

How to Grow a Healthy Church

You know when a church is not healthy as an organization. You will identify things like:

- Poor communication
- Low morale
- High conflict
- Limited results
- Foggy Vision

We know that healthy organizations reflect the opposite kind of list.

So far, this is not complicated.

But building a healthy organization is a challenging and complex task, that requires enormous effort and fierce focus.

The key to any healthy organization is based on the foundation of two things held in a cooperative tension.

- 1. The senior leadership wakes up every day thinking about what's best for the team.**
- 2. The team wakes up every day thinking about what's best for the organization.**

This is easy to comprehend and very difficult to achieve. There's an obvious unspoken tension here. I'll get to that in a minute.

But first, please absorb this same principle again, but this time in reverse. The tension becomes very clear.

1. If the senior leadership wakes up every day, focusing only on the good of the organization, (hit the numbers, success at all costs, staff are expendable, etc.) the staff won't want to stay there very long.
2. If the team wakes up every day, focusing only on what's good for them, (what do I get?, what will you do for me today?, make my load lighter, etc.) the senior leadership won't want them to stay very long.

The tension is obvious.

And this is why healthy organizations, including churches, are rarer than we would expect.

The tension held in these two principles only works when based on trust, and fails when either one attempts to take more than it gives.

I've never seen an organization pull this off without tremendous effort and commitment.

Here's what it looks like to accomplish healthy organizational results, acknowledging the need to tend to both sides of the equation.

1. The senior leaders invest tremendous effort and energy into thinking about how to invest in, care for, and develop the staff. While at the same time, paying fierce attention to their fiduciary responsibilities to lead the organization well.
2. The team invests tremendous effort and energy into producing mission-focused results for the organization. While at the same time, paying attention to their own needs, dreams, and desires.

You can see why I call this a "cooperative tension." The minute cooperation and trust breakdown, this doesn't work, and organizational health begins to erode.

It's a lot like a marriage.

It's easy to repeat the vows, and hard to live them out.

If a husband devotes himself to serve his wife, and his wife devotes herself to serve the husband – guaranteed marital bliss! Piece of cake, right?! Of course not, it's extremely challenging and takes tons of work and commitment.

If you wake up asking "What's in it for me?" and "What do I get?", your marriage will be, at best, a disappointing relationship.

Leadership in your church, especially among the staff and key leaders, is much the same.

So, if you are the senior pastor or on the senior/executive staff, how hard do you work to make sure the team is taken care of, while you lead the organization well?

If you are on the team, how hard do you work to deliver results that help the organization (church) make progress, while you remain honest about your own dreams and desires?

The powerful truth is that you get to decide how healthy your organization becomes.

It's up to you.

Want to know more about developing a healthy organization? [Connect with an Auxano Navigator](#).

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