



# THE IMPORTANCE OF MINISTERING TO YOUR STAFF

ERIC SWANSON

Any team leader who wants to have a ministry of multiplication will be committed to ministering to his staff as his number one priority. You cannot and must not bypass the staff if you want to build a movement of multiplication. If they are effective, then you are effective. The staff are not just the means to your ministry. They are your ministry.

## WRONG ASSUMPTIONS WE MAKE ABOUT STAFF

There are at least six assumptions that we make about our staff.

1. They have been adequately trained.
2. They are growing and developing spiritually.
3. They know what to do.
4. They can work effectively in leading people.
5. They are motivated.
6. That time in ministry means effectiveness.

## QUESTIONS THE STAFF ARE ASKING

The staff are continually asking themselves two questions--1) Does anyone notice what I am doing? and 2) Does anyone really care? Through your ministry with your staff, you as a team leader can help to answer these questions.

## THE BIBLICAL MODEL OF MINISTRY

The primary models of ministry and leadership that all of us have been influenced by are the "military model" and the "business model." The military model is beneficial for determining objectives and strategies.

The business model helps us with our organization. However, when it comes to ministry, we need another example--the biblical model of leadership. As a leader, Jesus identified himself as a Shepherd and a Servant.

## THE TEAM LEADER AS SHEPHERD AND SERVANT

Look at the following verses and see what principles you can discover about the role of a shepherd and a servant. How does this help you to understand your job?

John 10: 11-27

1 Peter 5:2-4

Psalm 78:70-72

Ezekiel 34:2-6

Isaiah 40:10

Mark 10:45

John 13:3-15

## THE TEAM LEADER AS A MENTOR

A mentor is someone who is committed to the success of another--even if or when that person passes him by. A mentor is a tutor, a guide, a coach, an encourager. Moses had his Joshua, Barnabas had his Paul, Paul had his Timothy. The story is told of a company president who was hired and at the same time was given a matreshka doll from Russia--six wood-carved dolls nesting one inside the other. Attached was a note. "If you hire people with less ability than you have, we will become a company of midgets. If you hire people with greater abilities than you have, we shall become a company of giants.



## THE TEAM LEADER AS A FRIEND

You cannot effectively minister to your staff as their supervisor. You must minister as a friend. The greater the relationship, the greater the impact. A friend looks after the good of his friends. A true friend never uses his friends. Friends talk about other things besides the ministry. Demonstrate genuine care and concern. Spend adequate time together. Former director, Kent Mulkey has well stated that with the staff team, as with children, “quantity time eventually becomes quality time.” You communicate availability by being available. “I’ve got an appointment right now, but in my first open spot, let’s get together. How’s 2 o’clock?” You minister best to your staff by being yourself--be real. We like our friends, certainly not because they are perfect, but because they are themselves. It’s O.K. for you to let them see you struggle and fail. It’s what you do with those struggles and failures that counts.

## WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?

In Philippians 1:25 the apostle Paul said that he would stay and minister for two reasons--1) their progress in the faith and 2) their joy in the faith. He wanted them to be productive and joyful. The questions to ask yourself are these, “Are my staff growing?” and “Are my staff joyful?” If not, what can I do to help? What contributes to their joy? God’s presence (Psalm 16:11), seeing multiplication (3 John 4), obedience (John 15:11), etc. What contributes to their progress? Progress is growth in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10), walking by faith (Hebrews 10:38), etc. Real needs are met by helping them with the things which promote progress. Felt needs are best met by concentrating on the things which bring joy. Note that your goal is progress and joy, not comfort. Progress and growth involve struggle and at times pain. It is helping them face the truth about themselves and about God and putting those things together. Joy is the product of obedience (John 15:11). Obedience is often hard, but that is the reason God has placed you as the leader of the ministry--to help people do the things they wouldn’t ordinarily do and to trust God for things they wouldn’t ordinarily trust him for.

In other words, just because the staff don’t feel like doing evangelism, or staying up all night for a prayer meeting doesn’t mean you let them do what they want or you cancel your evangelistic efforts or prayer meeting. Your job is to help them want to fulfill God’s purposes.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO MINISTER?

Ministry means service. To minister to your staff means that you are committed to building them up, encouraging them and equipping them for the job at hand. To minister means that you are aware of their needs and are doing your part in meeting them. Ministry means that we are “comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable.”

## WHAT CAN WE DO TO MINISTER?

- 1) You minister to the staff through your life--from a strong spiritual base of who you are and who you are becoming. Your walk with the Lord will speak the loudest and be your greatest source of ministry to your staff. We minister from our lives by continually coming to Christ and imparting His life to others (John 7:37-39), by filling our hearts with His Word (Luke 6:45), and by ministering to others through what God has done to personally minister to us (2 Corinthians 1:3-7). To be ministered to, staff need to feel like the person at the helm is walking with and trusting God.
- 2) You minister to your staff through the Word of God. Open the Word frequently and regularly together. Help them learn how to get into the word for themselves. Perhaps your best ministry is helping them to resource themselves on a regular basis. Share regularly what you are learning in your quiet time. Open the Scriptures on your personal appointments with the staff.
- 3) You minister to your staff by praying for them. To pray for your staff is to recognize that only God can change lives and give your staff what they really need.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO MINISTER TO YOUR STAFF

- 1) The Weekly Staff Meeting. Your weekly staff meeting provides a format not only for business and planning, but also for genuine ministry to take place. Get in the Word and pray together. Listen to a praise tape, pray two by two etc. Remember, it is not what you say about ministry that communicates what is important but what you do that counts. John Lamb has said this, “If our staff are not praying together and in the Word together, what does that say about our movement? We are reduced to running programs.”
- 2) Staff Retreats.
- 3) Individual Time With Your Staff Men. Your time with the staff men provides a format for asking about their personal growth in the Word, areas they are trusting God in, asking them what the next step in



their ministry is, as well as to find out how they are doing personally. Talk about the “whys?” What you are asking about and talking about will reveal what is really important. Pray together frequently. Be consistent with your appointments. By canceling your appointments with your staff communicates that something else is more important than the staff.

4) Your Time With Your co-MTL. Your weekly appointment with your co-MTL is potentially your most important appointment of the week.

5) Fun Times together. There is a direct correlation between staff teams who have fun together and productivity. Play and fun allow us to know and appreciate each other for who we are. Choose activities that everyone will enjoy although everyone will have to flex every once in a while. Include staff children where possible, but don’t limit your staff fun times only to things which kids can do. After all, there are only so many times you can go to the zoo. Golfing, water skiing, skeet shooting, and hanging out at Einstein Bros. Bagals are all fabulous ways to spend your spare time.

## RECOGNIZE YOUR BOUNDARIES

One of the hardest things you will ever have to balance is the tension between being the staff’s director and being their friend. Unlike other jobs, the “work hours” are not very well defined. If my life is my ministry, and ministry is my job, then I and my staff are always working, and I am always the director. People will look to you for direction in areas that extend beyond your role as the team leader. Where should you go to breakfast? What movie should you see? This kind of dependence is unhealthy. Make it clear to your staff that God has called you to lead the ministry, not their personal lives.

In non-moral areas, you minister to the staff best by allowing them to be themselves. Treat them like adults. Their hobbies, their taste in music, or movies is really not your concern. This also extends to how the staff spend their free time or their money. If they enjoy sleeping in until noon on a day off, that is their business. If they want to visit a boyfriend or girlfriend during a long weekend, it is their decision, not yours. They are adults capable of making their own decisions and living with the consequences of those decisions, which includes being back on campus at the beginning of the work week. If they are not asking their parent’s permission to do such things, why should they ever have to ask yours?

## WHO MINISTERS TO YOU?

One of the reasons that you were asked to be a team leader is that it was assumed that you know what you need to do to keep growing and keep being more effective. Well...so much for assumptions. You can do several things to keep growing. 1) Insure a daily time in the Word. You undoubtedly need a minimum of an hour reading, or studying the Word every day in order to have the spiritual resources to grow and be a resource to others. Book of the Month is an excellent way to stay resourced. 2) Develop a network of mentors--people who have influenced you in the past or people with more ministry experience than you have. This might be another team leader, a leader in another Christian organization or your pastor. 3) Allow your fellow-staff to minister to you.

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MTL

Former MTL, Bridget Murphey Jensen sent us the following suggestions for team leaders.

We feel ministered when you: Extend grace-- show love and acceptance that isn’t based on our performance. Listen--so we feel heard. Give us notes of encouragement. Verbally express your commitment to us. Help us be effective. Give us (more than the students) the benefit of the doubt--Stand in our defense. Go out to breakfast before staff meetings. Surprise us with treats or varied staff meeting activities. Get to know us personally--family, interests, weekend activities, dates, etc. Laugh a lot--have fun together. Hang out with the staff. See our needs and what you can do to meet them. Ask our advice--get our input. Don’t overcrowd the schedule. Don’t overload us--distribute the work fairly. Be an example in your walk, evangelism, and motivations. Demonstrate a willingness to sacrifice. Give perspective from the Word--based on our needs. Show your commitment to communicate, encourage and confront. Pray with us and for us. Show confidence in our abilities--respect us. Take our suggestions and feelings seriously. Love, love, love us. Love covers a multitude of sins.

## SUMMARY

1. Your number one job as a team leader is to minister to your staff.
2. You minister as a shepherd, servant, mentor, and friend of the staff.
3. Your goal is their progress and joy, not their comfort.

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4. You minister from your life, the Word and by praying for your staff.
5. You have several God-given opportunities to minister to your staff. Take advantage of them.
6. You are ministered to by God, mentors, and your staff.