
5 Ways to Grow Mission-Hearted Leaders

Every leader needs a compass in their head. ***The mission answers “Question Zero”: “What are we ultimately supposed to be doing?”*** It makes the overall direction of the church unquestionable and points everyone in that direction. The mission is a golden thread that weaves through every activity of the church. It brings greater meaning to the most menial functions of ministry.

It’s true that every church has a *General Calling* to glorify God and make disciples. Every church that has ever been, or will ever be, has that same universal calling. But each church also has a *Specific Calling*. God has called your church to do things that no church before you or after you can do. There are good works prepared in advance just for you, and your mission should reflect that! (For example, take a look at the different mission statements of these [10 churches in Dallas, Texas, all within 30 minutes of each other](#). Each has a *General Calling*, but it’s fascinating to see how their uniqueness is stamped into their mission.)

As you can imagine, the leadership team of a church is critical to the activation of the unique mission of the church. But as Dallas Willard says, “Familiarity can breed unfamiliarity.” Things that once stoked the fires of our heart can grow colder as we spend more and more time around it. In short...we just get used to it and the thing that made it once seem extraordinary, now seem ordinary.

Even if your church has a profound missional mandate and a mission statement that’s more sticky and viral than any Nike campaign, the sharpness of it can dull over time for your church leadership team. It is essential that we are constantly letting the calling of our church reach deep into our heart and shape what we do. (If this idea of a mission and vision shaped church really piques your imagination, check out this free download from my friend Will Mancini, who’s done a [Visual Summary of his book Church Unique](#).)

Here are five ways you can grow your team’s heart for your mission, using five different kinds of spiritual practices:

1. Pray together.

We all know that the mission of the church is inherently spiritual, but it’s easy to let the spiritual fire die down. If there’s anything that can engage us with this spiritual task, it’s connecting our heart to the heart of the Father for the mission. In the same way that Paul says that sometimes we don’t fully know how to pray but the “Spirit helps us in our weakness,” so too will praying as a team into the mission ignite the flame again.

2. Read stories from the Word of God.

Find fresh stories in the Bible that connect to the specific calling of your church. Who are the

main characters? Why do they connect on an emotional and visceral level? How do these stories connect to the essence of who God has shaped your church to be?

3. Guard the deposit.

Paul instructs Timothy to “guard the deposit entrusted to you.” In your church and in your leadership team, God has placed a very particular deposit through your spiritual gifts, redemption stories, “hand of God” experiences and leadership. Does your team know what those things are? Can they name them? Can they see how God has sovereignly brought those things together?

4. Identify five new stories.

As leaders, we often times we use the same stories to point to what the mission looks like when it's realized (we see this happen often in the Bible). Maybe it's a miracle that happened or transformation in someone's life early on in the life of the church and it because a kind of story passed down from person to person. But what about the here and now? Have each staff person identify five stories in the life of the church in the last 12 months that signify what the mission of the church is about.

5. Fast together.

There are all sorts of reasons to fast, but growing the heart for mission in the spirit of your team is a great one. Whether it's giving up food for 24 hours or social media for a week, set aside a dedicated amount of time for fasting (which includes you!) and each time they feel the desire for food or to check social media, pray that God's mission would be accomplished in and through your church family.

As leaders, it's easy to assume that what's clear to us and what lights the fire for the Gospel in our heart burns the exact same way. Whether you use these five ideas or have others of your own, I greatly encourage you to continue to recast the mission of your church into the hearts of your best leaders.

If you would like some help with developing or clarifying your church's mission, I highly recommend [the team at Auxano](#). Over a period of a few months, a navigator can meet with your team to see great clarity in your mission.

> [Read more from Eric](#).
