

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

# Navigating Changes on Your Senior Leadership Team - Episode 319

## *Developing an Effective Senior Leadership Team (Part 4)*

Even after a senior leadership team has been established, it's expected that this team will shift and change as the church grows.

In this episode, Tony and Amy explain how your senior leadership meetings should change as your church grows and offer advice for navigating personnel changes on your team.

### *How Your SLT Shifts as Your Church Grows*

We have to be intentional about our time with other leaders—that includes who we meet with on a regular basis. We typically recommend between 3-8 people, depending on the size of your church. As your church grows, who these people are will change:

- **PHASE 1 (Under 500):** All ministry staff are invited to the weekly meeting. Everyone participates and everyone helps make just about every decision.
- **PHASE 2 (500 to 1,000 attendance):** Only invite ministry leaders, meaning, people leading other people. Don't include people who primarily complete tasks.
- **PHASE 3 (1,000 to 2,000):** Until now, all pastors and directors were invited. In this phase, only invite leaders of leaders.

You can continue to engage with those *outside* of your senior leadership team meeting through:

1. **Ministry Team Meetings:** Focused on execution or tactical decisions with people who complete tasks and get stuff done.
2. **All-Staff Meetings:** Share vision, information, stories, etc. These are **not** decision-making meetings.

It's a myth to believe that getting more people in more meetings improves communications. Rather, to improve communications:

- Get the right people in the right meetings.

- Prioritize cascading communications: What do we need to communicate to teammates who are not in this meeting?
- Have regular 1-on-1s with your direct reports.
- Schedule recurring ministry team meetings.
- Leverage communications tools designed for team collaboration (don't rely on email).
- Encourage trust between teammates.

## *Addressing the Wrong Person on Your Team*

**Step 1: Begin praying about the situation.** God wants healthy leaders and healthy churches as well. He's leading that person **as well as** leading you. He's going before you and will be with both of you as you lead through the change.

**Step 2: Confirm the reason they are not qualified for the role.** Is it character? Is it competence? Is it a lack of leadership capacity? You need to identify the "why" before moving to the next step.

**Step 3: Engage the tough conversations.**

1. **Start by asking questions:** What's working? What's not? Are you fulfilled?  
(Don't be surprised if they open the door to the difficult issues you were avoiding.)
2. **State your clear expectations for the role:** Be honest. Be clear. Explain what success looks like for the person in the role.
3. **Communicate next steps** (As determined during Step 2):
  - a. If it's a character issue, there may be an intervention required.
  - b. If it's a competence or capacity issue that you believe can be improved, provide coaching, training resources, mentoring opportunities, etc.
4. **Tough conversations are sometimes followed by tough decisions.** That's leadership. When these tough decisions are required, we recommend reading [Necessary Endings](#) by Dr. Henry Cloud.

## *Final Thoughts & Reflections*

It takes courage to look in the mirror and choose to see what *is* rather than what you want to see. Our goal is to help you move forward without feeling tethered to limitations that directly result from a lack of performance at the top. The possibility that your senior leadership team might be the lid that is holding your church back from greater ministry impact also comes with the realization that **it doesn't have to remain that way.**

Before any change can take place, you must establish a baseline from which progress can be measured. Reflect:

- What leadership situations do you need to pray about so that God raises up healthy leaders and makes your church healthy as well? What tough conversations do you need to have this week?
- Does your team have the right people on it but is not performing at its highest capacity? Depending on your answer, how can you determine whether you need outside help and a fresh perspective?
- Last question, and arguably the toughest: Is your senior leadership team the lid that is holding your church back from greater ministry impact? If so, what do you need to do next?

**So much is at stake.** Don't miss the opportunity to propel your ministry to new levels of kingdom work by creating a healthy senior leadership team that—in turn—is creating a healthy church culture. The keys to overcoming what's holding your church back are not “out there” but “in here”—within your senior leadership team.

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