THE PURSUIT | Participant Workbook

Theme: The Pursuit — Pursuing Connection through Understanding, Resolving Conflict, and Strengthening Relationships

Communication That Connects • Three leadership discovery activities • Workshop focus: What is happening in me, between us, and around us that interferes with effective communication?

Instructions: Read or observe each scenario. Record what you notice before hearing the facilitator's explanation. **Ground rules: Allow everyone to participate. Stay on task. Be self-aware and do not dominate the time. Do not tell side stories to explain.**

Discuss behavior without naming individuals in your organization.

1. The Story, I Told Myself

Blind spots and presuppositions •

Scenario

During a leadership meeting, a ministry leader presents a proposal.

Ministry Leader Denise: Pastor, I have been doing a great deal of research, and our church needs to adopt this community outreach system of events**.**

The senior leader responds, "I appreciate your work, but I don't think we're ready to move forward with this proposal. Let's revisit it next quarter."

Denise seems to shut down and became noticeably quiet. She did not engage for the remainder of the meeting.

What did I notice?

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Table Discussion questions

1. What narratives could Denise be telling herself that caused her to "shutdown"?
2. Why might someone interpret a postponed proposal as personal rejection?
3. How might previous experiences with criticism or exclusion influence their response?
4. What might happen if Denise begins telling other leaders, "The pastor never supports my ideas"?

What assumption or habit might I need to examine?

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One practical change I will make this week.

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2. I Heard You, But I Did Something Else

Alignment and substituted priorities • 18 minutes

Scenario

Senior Pastor: “I asked you to contact the twenty inactive members by Friday and give me a report. You agreed. What did you learn?”
Outreach Leader: “We did not make those calls. We organized the outreach storage room and prepared for next month's event.”
Senior Pastor: “Did you discuss changing the priority with me?”
Outreach Leader: “No. I thought organizing was more urgent. We still got important work done.”
Administrative Assistant: “Three members called this morning asking why nobody had checked on them.”
Senior Pastor: “The issue is not whether you were busy. You accepted one assignment and substituted another without telling me.”
Outreach Leader: "I wasn't trying to cause a problem." “I was trying to help.”

Senior Pastor: "I understand but now we have a bigger problem. We have people feeling excluded, and a breakdown in trust." A leader should never have to discover that an assignment was not completed.

Discuss at your table.

- What was the directive, and was it understood?
- Was this initiative, poor judgment, or resistance? What evidence supports your answer?
- What were the consequences for the members and for trust?
- What should the outreach leader have done before changing priorities?

What did I notice?

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What assumption or habit might I need to examine?

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One practical change I will make.

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3. What Are You Really Saying?

Listening for the underlying concern • 18 minutes

Scenario

Volunteer: “I think I'm going to step down from hospitality.”
Leader: “We need you. Everyone is busy.”
Volunteer: “It's not just about being busy.”
Leader: “Well, if everyone quits, we won't have a team.”
Volunteer: “That's not what I'm saying.”
Leader: “Then what are you saying?”
Volunteer: “Never mind.”

Discuss at your table.

- Why do people sometimes communicate concerns indirectly?
- How can a leader distinguish between what someone says and what they mean?
- What assumptions did the leader make?
- What happens when leaders respond defensively before understanding the issue?

What did I notice?

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What assumption or habit might I need to examine?

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One practical change I will make.

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Closing Activity: The Communication Commitment

My Leadership Communication Commitment

Consider the five activities and identify which revealed their greatest opportunity for improvement.

- I sometimes substitute my priorities for agreed-upon assignments.
- I sometimes respond before fully understanding the message.
- My assumptions or personal sensitivities sometimes affect my reactions.
- I need to improve my follow-through and communication of progress.
- I need to manage conflict and relational repairs more effectively.

My Seven-Day Communication Commitment

Select the area that needs your most attention:

☐ Following agreed-upon priorities

☐ Listening to understand the real message

☐ Checking my assumptions and blind spots

The specific action I will take:

_____

When I will do it: _____ How I will know it happened:

_____

Ephesians 4:15 — Speak the truth in love.

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