Gathering a Well-rounded Leadership Team

by Dr. Tom Wood

CMM exists to empower thousands of leaders for health and sustainability so they will multiply the Gospel, primarily through church planting.
“An effective leader will diagnose the skill and motivation of his followers, as well as the requirements of the situation, and use the appropriate leadership style in order to achieve maximum results. The style of coaching should fit the readiness of the leader at each stage of his development and the situational challenges he may be facing” (Allen Thompson).

As you begin the planning phase of training leaders, consider that your leadership team should include a broad range of personalities and gift mixes. If everyone on the team is a dominate-directive type, you’ll spend too much time discussing what and how to do things. Conversely, if the team is loaded with compliant personalities you’ll never make any decisions because no one wants to force their opinion.

Below is a range of different personality structures and gifts in people. You might think through each of your potential leaders and ask God to help you with balance for a more effective team.

1. Directives/goal oriented risk takers
2. Compliant/detail oriented/thinkers
3. Intuitive/visionary/dreamers
4. Sensing/process-oriented
5. Feeler/caring pastors
6. Stable, cautious decision-makers
7. Apostle/intuitive/directives
8. The Administrative Leader (Cs/Sc):
   a. Adding confidence by adding competence
   b. Keeping them on-line
   c. Maintaining the relationship
9. Communications coordinator
You can attend great conferences to train people on all kinds of ministry, but the best training ground is your own playing field. The most effective training is that which we can get our hands around. So, how do you choose leaders in your context?

1. **Create environments to find leaders**

In what environment can you best identify quality leaders? Here are some quick hints that many Church Planters have found helpful.

   a. **Have them in your home:** Invite them into your home for a casual afternoon or evening. Nothing formal, keep things loose. Allow them to relax and enjoy the time. It is when we are most relaxed that we’re more likely to be our true selves; to offer our true opinions about things or to share our values and thoughts uninhibited.

   b. **Play & Projects:** We build a better understanding of people when playing together or working on some project together. We get to see how competitive someone is; how easily upset they can get; how they handle failure; and more importantly, how they handle success when we're involved in a competitive sport or working on a project together. Identifying good leaders involves getting to know them, how they respond to challenges and to other people around them when things are not going as planned.

When we were first starting out, a group of men started meeting every Tuesday night for basketball at one of the guy’s homes. It was there, playing B-ball that I found three great candidates for elder. It wasn’t there prowess at basketball. It was the way the reacted to one another. It was the informal talks afterwards, sitting around hydrating ourselves.
c. **Casual hanging out:** You see more of who people really are in a casual social setting. We’ve found that it takes almost no planning for a guy’s night out at a local hang out.

“The first time I announced something like this, seven men showed up for dinner and a movie night for the guys. We were having such a good time talking around the table that we decided to ditch the movie and close down the restaurant. Around that table I got to know these men far better than I had before. They were relaxed and enjoying themselves and each other. Here I was able to learn more about who is a leader” (Church Planter, Rod Entrekin).

### 2. Find people who “get” the Gospel

Gospel character is most important. Look for people who create an environment of grace around them...people who **get** the Gospel, not just for themselves, but for others also. Look for people who speak in a language that isn’t filled with pious talk or phrases. They are good stewards with their time, money, and resources. They show humility and respect for other races and cultures. They don’t bash other churches or types of Christians. Look for people who are as quick to forgive as Jesus is...without a critical spirit...and fun to be with. Now that’s someone you want around you as a leader.

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Look for people who are real, who take off the masks, who are open and honest with their issues and don’t play church games.
3. Find missionally focused people

Look for missional people rather than home people. Missional people are those ministries that are focused on attracting and growing with unchurched people. Home ministries are those that we want to make us comfortable. You can start a church as a mission and always add the home ministries.

**How do you find missional people?** When you interview someone for membership or have them over for dinner, ask: “If you were given the opportunity to do anything in a church that excited you, what would it be?” or “What would you like to see us do as a church?”

4. Select people who own the vision & values

When looking for potential leaders, one vital sign is finding those who share, with enthusiasm, the values, and vision for the church. If you’re seeking to recruit a particular person for a leadership role and after sharing your missional values, they respond in a questionable way: “Well, I suppose I could help you out.” **Run.** This is not the response that you’re looking for. There must be a desire inside that person that ignites when they hear what you are doing to grow God’s eternal kingdom. **Don’t settle for a mediocre commitment for an eternally significant role.**
5. Seek those with theological soundness

Potential leaders should have a basic knowledge of sound theology, though you will be spending time enriching their theological muscles. Overly conservative or pietistic people tend to be withdrawn from others. People with a more liberal bent may adapt too much to the secular worldview and see the Church as one more service agency. A theologically rich, Gospel understanding and application to culture will be the greatest asset you can find.

6. Look for available people

Sometimes availability must be taught. People in the post-everything culture (20’s and 30’s) plan to under-commit so that they don’t over-commit. Post-everything people over-protect their schedules at the expense of reaching their potential as leaders. They will work to protect their “freedom” in order to keep their options open. Challenge them to be givers, not takers.

7. Learn from their leadership history

A person who has a history of effective leadership may or may not be helpful in your setting, so be careful. Listen to what leadership roles they have had in the past. Listen for the context, the roles, the outcomes, and any conflict resolution skills. Listen, too, for gaps in their history.

Some who perform well in one environment may perform poorly in a very different environment. One of the biggest mistakes Planters make is to quickly accept someone into leadership who was a seasoned and proven leader in one setting, but that is nothing like the new church. It often doesn’t end well.
8. People you are discipling

Start discipling early because these people will form the pool of your best leaders. They have learned the Gospel from you. They are showing themselves to be teachable, allowing others in the community to speak into their lives.

Make sure discipleship includes learning events that put them into leadership functions. Assess them in those functions accordingly.

At CMM, we believe every pastor, church planter, ministry leader, and missionary is created to thrive in ministry. We suggest getting a Gospel Coach to help walk with you through the challenges you’ve never faced before. You don’t have to plant a church alone. A CMM Gospel Coach will help encourage and equip you every step along the way.

If you’re not ready to be coached but would like specific help on Leadership Coaching, read *Gospel Coach* — the book I co-authored with Scott Thomas, which you can find on Amazon.

An effective leader must be able to do four things:

1. Maintain flexibility in his coaching style
2. Accurately diagnose the requirements of a given situation
3. Develop a coaching style appropriate to the requirements of the situation
4. Establish agreement with the leader regarding the coaching style to be used

(Ref. *Coaching Urban Church Planters*, Allan Thompson)
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