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# Doing Church as a Team

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By Wayne Cordeiro

Wayne Cordeiro – in 1995, Wayne started New Hope Christian Fellowship in Honolulu with a handful of members. One month later, the faithful numbered 800. Today, there are over 8,000 members who share Cordeiro’s passion for doing church as a team!

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## Preface

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The bottom line of this entire book: *You can’t do it alone.*

No pastor can single-handedly fulfill that calling (the call to the Great Commission), regardless of how gifted he may be. Unless every one of us catches the fire, in the long run there will be no warmth against the chill of the age we’re living in.

To be a successful leader...you must develop not only your gifts but also the gifts of others around you.

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## Introduction

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The story is told of learning to paddle a six-man canoe and how it takes team work to make it work well. “Just like paddling a canoe, God designed His people to stroke together for a purpose. Each of us has been given a paddle by God. A gift. A calling. And like the paddlers of a canoe, each of us has a place or a role to fill. We were created to do church as a team!

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## Chapter one – God Has a Plan

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God never makes mistakes. He has a purpose and a plan for you!

God also preselected the city you are living in right now.

You have one life to live on the Earth. Invest it wisely. Don’t squander it or misuse it!

God’s reason for saving us – *deliver his message – to share the good news with someone who desperately needs the grace of God.*

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## Chapter two – Don’t Forget Who You Are

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**Story** – A rabbi living in a Russian city wandered into a Russian military compound that was off-limits to civilians. The silence of the evening chill was shattered by the back of a Russian soldier. “Who are you? And what are you doing here?” With some delight, as though he had made a discovery, the rabbi said, “I will pay you the equal sum if you will ask me those same two questions every day: Who are you? And What are you doing here?”

*Never forget why God called you and saved you!*

Every member a minister – the ministry of the church is not the responsibility of a few professionals; it is the divine responsibility of every single one of us. Every member is a minister. Full-time? Yes!

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What's the best way to reach people? Through a pastor? ...not the most ideal. The best way to reach teachers? Through teachers. The best way to reach police officers? Through police officers. Construction workers? Through construction workers.

Don't lose your flavor, and don't forget who you are!

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### **Chapter three - The Gifts: Commissioned Beyond Ourselves**

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God loves to take ordinary people like you and me and through them do extraordinary things! He doesn't need superheroes. He is looking for every day believers, willing vessels whom He can equip and gift.

Doing church as a team...is about a hundred people doing one thing each – doing the one thing they have been gifted to do! The question is not whether we have gifts. The real issue is whether we know what they are and are developing them for the Master's use.

*Three basic categories of gifts: office gifts, serving gifts and charismatic gifts.*

1. The office gifts – the sake of oversight and leadership; the role of these offices (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, Eph. 4:8,11-12) is not to corner the market on ministry but, rather, to equip God's people to do the work of ministry.

**Equipping** = from the verb *katartismos* which means “to mend” as used when James and John were “mending their nets.”

*When the people are being consistently mended and equipped by the Word of God so that the work of the ministry is being done, churches become vibrant and healthy.*

2. The serving gifts – distributed...to equip us to excel in serving.

Link your gift with your passion, and you will begin to play a powerful role in the Body of Christ.

3. The charismatic gifts – at New Hope...we welcome the totality of the gifts of the Holy Spirit...we have many gifts of serving, others with the gifts of tongues, others with the gift of leadership, teaching, mercy, giving and the rest. We all need each other!

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### **Chapter four – Finding Your Fit**

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Each of us is like a piece of a jigsaw puzzle. Every piece has its place in God's plan. No one piece is optional.

How do we find our place? Will it come easily? ...each piece doesn't smoothly fall into place on the first attempt. It usually takes several tries in order to find the right fit. If a piece doesn't fit on the first go-round, you don't toss the rebellious piece into the trash! You keep at it because you know every piece is a perfect fit...somewhere.

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## Breaking through our limitations

Your potential is like an iceberg that is 10 percent above the water with the other 90 percent hidden beneath the surface. With God's help, you can put your whole potential to its fullest use for the Lord!

## Finding Your Design

DESIGN is an acrostic that stands for the different ingredients that, when combined, equal you.

- ◆ D for Desire – What is your passion?
- ◆ E for Experience – Past experiences, projects, hurts make us who we are.
- ◆ S for Spiritual Gift – What are your spiritual gifts?
- ◆ I for Individual Style – each of us has a unique temperament or individual style.
- ◆ G for Growth Phase – Are you an infant, toddler, adolescent, young adult or a mature adult in your relationship with Christ? Your current growth phase is a factor I your DESIGN.
- ◆ N for Natural Abilities – What do you enjoy doing? Do you have natural talents?

## Three Results of Using Your Gifts

1. Amazing Joy – the Greek word for spiritual gifts is *chaismata* which is from the word *charis*, or grace. The word *chara* (the root word of grace) means joy!
2. A Healthy Accountability – without accountability, we will never build character. Character is the inner strength that carries you to the finish. Character is the weight in our lives and accountability is the weight trainer.
3. Accelerated Growth – using our gifts to serve is a crucial and indispensable ingredient for spiritual growth. Christians are like sponges...we absorb teaching, instruction, God's Word and His promises; but at some point we stop growing...we get saturated. We need wringing out which happens through service.

*It's not the size of the task but the size of the heart you put into the task that makes what you do something beautiful for God!*

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## Chapter Five: Mining Leadership Gifts in the Church

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### Dream Releasers

*The Church is laden with treasures, dreams and precious gifts, yet too many precious souls are going to their graves with songs left unsung, gifts yet unwrapped and dreams unreleased.*

*God calls each and every leader to be a dream releaser.*

### Building a Leadership Base

One of the most critical keys to doing church as a team is to build an ever-increasing core of servant-leaders.

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**Illustration** – Imagine a one-square-foot piece of cardboard and onto it you slowly empty a bucket of white sand. The sand will accumulate, and as it does, a pyramid of sand will form. What will happen if you pour another bucket of sand onto the cardboard? The amount of sand will increase until the cardboard can hold no more. If you back a truckload of sand into the room and dump it, does your cardboard hold more sand? No! What has to be done to hold more sand? Expand the base!

The leadership in any church is like the cardboard: *The larger the base, the more sand you can hold. If you leadership base is small, it doesn't matter how much sand you pour onto it. It will be impossible for you to hold any more sand - until you increase the size of the base! People come and leave. Increasing the leadership base by building a solid core of leaders is primary to a church's foundation for the future.*

The first step in building a core of leaders – believe they are there.

*God will provide all you need to fulfill what He has called your church to do. But first, you must believe that the leaders are there. Why? Because they are! Find them.*

### **God Has Already Provided**

In Exodus 15:22-26 the Israelites had run out of water so they cry for help. Then we read, *“Then he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree; and he threw it into the waters, and the waters became sweet.”*

The tree had always been there! God just showed it to him.

Let God show you the tree. It's there, and so are your leaders. You may be fellowshiping with them today, but you will never be able to see them until you believe that they are there.

**A picture** – A pastor friend was asked, “When you look at a forest, what do you see?” His answer, “Trees!” “That's your problem, all you see is trees. You've got to see the houses! ...dressers, rocking chairs, bed frames, cabinets and desks! They are all in the forest!”

*When you believe that they (leaders) are there, you'll be surprised at how many wonderful leaders start showing up!*

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## **Chapter six – Developing Servant-Leaders**

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*“Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of God upon earth.” -- John Wesley, 1703-1791*

In Mark 2, we find a story about Jesus seeing the best in people. It's the story of the four men who bring their friend to Jesus on a stretcher and lower him through the roof.

Jesus' response holds for us a leadership principle that is worth a pound of gold. Instead of chastising the zealous friends for their ill-planned exploit the record shows these words: *“And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, ‘My son, your sins are forgiven.’”*

He saw the action of Reuben's friends for what it was and called it faith.

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## **A Leader Sees What's Best**

Look for faith in those around you. Look for evidence of God's presence, not evidence of His absence. Some of the greatest discoveries come about when people readjust their eyes to see what's best about a situation rather than what's worst.

**Illustration** – George De Mestral was walking his dog when it ran off into some long grass. When he recovered it, it was covered with burrs. George could have cursed the dog but instead, he curiously took a cutting of the fur and viewed it under his microscope. Amazed at the gripping characteristics of the burrs, he studied it further. George's curiosity and his willingness to see the potential in a sticky situation ultimately led him to invent Velcro!

## **How to Please God**

*You can't please God by not investing what you have been given! (see Matthew 25:24-29). We must use our gifts, not bury them.*

## **Develop your gifts by taking a risk**

Leaders develop their gifts by considering the consequences and going for it anyway. There are no shortcuts. If it's for God, don't ask, Why? Ask, Why not?

## **Take a risk for God!**

*"There once lived a man who never risked, He never tried. He never laughed, He never cried. Then on day, when he passed away, His insurance was denied. They said since he never really lived, then he never really died!" -- Anonymous*

Gifts don't ripen like a bunch of bananas when put in a dark place. Gifts that are hidden away only get rotten.

## **"Take me out to the Ball Game!"**

To learn to play ball you have to play ball - even the most gifted at playing ball. This principle applies to doing church as a team. You must use your gift! Even though you miss a few grounders or drop the occasional pop-up, stay in there.

Say yes more often than you say no. Get involved. If after a while, you find your piece of the puzzle just doesn't fit, simply move to another position, but keep serving!

## **Building your character before building your ministry**

God is less interested in what you're *doing* and more interested in what you're *becoming*.

When you get involved, God will instill character or virtue in you through the process – perhaps endurance, submission, people skills or positive attitudes.

**Character** = *Character is the ability to follow through on a worthy decision long after the emotion of making that decision has passed.*

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But...over the long haul, ministry should charge you up. You'll build character along the way, but if week after week you come away from ministry drained, then stop! Reevaluate what may be causing this and find a remedy. Sometimes it may be God working on your character, and sometimes it may be time for you to move.

### **Security Checkpoint**

Developing servant-leaders requires one major ingredient: security. If you are not secure as a leader, you will find it virtually impossible to attract, develop or retain other leaders. You cannot do church as a team while battling insecurity.

Secure leaders encourage others and enjoy their successes; appreciate and applaud others; are neither territorial nor possessive; are willing and able to surround themselves with people more qualified than themselves.

### **10-Point Checklist**

<b>A secure leader</b>	<b>An insecure leader</b>
Encourages others' attempts	Sabotages others' efforts
Points out others' strong points	Brings attention to others' faults
Overlooks flaws	Uses others' flaws as ammunition
Readily admits own mistakes	Is defensive and justifies mistakes
Gives away credit to others	Demands or manipulates credit
Rejoices when others succeed	Is jealous of others' successes
Is excited when others do it better	Is easily intimidated
Is willing to risk to improve	Plays it safe to retain position
Is content to remain anonymous	Requires others to notice
Is quick to build teams	Wants to do things himself

### **Passing Baton**

Jesus style of leadership – he began passing batons to his disciples early in His ministry.

Passing the baton in ministry isn't meant to be a sudden last-ditch effort. Plan on it. Start passing batons early in your ministry.

It only takes a moment to pass a baton, but it takes much longer to pass the heart of that baton. At New Hope, batons are passed not as a precursor to the end of one's ministry but as a way of including others in the race!

You pass the baton at the apex of your stride in a relay race. The same is true in doing church as a team. One of the fastest and easiest ways to pass batons is through shadowing – following someone around who has been serving in an area of interest to you.

*Three stages of shadowing* are:

- Stage 1 – I do. You watch
- Stage 2 – We do together.
- Stage 3 – You do. I applaud!

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## **Passing out batons and running together**

Unlike a relay team, in ministry you pass batons to *all* the team members. Then you run together! You don't pass a baton and then quit. You stay with the team and run in unison.

## **Start by serving each other**

Although serving the Lord and others is best done in teams, start with serving the others on the team. Some call it *lateral serving*, in which serving one another is given equal importance with serving to get something accomplished. This is the *esprit de corps* of a church.

Doing church as a team also means “cross training” – training outside our specialties so we can step up and step in when others need a break or they simply need our support.

Someone once said that you never diminish the flame of your own candle by lighting the flame of someone else!

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## **Chapter Seven – Setting Your Compass**

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Reaching an ultimate goal means starting at the right place, and that means knowing where you're going. Before you do church as a team, there must be a clear and concise understanding of the mission and assignment the Lord has given specifically to your local church...setting your compass or what is commonly called *vision*.

Your vision is the goal God has set for your life and for your ministry. And a clear vision provides the direction you seek for your ministry and your church.

### **What is vision?**

**ILLUS** – Gutzon Borglum is credited with creating the carving of Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC. When the piece of art was completed Gutzon invited a faithful cleaning lady to its unveiling. He said to her, “Well, what do you think?” She replied, “I have only one question. How did you know that Mr. Lincoln was in that rock?”

Vision is the ability to see what others may not. It is the capacity to see potential – what things can be. Vision is the ability to see what God sees and the God-given motivation to bring what you see to pass!

Faith is required to see the unseen, and by seeing what God has in store for your future, you begin to have vision. What can you believe God for? Much of your future will depend on your answer to this one question. We become what we believe.

### **It's Never Too Late to Start Dreaming**

*“Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so shall you become. Your vision is the promise of what you shall one day be!” – James Allen*

The first step in finding your vision is to dream.

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## **Begin with What You Have**

God will always start with what you have, not with what you don't have. We can learn a lot about developing, or casting vision from Moses and the way God worked through him.

One lesson we can glean from Moses in that God began with what He had: *"Make yourself two trumpets of silver...use them for summoning the congregation and for having the camps set out" (Num. 10:1-2).*

The trumpets were to be made out of what they had, not from what they didn't possess.

As you begin to develop your vision, look at what you have...the skills, talents, spiritual gifts and passions God has planted in you.

**Illus** – David Livingstone tells the story of how he was asked to give his goat to the chief realizing it was his life's sustenance while living in Africa. Little did he realize it at the time but because he gave what he had, it helped him gain entry to every tribe and village in the interior. From that time forward, God's Word spread to thousands and thousands and God healed his stomach ailment too (which he depended on the goat's milk to keep under control).

## **Blow a Clear Trumpet**

Once He gives you a God-glorifying dream of what your ministry can be, the next step is to hammer it out - where you begin laying out a clear path, or blueprint, for the future.

Hammering out the details requires the ability to see where a church is (point A) and where the church is going (point B), as well as how to take it from point A to point B.

## **Custom Trumpets Only, Please!**

What should we take back from others' ministries? Hammering techniques...principles and new perspectives.

*Don't buy someone else's trumpet and attempt to play the same tune at your church. You'll only hit sour notes.*

## **Two Trumpets are Eternally Better Than One**

Being other servant-leaders alongside you, share the wealth of ministry that's available, and never, never go it alone! Be sure you hammer out two trumpets so that you venture into every endeavor as a team.

## **Guidelines for God-Glorifying Vision**

1. The vision must be birthed and aligned with the Word of God.
2. The vision must be consistent with the Great Commission for reaching the lost.
3. The vision must be hammered out.
4. The vision must be clear, concise and easily understood by everyone.
5. The vision must guide every activity.

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Remember this: People need a vision, but a vision needs people. You can have a vision, but if nobody buys into it, you don't have anything.

## **How New Hope Did It**

We started with the first two steps, aligning our vision with the Word of God, especially the Great Commission: *Go therefore and make disciples... (Matt. 28:19-20).*

The Great Commission can be broken into four distinct stages:

### **Stage One:** Evangelism (...go...)

This is simply taking non-Christians and leading them to the Lord in such a way that they become Christians – transformed, forgiven, growing followers of Christ. Sunday morning services are designed to partner with our members in their attempts to win their friends and families to Christ. The ambiance, printed materials, music and message are all shaped to support this one goal.

### **Stage Two:** Edification (...make disciples of all the nations...)

This is the discipleship stage – building each individual in his or her faith. This is where our small groups and midweek services come in. We have a course and tape series called *Growing Deep, Growing Strong* that introduces each person to membership.

### **Stage Three:** Equipping (...observe all I have commanded you...)

The New Hope DESIGN course and Doing Church as a Team conferences play a large part in this stage. Equipping people by helping them discover, develop and deploy their gifts helps them to grow.

### **Stage Four:** Extension (...and lo, I am with you even until the end of the age.)

Jesus calls us to take courage in reaching out to others. We close the loop, with all of us reaching out and inviting someone else, even as we were invited!

From these four stages was birthed the mission statement:

*The purpose of New Hope is to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ in such a way that turns non-Christians into converts (EVANGELISM), converts into disciples (EDIFICATION) and disciples into mature, fruitful leaders (EQUIPPING), who will in turn go into the world and reach others for Christ (EXTENSION).*

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## **Chapter Eight – Alignment: The Power of Moving Together**

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Just as a car out of alignment will pull to one side when it should be going forward, so in the church, with alignment one achieves unity.

### **Defining Alignment**

The strength of any vision lies in alignment – that is, vision that is caught and shared by every person involved. But vision means little without alignment.

*An old Greek proverb says, “If you pursue two hares, both will escape you.”*

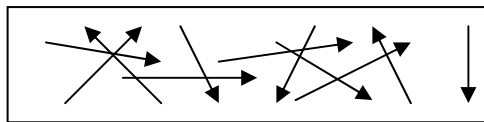
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## Recording the Vision

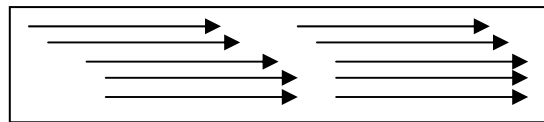
One of the first steps in building alignment is to let the people know where they are supposed to be headed! The servant-leader must communicate the vision in order for the people involved to catch it!

Take God's vision and write it down clearly, and teach your people to have a common vision. When the people have caught the vision of your ministry they will not need a leader constantly supervising them.

## Arrows Pointing in the Same Direction



Church without alignment



Church with alignment

## Constantly Evaluating for Success

Use frequent checkpoints along the way.

Each ministry must constantly evaluate itself, *asking the following questions*:

- ◆ Is our ministry producing disciples and mature leaders who are integrated into the context of the church? Or is the ministry an island unto itself with independent goals?
- ◆ In what way do we share vision with volunteers and staff? Is this method effective?
- ◆ How can we actively encourage alignment within our church? Our ministry?
- ◆ How do we regain alignment? Are there any course corrections we need to make within our ministry or church?

## Defining Values

The first phase of successful alignment is to constantly evaluate your ministry. The second practical phase of alignment is to identify your ministry's core values.

Values are like windows through which decisions are viewed. Values are like a homing device, an internal guidance mechanism that keeps you on course.

## New Hope's Nine Core Values

They flavor every activity, and they balance every endeavor.

1. We believe that every person, Christian and non-Christian alike, is valuable to God and to His kingdom.
2. We believe that doing church as a team is God's design for effective ministry.
3. We believe that a simple presentation of Jesus Christ in creative ways will impact and transform lives.
4. We believe that every members should commit to a lifestyle of consistent spiritual growth with honest accountability.

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5. We believe that every member is a minister who has been given gifts to be discovered, developed and deployed.
  6. We believe that God is worthy of our very best. Therefore, a growing spirit of excellence should permeate every activity.
  7. We believe that genuine love and caring relationships are key to the life of every endeavor.
  8. We believe that the most effective evangelism happens through people inviting people.
  9. We believe in identifying and training emerging leaders who are fully committed to Christ and who will reach their generation with the gospel.

### **Building a Common Culture**

Culture can be defined as the way a church's members interact socially with one another, but basically, a culture is defined by its...core values in action.

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## **Chapter Nine – Building Teams**

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The church is not an organization. It is more like an organism with living parts that must move and work together as a whole...building teams does not begin with a certain kind of technique; it begins with a certain kind of heart.

### **The Beginning of Fractal Team Building**

The metaphor of the “fractal pattern” = the word ‘fractal’ means ‘any of various extremely irregular curves or shapes for which any suitably chosen part is similar in shape to a given larger or smaller part when magnified or reduced to the same size.’

The fractal pattern is seen in the fern – the same structure is duplicated with a major stem and smaller leaves extending out from there.

Doing church as a team used this fractal pattern – a very simple, repeating pattern that is found in most organisms. At New Hope, teams are built in groupings of five.

### **Downward Growth**

Example: Let's say you want to work with children. Your first step isn't to start working with children, but to build a team of four leaders with whom you serve. When I choose the four, we have a team totally five people with similar passions and spiritual gifts. At every level that pattern is repeated so that no one leader is responsible for more than four people thus allowing the growth to continue indefinitely.

### **Natural Discipleship Groups**

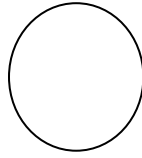
These groups of five become discipleship groups. Each person can be individually cared for and nurtured by the group leader who in turn is in a group of four led by another group leader and so on.

With the fractal design, our church becomes not a church with small groups but a church with small groups. Here, people are accountable to a leader, and that leader is accountable as well. Each person is discipling others as well.

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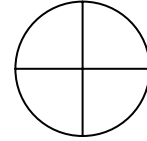
## The Design of Fractal Leadership

**Step One** – draw a circle



The circle represents the parameters of your ministry – everything you are responsible for.

**Step Two** – draw a cross within the circle



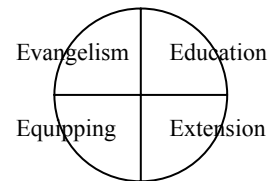
This shows you what you are aiming at. Now write down the purpose for your ministry. *What is its intention, the God-glorifying purpose for what you are doing? What is the goal of your ministry?*

**Examples:** Front Lines Ministries – to present the gospel to non-Christians and Christians alike with simplicity and excellence. With the Holy Spirit’s direction, we will redeem the arts for the glory of God and present the gospel in contemporary ways that will reach the heart.

Midweek LEAD services – to develop mature, fruitful, soul-winning leaders.

**Step three** – ask three questions:

1. If this ministry (or project or responsibility) were broken into four separate quadrants, what would they be?
2. What would I call each one?
3. Would the combination of these four encapsulate the total responsibilities for fulfilling this ministry?



**Step four** – determine what gifts are required within each quadrant.

**Step five** – identify the available people who possibly fit the required gift combinations

**Step six** – slot new and emerging leaders in to ask – challenge the men and women you think would fit.

Don’t let fear keep you from asking. It is actually quite arrogant and self-righteous to assume that others aren’t willing to help or assist. They may be waiting to be asked!

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## Chapter Ten – Nurturing the Team

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*“One of the highest of human duties is the duty of encouragement. There is a regulation of the Royal Navy which says: ‘No officer shall speak discouragingly to another officer in the discharge of his duties.’”*  
-- William Barclay

Churches are designed to be greenhouses for budding leaders with potential dreams in their hearts. Creating an atmosphere of health is one of the simplest, yet most overlooked, factors in growing healthy people and healthy leaders.

As leaders, we live to make the others in our team successful.

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## **The Three C's of Healthy Churches**

**Cause** – why the church exists.

Cause is to the church what an engine is to an automobile – it drives its passion and activities.

*“May I be so bold to suggest that this cause is evangelism?”* The cause of evangelism must always remain strong.

**Community** – the free interchange, open fellowship and genuine relationships that glue people together. It has little to do with programs and activities but has much more to do with what happens between people during these programs or activities.

Community is the life, the gel that fuses hearts together.

A recent study found that when people visit a church, they are not just looking for friendly people; they are looking for friends.

**Corporate** – healthy corporate finances – not necessarily abundant finance but the wise stewardship of what is there.

All three of these C's need to be vigilantly monitored. When one or more of these begin to slump, energy and action should be expended to immediately remedy the situation.

*Reviewed by Cam Taylor (May, 2001)*