

The Too Busy Pastor's Wife- Learning to Delegate and Share Authority

One of the biggest traps pastoral couples can fall into is trying to keep their fingers in every pot in their church, so that things are done "right." This dangerous temptation is especially strong in smaller churches. Both my husband and I struggled with micro-managing volunteers during our early ministry. We wanted everything about our church to represent Christ and the gospel with excellence. A worthy goal, but the wise pastor and wife recognize that teams accomplish that in a church, not individuals.

The fruit of micro-managing is worry. You're stressed about how your church will look if a volunteer screw something up. You're stressed about turning off lost people or visitors. Worst of all, you're stressed of how it will reflect on you, especially if you are the lead or only pastor. All bucks stop at your desk and it's hard when they are bad bucks because of a poorly trained volunteer or one with a sinful attitude.

Jesus never set an example as a micro-manager. He created room for his disciples to learn, make mistakes and grow. We **MUST** do the same because *discipling our own church members is more important than being certain that our church programs and worship services go off well.*

So, let me share with you a process that we learned from John Maxwell about how to designate leadership and responsibility to others. So they can grow in Christ. And you can stop being exhausted because you're trying to do too much. This method takes time. That's why many don't use it. They live under this false tape playing in their head that keeps saying, "Oh, it's just easier to do it myself." In the short run that is entirely true. Jesus could have been way more efficient without the disciples. But efficiency wasn't the primary goal. Love and relationship were his top priorities. Ours should be the same. Here's the steps.

1. **I do it and you watch.** Keep your eye out for people who can replace you in things you are currently doing and ask them to join you. As pastoral teams, our goal is to **equip** the body of Christ, not do everything for them. I'll use my husband's security team as an example. Once Ken identifies someone who might have the right gifts and skill sets for the team, he invites that individual to follow him around for several weeks.
2. **We do it together.** In this step the potential security team trainee gets his own walkie talkie and begins to actively participate in the duties of the team but remains with Ken (my husband) or another experienced team member for several more weeks.

3. **You do it and I watch.** At this point, Ken will allow the new security team member to travel on their own and have some lower-level responsibilities. Everyone else on the team is listening to them and watching them. Ken watches them from our control room where we have videos monitoring all areas of our church campus.

4. **You do it on your own.** If the trainee handles themselves well in all the above steps, they are allowed greater, more sensitive duties, for example in our nursery area, and are not actively monitored by anyone anymore.

This can be a slow process and many pastors and leaders jump ship out of frustration when volunteers screw up. It's so easy to revert to micromanaging. Remember when James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven on people who didn't treat Jesus right? Volunteers will mess up sometimes. You deal with it. You don't micromanage them. And you don't stress about them. Why? Because you're obeying Christ by discipling and training people up in his ways. Even when they mess up, he will care for you and help you untangle messes. We need to stop stressing about our reputation and our church's reputation and get our hands dirty training up volunteers that we can trust to represent Christ well.

Family relationships suffer when pastoral couples neglect each other and their children because they are micro-managing too many areas of ministry. Volunteers become disheartened and disillusioned under micro-managers, especially if they are creative or possess leadership skills themselves. Some people are happy to be unthinking, dutiful sheep but is that really what you want? Don't you want people to grow up in their God-given gifts? Sure, Jesus's disciples were a hot mess a lot of the time when he was here on earth but *look what happened after Jesus returned to heaven*. Those guys turned the world upside down. If something happened to remove you from over the top of your volunteers and ministries would everything collapse or would things continue to ignite and grow?

If your absence from a ministry means certain doom, you are not discipling your volunteers, you are micro-managing. Stop it. This is not what you are called to do. Did you ever consider the idea that by insisting on having your hand in too many places you aren't able to do things God designed just for you to do really well? Jesus knew what his calling was and understood his mission with his disciples. Together they changed the world. How about you and your volunteers?