

Gathering & Developing Your Core Team-

J.R. Briggs

2024-10-10 15:36:45

00:00:01

Hey, Bob. It's good to be back with you all. And I've been looking forward to this. And I am a practical person. And for me, this is one of my favorite things that I get to teach on because it is uber practical. We have a lot to cover. And I'm going to do my best to cover that quickly, but without feeling rushed. But I do want to get through it. And I hope we have time at the end. I'm a big fan of not talking at people on Zoom, but allowing us to interact in groups. But I may be a little bit hypocritical today because I just need to get through this.

00:00:33

But I'm also going to give you some resources. So hopefully we have some time. So let's just jump, right in. We are going to look at what does it mean to gather and develop our team. And I'm very excited about this one. I'm going to split our time into two here. Great. All right. So let's, yeah, let's just jump right in here. So let me start by saying this. In church planning, the culture that you create is more important than the programs you start with. So let's just jump right in here. So let me start by saying this. Let me start. Let me say that again. The culture you create is more important at the beginning than the.

00:01:05

programs you start. So when we talk about gathering your core team of people, it's really important to know your role right from the beginning and to realize that your role will change as the church matures, but to realize that part of your job description is to be a cultural cultivator. In fact, cultivating a culture where we care the most about what Jesus cares about the most is your job. It should always be your job, but especially at the beginning, because there's nothing tangible there. There's nothing to put it there. So you've got to talk.

00:01:39

about what do you value? So when we talk about cultivating, I love the word cultivate, right? Because if you think about a garden, it assumes mess. It requires patience. It necessitates perseverance and faith and a lot of waiting. It obsesses about health of the soil and of the seed, and it demands and expects hard work through the process. So I'm just a big, In fact, when we were planting our church, I, from the very beginning, said my job description is to be the pastor and cultural cultivator of the Renew community because this is so important in what you do.

00:02:14

So culture, of course, is a byproduct of consistent behavior. So it's like what happens, what are the ways people act without anybody writing anything down?

That's how you would define culture. And so at the beginning, it's really important to watch those expectations that you have and that other people have, those assumptions that sneak in that aren't often articulated. And so what we, here's some good questions, just some quick diagnostic questions to help you think about culture. What do you all celebrate or what will you celebrate?

00:02:46

What will be the things that will make you go nuts, to jump up and down, to cry with joy, to whoop it up in one of your gatherings because it happened? And what will you mourn? What will make you cry or angry? agree as a culture. And then what are the consistent behaviors written and unwritten in terms of what you do, right? Some cultures, it's very stoic and you don't hug, you don't embrace. It's very simple. Okay. Other places, you know, exuberant worship, total. No one wrote.

00:03:19

that down, but it's a part of the culture. So what is the kind of culture that you're trying to cultivate and how is that good news to your particular context? So anyway, so that's, really important. So we think about cultivating the soil, Mark chapter four, the parable of the sower. The key was in the roots. And so we focus on sowing seed and getting a healthy pH in the soil. That's your job. Below the surface, the messy, dirty, the dirt, the soil under your.

00:03:53

fingernails. It's unsexy. And unimpressive. Oftentimes it's invisible, but that culture lane. and cultivating is really important. So our job is to focus on what is going on below the surface in people's lives and in your church. And God's job is to see what happens above the surface. So let's be ridiculously practical about gathering a core team or a launch team, depending on what you call it. So when we talk about a core team, there are different ways to do that.

00:04:24

There are three options to go about gathering your core team. You can recruit people from a mother church and you can, you know, recommended people that recommended you and sent out from your church. It's called hiving off. Some people call it tithing, like we have a big church and we want to tithe people from our church. So you have 100 people in your church. We're going to pray that God sends 10 people from our mother church to join the church plant. You have a thousand people, you're going to send 100 people, right? But these are often from mission oriented, kingdom saturated churches.

00:04:56

Or they say, we lay our hands on you. We commission you. bless you, and we're going to send you with some money. We're going to send you with, I don't know, \$25,000 for the next three years. That's one way that you can do it. Number two is you can split from another church. This certainly isn't recommended, where you get mad and you say, I'm going to take my ball, I'm going to go elsewhere, and by the way, I'm being pejorative here, but oftentimes this is what has to

happen, where you just need to say, the Lord has called me to this, and the church you're at just doesn't support church planting, and you say, hey, I'm not.

00:05:28

trying to cause a split or a division or rift, but we just really believe we need to do this, but oftentimes this can be painful, and it takes a lot of wisdom to navigate through this if there is a separation from a church, but the third thing is you gather a team from scratch, which is often called parachute planting, where we say, you know what, I don't know anybody in Austin, Texas, but I really feel called by God to move to Austin, Texas and plant a church, even though we don't know anybody. Now, usually this takes a longer amount of time. It's much more of a marathon.

00:06:00

than it is a sprint. And it can be several years before some sort of official or formal expression of church is even possible. It usually involves support raising or going bivocational for several years. It's not a bad thing, but it just takes more time to be able to do that. I'll say this to you that language really matters. And if I could, I would recommend that you call it your core team and not your launch team. And you say, what's the difference? We called it our launch.

00:06:32

team. Looking back, I really wish we called it our core team. Why is that? Well, launch team often implies that there's an event or a specific date of your church starting. It's a process, and you want to develop a family and a network of relationships when you're planting a church. So you need core people in that. To say launch means that, unfortunately, you have to be careful with your language. Because it could communicate, we're an event. to church, but a core team is much more lending to that language if we are the church.

00:07:04

So if you want to know who the core of the core is, who are the people who are all in, if you cut them open, would they bleed the value of your church? That's the core team, and you're looking for core members on that. So language is really, really important on that. Quick plug here, Bob and I actually co-wrote a book together called Ministry Mantras, and it's actually talking about the importance of cultivating culture with the language that we use and why language is so important. And so again, why is there a difference between a core team and a launch team?

00:07:36

Well, because we have to be careful of the kind of culture it creates. That's a mistake that I made that I really wish we had called it, like I said, a core team on that. So I just wanted to highlight that briefly, that idea of being really careful about the language you use and the culture you're creating. So John Burke said this. The first 100 people in a church plant set the culture. of the church. The first 100 people within a church plant set the culture of the church. So be very careful about who you have on your core team. So you're wondering, how in the world.

00:08:12

do I go about recruiting my team? Well, it's best to start with the already existing relationships that you have, the relationships that you have with close friends or those who are already all in with you. So what is the process? How would we go about cultivating this or, you know, begin to gather a team, begin to recruit people? The first thing is, share your story. I mean, the Lord has given you something. If you are the planter, you have a story of some sort of burden.

00:08:44

or calling that God has placed upon you. And so if you can share your personal calling, your story, that's the best thing you can do. And I would... Actually break it down into these three things in terms of your story. Your story, the story of you. Number two... The story of us, why, and what our community will be or what we feel called to do. And number three, the story of now. Why is now the right time to do it? Because there will be people that will say this. There's a thousand churches out there.

00:09:15

Why do we need more churches? Don't we just need to reinvigorate old churches? Yes, we do need to do that. But we also need to see new churches. So the story of you, the story of us, the story of now. And these storytelling times where you can share your story can happen in one-on-one settings. They can happen in small groups. They can happen on social media. They can happen when creating partnerships or collaborative networks in your community. But any chance you have to share the vision and tell the story of what's happening, do it.

00:09:46

Any opportunity you can. So you're just praying for opportunities, looking for opportunities to say, hey, can we get together? I just want to share with you what God's been doing. In our lives, here's what we sense God is doing to call us into. new faith community, a new worshiping community, and why we believe that this is the moment we need to do this. Now, I don't know if you saw it. I just gave you the story of me, the story of us, the story of now in like two sentences right then. So if you can just structure that story of you, story of us, story of now, that can be.

00:10:19

really, really helpful. And so it's share your story. And as you share your story, the second thing is then invite people to some sort of vision casting evening and a Q&A time, because there will be people who say, huh, that's interesting. I like you. I like what you've done. I'm curious to hear more. And so this is usually a couple of meetings in someone's home. It can be your home. It can be elsewhere. I know, again, asterisk, COVID makes this difficult.

00:10:49

But anyway, so there's that opportunity of just making sure you're. Just being aware of COVID, but in a non-COVID situation. that's there. You are answering in that time, why? Why are we doing this? Why has God called us to this? Why

now? And by the way, church planting are costly ventures of time, of money, of relationships, of energy. And so when you have a vision casting evening, you get together and.

00:11:24

it's, you're getting a chance to articulate why is this important enough that we invest our time and our energy and our money and our relationships into doing something like this. So I like this structure that Andy Stanley spoke about. He said, anytime you're casting vision, you need to answer these three questions. What are we doing? Why are we doing it? Where do you fit in? Oftentimes where this falls short is that we tell people what we're doing. We tell people why they're doing it. And then we say, great, have a great night. We don't, ever actually invite them into here's where you fit in. Here's where we need your help.

00:12:00

is the big ask that we're going to make of you. This is the fork in the road. You can join us or not, but if you join us, here's why. This is a good time to do this. And so I think that's really important that we make sure we answer all three of these questions. I want you to think about church planting at the beginning like you would hiking a mountain. Now, the reason why we have to think about it this way is because you don't have all the information, right? This is a new venture. You're selling your story and you're selling your vision, but there's not something.

00:12:32

that they can go see and experience right now because it's so new. And so one of the ways that I try to describe it, if you're too specific about the vision, you can lock yourself in and then disappoint people if it isn't exactly that way. But if you say, I don't know, just come and check it out and we'll figure it out together, it's probably not a lot. So what you're basically saying is, you see that mountain range up ahead? That's where we're heading. We don't know which mountain in the mountain range yet, but, that's where we're going. We're not going this way. We're not going this way. And we're not.

00:13:03

going that way. We know that heading west, that's the mountain range that God has called us to. And as you get a group of people together that say, I believe in the vision of that mountain range, and I'm going to join you. And as they get closer to the foot of that mountain, there may be three trailheads, one to the right, one to the left, one straight up. Then together as a team, you can decide which one makes the most sense for us to go to. And then once you get there, you say, how much time do we think it's going to take to get to the top? You don't know that right now. It's too far away. There's just too many variables and uncertainties. So the best.

00:13:40

thing you can do right now is cast vision why that is the right mountain range for us to go toward. Not here, not here, not behind, but right in front of us. This is why we're going to head that direction. And then you say, as we get further along

and we fall in love with this mountain range, we're going to figure out which mountain, Jesus is going to take us to. Jesus is called us into. So, that's a really important metaphor that I want to share with you. As the planter, here are some specific questions that I want you to keep in mind as you think.

00:14:12

about developing a team of people, okay? What should be the minimum commitments to be a part of this core team? How can we be crystal clear about expectations? Because people come with all sorts of expectations. Expectations, and some of them are great, and some of them are really dangerous, but no one comes in saying, hey, I just want to articulate my 17 expectations that I have about your church plan, but they have them, and you know when it's really clear when they.

00:14:44

have those expectations? When you don't meet them. So, the best thing you can do is give it to them at the beginning, and the best time to disappoint them about those expectations. Is at the beginning. You want to scare them off soon rather than have them get invested for two years, and then it's a painful divorce. And so I really loved A.J. Swoboda's chapter in the book that you're reading together, *Planting Missional Churches*,

00:15:16

his book on how he really set the bar very low and just said, look, this is going to be hard. We're going to hurt each other. It's going to be disappointing. You're going to have expectations that won't be met, but we're here to die to ourselves because that's what Jesus called us to do. You can really, like, lower the boom on that, like, right away is really good. So be asking yourself, what are people's motives? And what if those motivations run counter to the vision? How will you handle that?

00:15:46

And then should I create a formal or an informal leadership structure? Should I give people titles or not? Or would you say, we're going to be a team. We're going to figure it out together. Or would you say, I'm going to designate this person to be the director of children's ministry on a volunteer level. What's the right size for our core team? Is it four people? Is it 90 people? I don't know. That's something you all have to wrestle with. When should I start talking about giving and generosity? What fears do people possess and how can I walk.

00:16:21

with them in a way that builds their trust in Christ, not just their dependence upon me as the planter? And how do I keep my core team motivated? And then how are we going to deal with conflict? How are we going to do that healthily? So these are questions that I think are really important for you to navigate when you're thinking about that. So you gather your people together, right? You have some sort of vision casting evening. What do you do in that time? Well, I would

encourage you to put in writing a core team development or core team commitment. And.

00:16:54

the reason being is because, putting things in writing, you can always refer, back to it later when you need to. Because expectations are so all over the board when it comes to people joining your core team. To have it in writing is really important. In these vision meetings, I handed out a packet that I think was like 12 or 15 pages long about who we were. And I cast the vision. And then I handed out all these handouts. And I said, I want to walk through this and read this aloud to you to know the kind of community we sense God is calling us to. The.

00:17:28

mountain range we're running towards. And we want to ask you if you want to join us, if you've fallen in love with this mountain range. And if so, would you lace up your hiking boots and pack your pack? And would you join us on the trail? I want to be really clear as to why we're doing this, what we're doing, and the types of people we're looking for. And because of that, I put it in writing for you all to see, right? And why they should consider it. It's really important to put this in writing to express the unique vision. Of the church plan.

00:18:00

Forces you to articulate, forces you to articulate clearly in your communication, what are we after? What is this church about? So it's a lot of work, but it's really good if you can hone it in such a way that you really feel like you get down and someone says, so what's your church plant like and why should we plant churches and do we really need another church and why here and why now and why this zip code? And you say, great question. I've actually written this down. Let me send it to you, let you read it, and then we can get together and talk about it.

00:18:31

That's the first thing. It clarifies for you. The second is it clearly communicates expectations, as I said, who we will be and who we will not be and what we will do and what we won't do. So I would encourage you, don't have low expectations as much as loose expectations, but you still got to name them and make sure they're realistic. Because one of my favorite mantras that I like to say is frustration is the difference between. Expectation and reality. The larger the gap, the more people are going to be frustrated.

00:19:03

Next time you're frustrated or angry or upset at a friend, at a spouse, at a co-worker, whatever it may be, ask yourself, what did I expect and what actually happened? My guess is that's a pretty large gap because the larger the gap, the more frustrated you are. So what we're trying to do is lower the expectation gap between reality and expectation so few people are frustrated or angry. So what I'm trying to do by having a written core commitment together is I want to avoid anybody saying, well, I didn't know that was a requirement.

00:19:38

Nobody told me that. If that's what I knew this was about, I never would have signed up to be a part of your core team. You just don't want anybody to be shocked. Six months in, they go, what? Now, this is not a legal binding document. I want to be really clear. You don't want to use it to shame people. But you are asking people to a big commitment. And people feel comfortable when they're clear what you're calling them to, to show them what they're after. So it spells out this high level of commitment. When you set the bar high, it does two things. Number one,

00:20:10

it tells you who's really committed, people who want to be challenged, who are hungry, who are trusting God, and they will respond. Number two, it'll show you that the people will say, whoa, yeah, never mind, where they thought it was a good idea, but they didn't necessarily feel like they want to commit to it. You're not looking for perfect people, but you are looking for committed people and people that we call people who are fat and hungry, people who are.

00:20:40

faithful, available, teachable, and hungry. You always want people who are fat and hungry. The benefit is that it just weeds out those who are wanting to join the team for all the wrong reasons and all the wrong motivations. So you almost want people to say after reading this, whoa. They're serious, of which, oh, then never mind, or whoa, they're serious. Wow, I think I want in on this, all right? So let me actually do a screen share real quickly with you here.

00:21:14

This is a copy, and I will give you a copy of this. This is our core team commitment, our covenant. We called it a covenant, and I went in and changed it. It used to say launch team covenant, but I changed it, and I'll send this to you. And this is, I talk about the purpose of it. Here's the mission, vision, and values, our mission statement, what we are committed to, our core convictions, a vision of who we desire to become. And you may go, oh, my gosh, that's a lot of work. It is a lot of work. But if people are going to give their time and money and energy to this,

00:21:48

they deserve to know you've thought through this, and you didn't wake up yesterday morning and think, hey, we should plant a church, that you're serious about this, okay? So these were the convictions. And, again, quite late. But then, and I even spelled out, here are the wrong reasons to join us. But here are the right reasons to join us. And I really wanted people to know the kinds of people that we're looking for. And then, and let me open this up here a little bit more. This is what I, after reading all this and going through this for about 45 minutes, I said, here are the commitments that we're asking of people.

00:22:25

And we spelled these out very clearly, these nine commitments that we wanted

people to do, including refraining from speaking poorly of other churches in the region. We're not here to say, we're amazing. Those old funny days, that traditional church doesn't get it, and we now get it. That was a commitment. We wanted to make sure that we were good news to the community, which also meant not bashing other churches in our community. Then here's what I did. I basically said, here's who we are. You know, like, here's my wife and I, here's our contact information.

00:22:59

But we said, we want you to. keep the packet, but the last page here, we want you to rip it off, and we want you to sign where it's appropriate. And so if you said, based on prayerful consideration, we want to join you. Yes, let's do this. I had them sign their name there. If they said, we don't wish to join you, but we do want to financially partner with you. Great. And then they would sign their name. Because some people say, hey, we don't feel called as a family to do this, or my wife wants to do it, but I don't really feel comfortable. But we love what you're doing, and we think it's a good thing,

00:23:30

and we want to commit to giving \$100 a month for the next year or two to what you're doing. Great. They can still partner with you. Or I don't wish to, but to be a part of your core team, but we had house churches that were starting. I don't want to be in leadership on the core team, but when you all are up and running, when you start, let me know. We want to start coming to the church. Or, I still have questions. Can we get together? I want to ask a few more before I sign on any dotted line here.

00:24:03

And then lastly, no thanks. We're not interested. Of course, we want as many people not on this last line as possible. But if they sign that, that's not a bad thing. In fact, sometimes people that sign on the dotted line on that line, I'll tell you what I did. Oh, thank the Lord. Oh, good. That would have been so awkward. Right? There are some people that shouldn't be on the team. And they come and you go, what are they doing here? But it's still good for them to hear it. And we had one guy who our logo that we've had the last 14 years was created by a guy.

00:24:39

He and his wife had three young girls. They came to the vision night, one of the vision nights we had. And they said, we love your vision. We think it's great. We don't feel called to join you. But I'm a professional graphic designer. And if you want, I'd be willing to donate my services to actually create a vision night for you and your family and your friends and your family and your friends and your family and your friends and your family and your family, a logo work for you. Awesome. The logo 14 years later we have come from this guy, who said, I'm not going to join you, but can I help you? Can I just serve you in some way?

00:25:12

I don't even think about that. It's so creative. I'm so grateful for his willingness to

serve our community that way. And we still use it. So another person designed our first website that way. He said, I'm a web designer. I'll do your website for free. I'll host it for a year. Would that be of help? Yes. Thank you. So we got some donations, but they weren't just financial. They were wonderfully helpful. So anyway, so I will send that core team commitment to Bob, and then he can load that up here. So give him that core team and then conduct one-on-one follow.

00:25:51

up meetings. I had people sign on the dotted line, but it wasn't sign me up. Great. It was sign me up. I'm ready. I'm ready. I want to do this, but it's, still important you get together in one-on-one follow-up meetings. Just say, hey, man, tell me what you reflected on. What do you remember from the meeting? What stuck out to you? What excites you? What makes you nervous? What additional questions do you have? Hey, let's spend some time together and pray now to see if you want to join us. And I'll tell you, I mean, in the first three months of our church plan, all I did was learn about our community.

00:26:26

Community, just going, the first thing that I taught on is just how do I be an expert in my community? And number two was hosting meetings and one-on-ones with people to just see who would be a part of our core team. Who's going to do the heavy lifting in what we're doing here? So, and then when you're together, assess and discern if they're the right fit for the vision. This is really important. Again, when you're conducting these one-on-one meetings, you know, ask them to tell their faith story. Have them talk about their expectations or motivations.

00:27:00

And look to see if their expectations are held loosely. Here's what some people said. Man, we're really excited because, you know what, that church over there, they don't know what they're talking about. But, man, you and your teaching, you know what you're talking about, and I'm in because you're the right church. Now, I tell you, that's intoxicating to hear. And it's dangerous. And it's wrong. It's wrong because the moment that some other cool church pops up in your.

00:27:33

community who's a better teacher than you, they're jumping ship fast. Plus, they just threw this other church under the bus. If people are leaving churches, I say to them, tell me why you're leaving. Because if they left poorly of their last church, guess what? They're going to leave poorly from yours. There are times. There are times that we've said to people, hey, you know what, that sounds a little, I don't know. I really think you need to sit down with leadership and talk with them.

00:28:04

You might feel convinced to join us, but I need you to kind of go back and tie that bow up with them because it feels like things are left undone. And they go, yeah, I can't do that. So you know what? It's really important to me because if you don't do it there, then I'd hate for you to do that with me. So that becomes a

discipleship opportunity. And truthfully, we scared a few people away because of that. Yeah, I'm okay with that. I'm okay. Because the culture we were creating is that we're going to deal with conflict and we're going to deal with hard issues.

00:28:38

and we're not going to avoid it or bad mouth other people. So part of the culture you're creating is actually the core team covenant you're calling people to. You call people to high levels of commitment. You're showing people, hey, this isn't a church. You just spectate and you just come and coast. So that's really important that you assess that time together. So, again, some questions. in that meeting to help you discern, like, tell me your thoughts about what you heard in the vision. What made you nervous? May I tell you my thoughts about your involvement with the team? Or do you.

00:29:10

think you'd be a good fit for this team? Now, let me be completely buck naked honest with you here. I failed because I said yes to too many people. It is better that you have a smaller core team with the right people than a larger team with the wrong ones. More people doesn't often mean more momentum. It sometimes means more problems and messes and.

00:29:41

issues. Sometimes it means less momentum if you say yes to more of the wrong people. Learn to say no. You aren't going to make some people happy. But being someone's pastor doesn't mean you always have to be their buddy. And there were times, I remember this one guy named Joe. He did not, single guy in his early 40s. He had some major, major emotional unintelligence. It was very, very apparent in his life.

00:30:15

I'm not looking for perfect people, but I just knew, yeah, this isn't going to be right. He really wanted to join the team. He signed, yes, sign me up. I'm in. And I thought, we can't do this. So I had to have that really hard follow-up conversation with him where I discerned, this isn't the right fit. Now, I wasn't saying he couldn't come to our church. He could come, but as far as our core team, the core of the core, I couldn't have him on my team. And I remember I met him at Saxby's Coffee Shop, and we were sitting there talking. And he shared why he thought it was a good idea. And I said, Joe, we just feel like this is not the right fit. I said it very calmly. Joe started yelling at me very loudly in this coffee shop, very awkwardly. Everyone's like looking over at our table. He said, I don't understand why I can't.

00:31:00

to be on this team. I don't understand why you and just very embarrassing. And it was just in that moment that I just lowered my voice and leaned in. And I said, Joe, what you're doing right now is exactly what I'm talking about. This is why we can't have you on the team. In fact, if there was any doubt in my mind, you

should be on this team. You just took all that doubt away. This is not how we treat people. You're more than welcome to come to our church. We have our.

00:31:33

first gathering. But this is not the kind of way that we treat people. And therefore, I can't have you on the team. The last I ever saw him. Probably still hates me. I don't know. But it was the right move. That was a win. I made the right decision. But I also said yes to too many people. And I really want to challenge you with this because there was this little voice in my head. When I go high pitched on my voice, it's like, I don't know. I don't know. In my head, I know it's a problem. So it went like this. Well, I mean, they could work.

00:32:03

Well, I mean, yeah, they got a tough marriage, but like, yeah, I mean, we'll help them. I mean, it's about grace, discipleship, you know. Well, and when I go, well, like high pitched, that's my personal indication. I have to be very careful. It is about grace. But when it comes to your core team, you need some spiritually, emotionally mature people. And so I didn't listen to that voice well enough and made some mistakes.

00:32:34

And I will say the people that I went, well, or, well, they could work in my head. I rationalized and justified, and they were the majority of my headaches in the first year of our plan. It wasn't non-Christians. It wasn't new Christians. It wasn't people coming off the street. There were some emotionally unintelligent people that I rationalized. And so I had to join the team. And it sucked all of our time and energy. So that's where I failed in that.

00:33:05

So with Renew, we had three meetings, just to give you – I'm not saying that you have to compare yourself. I'm not saying this is even right or wrong. But for us, we had three vision-casting meeting times. Over 100 people showed up between the three meetings. And we knew that not everyone was going to do that. Some people showed up just to lend moral support and make sure that if two people showed up, there were some other bodies in the room and we didn't feel embarrassed. So we ended up with about 40 adults. We had 40 adults, and so that means less than half the people that came to our vision time joined our team.

00:33:38

We had 40 adults and I think like 14 kids. And I said and I encouraged and I hinted and I led most people to a no decision. I really sensed most people were like, yeah, I'm bored. Friday night, sure, I'll come. You know, I'll check out. I'm like. Oh, boy, you know, and so if I just sensed like, or, hey, we're looking for a real kick by children's ministry, you guys are going to have that in week one, right?

00:34:09

My first thought was, ooh, I don't know of any children's ministry that's kicked by

children's ministry week one. Most church plants I know don't have that after a year, sometimes longer, but I said yes to too many people. Our team was still too big with 40 adults and 14 kids, and a few of those people, just couldn't cut it, and they decided not to finish. They could not fill that one-year commitment of our core team covenant, and when they came.

00:34:40

to me and said, I'd like to be released from this agreement, I said externally, okay, and inside I'm like, thank you, Jesus. Oh, my gosh. Like, it was so exhausting. So I just want to be honest with you about that, okay? So then, you know, assess and discern, you know, if they're the right thing. How do you assess? Yes. This is a good one. These are the six components of assessing if someone should be on your team. Character. That's the only one that matters in terms of order. Six or two through six doesn't matter what order it's in.

00:35:12

Character has to be first. If you don't trust them, if they cannot be trusted, do not even think about having them on your team. Nothing will wreck the reputation of your church plant more than core team members who are dishonest and who are not living in the way of Jesus. Two through six doesn't matter what order it's in. But competency, like, they have some competency, right? They're not looking for perfect people. They don't have to have a PhD, but there's some competency to what they're doing.

00:35:43

Is there chemistry? Like, do you like spending time with them? Or when they walk in the room, does everything get really awkward? They might be kind-hearted, but they just make everything awkward. Just be aware of that, you know? Consistency. Are they good at follow-through? Are they responsible? people. They have capacity. And by capacity, I mean, can they learn new things? If you threw them into the deep end of the pool, could they learn to swim their way to the edge? Like, they're just like, yeah, that's a challenge. I'm up for the challenge. Let's do it. Or they're.

00:36:13

like, oh, no, I can never do that. You want to look for people that have capacity. And then calling. This is really important as well. There are a lot of people that will come to your church because it feels like a good idea. It's the flavor of the month. It sounds, oh, that sounds fun. Oh, you're a great preacher. You guys have the coolest, hippest church in town until, a cooler, hipper church comes in town and then they jump. So you need to, that's why I asked for a year. Because in a year, you really can stabilize if you've got a core group of people.

00:36:47

to do some heavy lifting. It's hard to wake up and go, man, I don't know who's going to do heavy lifting with me or not. For you as a church planter, you need that. Peace. mind that comes with knowing if no one else shows up at least I've got 40 adults you know for us that was in my mind at least I know I've got 40

adults that are going to be there for the next year there's just something reassuring for me and then you can just build on that and knowing.

00:37:19

that those expectations are there so anyway before we go to take a quick stretch break and before we move from part one to part two I know that was a lot so again we started with gathering our team how do we get people together how do we recruit and identify there is a point and I don't know what that point is because it's going to be different for every planter if you've got three people committed on your core team I would say wait keep praying pray with your core team see.

00:37:53

that grow I think you know and I don't want to be hard on numbers here but I think if you're if you have, less than 12 adults, it's probably wise to keep praying. And so what you may be calling people to is a year of whether we have gatherings or not, just a core, we're going to gather for a year in our living room. And part of the commitment may be of having other people that you are recruiting or asking or inviting to check out what we're doing and consider joining us. So it could be.

00:38:27

part of that, that is recruitment. So yeah, and that sometimes, especially in a parachute setting where you move to a place and you don't know anybody, it's hard to just set up tents, set up camp and just go, hey, everybody come, because no one knows you. No one trusts you yet. We happen to be in an area where people already knew us and trusted us. And so they said, I don't even know if I want to be a part of a church plan, but I trust the Briggs family because we know them. But if you're in a new place where, man, you just moved to Tennessee, it may take a little bit longer to develop.

00:39:00

And that's okay, but I would just want to make sure your expectations are set appropriately. So some people have, I mean, gosh, I have like a core team. They're like 200 people. I'm like, what? Like that's just, how do you even know each other's names? Like how do you hear each other's stories? So anyway, with that being said, I think 12 or more, I think if you actually even have had 10 family units is probably really good. A synagogue is developed in the first century when there are 10 worshipping Jewish families.

00:39:33

Now there's nothing biblically set in stone. You can't plant with less than 10. But that's a good, you know, some of them could be newly married. Some of them could have a bunch of kids. But when you have 10 committed families together in a room, less than numbers. Here's a great phrase from Mike Breen. You need to be small enough to care. But large enough to dare. And whatever that looks like in your context, do that. Small enough to care for each other and know each other's names and stories and really pray and press in with each other, but large enough to dare to say, you know what, we're going to do this for our community.

00:40:12

We really sense that God's with us on this. So that's probably, yeah, where I would say, Brian, make sure we're large enough to dare, even if it means we wait and take our time a little bit on that. So, so there's some things that non-negotiable, like this is who we are, like no one's going to take this away. And I'm sure of it because I'm the planter. But there are other things that we say, we're going to figure this out together. I don't know. I mean, the first week someone said, what are we going to do with children, with children's ministry?

00:40:43

I said, I don't know. What are we going to do about it? And I pushed the pronoun back on them because the expectation was, Briggs, you figure it out. And I said, I don't know. That's a great question. What are we going to do about this? And they chuckled. But to me. That was a culture shift. It was a language shift from I'm going to figure it out to we are going to figure it out. So I said, so what are we going to do next week? I looked around, real quiet, and I was freaked out. What if no one says anything?

00:41:14

I'm playing chicken with them, right? So what are we going to do with the kids next week? And then someone who was a preschool teacher, Jenna, raised her hand and said, I've got some curriculum laying around. I'd be glad to use that, and I'll take the kids back for a 30-minute lesson. Terrific. What else do you need, Jenna? I need three volunteers that they don't have to teach anything, just going to help me with the little kids and make sure they don't squirm around. And people are like, I'll help, I'll help. Great. Thank you, Jenna. So then, whew, it leads me to what we're doing next week with the kids, right?

00:41:47

And then I said, Jenna, thank you. How was it? What do you need from us? What can you – how do you need to update everybody about how it went? What do you need – what do parents need to know? How about people that don't? have kids, how can we still help you even if we don't have children? And so I think turning the pronoun from what are you going to do, Briggs, to no, what are we going to do about this? We're going to own this together. That's why we're a core team doing heavy lifting together. I'll give one quick analogy and then we'll stop for a quick break. There was a pastor that I worked for.

00:42:20

and he had really bad chronic back pain. And he's had it most of his adult life. And I said, what happened? He said, one time I was a youth pastor and he said, we decided to play a prank on one of the youth kids and they had a very small car and there were about 10 of us. We decided to pick his car up and move it down the street a little bit, which was really cool. But he said, what they didn't tell me is the other 10 decided to play a prank on me that we would all lift up.

00:42:51

the car and then someone would yell a word and then everybody let go. And so

they thought it would be funny. You know, all these teenagers. So they did it, and what happened is, obviously, the weight, it just jerked his back so badly because that whole weight of that car was left on his back. And so he struggled with chronic back pain his entire life. This is why a core team commitment is so important. No one's trying to be mean. Those kids weren't trying to be mean.

00:43:21

They were playing a prank. They thought it was an innocent prank on their youth pastor, and it wrecked his back. In fact, a year-long commitment of asking people to commit for 12 months to doing what you're doing, keeps you from trying to be somebody where you think everybody's lifting to carry the big weight of the car of church planting. And everybody says, never mind. And then you're left with not a bad back but a bad soul. You become really bitter and angry because everybody bailed on you.

00:43:55

So that year commitment can be really, really helpful to make sure you don't throw your back into chronic pain spiritually, if that makes sense. So it's a commitment. I will help you pick this up and move it and set it down at the same place with everybody else, and I won't give up on it. So let's just assume that we've got our core team together, and you've got them. Okay, now what? What do you do with them? And let's talk through what we do with our core team once we have them.

00:44:27

Okay, so developing our team. All right, so here's the thing. Make a commitment right from the beginning, once you have your core team, that you'll do three things. That you'll help them grow in their walk with Jesus, first and foremost. Number two, that you will equip them and give them the tools they need to work within this vision. All right, and number three, you'll focus on growing hearts more than on growing numbers. Now, growing numbers is always going to be that that home in the background. It's always going to be there, right?

00:45:00

Right? Numbers of baptisms, numbers of givers, numbers of, you know, people attendance, of course. But make the focus, especially at the beginning, on growing hearts more than on growing numbers. If you can make this commitment, this is your job. You're going to pastor your courts team, they're your pre-plant, right? They are the original charter members of your church plant. And so when it comes to this idea of equipping them and giving them the tools they need,

00:45:31

I want to take a moment to talk about in the first century, the word equipping had four different meanings. And each one gives a great mental image that I think is important for us. The first one, it was to heal a broken bone. So when a bone got broken, how a doctor comes in and sets the bone back in so it grows back in. That was how the word equipping was used, the first way. The second thing is

equipping was to pack a ship for the journey ahead. All the food and the supplies. supplies that are needed for the long journey ahead on the water. That's equipping. Number.

00:46:06

three, restoring something to its original condition. So if it was broken, being a part of the repair or some sort of renovation project. And then lastly, it was to prepare a soldier for battle. I think all four of those are really important metaphors because there's going to be brokenness within your core team. There's going to be people who are struggling or going through a hard time. And so equipping them means teaching them how to lean into Jesus.

00:46:37

further and into community further when they need healing. It's also going to be equipping them to show them how they can, by the power of the Spirit, help to set bones right in the lives of other people. What do they do when they see brokenness in their neighbors? What do they do when they see brokenness in their families or their co-workers or in their kids' ball team on Tuesday nights at the YMCA. To pack a ship for the journey. This is the journey. So how are you giving them the tools, the information, the resources that they need to restore their.

00:47:12

original condition, right? I mean, name of our church was Renew. And so we said, we want to live up to our name. We have been renewed. We are currently being renewed. And then we join God in the renewal of all things. And so that idea of restoring or renewing or redeeming is an important part of equipping. And then we are in spiritual battle. Let's make, you know, I don't want to turn this into some like, you know, high-end intense, you know, Pentecostal service. But let us not forget that we are in a battle. This is a war. And the evil one would love to divide your church.

00:47:49

And he would love to divide and split and tear down and damage your church right from the start before it even gets off the ground. So you got to equip people. And one of the, One of the questions that we wrestled with as a church, with our core team, was this. If you were Satan, what would you do to tear our church apart right now? This is a weird question, but it's an important one. If you were Satan, what would you do to tear this church down? That sounds like a weird question, but nothing unifies like a common enemy.

00:48:22

And so we would just take the time to pray against the evil one having a foothold in our community. So as you think about this, I want you to think about your role, 1 Corinthians 14, 12. Strive to excel in building up the church. What great words from Paul. Strive to excel in building up the church. One of the best compliments you can get in this year is people saying, I have never been more shepherded or more equipped at a church than I have been being a part of this core team.

00:48:54

Strive for that. That's really, really important. All right. I'm going to keep moving down here a little bit just for the sake of time. Again, some people, they will join your vision because they trust you. I used to be freaked out by this. Whoa, what? People are coming to our church just because of me? I want them to come because of Jesus, because of the vision. Are they leaning too much on me? But I learned that it's okay that that is the case at the very beginning.

00:49:27

They can say, I don't know about this church planning thing, Briggs, but I trust you and your heart, and I trust what you're about, and so we're in. And I could be okay with that at the beginning, but the goal is to wean them off of trusting you to trusting the vision, all the while having an ever-deepening trust in Jesus. Does that make sense? Some people just aren't visionaries. So they go, what do you mean? You just put a church together. I'm like, how do you do that? I don't even know what this is.

00:49:58

But I trust you. That's okay. But if five years from now they still trust you but don't like the church or they don't really believe in the vision, they just like hanging out with you, that's dangerous. So realize at the beginning they're going to hold your hand, but after a while you're going to want to take their hand out of your hand and actually put it in the hand of the vision, and let the vision be the one that carries them forward. So eventually you want to pass the school bus test. And this is one of my favorite things to talk about,

00:50:29

the school bus test. Or you could call it the beer truck test or the bread truck test, whatever it is. And if you're walking across the street, God forbid, and you get hit by a bread truck and died, what happens to your church?