

The Unique Role of the Executive Pastor

Episode 458

The senior pastor owns vision. The ministry staff own execution. ***But who owns the space in between?***

The gap between vision and execution—the strategy, the alignment, the ability to pull things together—is where churches get stuck. And the **executive pastor** is the person who can close that gap.

You may call this role something different in your church, but the best way to think about this role is as the *integrator*. Some people think the XP role is the “associate” or “the person who does the stuff the lead pastor doesn't want to do.” It is so much more than that.

A great executive pastor might be **the rarest, most valuable person on your team**. So in this episode, Sean and Jimmy dive into what *only the executive pastor can do*.

Key Quotes

- “The XP’s success isn’t measured by how busy they are. It’s measured by how free the senior pastor is to stay in their lane.”
- “A great executive pastor has a heart for theology and a head for organizational leadership.”
- “They have to manage the tension between delegating and micromanaging.”
- “Part of this role is being the bridge between reality and potential—what's true and the possibility.”
- “A great XP drives a culture that is genuinely healthy *and* really performs.”
- “Putting the wrong person in the executive pastor seat is one of the most expensive mistakes a church can make.”

Self-Assessment: How Are We Doing?

1. As the senior pastor, think about the profile of a good executive pastor using the questions below and consider if you have the right person in the XP role.
 - a. Do they have a heart for theology and a head for organizational leadership?
 - b. Are they strategically gifted? Are they thinking about the long term?
 - c. Are they an activator who takes initiative? Are they a leader with high emotional intelligence who the staff will follow?
2. As the executive pastor, can you honestly say that you are in the right seat? Who around you is helping you leverage your strengths and minimize any blind spots?
3. Spend time this week going through [Four Roles a Senior Pastor Can't Delegate](#) and the [Three Roles an Executive Pastor Can't Delegate](#) to determine how you each can better support and empower one another in your unique roles.

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