

Way of Discipleship Small Groups

Leading: Growing Collaborative Teams



Touching base (5 minutes)

Open in prayer as is helpful for your group.

If this is your first session take time to introduce yourselves and set any ground rules you want to for your time together.

If you met previously take the opportunity either as a group or in pairs to check in with each other about how your response from last time has gone.



Opening question(s) (5 minutes)

What makes a good team?



Understanding the information (35 minutes)

Share these thoughts in your own words or read them together:

An African proverb says if you want to go fast you should go alone. If you want to go far then you must go together. Why did Leicester City win the Premier League in 2016 for the first time in their 132-year history when the bookies placed the odds of them doing so at 5000 to 1? Ian Parkinson says it was not because they had the best or most expensive individual players. Rather it was because they were facilitated by a manager who knew how to make everyone feel valued in such a way that they became very much more than the sum of their individual parts.



Facilitating collaboration is a distinguishing mark of an effective leader which brings several distinct advantages:

Leadership becomes the property of the community rather than the property of one person.

This builds confidence because most of the time followers will see decisions made by a group as being more reliable.

Collaboration tends to be more efficient and effective, with a mixture of gifts able to come together. (As we have seen, leaders who resist collaboration are always going to be restricted by their own personal limitations.)

Collaboration builds community and counteracts the loneliness which can be a cost of leadership.

Within an organisation it helps with coordination.

By providing systems and structures which gather the efforts of others and enable people to work with one another, we develop the life of the community, as well as of its members.

Lawrence defines a team as those who are “working interdependently with others in a mutual, caring and complementary way, towards a shared, Kingdom honouring goal.”

Generally speaking, whereas a working group or network will be more about gathering people with similar areas of oversight together for mutual support and accountability – helping them to do their individual tasks more effectively – teams will come together to focus on a shared project or task.

The whole team is mutually accountable in making sure that the work is done. They are a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, clear goals and an agreed approach, in order to better serve the purposes of God's Kingdom.

What are the main features of a good team?

Being clear about our common purpose. When people are diverse in their characters and gifts it is a compelling purpose which makes them work collaboratively. The essential foundation for effective teamwork is not the relationships; the most critical component is the owning of the clear task - the aim is not to get along but to get aligned. In forming a team, you do not start with people but with the purpose, which needs to be clear, shared and owned.

James Lawrence uses an example to reveal how bees can show us something about this. On a warm day, about half the bees in a hive stay inside beating their wings while the other half go out to gather pollen and nectar. Because of the beating wings, the temperature inside the hive is about 10 degrees cooler than outside. The bees rotate duties, and the bees that cool the hive one day are honey gatherers the next. They are committed to the common purpose.

A mixture of complementary gifts and skills necessary to get the task done. Using Strengthsfinder or a Fivefold ministry assessment may help with this.

A size of team which works. The essence of a good team is the productive interaction between team members. An ideal number is between four to eight people. This is because when there are five people there are twenty channels of communication. When there are six it goes to thirty channels. And when there are eight it goes to fifty-six. The larger the team the more likely some of them might be overlooked and others might dominate. Good teams are ones in which everyone talks and listens in roughly equal measure and members have a chance to connect with each other.

Building teams in which a certain number of people already know each other is easier. If it is entirely new in its make up a lot of energy must go into the initial relationship building.

Having a balance between task and relationship. While a team is formed and shaped by its task, the best teams will combine space for mutual relationship and support as the environment in which that task is done.

What are the challenges in developing a team?

Developing teams will not make work or ministry easier – often it introduces complex and difficult conflict and negotiation into a task and the best teams are not made up of similar people – but it will ultimately make it more fruitful. Teams therefore require effort and commitment.

Patrick Lencioni describes five things which teams can struggle with.

A lack of or absence of trust which means people may be unwilling to be vulnerable within the group and share. The role of the leader may be to model vulnerability and spend time on relationships.

A fear of conflict. As a result, teams can keep harmony superficially but fail to deal with real issues through constructive debate. The role of a leader may be to name difficult issues in a safe but intentional way.

A lack of commitment. If there is a difference in the extent to which different team members are committed this can both make decisions difficult to reach, and result in a loss of momentum. The role of the leader is to clarify expectations and perhaps make tough decisions about membership.

Avoiding accountability. Teams will inevitably do better if on the occasion that they are not functioning well, the issues can be named. The role of the leader will be to highlight any behaviours which are stopping the group carrying out its responsibilities.

Inattention to results. Rather than being focussed on whether or not the team is moving towards doing its task well, teams can fall into the temptation of protecting their reputation, or sense of status. While affirming the members of the team, the role of the leader will be to keep attention on the evidence which shows the purpose is being carried out.

What skills and attitudes help a leader to build a good team?

The role of a team leader will be to act as a steward or facilitator - making sure the team exists to fulfil a purpose (and not vice versa), to release its imaginative potential, celebrate its diversity, and to make sure everyone can participate.

As well as being aware of the challenges already outlined, these other general leadership qualities will be foundational in helping the right environment:

Modelling collaborative behaviour – by genuinely listening to and working with others. What people see us do will form the culture of any collaborative group, more than what they hear us say.

Being both task and relationship oriented. While it is the purpose that will always shape the way people work together, it is the role of the leader to create an atmosphere in which people are not a means to an end.

Investing in people. As we have seen, it is how we develop people that creates a lasting legacy and will create the foundation for good collaboration. This can be done formally or informally through supervision, though a regular commitment to meeting will help. The focus of supervision is personal and task oriented. It is about developing the person – in their skills and character - but also enabling them to see where their own area of service fits into the whole life and mission of the church or organization. Good supervision may include a combination of reflection on their recent experience or work, personal support, and management of current tasks.

Discuss: Choose one of the questions to ask yourself on the handout. What is your response?

Reading the Bible (15 minutes)

Read Mark 3: 13-19 in which Jesus calls His disciples.

Discuss the Discovery Bible Study questions:

What does this passage teach me about God?

What does this passage teach me about people?

How does this passage call me to obey God?

What might I do in response to this this week?

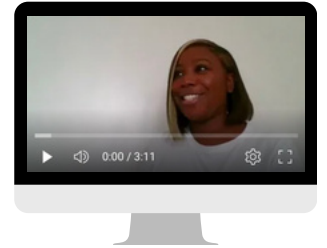


Seeing how it looks in real lives (10 minutes)

Watch the video at:

<https://youtu.be/hnnyEhY9CZU>

What struck you as important in the video?



Responding to God's leading (5 minutes)

Give people an opportunity to think about, "What might God be showing me and how might I respond?" They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, "Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?"



Group prayer (5 minutes)

Thank you, Lord,
for the teams to which I belong,
for the support and encouragement we share,
for the clarity of the role we each play,
so when we reach our goals
we can celebrate a job well done.
Amen



From <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0021q6b>

Growing Collaborative Teams.

**“If you want to go fast you should go alone.
If you want to go far then you must go together.”
African proverb.**

Why is collaboration important?

Leadership becomes the property of the community rather than the property of one person.

This builds confidence

because most of the time followers will see decisions made by a group as being more reliable.

Collaboration tends to be more efficient and effective,

with a mixture of gifts able to come together.

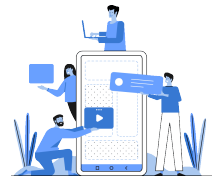
Collaboration builds community

and counteracts the loneliness which can be a cost of leadership.

Within an organisation it helps with coordination.

.....

**A team is “working interdependently with others in a mutual, caring and complementary way, towards a shared, Kingdom honouring goal.”
(James Lawrence)**



What are the main features of a good team?

Being clear about our common purpose.

The most critical component is the owning of the clear task - the aim is not to get along but to get aligned.

A mixture of complementary gifts and skills necessary to get the task done.

A size of team which works.

An ideal number is between four to eight people.

Building teams in which a certain number of people already know each other is easier.

Having a balance between task and relationship.

.....

Questions to ask myself in forming a team:

How have I helped them clarify the purpose?

Is there a good mix of the skills necessary to pursue that purpose in the team? Where are the gaps?

How does the size of the team encourage everyone to engage well?

How is the balance between task and relationship in the team?



What are the challenges in developing a team?

Patrick Lencioni describes five things which teams can struggle with.

- 1 A lack of or absence of trust.**
The role of the leader may be to model vulnerability and spend time on relationships.
- 2 A fear of conflict.**
The role of a leader may be to name difficult issues in a safe but intentional way.
- 3 A lack of commitment.**
The role of the leader is to clarify expectations and perhaps make tough decisions about membership.
- 4 Avoiding accountability.**
The role of the leader will be to highlight any behaviours which are stopping the group carrying out its responsibilities.
- 5 Inattention to results.**
The role of the leader will be to keep attention on the evidence which shows the purpose is being carried out.

What skills and attitudes help a leader to build a good team?



The role of a team leader will be to act as a steward or facilitator by

- Modelling collaborative behaviour.**
- Being both task and relationship oriented.**
- Investing in people.**

The focus of supervision

Personal and task oriented.

It is about developing the person – in their **skills and character** – but also enabling them to see where their own area of service fits into the whole life and mission of the church or organization.

Good supervision may include

a combination of **reflection on their recent experience or work**, personal **support**, and **management of current tasks**.

Questions to ask myself when leading a team:

- How do my team know I am committed?**
- How am I modelling collaboration?**
- How do I build trust by demonstrating vulnerability?**
- How am I helping the team take responsibility for difficulties?**
- How am I helping the team look for evidence of progress?**
- Am I seeing people as means to an end or am I investing in others?**
- Do I supervise people in a holistic way?**

