

Essential Team Essentials

If you asked successful ministry leaders to identify components of a well-functioning team, there would likely be many suggestions. However, there are five things that are vital to ministry teams functioning well. They include the following:

- Trust
- Healthy Conflict
- Commitment to Cause & Team Decisions
- Accountability
- Attention to Results

Why are these so important? Let's take a closer look.

Trust: Trust is the foundation of well-functioning teams. It flows out of love for Christ and for others. It creates a culture of openness and vulnerability. When people trust, they share opinions and feelings confident they will be respected and heard. Trust enables people to delegate tasks knowing things will get done. While trust flows from love, it is nurtured by respect for others, effective communication, acknowledgement of personal limitations and/or failures, and follow-through on commitments made and jobs undertaken.

Healthy Conflict: Healthy conflict flows out of trust and recognizes that when there are issues, team members out of respect for one another hear and are heard. They can respectfully disagree with one another as they discuss issues and work toward solutions. But when they leave meetings, they leave as sisters or brothers in Christ – loving one another.

Commitment: Well-functioning ministry teams have members who are committed to the core values, cause, and vision of the ministry. Members are committed to prep up, show up, and step up. But individuals also support team decisions even when they disagreed with the solution (unless there was something morally wrong with the decision - Acts 5:29). Anything less undermines trust and sows confusion, conflict, and lack of confidence in a ministry.

Accountability: “Who am I to hold someone accountable?” is often the thought Christian team members think when it come to accountability. Jesus tells us to deal with ourselves before dealing with others (Matthew 7:3ff.). But he doesn't say that in Christian love we should never hold one another accountable. Such accountability, while it keeps the sinful nature in check, is an encouragement to the new person within. Accountability shows value to the person and the task. It is important to keeping things on track and getting things done. It builds team trust!

Attention to Results: There is much in ministry that is unseen. The Holy Spirit works through Word and Sacrament in souls. But where the Holy works, we can see people walking with the Spirit in worship, spiritual growth activities, service, fellowship, and godly living. Some of these things we can measure to gauge effectiveness of our efforts – what to keep doing and what to start doing. Surveys and focus groups help to assess whether a ministry is warm and welcoming.