

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP REFLECTIONS

DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Church Needs Some R&R

https://www.cccc.org/news_blogs/john/2016/04/12/the-church-needs-some-rr/

Discussion Questions

EXISTENTIAL DIAGNOSTIC

1. Who are we?
 - a. How strongly have secular presuppositions, norms, and values conditioned the way we think and act in our ministry?
 - i. Have they compromised the distinctiveness of our faith?
 - ii. Have they distracted us from the priorities of our faith?
 - iii. How would our (hopefully hypothetical) critics answer these questions?
 - b. How mature in the faith are our members and staff?
 - i. Does the way we live give evidence of the power of our faith to change lives?
2. What is really driving us as a ministry?
 - a. Is our ministry to the world a core activity or is it an add-on to serving our members?
 - i. If we are a specialized ministry serving Christians, does the content of what we do include an element of outward focus (e.g., devotionals, lyrics, posts)?
 - b. Have we become too comfortable or inward-focused?
 - i. Have we lost the boldness of the ancient church? Remember Paul's words, "Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold" ([2 Cor 3:12](#)).
 - c. Based on our recent past, why should God continue to bless our ministry?
 - i. Are we fulfilling the purpose for which we are called? The author of Hebrews wrote, "Now may the God of peace...equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him..." ([Heb 13:20-21](#)). We will be resourced by God as we keep his will as our guide.

3. How do we fit within our society?
 - a. What is our posture towards those not like us? Our example should be Jesus, of whom his critics could say with justification that he was a [friend of sinners](#), although they seemed to miss the point of his friendship, which was not just to befriend them, but to tell them to "[Go now and leave your life of sin](#)."
 - i. How conducive is our posture to fulfilling our mission?

ENVIRONMENTAL DIAGNOSTIC

1. Are our assumptions and methodologies still valid?
 - a. How well do they stand up to research on what people are thinking and how they are behaving?
2. What system(s) is our ministry a part of? Our ministry is only part of a person's life, and what we do is only one of many influences they experience. For example, new converts have existing social systems which support their old lifestyle. They may need help learning how to deal with family, friends, and workmates who do not support their new life.
 - a. Other parts of the system could provide partners to collaborate with, or opposing forces that we must work around or overcome. Examples of other system components might be other charities, secular social support programs, education system, etc.

MISSION PROGRESS DIAGNOSTIC

1. How do we define mission success?
 - a. What is the external evidence that we are making successful progress?
2. Are we doing regular program evaluations? If not, how do we know that our programs are really accomplishing what we think they are?
3. Does it appear we are coasting on past success?
 - a. Have we stalled?
 - b. Are we stuck in a rut, lacking creativity and boldness?

VISION DIAGNOSTIC

1. Are we thinking big enough? Are any of our plans big enough to create some doubt as to whether or not we can actually accomplish them?

2. Are our expectations too low? Are they so easy they can be accomplished blindfolded?
Are they so low that we don't need to be creative in getting them done?
3. Are we thinking strategy and not just tactics?
4. Is our planning horizon far enough out to think really big thoughts?
 - a. Comment: When our time horizons are short, everything shrinks. In comparison to long time horizons, the realm of possibility seems smaller, our goals are less lofty, and our focus shifts to the mechanics of doing what we can right now, of tactics. The problems and opportunities centre on the immediately obvious. We work within existing conditions.
 - b. By expanding our time horizons, we think bigger thoughts. A series of short-term goals and plans have greater cohesion because they are all related to an overarching set of longer-term goals and plans. The focus becomes what we need to become in order to execute a strategy. We dig below the surface to look at underlying issues that need to be addressed. We work to change existing conditions.