



Learning Community Sixteen

Simple Planning

20-30
minutes

Personal Check-in:

Facilitator Instructions: Give everyone a few minutes to find two short passages in the book of Proverbs that highlight the importance of planning. Take turns sharing the various verses and responding to the questions below:

Sharing Questions:

1. In what ways does this passage challenge and inspire you?
2. What is one idea you have been exposed to recently (in the last 12 months) that has helped you be a more effective planner?
3. What is one way that you would like to grow as a leader in the coming months regarding your planning and managing skills? How can we pray for you regarding this?



15-30
minutes

Homework Debrief:

Instructions: Below is a list of the homework assignments from the last meeting. Ask each pastor to update the group on how they responded to each of the items. After everyone has checked in regarding the homework, take some time to talk about lessons that are being learned so far. Capture the discussion on a whiteboard or a flipchart.

1. Complete the Community Outreach Planner sheets at the end of this module and come to the next LC prepared to discuss your six to twelve month plan for your church.
2. For next time read *Church That Works* by Gary McIntosh and respond to the Book Review Questions.



30-45
minutes

Book Review Debrief:

***Church That Works* by Gary McIntosh**

1. Which assimilation ideas did you like most?
2. What have you learned about young people from the book?
3. How could your church become more friendly?
4. How could your worship service be strengthened?
5. Which ideas from Part 9 are worth considering?



6. Which planning ideas from Part 12 would you like to try?

7. Which ideas from Part 13 would you like to incorporate into how you lead and manage?

8. How were you personally challenged as a leader by this book?

9. What are the three most important ideas that you take away from this book?

10. What are your two favorite quotes from the book?



45-60
minutes

Case Study Interaction:

Instructions: If a pastor is lined up for this meeting, give him 10-15 minutes to talk about his church. With the remaining time, ask the group to give feedback on the following questions and to spend time interacting with the pastor about the following:

- 1. Please share the prescriptions you received from the Weekend Consultation.**
- 2. What progress have you made toward implementing the prescriptions?**
- 3. What are the most significant challenges you are facing in implementing the prescriptions?**
- 4. Have you done your time study? What did you learn about your use of time? What are you doing to make changes in your use of time? How are you getting these changes rooted in your life for the long term?**
- 5. What leadership skills are you focused on developing? Share your sense of progress and your challenges.**
- 6. Have you built new bridges into the community? If not, why not? If so, how? What are the results so far? How can you improve your vision casting for reaching the community?**
- 7. What are you doing each week to create a sense of urgency? Are you seeing an increase in Sunday worship attendance?**
- 8. What are your plans for the next three months?**



20-30
minutes

Learning Activity: Simple Planning

Facilitator Instructions: Transition the group to the article entitled “Simple Planning.” Ask everyone to read slowly and to highlight key ideas. After everyone has read, ask people to respond to the reading in pairs or triads.

Simple Planning

Managing and leading a volunteer organization like a local church requires a pastor to wear several different hats. The “manager hat” and the “leader hat” have received considerable attention over the last decade. Phrases like “strategic planning,” “goal setting,” “priority management,” “management by objective,” and “quality improvement” have seeped into our church vocabulary. Pastors must live in the dynamic tension between being “spirit led” and running “effective ministry.” That being said, it stands to reason that many pastors struggle with creating a ministry plan and then sticking with the plan. With this in mind, here are a few planning tools, tips, and ideas that could make “strategic planning” a little less daunting in the years to come.

Planning rhythm

Those who analyze execution and implementation dynamics estimate that we do 70% of the activities we lock into our calendar. In other words, if you commit to doing something and give it a “time block” in your schedule, there is a 70% chance of follow-through. Most churches do very little ministry planning because they refuse to time block this critical activity.

What is the natural planning rhythm in your setting? For starters, consider blocking out four planning sessions in the next twelve months that are based around the seasonal calendar. eight to twelve of your key ministry and opinion leaders should be asked to set these dates aside also. Once you have become comfortable with the quarterly two- to four-hour planning meeting you can expand to a full planning retreat approach. Keep in mind that planning sessions must have calendar priority if they are going to happen.

Great planning questions

A superb, thought-provoking question is worth its weight in gold. Planning sessions that stay focused on questions are sure to provide insight and impact. Resist the temptation to be the “answer man.” Allow the question to guide the discussions. Flipcharting is also a productive planning tool which will maximize the involvement of everyone as well as create a written record of the key ideas that were discussed. Here are a few questions to get you started:



- What is right?
- What is wrong?
- What is missing?
- What is confused?
- What do we not know the answer to?
- What is important right now?
- What one thing if focused upon would have the greatest impact or benefit?
- What jugular issue must we face?
- What potential opportunities do we need to consider?
- What roadblocks have we recently encountered?

Solve Problems

Did you know that 80% of the population hates setting goals? Bob Biehl makes this startling claim in his book *Stop Setting Goals*. His point is that most leaders gravitate toward solving problems rather than dreaming about the future through the generation of goals. Biehl argues that many leaders spend far too much time sweating about how to make and set goals. Cut yourself some slack and simply focus your energy on solving real-life problems in your church.

The eighteen-month window

Strategic planner Tom Patterson suggests that most organizations would benefit from using a shorter planning window. He believes that eighteen months is an adequate length of time for the prioritization of core issues facing a congregation.

At least a couple of times a year it is worth asking these questions:

- What important issue(s) are we facing in the 1st quarter (the next three months)?
- What important issue(s) are we facing in the 2nd quarter (three to six months from now)?
- What important issue(s) are we facing in the 3rd quarter (six to nine months from now)?
- What important issue(s) are we facing in the 4th quarter (nine to twelve months from now)?

Review, review, review

We can fool ourselves into thinking that action plans actually get implemented. However, the only way to ensure that your plan is progressing is through regular review. Monthly review is a great starting place and could be integrated into a regular council or committee meeting. When you are assessing your on-going implementation, simply ask:



- What progress have we made recently?
- What problems are we encountering?
- What new priorities should we have?
- What is the plan for the next one to two months?

SMART Goals

Let's face it...the ministry world is a confusing place sometimes! And we have created "planning" language that is so vague and open-ended that almost anything qualifies as effective ministry. Churches use language like:

Develop
Train
Equip
Grow
Inspire
Create
Reach out

The main problem with all of these words is that they are not specific enough. One of the greatest cures for the "flimsy, wishy-washy" goal is to use the SMART format.

SMART Goals

When writing your goals, the following checkpoints are essential:

S = Specific

Goals must not be vague. They must be direct and specific.

M = Measurable

It must be clear how you will know when you are "across the finish line."

A = Attainable

Goals must be realistic given reasonable effort and focus.

R = Related to vision

There must be a direct connection between your goal and the vision of the church.

T = Time bound

There must be a time frame by which you intend your goal to be achieved.



SMART Goal Examples

#1 We will put in place a computer software tracking system that will assist us in measuring the assimilation level of everyone that calls Mission Hill their church home by October 1, 2007.

#2 We will train each of our teachers in the “how to be a great teacher” video series which will enhance the learning that occurs in our Sunday School classrooms by June 1, 2008.

#3 We will establish a regular team meeting for training and support, which will strengthen our relational connection to each other and improve our teaching skills by June 17, 2008.

#4 We will develop a strategy for mobilizing the congregation in “relationship evangelism” which will strengthen our intentionality and effectiveness in impacting the unchurched in our community by September 1, 2008.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which ideas from “Simple Planning” stood out to you and why?

2. In what ways could you incorporate ideas from the article?



20-30
minutes

Learning Activity: My SMART Goals

Facilitator Instructions: Give each participant fifteen minutes to draft SMART Goals for the next six months of ministry. Then spend time sharing the goals in groups of two or three. Encourage partners to give honest feedback about how SMART the goals are. Look for vague, non-specific language!

Instructions: In the space below, create at least six SMART goals that relate to your church.

SMART Goal Worksheet
<p>SMART Goals When writing your goals, the following checkpoints are essential :</p> <p>S = Specific Goals must not be vague. They must be direct and specific.</p> <p>M = Measurable It must be clear how you will know when you are “across the finish line.”</p> <p>A = Attainable Goals must be realistic given reasonable effort and focus.</p> <p>R = Related to vision There must be a direct connection between your goal and the vision of the church.</p> <p>T = Time bound There must be a time frame by which you intend your goal to be achieved.</p> <p>SMART Goal #1</p> <p>SMART Goal #2</p> <p>SMART Goal #3</p> <p>SMART Goal #4</p> <p>SMART Goal #5</p> <p>SMART Goal #6</p>



5
minutes

Homework and Wrap-Up

Facilitator Instructions: Close out the session by highlighting the homework assignment.

Homework Assignment:

1. Come prepared with a list of SMART goals that you can present to the group. Develop a list of goals that you would like to work toward over the next twelve to eighteen months. Shoot to have at least ten goals that encompass a number of ministry areas including outreach.
2. For next time read *Good To Great* by Jim Collins and respond to the Book Review Questions.



Book Review Questions

Good To Great by Jim Collins

1. Which of the Level 5 Leadership qualities do you feel are most important for a pastor to embrace and why? Which ones do you personally feel you need to work on developing the most? What are 5 practical steps you can take for each of these leadership skills you want to improve in?
2. According to Collins, Level 5 leaders look out the window to attribute success to factors other than themselves. When things go poorly, however, they look in the mirror and blame themselves, taking full responsibility. As pastors, we are often guilt ridden and find ourselves the easy person to blame for problems. What are your thoughts on how we can manage our responsibility as a leader and at the same time avoiding the guilt trap? Going a step further, how can we grow personally in the ability to understand the underlying problems which may be frustrating the church as it seeks to grow?
3. In your congregation how does Collins ideas regarding getting the “who” question settled before the “what” question is addressed, make an impact on what you will do in the future? If you are the solo full time staff person, does it make a difference “who” is on your team? Why or why not? If people are in the wrong seat on the bus, what should you do?
4. How can you as a pastor who is the chief comforter of the saved, help the saved confront the brutal facts that we are not being effective in reaching the lost in a way that brings hope and real change? What are some practical steps to communicating our reality in a way to motivate the saved to action? Do you think “The facts are better than dreams”? How do you keep a balance between the two?



5. What is the Hedgehog Concept? How does it apply to your congregation? What do your people care deeply about? What can they be the best in the world at? What would you substitute for the “economic” driver? Why? What is your churches hedgehog concept? Work with 5 key leaders at your church before the next LC to come up with your hedgehog concept. Keep good notes on the process and share the ideas with your LC.

6. How are you leading your congregation to turn the flywheel of change? How are you focusing on process as well as results? How do you find the balance between getting the church off dead center and building momentum and keeping a focus on process development? Has the TCN coaching process helped you with this balance? How can the process be improved?

7. What is a BHAG? Does your congregation have one or more? Does the culture of the church body encourage BHAG’s that are never reached and soon forgotten? How can your congregation create one that is set with understanding that captures the imagination and will not kill the church? What are some BHAG’s in your past that were bad ones and what are some good ones?

8. Out of all the ideas in this book, choose 2 that you are going to implement. Share with your partner how these ideas will change your schedule and your priorities in the use of time and other key resources. For what can your partner hold you accountable to do before your next LC meeting regarding these two ideas?



LC Evaluation:

Date:

Location:

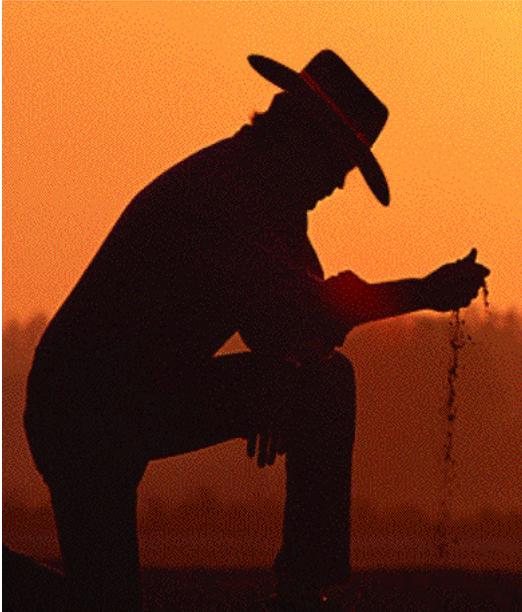
Questions:

1. What did you like most about the homework from the last Learning Community?

2. What did you like least about the homework from the last Learning Community?

3. How could we improve today's Learning Community experience?

4. How can we give you additional support for developing leadership skills in your own life and helping your church turn outward?



Me and the Harvest

1. How committed have I been to praying for people who need Jesus?
2. What have I done in the past month to help someone move closer to Christ?
3. What changes do I need to make in the next month to find time to be more outreach focused?
4. How did I keep the fire burning for outreach in our church this past month?
5. What have I learned about the community needs in this past month that our church could be poised to meet?
6. What's the most important outreach oriented action step I can take in this next month?