



## **Nurturing Your Children's Ministry Leadership Team**

Written by Jason and Casey Vernon

The verb “delegate” can be found today in almost every blog, leadership book and training seminar. The word has refreshed and refocused overworked pastors as they assign leaders to oversee various areas of ministry in their local churches.

Unfortunately, during this process some pastors have also delegated their vision for the young harvest. Hospital visits, budget meetings, sermon preparation, daily emails and phone calls make it very easy for pastors to overlook or misunderstand what is going on in their children's ministry. When we say “yes” to too many things, we say “no” to our core priorities. Author Michael Gerber and Pastor Andy Stanley said that organizations thrive when leaders work “on” their churches rather than “in” their churches. This means that pastors should regularly step back from the daily grinds of ministry to intentionally invest an adequate amount of time casting vision with their children's leadership team. Pastors will always need to delegate roles and responsibilities but vision should be directly transferred with nurturing empowerment and “one on one” attention.

Our local church has a great children's ministry so it quickly became very easy for me to neglect the young harvest. Weekly activities that seemed “urgent” consistently took priority over the core values of our vision. I suddenly realized that quarterly leadership meetings, weekly emails and occasional lunches were not enough. Each church is unique, but in every church, simple delegation is no longer adequate. One of the core values of our local church is to develop a culture that equips, empowers and nurtures our children's leadership team.

### **Pastors can develop a culture that equips, empowers and nurtures their children's ministry leaders by investing time.**

Time. It's like a dollar bill. You only get to spend it once. God recently convicted me that more time needed to be invested in our children's ministry. Each week, I invest over two hours of my time to work “on” our youth and children's ministries with our key leaders. I adjust my schedule to what is convenient for our leaders because they work full-time jobs and have young children. During this time, we go over books together, watch training videos, laugh, dream, listen, pray and share vision. Our leaders know that I expect them to share what we have learned with other leaders. At first, I was hesitant to ask busy people for this type of commitment but our meetings have quickly become a weekly highlight for all of us. Also, I periodically have someone speak for me

during our Sunday morning service so I can be part of our children's ministry. Our kids never forget these days and parents and grandparents can clearly see that our priority is on the young harvest. As pastors we can raise the bar by serving our children's workers and showing them unlimited support, encouragement and appreciation. I realize that I will never know every child in our ministry on an individual basis but I should at least be able to share my life with our key children's leaders.

**Pastors can develop a culture that equips, empowers and nurtures their children's ministry team by investing church resources.**

This year our church will significantly increase the amount of money we invest in children's ministry. We plan to do this by eliminating expenses and ministries that are not contributing to the health of our church. We don't want to place tradition over our mission of reaching the young harvest. Our goal is to invest in resources that will allow us to develop a dynamic system of ministry for our kids.

Perry Noble, pastor of the New Spring Church in Anderson, SC recently made this statement about investing resources into children's ministry:

*"It blows me away that the church world always seems to be scratching our heads and wondering why kids flock to Disney but they don't flock to church. Maybe it's because Disney spends 'billions' of dollars on them...and many churches have more money in dead or dying ministries than they do their children's budget. My church will spend money on what is important...and I think children's (and student) ministry is THE most important mission field in the church."*

**Pastors can develop a culture that equips, empowers and nurtures their children's ministry team through prayer.**

One of the greatest rewards of working side by side with your children's ministry team is watching them grow in their relationship with Christ. I was touched when I found out that almost all of our youth and children's leaders participated in our one-month fast. We closed our time of prayer and fasting with a three-day fast. Without being asked, our children's pastor fasted four extra days. Any secular company can develop leaders but watching someone's spiritual life grow is one of the most rewarding privileges of a pastor. Heartfelt and anointed ministry comes out of these vibrant relationships with God.

In closing, leadership expert Seth Godin wrote, *"What works is having everything good enough and one or two things being amazing. Find the guts to do one thing remarkable. You don't get talked about when people are unimpressed."*

Why can't our children's ministries be talked about in our communities? Why can't they be excellent and remarkable? Building a dynamic children's ministry may seem difficult or even intimidating. Don't allow that mindset to keep your children's ministry at status

quo. Make it remarkable. Pastor Steven Furtick said in the book Sun Stand Still, *“If the size of your vision for your ministry isn’t intimidating to you, there’s a good chance it’s insulting to God.”* Take the first step by investing in your children’s ministry team; you won’t regret it.