

CHARACTER AND COMPETENCIES

Genesis Church Planting Training

The Basics

- Character is who you are; competency (or _____) is what you do
- You need to assess your current character and competency and also regularly assess areas of challenge and growth in your character and competency
- Both character and competencies are important, but character is _____: “Don't be impressed with charisma; look for character. Who preachers are is the main thing, not what they say.” - Matthew 7:16-17, The Message
- Outline for us: key character qualities and competencies for church planters and how to assess and evaluate areas of strength, weakness, and growth regularly

Character

- _____ in Christ
 - John 15:5 - “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.
 - Ps 1:1-3 - Blessed is the one who . . . is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.
 - This seems so obvious but is probably the most difficult thing as a church planter
 - Your identity right now is _____ in your vision, how it unfolds, and what impact it has
 - You will feel crappy/ashamed/depressed/like a _____:
 - When your church plant doesn't grow quickly
 - When your sermons don't impress
 - When people don't sign up for that event you planned
 - When small groups limp along
 - When people leave (and they will)
 - When no one is convicted about the thing you're challenging
 - When money is short
 - When the thing you put a lot of time and energy into isn't recognized by anyone
 - Some of your discouragement will be natural and healthy; much of it will be because your identity is wrapped up in your role and success as a church planter
 - Come back to Mt 3:17
 - _____ everything you have into it; trust God with the _____
- _____
 - This vision is not about you and can happen without you
 - What if amazing things happen and you get *no credit*? Shouldn't that be the goal?
 - Humility is not being proud of what you're good at and not being ashamed to hide what you're bad at
 - Ask others: where have you seen humility in me? Where have you not?

- _____
 - Philippians 4:11-12 “. . . for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.”
 - Contentment is knowing when to stop or say no or just be present or trust God with the results
 - Eugene Peterson: “a way of living _____”; there’s a place and a time for being assertive as we often think about it, but when it turns into discontent it’s unhealthy
- _____
 - We live in a culture that lacks all patience; much of our technology drives this
 - *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church* by Alan Kreider; patience is the most discussed Christian virtue in the apostolic era
 - “God is never in a _____”
 - Church planting will test all of your patience

Competencies

- Tenacity
 - Or _____ - turning frustration and failure into opportunities and motivation
 - Sometimes this is just . . . hanging . . . in . . . there
 - This is the _____ attribute of church planters who make it versus those who don’t
 - The longer you go (1, 2 or 3 years), the greater chance of making it
- Team-building
 - Attracting, _____ in, and building a core team of people who will bear the load of launching the church
 - This requires networking ability but also going deep with specific individuals, identifying their gifts, shepherding them, investing in them personally and relationally
 - You can’t plant a church without a healthy and _____ team
 - Note: it’s well known that most people on your core team will leave in the first year or two; that’s okay--this is normal for the life cycle of all churches now; you have to invest in people who likely won’t be around for a long time
- Flexibility
 - Everything is an _____ in the early days, you have to be flexible and adaptable when things need to change
 - Ask yourself:
 - What am I holding on to that isn’t working well?
 - Where am I being too rigid?
 - In what ways are on-the-ground realities different from what I had envisioned and how do I need to change?
- Decision-making _____

- You will be faced with so many decisions - how you make those decisions (wisely and promptly) is as important as the decisions themselves
- What persons or teams of people are responsible for what decisions?
- Who is _____? Or are you holding all the power?
- Are you prone to make decisions too quickly or slowly?
- In the early days, have a bias toward decision-making and action and then be ready to evaluate
- Four steps of decision-making: evaluation, _____, decision, implementation
- Cultivation of personal _____
 - How you are doing emotionally, relationally, financially, and physically is crucial and will bleed into how you approach your job
 - Take care of yourself and this isn't just about your soul/identity in Christ
 - What are your own habits and stresses and lifestyle challenges?
 - If you want to be a pastor for the long haul, take care of your _____
 - _____ is essential here - this should be part of your weekly schedule right now
- Cultivation of _____
 - This could have been a character quality: cultivating self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses, personality traits, false and true self, communication tendencies, etc.
 - Several assessments are helpful
 - _____ - most helpful but requires work to understand/utilize
 - Myers-Briggs
 - Disc, Strengthsfinder, RightPath, etc.
- Leading _____
 - This is an essential skill that is often overlooked
 - You will lead staff meetings, elder meetings, planning meetings, 1x1 supervisor meetings, lay leader meetings, vision casting meetings, volunteer training meetings, etc.
 - Start with evaluation regarding meetings you have led: were they engaging, purposeful, and participative? Were they fun or boring? Something to look forward to or a necessary evil? Did they accomplish much?
 - Don't _____ when it comes to meetings; be intentional in preparation; it will pay off in the long run
- _____
 - Even in a more missional, less programmatic church, preaching/teaching still plays an important role
 - And, rightly or wrongly, it is the most _____ marker and measure of evaluation by newcomers

How to Assess Character and Competency Regularly

- Meet regularly with a _____ - this is so important for your identity in Christ, which is his/her primary goal (which is different from coach or mentor)
- Read *The Pastor* by Eugene Peterson
- Read books on specific competencies you want to cultivate - be wary of general leadership books

- Carve out regular time to get away (a day or _____) for self-reflection
- Set regular goals (every 4 or 6 months) that include a character or _____ component
- Create a staff culture that embraces _____ (instead of hiding it) and then supports each other in engaging weakness; this includes honest and helpful feedback