

The Power of Partnership

Moving from Isolation to Cooperation in Your Ministry

“One can put a thousand to flight, and two can put ten thousand to flight.”
(Deuteronomy 32:30)

“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”
(Psalm 133:1)

BIBLICAL
BASIS

In order to take your leadership to a higher level, you will need to leverage the power of partnership. Partnerships can happen within a ministry between different departments or outside between two separate organizations that share a common goal. Effective partnerships produce synergy – energy coming from blended sources. It is a synthesis of strengths that produce more than the mere addition of the parts. Partnership is about multiplication. The difference between addition and multiplication is profound:

$$4 + 4 = 8$$

$$4 \times 4 = 16$$

In short, partnerships multiply wisdom, energy and resources. Consider what could happen if you no longer held on to the control of your ministry, but invited the strengths of others to join you in the process. What if you joined with other ministries to produce more fruit for God’s Kingdom than what you could produce alone? What if your ministry was about something more than you?

Personal Partnership Case Study: Jonathan and David

The story of Jonathan and David is told in I Samuel 18-20. It is a vivid portrait of two men who chose to partner together for the future success of God’s people. What makes the story profound is that Jonathan chose to promote David to be the next king of Israel, even though Jonathan was the rightful heir. It is the story of sacrifice and partnership for the good of the Kingdom, not for the benefit of one person.

What qualities did Jonathan and David possess that created such a powerful partnership? We examined this important truth in an earlier *Million Leaders Mandate* lesson. A quick review of I Samuel 20 reminds us of the ingredients that create an effective partnership.

1. They were _____. (I Samuel 20:1-4)

Although Jonathan couldn’t believe David was in such danger from his father, he pledged to him that he was at his disposal. Jonathan would do whatever David asked him to do.

Question: Do I have any ministry partner for whom I am completely available?

2. They were _____. (I Samuel 20:5-17)

When they parted ways Jonathan initiated a “vow” that he and David would make to one another. It stated that they would be committed to each other regardless of the cost.

Question: Am I dependable within the partnerships and relationships I am involved?

3. **They were _____.** (I Samuel 20:18-33)

When David failed to join King Saul for dinner, the king became angry. Jonathan was vulnerable, risking his very life to protect David that night.

Question: How vulnerable am I willing to become for someone else?

4. **They were _____.** (I Samuel 20:34-42)

In the end, David had to leave the palace for a season. These two friends wept at the separation, yet they did what was right. Even when it required a painful decision, they acted responsibly toward each other.

Question: Do I act responsibly and in the best interests of others in my leadership?

The Truth about Partnership

Unfortunately, the power of partnership is rarely seen. It is easier to talk about than to practice. Phil Butler, President of Interdev, outlines several principles for effective partnerships:

KEY
POINTS

1. **Effective partnerships are built on _____, openness and mutual concern.**

Partnerships are more than coordination, planning, strategies and tactics. It requires relationship.

2. **Lasting partnerships need a facilitator or _____.**

Partnerships need someone who, by consensus, has been given the role of bringing it to life.

3. **Effective partnerships develop in order to accomplish a specific _____ or _____.**

Partnerships should focus on “what” (goals) rather than on “how” (structure). Form follows function.

4. **Relevant partnerships begin by identifying _____ among the people to be served.**

They don’t start by writing a common theological statement – but by being moved to meet a need.

5. **Partnerships are a _____, not an _____.**

The formative stages often take time; exploring and building trust doesn’t happen overnight.

6. **Great partnerships are even more challenging to _____ than to start.**

Making sure the vision survives, the focus is clear and communication is good requires commitment.

7. **Fruitful partnerships are made up of ministries who each have a clear _____.**

Partner ministries must own a unique and clear vision that complements the vision of each partner.

8. **Effective partnerships _____ the differences between the ministries.**

Partners celebrate different contributions they make, but focus on what they have in common.

9. Lasting partnerships stay _____ on the ultimate goals, not immediate problems.

Partners don't get distracted from their major objective because of operational demands.

10. Smart partnerships expect _____ and plan ahead for them.

Be sure a process is built in to deal with changes, disappointments, and simply the unexpected.

Question: Are you involved in any effective partnerships right now?

Strategic Partnership Case Study: Saul and Samuel

The Scripture provides a picture for us of how pastors and business leaders can partner together to fulfill a God-given vision. In I Samuel 9-15, we see how Samuel, the priest, and Saul, the King, are both used by God in His sovereign plan. Samuel is the spiritual leader (or the ministry leader) and Saul is the secular leader (or marketplace leader).

Samuel is able to fulfill his role as a spiritual leader to a powerful leader like Saul because he is secure in who he is. Samuel finds security in his divine call and in the One who has called him. While Saul is an intimidating, daunting leader (I Samuel 9:2), Samuel is neither fearful nor envious of Saul's role. Furthermore, he is not diverted from his work in King Saul's life. Note the following observations regarding their relationship and their partnership.

EXAMINE
THE WORD

What Every Pastor Can *Learn* about These Partnerships

- 1. Samuel could speak into Saul's life because he was _____ in his calling. (9:17-19)** God points out the king of Israel to Samuel, but Samuel never puts Saul into celebrity status. Saul will be King over Samuel – but Samuel's security or emotional health is never placed in a man. With poise and confidence he says to Saul, "I am the prophet." He then proceeds to furnish Saul with instructions concerning the spiritual matters he will be facing as a king.
- 2. Samuel was able to _____ Saul's complementary role and honor him for it. (9:21-23)** Although Samuel has been the visible leader in Israel, he intentionally gives away his status by publicly honoring Saul. He has reserved special food for him and a special place at the table so no one would question whom they are to follow.
- 3. Samuel took _____ and anointed Saul for the ministry role he was to fulfill. (10:1)** Samuel doesn't feel competition or envy over this new king. Samuel knows that others will serve as leaders among God's people and both will complement each other. As Coach Mac once said, "We are not here to compete with each other, but to complete each other."
- 4. Samuel was instrumental in Saul receiving a new _____ to serve people. (10:6-9)** It's at this point that Samuel has every reason to feel awkward or displaced. Now Saul is doing the very thing that Samuel is gifted to do. But Samuel doesn't resist being part of developing Saul into the spiritual leader God has called him to be.
- 5. Samuel was _____ in helping Saul use his spiritual gifts. (10:10-13)**

"When they came to the hill there, behold, a group of prophets met Saul; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily and he prophesied among them... And the people said to one another, 'What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also a prophet?'"

6. **Samuel was not intimidated or _____ of Saul's conquests. (13:8-13)** Despite Saul's position as king and his success as conqueror, Samuel isn't moved by either of those. While Samuel was very affirming, he also understood the role he was to play in Israel and in the king's life. Samuel confronts Saul in his disobedience and clarifies the role each of them is to play: Saul is the king and he is the priest.
7. **Samuel was able to speak words of _____ to Saul. (15:1-3)** Even after confronting Saul's disobedience, Samuel is able to provide direction for the king and affirm his work on the battlefield. He doesn't shrink from playing his role in Saul's life and again clarifies Saul's place in the scheme of things. He furnishes Saul with great confidence and support as he endeavors to lead the armies of Israel.
8. **Samuel _____ and _____ for Saul when he failed. (15:10-11)**
"Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, 'I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned his back from following Me, and he has not carried out My commands.' And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the Lord all night."
9. **Samuel could confront Saul when he sinned and provide him _____ . (15:12-23)** Samuel feels called continually to provide the big picture perspective to Saul, and to remind him of his roots, God's call and what the mission is. He offers an eternal perspective to the king, and refuses to let Saul deviate – trying to do God's will his way.
10. **Samuel possessed the _____ to call for repentance from Saul. (15:24-31)** Samuel ministers to Saul with a beautiful combination of grace and truth (John 1:17). He speaks the truth in love, never out of spite or superiority. When he returns with Saul, Samuel does not use intimidation, but he treats Saul with as much dignity as possible.

CHECK
YOUR HEART

What Every Pastor Should Know about These Partnerships

The Scripture illustrates the partnership role that ministry leaders (or pastors) and marketplace leaders (or laymen) can enjoy if they will work in cooperation.

1. The pastor's role is illustrated by _____. (He is the ministry leader.)
 The layman's role is illustrated by _____. (He is the marketplace leader.)

Quite often, neither of these two types of people knows how to relate to each other. The marketplace leader feels he doesn't really understand all of that "spiritual" stuff, and the ministry leader feels at a loss to talk with laymen about business. Neither understands the language of the other world. In the text, the prophet Samuel isn't afraid to enter Saul's world and to talk straight to him about the principles of God.

2. The issue ministry leaders (pastors) must settle is: _____ .
 The issue marketplace leaders (laymen) must settle is: _____ .

The majority of pastors are insecure and intimidated with successful laymen in their congregation. One survey reported that three out of four pastors responded anonymously that they feel intimidated by the lay leaders or the staff with which they work. Nine out of ten said they feel inadequate for the tasks that are before them.

Conversely, many successful laymen have difficulty submitting to a pastor who is insecure. They look for strong, confident leadership. They prefer to call the shots themselves if the one in charge isn't a leader. These laymen frequently need for God

to “break” them (Psalm 51:17-18). The Hebrew word for “brokenness” means “to crush so as to bring into a new state.” To be broken means we no longer press our own agenda but are elated when God’s plan comes to light. Our soul has been tamed and we are no longer self-promoting, self-sufficient or self-righteous. We simply want to make a difference, regardless of who gets the credit. In the same way that Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and then gave it to the people, we must experience the same sequence from God. God has blessed us, but He must now break us before He can use us to feed others.

CHECK
YOUR HEART

3. The pastor often envies the layman’s _____. (He envies the money.)
The layman often envies the pastor’s _____. (He envies the mission.)

The relationship between successful laymen and pastors often is one in which each envies what the other one has. Both can generously give of what they have to the other, and share their wealth – whether it is money or a mission from God. The Lord has placed both kinds of leaders in the church to bless the other.

4. Pastors must develop a _____ big enough to attract successful laymen.
Laymen must develop a _____ to enable pastors to fulfill it.

Sometimes it is difficult to admit we need each other. We’d rather just do it ourselves. But there are times when we simply cannot. Our vision should be so large that it requires the gifts of others to accomplish it. Often, the ministry leader has the vision, while the marketplace leader has the resources.

5. Pastors must include laymen in _____ so they can own the ministry.
Laymen must include pastors in both their finances and _____.

What seems to be most valuable to pastors is the power to control the ministry of the church. What seems to be most valuable to marketplace leaders is their time. Both must give what they value most to the other. If they can, they will share ownership of the church’s vision. If they can’t, marketplace leaders will have only a passing interest in the church’s programs, and the pastor will have limited resources.

6. Pastors must give the _____ to laymen.
Laymen must give their _____ to the church’s ministry.

Our local church ministry is so deep it requires the gifts and service of the entire body of Christ (Romans 12:4-5). In this chapter Paul writes that we are “members of one another.” Think about that – we are not merely members of Christ’s Church but of each other: I belong to you and you belong to me!

7. Pastors fail in this partnership because they are _____.
Laymen fail in this partnership because they are _____.

Far too often, this is a picture of the Church. Out of intimidation or sheer independence, the ministry leader or marketplace leader jumps out of the partnership early.

8. Pastors can offer one thing that laymen want most - _____.
Laymen can offer one thing that pastors need most - _____.

“There are no problems we cannot solve together,
and very few that we can solve by ourselves.” (Lyndon B. Johnson)

ACTION PLAN

What Every Pastor Should *Do* about These Partnerships

1. Pastors must become secure in their call and their role in marketplace leaders' lives.

APPLICATION: How can you build this into your life?

2. Pastors must initiate relationship and partnership with marketplace leaders.

APPLICATION: When will you do this? With whom?

3. Pastors must create places for marketplace leaders to use their gifts.

APPLICATION: Where might these people use their gifts in your church?

4. Pastors must allow marketplace leaders to own the ministry by making decisions.

APPLICATION: How could you include them on decisions?

5. Pastors must know and communicate their principles (core values) and vision.

APPLICATION: When and how will you do this?

6. Pastors must challenge marketplace leaders to God's call on their lives as well.

APPLICATION: What platform can you use for this?

7. Pastors must equip marketplace leaders to become spiritual leaders in their own arenas.

APPLICATION: How will you accomplish this?

“The Law of Significance: One is too small a number to achieve something great.”
(John C. Maxwell)