



Building Strong Leadership Teams Within ABFs - March 04

When I came to Hope Church in the Cincinnati area beginning in July of 2002 they were young in their development of midsize groups, which they call communities. There were six Sunday morning communities and two other midsize groups that met at other times. The communities were functioning, but not on all cylinders. See, they had leadership teams in place with most of the positions filled, but the teams only met when a pastor called a meeting. The pastor who assisted in starting communities had job responsibility changes within the church and had not had a meeting in about nine months. The FIRST order of business in my tenure was to meet with the Community Leaders and share the vision of the leadership team meeting regularly on their own. Over the next year, most of the groups have just taken off with a renewed passion and direction. Of course a couple of the groups struggled making this adjustment and over time needed leadership changes have taken place at either the community leader and/or team levels. As we completed the first year our Sunday morning communities are now at seven and we have four meetings at other times and our Sunday morning attendance jumped a little over 50% from 122 to 190. In February 04 we have just averaged over 250. Add another 130 for our other communities. This might not seem like much for a church of 1,700, but remember Hope Church was a 2c (Celebrative worship services and Cell groups in homes) Meta model type church that because of assimilation and discipleship/teaching issues, strategically added midsize groups to their overall adult ministries.

Leadership teams in ABFs are one of the most important keys to a successful ABF or midsize community. A Leadership team can be defined as "A Group of People who represent and oversee an ABF". If a church values building "communities" and not just classes then they need to vision for strong leadership teams in each ABF. In my ABF Class Leader Training Course I outline all the "basics" of building a strong leadership team.

The big picture issues are:

1. The team is made up of 4 to 7 people depending on the size of the ABF
2. The team is led by a class or community leader
3. The team meets on a regular basis
4. The team is the eyes and ears of the ABF

There four basic responsibilities of a leadership team are:

1. Developing the organized life of an ABF
2. Looking out for the needs of the group
3. Setting the direction of the group
4. Evaluating the effectiveness of the group

When the team meets I have identified eight elements that should be dialogued on. Every issue does not need to be addressed every meeting, but they are should be addressed regularly.

The key elements of the leadership team meetings are:

- 1 Re-casting the vision of where the ABF is going
- 2 Reconnecting as a team
- 3 Reviewing previous meeting Action Points
- 4 Reporting on what's happening in each area of ministry
- 5 Responding to potential needs, problems, etc.
- 6 Reproducing leaders
- 7 Evaluating the different aspects of the group ministry
- 8 Planning and strategizing for the present and future

A common question I am asked is how often should a team meet? I believe the most effective leadership teams meet about once a month. I would not encourage any team to meet less than bi-monthly. In a perfect world, we would like these teams to experience and model the "community" that they desire for the bigger group they represent. This cannot happen without spending time together. It is the class leader's responsibility to oversee the team, schedule the meetings, plan the agenda and check up on team members to see how things are going in their area of responsibility.

Finally, I really believe that a strong leadership team is the backbone to any healthy ABF. If the team is alive and thriving the ABF either is or will as the passion and commitment of the leadership team catches on.

All of these ideas and principles are fully explained in the ABF Class Leader Training Course. I also have several audio CD workshops that address some of these issues including "Developing Leadership Teams in Your ABFs, Characteristics of a Healthy ABF and The Role of the Class Leader. If you would like to purchase the manual copy either in manual form or on CD (customize and reproduce) or audio CDs please download the order form on my website at stevelizzio.com or abfresources.com

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