

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

Stupid Church Tricks: Leadership & Staffing - Episode 330

Stupid Church Tricks

Churches don't try to sabotage their ministries *on purpose*. However, there are many churches innocently making decisions today that will likely be quite damaging in the long run.

We're not calling this series "stupid church tricks" because the church leaders who make these mistakes stupid. Rather, we're calling these tricks stupid because they lead to pain, problems, and dysfunction... and they always have. Meaning, your church won't be the exception.

Our goal in this series is not to call out churches or discourage you, but to help you learn from the mistakes of others. In the first episode of our series, Tony and Amy unpack stupid church tricks related to church leadership and staffing.

Stupid Church Tricks: Leadership

#1: Having more than one lead pastor where everyone is equal/having no primary leader.

While there is a difference between team-based leadership and equal leadership, plurality of leadership pushes real leaders away. Plural leadership complicates decision making, compromises momentum, and blurs lines of accountability and ownership.

#2: Giving everyone a voice as often as possible.

Giving everyone an equal voice is how democracies run, but it's not God's design for the church. Every time you vote, there will be winners and losers. Voting fosters division.

#3: Trying to make everyone happy.

The only way to make everyone happy is to avoid making anyone mad... And the only way to do that is to keep things the way they are. Mediocrity is a place where there are few critics, but it's also a place where few people become really passionate about ministry and their relationships with Christ.

Stupid Church Tricks: Staffing

#1: Elevating someone to a leadership position over a campus or core ministry area who is only 95% on board with your strategy and values.

It's completely possible for someone to 100% love Jesus, love you, and love your church, but only love 95% of your strategy and values. When you let someone lead an entire congregation of people, that last 5% gap becomes huge.

#2: Avoiding a succession plan so that young leaders are forced to move on.

Every church needs an emergency succession plan, and any leader aged 60 and over needs to have a plan in place for who will become the next leader and when that will happen. Because the younger leaders *will* eventually move on.

#3: The senior pastor has a span of care issue... so they hire an executive pastor and transfer the problem to them.

In essence, they've resolved one issue for the SP, but created another for the XP. When we refuse to acknowledge these span of care issues or make the tough calls to establish the right structure, the church often stalls into neutral.

#4: Hiring your whole family.

Team members can become uncomfortable with challenging ideas. Non-family staff can feel like there is favoritism. Communication is tough. And when one person leaves, any attached family in other roles leave, too. In other words, when it goes bad, it goes pretty bad. We encourage churches to reduce familial relationships where they can.

#5: Not embracing diversity on staff.

Most church leadership teams don't have a diversity of age, ethnicity, gender, and giftedness, which means they're lacking in diversity of thought, ideas, and perspective. We need to make sure the gifting on our team reflects the entire body of Christ and we're not just hiring people like us.

Final Thoughts

Though they may seem extreme, we've seen each of these "tricks" lead to real-life church splits. That's why we want to make you aware of what these stupid church tricks are and how they've played out for other churches: so you can learn from them and do it differently.

We're all called to be good stewards of the limited time and resources we have available. That's why we're pulling for you to maximize your potential and avoid some of these ideas that have landed other churches in trouble.

Listen to the full episode on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode330.

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