

DO YOU REGULARLY WORK AT AN UNSUSTAINABLE PACE and fear that you may be headed for burnout? Are you afraid the way that you do the work of God is in danger of destroying God's work in you?

What if you could receive help and simultaneously enhance the quality of the teaching that your flock receives? Is that possible?!!

It is if you are willing to employ the teaching approach described in the following paragraphs.

THE JOYS & BENEFITS OF TEAM-TEACHING

The average senior pastor has far too much to do! A team-teaching format can include a teammate whose primary job is to research, study, prepare before God, and deliver a “gourmet biblical meal.”

Open the bandwidth. Each teacher has his or her own voice, and different people connect with different voices. When you move to a team-teaching format, you increase the range of voices to which people can respond.

There is joy! When spiritually gifted people join a stimulating community that recognizes, shares, understands, and celebrates their gifts, they experience joy.

A new level of feedback becomes possible within a community of gifted teachers. When teachers can seek critique from fellow teachers as they prepare their messages, they are empowered to produce finer results. Post-delivery feedback can likewise inspire tremendous development.

FIND THE RIGHT TEAMMATE

The key to successful team-teaching is to have the right blend of teachers. Look for someone who agrees with the doctrine of your church, whose top spiritual gift is teaching, and who wants to use that gift in a team format.

Do not overlook potential team members already on your staff. Try to identify and develop communicators from sub-ministries within your church. Evaluate their current preaching and teaching skills, and then have someone whose top gift is teaching coach them.

Each team member must teach at a very high level so that comparisons are not “deadly.” Be careful not to set up teachers to fail by putting them in front of the congregation before they are ready.

What about volunteer teachers? It may be possible to find a volunteer teacher within your congregation. However, do not underestimate the amount of time, energy, and emotional vulnerability that teaching requires.

ROLES & ASSIGNMENTS

Senior pastors generally assume ultimate responsibility for the assignment of teaching opportunities and responsibilities. *Do not make assignments in isolation!* Use discernment and discuss teaching opportunities with team members.

Encourage teachers to stretch. Challenge team members out of their comfort zones—but be careful not to extend them beyond what they can reasonably do. Present a picture of belief in them, but allow them to decide when they are ready for a new challenge.

Recognize good mistakes as opposed to bad ones. Praise team members for taking good risks—even if they fail.

Start with the positives. When you evaluate your teachers' efforts, tell them what they did well before you dig into specific areas in need of improvement.

Not all teachers can call the church to certain levels of commitment and challenge. Within the team there is a point-leader role. Generally speaking, tough issues need to be presented to the congregation via the senior pastor.

CULTIVATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Cultivate a prayerful, supportive, affirming team environment. Reject a sinful spirit of competition, comparison, fragmentation, and disunity, and your team will have one of the greatest spiritual victories a teaching team can experience.

Seize opportunities to publicly affirm fellow teachers. Model support of team members before the congregation. Congregations that see teachers sincerely respect each other's teaching are less likely to inappropriately favor one teacher over another.

Take an honest look in the mirror. One surprising personal benefit offered to members of teaching teams is the growth opportunity that occurs as one struggles with envy. If you have difficulty celebrating a team member's success, pray for the courage and integrity to investigate and discover why.

Iron sharpens iron. If you truly believe that your gift was given to build the body of Christ, then *do not let pride prevent you from turning to experienced, loving brothers and sisters who can help you take your message to the next level of excellence.*

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Team-teaching may not be the quickest way for your church to grow, but it may be the healthiest. It takes time, and there is no guarantee that every teacher will “click” with your congregation.

But if your congregation learns to listen for the voice of God through multiple teachers, your teachers can live sane lives, invest more time preparing, and produce a higher caliber of message.

Is it time to ask, “What next step do I take to implement team-teaching?” It can greatly enrich the learning experience of your church!

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