annual

¹⁵ Lewis, 76-77.

¹⁶ Hight, interview.

¹⁷ Maxwell, *17 Essential Qualities*, 113.

evaluation. Using the MAP outline, staff members list their ministry objectives, goals for each objective, and the tasks that will be needed to accomplish the goals.¹⁸

Preparing for Staff Meetings

The final two sections of Chapter Four focus exclusively on pastoral staff meetings. Two main aspects are considered: preparing for staff meetings and conducting staff meetings.

Importance of the Staff Meeting

The pastoral staff meeting is one of the most important components of the Senior Pastor's role in leading his pastoral staff. This project approaches the Senior Pastor's role from both a relationship-oriented and task-oriented aspect. Done properly, the staff meeting successfully incorporates both of these aspects. Several writers attest to the importance of conducting regular staff meetings:

- “Regular staff meetings are not an option but a necessity.”¹⁹
- “Regular staff meetings and frequent communication are the lifeblood of healthy staffs.”²⁰
- “The most important regular event in the life of a team is the staff or team meeting. . . . In many ways the team meeting is the heart, the vital organ, of any team ministry.”²¹

¹⁸ Barber, interview.

¹⁹ Sheffield, “Leading,” 73

²⁰ Leith Anderson, “Staff Organization,” in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, ed. James D. Berkley (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1994), 209.

²¹ Kelley, 120.

- “Team members have to meet often with each other to be on the same track. Virtual meetings and e-mail and voice mail contacts are fine and good, but nothing replaces the time spent together in face-to-face meetings.”²²
- “A thoughtfully conceived, well-run staff meeting will improve the effectiveness of ministry in virtually any church.”²³

Disdain for Regular Staff Meetings

In spite of the importance inherently attached to the staff meeting, some do not look favorably upon them. A nationwide survey conducted in 1998 revealed that 61 percent of pastors would prefer to spend less time in meetings.²⁴ Certainly not all of these pastors were referring to staff meetings; nonetheless, the negative sentiment is present. To some, staff meetings are nothing more than “church maintenance evils” or “crisis intervention sessions.”²⁵ John Sommerville portrays the disdain some feel toward staff meetings in the introduction to his article on running great staff meetings:

Are staff meetings really necessary? Some pastors have told us that they consider them a waste of time (“There’s only the three of us, and the other two are part-time. Aren’t hallway conversations enough?”). Others confess that they consider staff meetings a burden (“It feels like one more event I have to plan”) or even a source of dread (“I always come away with more on my to-do list”). Still others admit they used to have weekly meetings but stopped because of resistance and apathy.²⁶

²² Cladis, 106.

²³ Sommerville, 75.

²⁴ John C. LaRue Jr., “Time Management for Hardworking Pastors,” *Your Church* 44 (November-December 1998): 80.

²⁵ Lewis, 91.

²⁶ Sommerville, 75.

In spite of negative experiences and opinions of staff meetings, the meetings are necessary for the formation of effective teamwork. Harold Westing highlights this necessity by comparing the pastoral team to a football team: A football team runs onto the field at the beginning of a game with a clear game plan in mind. The game plan is a culmination of many hours spent studying both teams. After the first half, the team trots off of the field and heads to the locker room. Prior to entering the locker room, a reporter will usually ask the head coach about his plans for the second half and whether or not he is going to stick to his game plan. During halftime, the coach has an opportunity to make changes—some slight and some more pronounced—to the game plan to increase the chance of victory. From this analogy, Westing concludes, “In many ways a staff meeting is like the half-time locker room meeting of a team. No sensible coach would sell his rights to the team meeting. It may make all the difference in the outcome of his efforts. Yet, how tragic to see some lead pastors not even bothering to take advantage of their staff meetings where in essence the same purposes are to be accomplished.”²⁷

Purposes of the Staff Meeting

As he begins to discuss the topic of staff meetings, Leonard Wedel writes, “When someone asked a small boy the purpose of a cow’s hide, he replied, ‘To hold the cow together.’ In a very real sense, one outcome of good staff meetings is to hold the staff

²⁷ Westing, 119.

together.”²⁸ Staff meetings have various purposes. A list of specific purposes (or benefits) of regular staff meetings is provided by Jimmie Sheffield:

- To build team spirit (In this context, Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont believe, “Seeing people’s faces and remembering their presence—even if our work does not frequently cross paths with theirs—is nonetheless a powerful reminder of team and community.”²⁹)
- To enhance spiritual growth
- To improve communication among staff members
- To establish an atmosphere for creative planning
- To provide opportunities to coordinate activities
- To give opportunity for evaluation of ministries
- To provide a good setting to resolve conflicts
- To provide a time and place to disseminate information (Again, Rendle and Beaumont provide a pertinent reminder that there should be “no surprises.” Everyone does not need to be in the know as to everything others are doing. “No one on staff, however, should be surprised to hear, generally, what is being done in the congregation and, specifically, what has been decided or planned that will have a direct impact on their own work and responsibility.”³⁰)
- To give staff members an opportunity to share burdens and blessings
- To provide a good setting for discussing mutual problems³¹

H. Joseph Miller prefers to think of the purposes of staff meetings in terms of being “inside the huddle.” As he recalls his days playing football in high school, he

²⁸ Wedel, 157.

²⁹ Rendle and Beaumont, 191.

³⁰ Ibid., 191-92.

³¹ Sheffield, “Leading,” 73.

remembers fondly the time spent “in the huddle.” He writes, “While the game may be won at the line of scrimmage, I believe that winning teams are developed and maintained inside the huddle. In fact, I believe that what happens in the huddle will dictate what happens at the line of scrimmage.”³² He proceeds to describe four vital aspects of “life inside the huddle”:

1. *The huddle is the place to call the plays.* In football, the quarterback communicates the play that will be run, and each player then knows what he is to do. Similarly, each member of the pastoral team needs to know his assignment as it fits into the mission and vision of the church. In other words, teamwork requires that each be on the same page.
2. *The huddle is the place to correct mistakes.* Some plays in football are not effective; perhaps penalties and turnovers have occurred. When things go wrong, the huddle provides the opportunity to review and correct the miscues. Similarly, the staff meeting provides an opportunity to address problems.
3. *The huddle is the place to catch your breath.* During a football game, a “no-huddle” offense may be effective at times. However, players eventually return to the huddle—along with some heavy breathing. As the players huddle, they have the chance to regroup and “re-oxygenate.” For the pastoral staff, returning to the huddle also provides an opportunity to regroup and maintain a healthy balance in one’s ministry.
4. *The huddle is the place to connect with your team.* As a team, football players need to connect with one another and encourage one another. “Inside the huddle of winning teams, the players pick each other up, pat each other often, and praise each other freely.” Such encouragement and connection is also vital to the pastoral staff.³³

In keeping with the “huddling” theme, John Maxwell writes, “When players don’t take time to huddle, the results can be disastrous—or even comical.” He then shares the following:

³² Miller, *Building the Church*, 749.

³³ Ibid., 749-50.

The story is told of a gentleman who was walking down a residential street when he noticed a man struggling with a washing machine at the doorway of his house. When he volunteered to help, the homeowner was overjoyed, and the two men together began to work and struggle with the bulky appliance. After several minutes of fruitless effort, the two stopped and just looked at each other. They were on the verge of total exhaustion. Finally, when they caught their breath, the first man said to the homeowner: “We’ll never get this washing machine in there!” To which the homeowner replied: “In? I’m trying to move it out!”³⁴

The Senior Pastor and his pastoral staff might avoid much “fruitless effort” by prioritizing regular times to “huddle.”

In this context of staff meeting purposes, the Senior Pastor must not lose sight of the primary spiritual foundation of all staff meetings: The Senior Pastor and each member of his pastoral team labor together, serve together, and meet together because each has been called by God to pastoral ministry. Out of all the resources consulted for this project, only one addresses the topic of staff meetings from a spiritual perspective. In *The Team Builder*, Frank R. Lewis brings out this aspect as he writes, “Team meetings are the scheduled opportunities when the spiritual-gift mix that is unique to your team has the greatest possibility of yielding itself as an offering to the sovereignty of God.” He then immediately asks, “When your team comes together, does this last thought ever enter anyone’s mind?”³⁵ In the midst of all the discussion that takes place in a staff meeting, may God help the Senior Pastor and his staff remember that their abilities to serve come from heaven, and the content of the staff meeting is to result in an offering of praise and faithfulness to God.

³⁴ Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 155-56.

³⁵ Lewis, 91.

The Logistics of Preparing for Staff Meetings

The logistics of preparing for staff meetings include matters such as: when to meet, how often to meet, where to meet, who should meet, and how long to meet.

When To Meet?

According to written sources and personal interviews, nearly all Senior Pastors hold their staff meetings on either Monday or Tuesday.³⁶ Most meet in the afternoon rather than the morning. Those who meet on Monday prefer that day because it jumpstarts the week and enables the staff to plan for the upcoming week. Those who meet on Tuesday prefer to allow time to pass after the busyness of Sunday's activities. Ronnie Brown said meeting on Tuesday "gives them time to figure out where they are after Sunday."³⁷ Mark Becton agrees. He feels that meeting on Tuesday "gives them time to tally numbers from Sunday and let things settle from Sunday."³⁸ Rodney Autry said he and his team used to meet on Monday, but Mondays are just too "crowded."³⁹ To assist the pastoral staff in determining which day to meet, Jimmie Sheffield provides the following criteria:

- When will all the staff members involved be available?
- Which day presents the least number of problems for a regular meeting?

³⁶ One of the Senior Pastors interviewed meets on Thursday.

³⁷ Brown, interview.

³⁸ Becton, interview.

³⁹ Autry, interview.

- How much time is needed for the staff meeting?⁴⁰

How Often To Meet?

Frank Lewis writes, “Team meetings need to take place often enough to give passionate impetus to the fulfilling of the church purpose statement.”⁴¹ Thus, there is no fixed rule dictating how often the pastoral staff meets. However, nearly all of the sources consulted and Senior Pastors interviewed reveal that meetings should occur weekly. Only one of the ten Senior Pastors interviewed shared that he and his pastoral staff do not meet weekly; rather, they meet as the need arises, usually thirty to thirty-five times per year.⁴² Several Senior Pastors also mentioned they periodically share a meal together as they meet.⁴³

In arguing for weekly staff meetings, Jimmie Sheffield offers reasons that might help the Senior Pastor in deciding the best course to follow:

- Weekly meetings foster and nurture the shared ministry concept.
- Weekly meetings offer the opportunity to evaluate programs and ministries on a regular basis.
- Weekly meetings provide a more consistent method for spiritual development.

⁴⁰ Sheffield, *Shared Ministry Team*, 18.

⁴¹ Lewis, 91.

⁴² Myers, interview.

⁴³ Ronnie Brown and his staff eat one meal together per month. Once every month or two, Tim Hight and his staff have an extended meeting with lunch where they focus on long term planning. Drew Landry and his staff have lunch together on “fifth Mondays” where they relax and have fun; staff members then are allowed to take off the rest of the day.

- Weekly meetings ensure that planning and coordinating details of various programs and ministries receive constant attention.⁴⁴

Where To Meet?

Deciding where to hold staff meetings does not appear to carry much significance initially. However, there are important thoughts to consider. Truly, the physical location makes a noticeable difference as “the setting influences communication.”⁴⁵ For this reason, the Senior Pastor’s office (or study) may not be the best place to meet as it frequently is seen as a “place of power.”⁴⁶ Meeting in the Senior Pastor’s office may detract from the “team” philosophy as the setting could imply an unspoken and unintended hierarchy. To avoid this possible connotation, most Senior Pastors prefer to meet in a neutral location, such as a conference room. Jason Barber shared that his pastoral staff meetings are held in his office, but only because no conference room is available.⁴⁷ The actual location notwithstanding, the meeting room should be conducive to the work at hand. This means paying attention to such details as room arrangement, heating/cooling capabilities, a chalkboard (or dry erase board), audiovisual equipment, and refreshments.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Sheffield, *Shared Ministry Team*, 17.

⁴⁵ McCarty, 90.

⁴⁶ Wiebe and Rowlison, 22.

⁴⁷ Barber, interview.

⁴⁸ Sheffield, “Leading,” 75.

Who Should Meet?

In addition to the pastoral staff, questions often arise as to whether or not others should attend pastoral staff meetings. Research and interviews reveal that most Senior Pastors do include others in their staff meetings but for only a part of the meeting. Frank Lewis writes that every member of the pastoral team and support team (administrative assistants, secretaries, and receptionists) are to attend the first few minutes of the team meeting. Once this initial time of fellowship, devotion, and prayer is completed, members of the support team—minus the office coordinator—return to their respective stations. The office coordinator remains for calendar issues and then is dismissed. At this point, only the pastoral staff members are present to deal with pastoral leadership issues.⁴⁹

Some variation of this model is currently followed by most of the Senior Pastors interviewed for this project. Generally, one administrative assistant is present at the beginning of the meetings. Drew Landry includes his building and grounds supervisor and information technology guy for the first part of each meeting.⁵⁰ Mark Becton and Tim Hight follow a slightly different format as their support staff members are a part of the staff meeting monthly rather than weekly. Their primary purpose is to be present for calendaring responsibilities.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Lewis, 92.

⁵⁰ Landry, interview.

⁵¹ Becton, interview; Hight, interview.

How Long To Meet?

There really is no fixed amount of time that can be assigned to the length of a staff meeting. Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont write that ninety minutes appears to be the norm in many congregations.⁵² However, as a rule of thumb, the Senior Pastors interviewed for this project lead staff meetings that average between two and two-and-a-half hours. Circumstances often will dictate how long the meeting must be. One Senior Pastor said his meetings last at least two-and-a-half hours but usually no longer than four hours.⁵³

Conducting Staff Meetings

The Senior Pastor will want to make sure the staff meetings are a joy rather than a drudgery. A probing question to ask is, “Do the staff members really look forward to these staff meetings?”⁵⁴ If the answer is “no,” the Senior Pastor may want to revisit the basics of conducting effective staff meetings. Don Cousins pointedly writes, “It’s not effective to make a few announcements, work through a brief agenda, and then wonder why workers come up with so many excuses for missing these weekly meetings.”⁵⁵

⁵² Rendle and Beaumont, 197.

⁵³ Hahn, interview.

⁵⁴ Wedel, 170.

⁵⁵ Don Cousins, “Managing Staff,” in *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, ed. James D. Berkley (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1994), 251.

Principles

Staff meetings become effective—and more enjoyable—when good principles are followed. John Sommerville provides a comprehensive list of “Ground Rules” that serve as a starting place for effective staff meetings:

- *Have a regular time and place (and don’t cancel!).* Create the discipline of meeting each and every week at the same time.
- *Start (and end) on time.* Starting late is disrespectful to those who come on time; aiming for an ending time helps keep the meeting moving. There are several “time wasters” to avoid: not starting at the scheduled time, discussing relatively unimportant topics at length, complaining rather than problem solving, allowing one person to dominate the meeting agenda, allowing the meeting agenda to become too full, and waiting for team members to arrive at a meeting past the prearranged starting time.⁵⁶
- *Have an agenda and stick to it (most of the time).* Adequate thought needs to be put into what will be discussed.
- *Be prepared.* Those with assignments must come prepared as proper preparation is not optional.
- *Have an established leader.* There needs to be consistent leadership of meetings. In most cases, the Senior Pastor leads the staff meeting. However, this responsibility is sometimes delegated to another pastor better equipped at conducting meetings.
- *If possible, decide.* There needs to be adequate space and time allotted for discussion; however, action must eventually be taken.
- *Maintain task orientation (with human sensitivity).* While the meeting must move along, it must not do so to the detriment of relationships. The meeting should be characterized more by dialogue than monologue.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Eller and Eller, 22.

⁵⁷ Anderson, *Multiple Ministries*, 34.

- *Be realistic.* The agenda must not become so full that adequate time is not allowed for the significant issues. “Do not try to do too much in meetings; do only as much as you have to.”⁵⁸
- *Set aside additional time for experiences and long-term thinking.* All issues cannot be addressed in weekly meetings. Some are better left to retreat settings (e.g., brainstorming, planning, staff development, fellowship/nurture).
- *Keep confidentiality.* There are times when the conversations must not leave the meeting room.
- *Be unified.* Complete agreement is not always possible. However, once a decision is reached, differences must not be aired elsewhere. The entire team must be on board.⁵⁹

Common Components

Nearly all pastoral staff meetings share certain components. Following are some of the most common.

Staff Worship

“The family that prays together stays together.” This oft-quoted principle might apply equally well to the pastoral staff. Staff meetings should always include time for worship. While this might occur in a formal setting on occasion, most staff worship will be comprised of a devotion time during the staff meeting itself. This time of devotion should enable staff members to share God’s Word, examine their own lives, celebrate what God has done and is doing in their lives and ministries, share concerns, and pray

⁵⁸ Brown, interview.

⁵⁹ Sommerville, 76-77.

about needs and blessings.⁶⁰ Basically, this time provides “a time for staff members to approach God in a worshipful attitude.”⁶¹ The Senior Pastor will often lead this time of worship. However, each member of the pastoral staff could be responsible for this devotion time on a rotational basis.⁶² Most Senior Pastors begin the staff meeting with the worship time as it sets the tone for the remainder of the meeting.

Reflecting on Sunday

Most Senior Pastors spend time reflecting on the previous Sunday’s services, primarily to celebrate God’s activity and blessing. Jason Barber calls these the “wins” from Sunday.⁶³ This can also become a valuable time of affirmation as the Senior Pastor draws attention to the faithfulness and effectiveness of his staff members.⁶⁴ Intentionally spending time on the positives will likely affect the remainder of the meeting. Shelia and John Eller make a general observation about meetings that “if people are involved in positive discussion at the start of a meeting, the positive feeling will carry over to the rest of the meeting.”⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Sheffield, “Leading,” 75.

⁶¹ Sheffield, *Shared Ministry Team*, 18.

⁶² Landry, interview.

⁶³ Barber, interview.

⁶⁴ Lewis, 85.

⁶⁵ Eller and Eller, 43.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral staff meetings should include a time to address the needs of the flock. This will chiefly include updates on physical needs so as to organize hospital visitation. Most Senior Pastors ensure that a member of the pastoral staff is assigned to each day of the week to minister to the sick. This “elementary discipline of pastoral care” must not be minimized or overlooked.⁶⁶

Staff Reports

Weekly staff meetings offer the ideal time for sharing ministry reports. These reports communicate what is going on in one’s ministry. They allow team members to know what others are doing. Intrinsically, this time also provides an opportunity for accountability—e.g., upon the Senior Pastor’s sharing of witnessing opportunities and results, he merely has to ask, “Who’s next?”⁶⁷ Rick Warren asks each person on his pastoral staff to submit a weekly “staff report card.” These “report cards” are divided into four sections:

1. I have made progress in the following areas:
2. I’m having difficulty in this area:
3. I need a decision from you regarding the following:
4. Prayer requests and praise reports.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Lewis, 98.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 96.

⁶⁸ Warren, 6.

Calendaring

Working on calendar issues is not always a welcome assignment, but it is a necessary one. Marvin Judy writes, “Much confusion, antagonism, and frustration within church staffs would be avoided if there was a strict adherence to a calendar of events and each member of the staff was thoroughly apprised of the calendar.”⁶⁹ Spending time to discuss calendar requests and keeping the calendar organized are a must. While this usually happens during staff meetings, some Senior Pastors handle it outside the staff meeting. Ronnie Brown does not engage in calendaring in staff meetings; rather, he has three other individuals who oversee this responsibility.⁷⁰ Similarly, Ernie Myers does not do calendaring in staff meetings as it wastes too much time.⁷¹ Regardless of one’s method of ensuring calendaring is done, it is imperative that all staff members be fully aware of what is on the church calendar.

Planning

As already mentioned, weekly staff meetings usually do not allow sufficient time for extensive planning. Strategic or long-range planning is best done in a retreat setting. However, general and short-term planning is often accomplished in staff meetings. Planning is necessary as “the future will not just happen if one wishes hard enough.”⁷²

⁶⁹ Judy, 104.

⁷⁰ Brown, interview.

⁷¹ Myers, interview.

⁷² Peter F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 122.

Planning entails discovering and reviewing needs, setting specific objectives and goals, and then developing detailed actions necessary to accomplish the objectives and goals.⁷³

Similar to Jason Barber’s MAP outline, Kenn Gangel provides an “Annual Planning Outline” to assist in the planning process. Below is the framework of his outline that would be followed for each objective:

OBJECTIVE A

1. To _____

GOALS

A. Through _____
B. Through _____
C. Through _____

ACTIONS STEPS (“We will”)

1. By _____
2. By _____
3. By _____⁷⁴

While this project does not focus in-depth on strategic planning, one helpful method of establishing objectives and goals is the SWOT analysis. The pastoral staff (and perhaps other leaders) meet together to discuss the following topics using the acronym, SWOT:

- *Strengths* – List the ministry’s strengths.
- *Weaknesses* – List the ministry’s weak points.
- *Opportunities* – What should we do to accomplish our mission?

⁷³ Graves, 36.

⁷⁴ Gangel, *Team Leadership*, 297.

- *Threats* – What outside or inside factors may prevent us from doing what we need to do?

Final Question: In light of what we've learned from this analysis, what is (are) our next strategic objective(s) to accomplish our mission?⁷⁵

Mentoring

The Senior Pastor will want to include an aspect of mentoring in his staff meetings. Such mentoring may be the most important action item on the agenda. In fact, Kenn Gangel believes the staff meeting should be viewed primarily as a “leadership training time.”⁷⁶ Agreeing with this sentiment, Don Cousins writes, “The bulk of the time—50 percent, ideally—should be devoted to training.”⁷⁷ As mentioned earlier, the Senior Pastor has a responsibility to nurture and develop his pastoral leaders. To neglect this role is to miss a great opportunity and blessing.⁷⁸

The Senior Pastors interviewed for this project take fairly simple approaches to mentoring and leadership development. The most common method of mentoring occurs through book studies. A couple times each year, staff members read through a book together and discuss its contents and application during regular meetings.⁷⁹ In addition to leading his staff through book studies, Tim Hight sometimes views videos with his staff

⁷⁵ Fagerstrom, 43.

⁷⁶ Gangel, *Team Leadership*, 350.

⁷⁷ Cousins, 251.

⁷⁸ Lewis, 63.

⁷⁹ Hahn, interview.

or simply brings in a good article he has discovered in his own study.⁸⁰ Rodney Autry follows these same basic ways of mentoring, but he sets aside special mentoring time outside of staff meetings. He calls his mentoring ministry “dodeka” (the Greek word for twelve). He and his staff meet for three hours once per month for leadership development. Occasionally, he brings in an outside speaker to address his staff.⁸¹

The Agenda

The Senior Pastor should follow a clear agenda as he leads his staff meetings. This does not mean the agenda has to be “fixed” or “rigid,” leaving no room for flexibility. However, he will discover that “staff meetings need to have a well-planned track to run on.”⁸² Significant barriers might very well exist, but there really is no excuse for allowing a poorly planned agenda to become a barrier to effective meetings.⁸³

In their discussion of staff meetings, Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont provide several examples of formats that might be followed for the staff meeting. Two of those examples are particularly instructive for the Senior Pastor as he develops the structure of his staff meetings. First is the “informal” format. Rather than follow a formal agenda, the informal format allows the agenda to develop as the meeting unfolds. Four components comprise the informal staff meeting:

1. Gathering – a time of prayer and fellowship

⁸⁰ Hight, interview.

⁸¹ Autry, interview.

⁸² Brown, *Church Staff Teams that Win*, 114.

⁸³ Eller and Eller, 29.

2. Calendaring – open conversation about the upcoming week and any changes to the calendar
3. Member Care – open conversation regarding people receiving or needing care
4. Agenda Items – a time for each staff member to update others on his work⁸⁴

The second format of particular interest to the Senior Pastor is what Rendle and Beaumont call the “questions” format. After an initial gathering time for prayer and fellowship, the meeting follows a protocol of questions. These questions do not change from meeting to meeting. They are:

- What do we need to check on the calendar for this week? This month?
- Who needs care?
- What information do you have that others need?
- What do you need to present to the team in order to get help or support?
- What “big picture” or future issue do we or our congregation need to be aware of?
- What needs to happen before our next meeting?⁸⁵

During the interviews for this project, several Senior Pastors shared the agendas they follow during staff meetings:

- Rodney Autry
 - Prayer
 - Review of the weekend (the good, the bad, the ugly)
 - Reports (Finance, FAITH evangelism)
 - Events on the calendar
 - “Let’s be ticky” (things that bug him)

⁸⁴ Rendle and Beaumont, 201-2.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 202-3.

- Pastoral concerns (marital, sickness, terminal illness)⁸⁶

- Tim Hight
 - Devotion
 - Mentoring (e.g., discussion of a book)
 - Administrative Items
 - Celebrations from Sunday
 - Calendaring⁸⁷
- Jason Barber
 - “Wins” from Sunday’s Service
 - Reports (“nickels and noses”)
 - Evangelism (witnessing opportunities, prayer for someone specifically)
 - Ministry Needs (e.g, surgeries)
 - Looking Ahead (monthly calendar)
 - Shoot Around (each staff member brings up what is going on in his ministry)
 - Prayer Time⁸⁸

One final agenda deserving attention is the one followed by Drew Landry.

Landry’s approach is different from most in that he does not follow a weekly agenda. He follows what might more appropriately be called a monthly agenda, with each week’s staff meeting focusing on a different primary area. He and his staff meet on Mondays. Each meeting begins the same way: Calendar Requests, Devotional Time (each staff member is responsible for leading this on a rotational basis), Prayer, and Building and Grounds or IT questions. Once these items are complete, the Building and Grounds and IT personnel leave the meeting. The pastoral staff then focuses on different areas with each meeting. Following is the monthly schedule he follows:

⁸⁶ Autry, interview.

⁸⁷ Hight, interview.

⁸⁸ Barber, interview.

- *First Monday of the month* – This meeting is devoted to monthly reports from each staff person, and to calendaring. (This can be a very long meeting; they stay until it is done.)
- *Second Monday of the month* – This meeting is devoted to spiritual concerns and disciplines. (Questions asked include, “What have you been reading?” “What verses are you memorizing?” “When did you last witness?”) The staff divides up into groups of two or three to spend time in prayer for one other.
- *Third Monday of the month* – This meeting is devoted to teaching time (mentoring). Each staff member is responsible for leading an hour or so of teaching time from a book or other resource.
- *Fourth Monday of the month* – This meeting is devoted to ministry evaluation (“What can we do better?”) and brainstorming. The staff uses this time to address current challenges.
- *Fifth Monday of the month* – This occasional meeting is devoted to fellowship. The staff has lunch together, during which time they have fun, joke, and relax. After lunch, they take the rest of the day off.⁸⁹

Each Senior Pastor will develop a staff meeting agenda that best fits his convictions and circumstances. As he does so, he must keep in mind that meetings are to be “conducted in an attitude of absolute dependency upon the Holy Spirit of God.”⁹⁰ Just as the Senior Pastor would not want to go into the pulpit in his own strength and power, he must not enter the staff meeting in his own strength and power. In this light, the Senior Pastor would do well to view the staff meeting as a “gathering of spiritually gifted individuals committed to seeing God use them in extraordinary ways.”⁹¹

⁸⁹ Landry, interview.

⁹⁰ Lewis, 101.

⁹¹ Ibid., 102.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The closing chapter of this thesis project focuses on conclusions and recommendations. The conclusions draw from the content of the project to leave the reader with important “take-aways.” The recommendations provide a list of specific ways the project might be implemented in ministry settings.

Conclusions

The reader of this project should come away with four concluding thoughts in mind: the importance of prayer, the importance of relationships, the importance of preaching, and the importance of preparation.

The Importance of Prayer

While this project does not devote space to the topic of prayer exclusively, the Senior Pastor must know that prayer forms the foundation of all aspects of effective ministry. Understanding and implementing healthy principles for leading a pastoral staff will not compensate for a lack of prayer. Kenn Gangel emphasizes this thought as he reflects on his time as a college president:

I have frequently been asked what I would do differently if I chose to return again to a college presidency. I would do many things differently; but the most important is that I would pray more and say less. I would also pray more and worry less. My problem is not that I do not believe in prayer nor that my theology of prayer is somehow defective. My dilemma arises from the convoluted thinking that leads me

to genuinely believe in prayer but not make time for it in my busy life. This kind of crazy human behavior must drive the angels berserk.¹

Neither does the Senior Pastor want to “drive the angels berserk” by not giving proper attention to the spiritual discipline of prayer.

The Importance of Relationships

Admittedly, this writer has been surprised by how critical it is that the Senior Pastor develop and maintain healthy relationships among his pastoral staff. Even the structure of this project speaks to the importance of relationships as the Senior Pastor’s relationship-oriented role (Chapter Three) consumes three times more space than the Senior Pastor’s task-oriented role (Chapter Four). One may safely conclude that the quality of interpersonal relationships will affect nearly every facet of multiple-staff ministry. Robert Bingham offers this reminder: “The pastor’s task is a monumental one under the most favorable conditions. It becomes almost impossible under strained relationships with the rest of the staff.”²

The Importance of Preaching

The Senior Pastor must remember that his primary responsibility is to “preach the Word” (2 Tim. 4:2). Leading his pastoral team is obviously important and will require a substantial amount of time; however, he must not shortchange his responsibility to faithfully proclaim God’s Word. Four of the Senior Pastors interviewed for this project specifically emphasized that preaching is their number one priority. One went so far as to

¹ Gangel, *Team Leadership*, 216.

² Bingham, 6.

say that his pulpit ministry is the “rudder that steers the ship.”³ Earl Radmacher writes about what he calls the “Jack-of-All-Trades Syndrome,” identified by the tendency to become so bogged down in secondary ministry responsibilities that the Senior Pastor neglects his preaching. Radmacher states, “No profession in the world makes greater demands on a man today than the Christian ministry. The spiritual needs and moral problems with which he must deal are as wide and deep as life itself. And though he may recognize his basic calling to preach the Word, he finds himself enmeshed in such a multiplicity of jobs that he just doesn’t have time as he would like to prepare food for the sheep.”⁴ The Senior Pastor must intentionally guard his study time to ensure he is able to feed his sheep on a weekly basis.

The Importance of Preparation

The pastor stepping into a senior pastorate position for the first time must not enter blindly. He should prepare himself to the best of his ability. Thus, he will need to locate and read resources about pastoral staff leadership and talk to others who have experience in this area. The interviews for this project concluded with the question, “What do you wish someone had told you before you became pastor of a local church with a pastoral staff?” The responses to this question provide valuable assistance to the Senior Pastor as he prepares to lead his staff. Below are those responses:

³ Hayes, interview.

⁴ Earl D. Radmacher, “The Jack-of-All-Trades Syndrome,” *Moody Monthly* 71 (March 1971): 41.

- “It’s a lot more detail-oriented than I thought it would be. (A pastor once told me that he came to the realization that a lost man could do most of what he did.)”⁵
- “. . . the consumption of my life and time. Fifty percent of my time is spent leading my staff—and that’s with a good unified staff; imagine how much it would be with a bad staff! . . . I wish someone had emphasized the importance of relationship-building.”⁶
- “Time management; . . . spirituality vs. the sin nature—staff brings all kinds of problems with it.”⁷
- “I knew what I would be required to carry, but I did not know how heavy it would be. . . . There is more opportunity for conflict and there is the challenge of communication in a larger setting.”⁸
- “Staff members are a lot of work. I underestimated how much work they would be. You must hire wisely; if not, you will really have a lot of work on your hands.”⁹
- “Lead your leaders – mentoring, investing, iron sharpening iron. I didn’t know I was supposed to do that! You don’t want a cubicle approach—build relationships!”¹⁰
- “Take your time acquiring staff. Assert your leadership in acquiring staff. The Senior Pastor recommends the person and the personnel committee is the checks and balances.”¹¹

⁵ Autry, interview.

⁶ Hahn, interview.

⁷ Brown, interview.

⁸ Becton, interview.

⁹ Barber, interview.

¹⁰ Hayes, interview.

¹¹ Ginn, interview.

- “Serve out of your weaknesses. Be dependent on God. Strength is perfected in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). The Apostle Paul served the Corinthians in weakness (1 Cor. 2:1-5).”¹²
- “Two things: 1) How to manage your time—study in the mornings and 2) You do what only you can do—I do not do hospital visitation; I miss doing weddings, funerals, baptisms, counseling, but others can do these things.”¹³
- “Hire people to do what you can’t do and let them do it. It also is very important to cast the vision and make sure your staff is on board one hundred percent.”¹⁴

Truly, the Senior Pastor cannot fully prepare himself for the task before him.

However, he has a part to play in making the journey fruitful and enjoyable. He never wants to end up secretly longing for the days gone by when the ministry appeared to be easier. William P. Tuck shares the following statement from an honest pastor who had just accepted a call to a smaller church with fewer ministers on the staff: “Supervising the church staff took most of my time. I often longed for the time when I was the only minister on the staff. It was easier and more fun then.”¹⁵ Only God knows how many Senior Pastors truly feel this way at some point in their ministries.

¹² Hight, interview.

¹³ Landry, interview.

¹⁴ Myers, interview.

¹⁵ Tuck, 5.

Recommendations

This thesis project results in information that needs to be shared. Robert D. Dale writes, “There are few resources for high-quality staff relations training.”¹⁶ There are various settings in which this project will bear fruit.

Publication

This project could be turned into a published work. Several of the Senior Pastors interviewed expressed great interest in reading the completed project as they do not have any books on their shelves that focus on the Senior Pastor’s role in leading his staff. In the process of researching the topic of this project, this writer did not find a source devoted entirely to the topic. There are many sources that touch on various aspects of the topic (see the bibliography), but none were found that focus exclusively on the chief areas involved in pastoral staff leadership. A published book, or handbook, would be a helpful resource for Senior Pastors to have in their personal libraries.

Seminary Course

The information in this thesis project could form the basis for a course in seminary. Most seminary graduates enter the ministry with minimal pastoral experience. Even fewer have experience in the context of multiple-staff ministry. An elective course in the area of pastoral ministry could be devoted specifically to the Senior Pastor’s role in leading a pastoral staff. In addition to lecture notes built off of this project, the professor could bring in Senior Pastors to address some of the pertinent issues. Senior Pastors from

¹⁶ Dale, 15.

local churches could be invited. Also, there may be times that visiting chapel speakers could be invited to lead class discussion.

Internships

Developing ministry internships would be a highly practical way of implementing the findings of this thesis project. Seminary students, or even recent seminary graduates, could spend a predetermined amount of time essentially “shadowing” a Senior Pastor in his role as staff leader. This would expose the intern to both the relationship-oriented and task-oriented aspects of the Senior Pastor’s role. Seminaries might even consider offering course credit for this setup.

Seminars

Seminars focusing on the Senior Pastor and his pastoral staff could be developed. These seminars might best be conducted at statewide gatherings of Christian leaders. In Southern Baptist circles, most state conventions offer leadership training opportunities. In this writer’s state convention (The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia), Church Leadership Conferences are held annually. These conferences offer an ideal setting for offering a breakout session on the Senior Pastor’s role in leading his staff. As this writer has been associated with his state convention for the past eight years, he does not recall ever being offered the opportunity to attend a seminar or breakout session on this particular topic. On the basis of what Senior Pastors shared with this writer during interviews, there is a need for leadership training in this area.

Pastoral Staff Meetings

The most obvious—and perhaps easiest—way to implement this thesis project is in the pastoral staff meetings themselves. As discussed in Chapter Four, the Senior Pastor should regularly engage in mentoring his staff members. As he chooses specific books to read and discuss together, he might consider using this thesis project as a resource. This is especially the case with Chapters Three and Four. These two chapters provide an outline that could be followed and information that could be discussed. This would be a helpful assignment for the Senior Pastor to begin during his “first 100 days” as he attempts to get everyone on the same page philosophically and practically.

APPENDIX A

THE INTERVIEW FORM

1. Do you see yourself as a pastor to your staff? (i.e., Do you carry out “shepherding” responsibilities for your staff members?)
2. Do you make an effort to support and/or encourage spouses and children of staff members?
3. Regarding expectations . . . What are the most important things your staff can do for you? What are the most important things you can do for your staff?
4. Do you believe the Senior Pastor’s leadership style should be relationship-driven or task-driven? (or both?) If both, how do you maintain a healthy balance between the two?
5. Do you view your staff as a ministry “team”? If so, in what ways do you see this and try to encourage this?
6. What are the two or three most important issues a Senior Pastor deals with on a regular basis? How does communication and conflict rate among these issues?
7. Do you have specific practices you follow to foster good communication among staff members?
8. What are the chief causes of conflict a Senior Pastor deals with among his staff? Are there specific practical guidelines you follow when working towards conflict resolution?
9. Regarding staff meetings...
 - When do you meet?
 - How often do you meet?
 - Where do you meet?
 - Who is expected to attend?
 - How long do staff meetings usually last?
 - Do you follow a set agenda/outline?
 - How do you include other staff members in the meetings?
 - Do you provide mentoring and/or staff development during meetings?

10. If you were preparing an agenda for the first 100 days a Senior Pastor spends “on the job,” what are the most important items to include?
11. What do you wish someone had told you before you became pastor of a local church with a pastoral staff?

APPENDIX B

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEES

Rodney Autry

Dr. Rodney Autry has been the Senior Pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Manassas, VA for thirteen years. He has been in ministerial positions leading a paid staff since 1985. Emmanuel Baptist Church has an average weekly attendance of 300. Dr. Autry serves alongside five pastoral staff members.

Jason Barber

Rev. Jason Barber has been the Senior Pastor of North Main Baptist Church in Danville, VA for five years. He has served a total of ten years as a Senior Pastor. North Main Baptist Church has an average weekly attendance of 500. Rev. Barber serves alongside four pastoral staff members.

Mark Becton

Dr. Mark Becton has been the Senior Pastor of Grove Avenue Baptist Church in Richmond, VA for eight years. Grove Avenue Baptist Church has an average weekly attendance of 1,250. Dr. Becton serves alongside ten pastoral staff members.

Ronnie Brown

Rev. Ronnie Brown has been the Senior Pastor of Swift Creek Baptist Church in Midlothian, VA for twelve years. Swift Creek Baptist Church has an average weekly attendance of 1,000. Rev. Brown serves alongside four pastoral staff members.

Jeff Ginn

Dr. Jeff Ginn currently serves as the Executive Director of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia. Before serving with the SBCV, he was the Senior Pastor of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Colonial Heights, VA for eight years. He has led a

pastoral staff for many years, including as a church planter on the international mission field. At Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, the average weekly attendance was 1,100. Dr. Ginn served alongside seven pastoral staff members.

Randy Hahn

Dr. Randy Hahn has been the Senior Pastor of Colonial Heights Baptist Church in Colonial Heights, VA for seven years. He also has served on staff at Second Baptist Church in Houston, TX. Colonial Heights Baptist Church has an average weekly attendance of 2,100. Dr. Hahn serves alongside nine pastoral staff members.

Thurman Hayes

Dr. Thurman Hayes has been the Senior Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Yorktown, VA for nine years. He has served a total of fourteen years as a Senior Pastor. Bethel Baptist Church has an average weekly attendance of 775. Dr. Hayes serves alongside three pastoral staff members and a children's ministry director.

Tim Hight

Dr. Tim Hight has been the Senior Pastor of Main Street Baptist Church in Christiansburg, VA for thirteen years. He has served more than twenty years as a Senior Pastor. Main Street Baptist Church has an average weekly attendance of 500. Dr. Hight serves alongside four pastoral staff members.

Drew Landry

Dr. Drew Landry has been the Senior Pastor of Spotswood Baptist Church in Fredericksburg, VA for three years. He has served a total of fifteen years in three multi-staff churches. Spotswood Baptist Church has an average weekly attendance of 2,000. Dr. Landry serves alongside eight pastoral staff members.

Ernie Myers

Rev. Ernie Myers has been the Senior Pastor of Deep Creek Baptist Church in Chesapeake, VA for nineteen years. Deep Creek Baptist Church has an average weekly attendance of 1,250. Rev. Myers serves alongside five pastoral staff members and two directors.

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VITA

Rev. Keith E. Robinson

PERSONAL

Born: January 12, 1975

Married: Rhonda Ann Stone, June 14, 1997

Children: Tabitha Ann, born October 26, 2001

Abigail Faye, born October 5, 2006

EDUCATIONAL

B.A., Southeastern Baptist Theological College, 1998

M.Div., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001

MINISTERIAL

Licensed: December 31, 1995, Ladysmith Baptist Church, Ladysmith, VA

Ordained: July 22, 2001, Spotswood Baptist Church, Fredericksburg, VA

PROFESSIONAL

Youth Minister: Sulphur Springs Baptist Church; Warrenton, NC; 1998-1999

Interim Pastor: Inez Baptist Church; Inez, NC; 2000

Senior Pastor: Capron Baptist Church; Capron, VA; 2001-2004

Senior Pastor: Mountain View Baptist Church; King George, VA; 2004-present

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Certified as an Interfaith Evangelism Associate through the North American
Mission Board (SBC), 2000

Recipient of the Ellis W. Hollon Philosophy of Religion Award (SEBTS), 2001