

Leadership

Multiplying

Follow Me As I Follow Christ

1 Corinthians 11:1

As we addressed in the previous section, we must know and live in the mission of God if we are to lead others into it and develop new leaders that promote it. Not only this, but we must also consider the practical ways that we lead others into it. The first basic assumption that we must understand and embrace is that our primary means for developing new missional leaders is to have them follow us on mission.

The best way for potential leaders to grow is to follow a faithful leader who is living on mission themselves. This is why you as individual leaders and as a leadership team, must be committed to personally living in the mission of God. It is from your position of personal sacrifice and engagement in the mission that you will call others to follow you as you model for them what missional life looks like.

The first step for us as leaders is to make the choice to sacrifice our personal lives for His mission. This means we choose to give up pursuits that are culturally encouraged and we redirect our resources (time and money) toward the mission. Secondly, then, we boldly invite others to follow us in this mission. This might seem fearful, and maybe even prideful, to consider, but this is the way of Jesus which was also reaffirmed in the lives of the apostles.

Practical considerations for leaders living on mission will be addressed below as we attempt to answer “how” this looks in our real-life context of leading Missional Communities.

Identify Potential Leaders

Embracing the Follow-Me-As-I-Follow-Christ principle begins by identifying potential missional leaders within your MC. This can take place on a personal level as individual leaders, but should also be considered as a leadership team. An important recurring topic of conversation as a MC leadership team should be the individuals in your group and who among them is demonstrating potential as a missional leader.

The first indicator of a potential leader is someone who is demonstrating a personal passion and sacrifice for the mission of God. You should not specifically be looking toward those who best articulate the facts about the mission of God, but rather those who are faithfully choosing to live in it. A lifestyle of pursuing the mission of God actually demonstrates that they do understand the facts, and it also shows that they believe and are pursuing those facts.

The second indicator of a potential leader is someone who is a humble learner who desires to grow in their ability to live on mission. The most effective missional leaders are those who are humble. They understand their need to grow into mission and pursue input and understanding that can help them to become a more effective disciple and to help others become better disciples of Jesus. This is often demonstrated in their desire to know and apply the Word in their lives and into the lives of others.

The third indicator of a potential leader is someone to whom others look as a model of a faithful disciple on mission for Christ. It does not necessarily mean that this person is the best communicator, public speaker, or has a dynamic personality. What it does mean is that others in your group look to this person as a picture of what it means to live on mission. They demonstrate a yearning to grow into Christ and reach others for Him.

These are the early indicators, the clues, if you will, that you might have a potential missional leader that you can invest in and help grow into an effective leader for the mission of God.

Invest In Potential Leaders

2 Timothy 2:2

Once you begin to recognize those in your MC that have demonstrated faithfulness to the mission of God, the next step is to begin entrusting more to them as part of their leadership equipping. It is assumed at this point that, if you have personally modeled good leadership to these potential leaders, you would already be in a more intentional relationship with them as they follow you on mission. With this intentional relationship in place and their initial demonstrations of faithfulness to the mission, you will need to change the focus of your interactions with your potential leaders over time to help them develop a broader scope of what it means to lead others into mission.

The **first** thing to do with potential leaders is begin to communicate with them more intentionally. This would include:

1. Their personal spiritual growth and missional living. Potential leaders must not be confused by conversations about “leadership” too early in their spiritual growth. As you notice the growth of a potential leader, be more intentional to begin talking with them about spiritual things, their own growth in the Word, and their increasing participation in the mission. They need to see a more intentional interaction with them from you.
2. Their leadership potential. Do not be shy about encouraging these potential leaders about their growth and faithfulness. Let them know that you notice these things and that you see potential in them being used by God to impact others. Be honest about this, but not overly romantic or presumptuous. Do not embellish their potential in such a way that it could be understood as a promise or guarantee of a leadership position.
3. Their need to sacrifice some of their time and effort for other believers who need to grow in their commitment to the mission of God. Lord willing, your example of how you built into them will help them understand better what this looks like as you challenge them to consider how God would use them to now build into other growing believers. They will need to consider what it means to lead growing believers into the mission of making disciples of the lost. They must learn to see their time and efforts on mission as opportunities to help other growing believers move into that same mission.

The **second** area of leadership development for potential leaders is to equip them to co-lead with other leaders. This style of leading is a complete paradigm shift from the cultural view of leadership, especially in corporate America. To those who have never experienced genuine biblical leadership, it is a very new and different way of

working with other people. It is fueled by collaboration in humility, experiencing success through sacrifice, and a shared focus on eternity. This equipping could include focused conversations, bible study on the topic, and intentional relationship opportunities with other leaders.

Thirdly, when you, as a team, both recognize have begun to engage potential leaders, you should begin to include them in leadership functions when appropriate. Be clear and honest with them, however, that they are potential leaders who you are excited to help grow, but they are not yet official leaders. This clarification is important as you give clear focus to them on what they are pursuing. They should not see this as a way to “climb the ladder,” but as an opportunity to grow in what it means to be on mission for Christ in the context of the Body of Christ. Practically speaking, this includes their participation in team leadership discipleship of growing believers, attending leadership meetings, attending Equipping Intensives, etc.

Plan And Prioritize

In order to see these potential leaders develop, you must take seriously your responsibility to lead them into maturity. This will require planning as you move them through the maturing process, and a prioritizing of your time as you balance the various challenges of leadership development.

Consider these “planning” questions (for you personally and as a leadership team):

- What steps do I/we need to take to better embrace and live in the mission of God?
- How can I/we more effectively include my/our potential leaders in the missional efforts that I/we are making?
- How can I/we best use the time with my/our potential leaders to equip them for mission (hangouts, discussions, teaching, praying, etc)?
- Am I using the various “contexts” of our church life to their best potential to equip up-and-coming leaders (Central Teaching, MC Gathering, cell/discipleship groups)?

Consider these “prioritizing” questions:

- What parts of my/our schedule need to be pruned in order to better live on mission (hobbies, entertainment, good things like other ministries I might be pursuing, etc)?
- What parts of my/our resources need to be refocused toward mission (money, time, treasures, etc)?
- What adjustments need to be made to any current relationships that I am/we are investing into so I/we can more effectively invest into potential leaders?
- Am I appropriately allotting time for my family relationships as I seek to sacrifice my time to develop other leaders?
- Am I/Are we appropriately balancing leadership development with leading the MC in the full measure of the mission of making disciples.

There is no leader that has a perfect balance between developing leaders and living in the full mission of God. Having an appropriate balance is a goal to strive towards as part of your own growth as a leader. The question more is, “Are you willing to take an honest look at where you personally are as a leader and where your MC is as a community on mission for God?” The next question is this, “Are you willing to do what it takes to lead your MC forward in the mission of God?”

It is our conviction that you identify one or two areas of growth for you as a leader and then make a plan to move forward to grow in these areas. The first step is to share these areas with your leadership team and to begin

praying for these areas. The next step is to actually put your plan into practice by taking the scary steps of faith necessary to move more in line with investing into potential leaders while simultaneously leading your MC into the mission of God.

Assessment, correction, planning, and prioritizing must become a regular process engaged by you and your leadership team. These should occur formally at least once a year and informally at various times throughout the year. We believe this is a big part of what Paul meant when he said in 1 Corinthians 9:26–27, “...I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”