

Who Owns What? — Episode 465

Most churches build structure without ever naming what they're structuring around.

Pastors want good structure for really good reasons. They want communication to work. They want to catch problems before they become a crisis. They want to know nothing's falling through the cracks. And honestly, most of them want their people cared for; they don't want anybody carrying more than they should.

Those are pastoral instincts—great instincts. But here's where it can go wrong.

A church feels the organizational pain, and they go straight to adjusting the org chart. They restructure without ever answering the question of what the structure was *supposed to serve*.

In this episode, Sean and Jonathan talk about a key part of structuring your church staff: who owns what?

Key Quotes

- "A lack of accountability or ownership is infectious; it produces teams that look busy but aren't always fruitful."
- "A lot of pain that looks structural has turned out to be strategic ambiguity in the end."
- "Strategy is what gives you language to explain the change to structure."
- "If the structure is poor, real people pay for it—that makes it pastoral work for me, not just clerical work."
- "Past a thousand people, relationships still carry the trust, but they can no longer carry the information."
- "The fewer decisions I'm actually making is evidence of the team I'm building."
- "Your church will accomplish what you resource, not what you wrote down."
- "Wide span of care doesn't just slow a pastor down; it kills leadership development in the church."

Self-Assessment: How Are We Doing?

1. Who makes up our senior leadership team? If we don't have one, who might we ask to join this group of four to six individuals?
2. What strategy or ministry lane does each senior leadership team member own?
3. How healthy is the span of care for these leaders? If they lead more than six people, do we need to add another senior leadership team member? Trim our ministry priorities for a season?
4. What would our structure need to look like in three years if we continued growing at the same rate as we are now?

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If Jesus walked into your church right now, would people recognize him? We've created a personalized Savior who exists primarily to meet our needs, bless our lives and guarantee our spots in heaven.

But here's the problem. That Jesus would be unrecognizable.

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