

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

How to Choose Your Senior Leadership Team - Episode 317

Developing an Effective Senior Leadership Team (Part 2)

Often when churches are building a senior leadership team, the tendency is to invite team members based on their title or tenure—but the criteria for a healthy and effective senior leadership team goes much deeper than that.

In this episode, Tony and Amy offer practical guidelines and defining questions to help you identify the right leaders for your senior leadership team.

How Not to Choose Your Team

When considering who should be on the senior leadership team, many times, we try to answer the wrong questions. Sometimes we ask, “What positions should be represented on the team?” We may think anyone with “Pastor” or “Director” in their title automatically qualifies. That’s not always the case, regardless of the position.

Sometimes we ask, “Who has been around the longest?” But tenure doesn’t necessarily equate with the profile of the person you want serving on this team. In fact, if you’re stuck and need a fresh perspective, sometimes the *newest* person should be added to the team.

So selecting leaders for this team is not about positional leadership or length of ministry, and it’s not necessarily about the people at the very top of your current organizational structure.

(However, once you identify the right people for your situation, you should build your structure around your senior leadership team. In other words, every person and every ministry needs to be connected to one person on your senior leadership team.)

Seven Questions to Help You Find the Right Leaders

**This list assumes that the people you’re considering for this team already meet the qualifications for leadership as defined by Scripture.*

1. **Do they have leadership gifts?** If they aren't leaders, they shouldn't be on this team. You also need to consider leadership capacity. We know from Scripture that there are leaders of tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands—for this team, you ultimately need leaders of hundreds and thousands.
2. **Are they big-picture thinkers?** These leaders prioritize the church's health over what's happening in their ministry areas. They are more concerned with alignment to the overall goals than defending their turf. They won't let their passion for specific ministries get in the way of making decisions that help the entire church take a step forward.
3. **Are they strategic thinkers?** Find people who think about the future and then can strategically propose how to take you there. One of the primary roles of this team is developing ministry strategy to accomplish the church's vision.
4. **Can they build teams?** In ministry, this is primarily about building and equipping teams of volunteers. As the church grows, you also need people who can develop staff teams. They need to have demonstrated that they can identify and empower other leaders.
5. **Do they share the vision and values of your organization?** This is no team for people who perceive they need to provide checks and balances. Every leader at this level needs to be 100 percent on board with the church's vision and values.
6. **Do they help us reflect the diversity of our ministry?** Leadership comes in a variety of shapes and sizes based on someone's gift mix, background, personality, and experiences.
7. **Are they lifelong learners?** Ideally, you'll identify people who will grow with your organization. You need people who embrace leadership development for themselves and their teams.

Final Considerations

Especially in smaller or newer churches, you don't necessarily need to be paid staff to be on the senior leadership team. If you do select lay people, though, they still need to be fully engaged in ministry and serving in a leadership capacity.

Another thing to remember is that this team needs to change over time. As the church grows, your senior leadership team needs to reflect that ongoing change. With that in mind, you may want to consider changes to this team every eighteen to twenty-four months.

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