

## LEADERSHIP AS ENABLING

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the workshop is to help leaders understand their roles in light of an understanding of leadership as using one's gifts to enable others in ministry, as outlined in Handout A "Leadership as Enabling." This two-hour workshop is appropriate for any size group and with any persons—seasoned or new—involved in any form of leadership in the church. It can be used in a church, a cluster of churches, or in a regional training event.

### BASIC WORKSHOP OUTLINE

**I Introduction (15 minutes)**

**II Discovering Gifts (20 minutes)**

**III Exploring Leadership as Enabling (20 minutes)**

**BREAK (10 minutes)**

**III. Identifying Enabling Strengths and Weaknesses (20 minutes)**

**IV. Create Ministry Maps (30 minutes)**

**V. Evaluation and Closing (10 minutes)**

### PREPARATION

- Review the workshop in its entirety and identify material you want to display on newsprint, overhead or in Power Point.
- Review Handout A "Leadership as Enabling" and note areas for emphasis during the workshop.
- Read Ephesians 4:1-16 and reflect on its description of leadership.
- Photocopy handouts
- Pray and ask God to help you present the workshop in such a way that leaders are strengthened.

### MATERIALS

- newsprint, chalkboard, overhead, or Power Point with key information
- masking tape
- markers
- chalk, or computer/projector (if board or Power Point is used)
- paper and pencils
- Bibles
- copies of handouts for each participant (2 or more per person for Handout B)
- sample "Enabling Chart" (Handout B), posted on newsprint, overhead, or Power Point
- drinks, snacks, and accoutrements for break time

## CONDUCTING THE WORKSHOP

### I Introduction (15 minutes)

Welcome participants and allow for introductions as suits your setting. Review the purpose and give a brief overview of the workshop—you may want to display the “Basic Workshop Outline on newsprint, overhead, or Power Point. Keeping the outline visible will help participants to stay focused without wondering what’s next or when they might get a break.

Ask participants to think about the sentence “Leadership is . . . .” Ask for a few volunteers to share how they might complete the sentence. Then invite participants to think about leadership, how and where they developed their current understandings and expectations of leaders. It might be helpful for them to think about (or discuss) key leaders who had an impact (negative or positive) on them and how those experiences helped define leadership for them.

Distribute Handout A and explain that this workshop is built around the particular understanding that leaders are people who use their gifts to enable others in ministry. Allow participants to share initial responses to that understanding of leadership. Give any who aren’t “sold” on the definition permission to hold that perspective, but make it clear that this is the guiding definition for the workshop and encourage them to work with the definition, even though they may not entirely accept it.

Read aloud Ephesians 4:1-16. Share with participants the following assumptions (you may want to display these on newsprint, overhead, or Power Point):

- Just as people in biblical times, people today are gifted by God for leadership.
- There is a wide variety of gifts—much greater than the church has commonly recognized.
- All people are gifted and to deny your own gifts is to dishonor the Giver.
- Gifts are often discovered through interaction with others.
- Gifts need to be both discovered and developed.

### II Discovering Gifts (20 minutes)

Provide paper and pencils and mention a wide variety of examples of gifts such as, musical ability, patience, organizational skills, love for children, storytelling, listening, and compassion. Then ask participants to consider the following questions:

- What do you enjoy doing?
- What makes you feel alive?
- What gifts have others identified in you, for example, when has someone said, “Wow! That’s great!” or “I really appreciate how you . . .”?

Give them 5–10 minutes to list some of their gifts.

Divide participants into groups of three and invite them to share the gifts they have identified in

themselves. Explain that each person should take only a minute or two to identify their gifts, without apology or explanation, but boldly claiming their gifts as treasures from God. Further explain that the job of listeners is simply to listen and affirm. Encourage them to speak phrases of affirmation, such as “I’m thankful you recognize how God has gifted you,” or “I appreciate that gift in you.” No discussion, explanation, or story-telling is necessary, simply straightforward sharing.

If anyone is unable or unwilling to identify their gifts, ask them to simply share two or three things they really enjoy doing.

Once all have shared, ask participants to discuss how some of the gifts they’ve identified might fit into leadership that enables others. Encourage them to think creatively, for example, someone who has a gift for listening might use that skill as part of a discernment committee that focuses on helping another discover his or her ministry.

### **III Exploring Leadership as Enabling (20 minutes)**

With participants still in groups of three, ask them to turn to page 2 of Handout A and review together “Observation #1” under “to enable others” and the paragraph that follows, which reads (you may want to post this on newsprint, overhead or Power Point):

*Observation #1:* The key function of a leader is to serve in enabling others by helping them discover, develop, and effectively use their God-given gifts.

*While few leaders will function in all categories, there are five essential components to enabling others: encouraging personal growth; helping them gain knowledge; aiding in skill-development; assisting them in working with others; and providing appropriate settings.*

Invite participants to review the bulleted descriptions following “*Observation #1.*” After review, ask them to revisit gifts they identified and discuss how they might be used, in light of the five components of enabling that are described.

Next, invite the small groups to read “*Observation #2*” on page 3 of Handout A: *The role of the leader is not always direct or immediate.* Ask them to discuss:

- ways in which they were prepared for by others before they moved into leadership
- ways in which they are currently supported in leadership by people “behind the scenes”
- ways in which their gifts might help prepare or support others in their leadership roles

### **BREAK (10 minutes)**

### **III. Evaluating Enabling Strengths and Weaknesses (20 minutes)**

Reconvene after the break and explain to participants that this part of the workshop is in designed to help them look at their own leadership styles, see in what way their styles are enabling and might become more enabling. Stress that the evaluation is for their information only and sharing with others is entirely voluntary.

Post the sample enabling chart, then distribute copies of Handout B, “Enabling Chart,” and pencils to each participant and explain the process as follows:

- Identify one or more leadership responsibilities that you have had in the past, you now have or to which that you aspire in the future, keeping in mind that leadership responsibilities go far beyond traditional offices and roles.
- Review the five components of enabling from Handout A.
- For each responsibility listed, rate yourself in “box 1” for each component, according the scale at the top of the chart.
- Write a descriptive phrase that supports your rating in “box 2” or use that box to identify steps to take to strengthen yourself in this area.

When everyone has completed their charts, give participants an opportunity to discuss the *process* of evaluating their enabling strengths and weaknesses or, if any wish to, to share some of what they discovered about themselves and/or intended steps to address weaknesses.

**Sample “Enabling Chart”**

*Rating System*

A: always do this well

S: sometimes do this well

R: rarely do this well

		Growth	Knowledge	Skills	Others	Setting
Leading small groups	1	S	R	A	R	S
	2	sometimes too task-oriented to attend to people’s needs	- I need to plan training for new small group leaders	-I welcome new persons to lead sessions. -I model small group management	Interaction important in classroom.	I need to be more conscious of helping novice group leaders respond to unexpected challenges

**IV. Create Ministry Maps (30 minutes)**

Review with the group the information under “. . . in ministry” on page 3 of Handout A. If your group is made up of people from more than one church, have those representing each church move into subgroups, and then divide those subgroups into two so that each church has two groups. If all the participants are from the same church, divide them into two groups.

Assign half the group(s) to discuss ministry that takes place within their church and the other half to discuss ministry that takes place outside the church. Stress that they need to identify ministries that are done by individuals, small groups, and the church as a whole. Provide newsprint and markers and ask the groups to label a sheet of newsprint with their church name and “within” or “outside.”

Explain that their task is to list the ministries that they identify and put in parentheses I (individuals), SG (small group), or Ch (whole church) to indicate who carries out the ministry. Encourage them to list all the ministries that come to mind without additional comment. The participants need not be concerned about overlap with other areas, and they should not spend time debating what is or is not appropriate for their lists.

When lists are complete, have the two groups, (from each church, if more than one church is represented) come together and tape their sheets of newsprint together to create a church ministry map. Give the group(s) time to contemplate their ministry maps and identify areas strength as well as gaps in their ministries. Ask them to add the identified gaps to their maps with a different color marker. With the maps posted on the wall, invite participants to place their initials by the ministries they are currently doing and also by those they would like to pursue in the future. Ask them to pay special attention to ways in which their gifts might fill in the gaps.

Once the maps are complete and labeled, invite the group(s) to come up with a “next steps” list for how they will move their church(es) toward action. For example, they may want to present their findings to a joint meeting of the church boards. They may also want to post it for the congregation and ask those who don’t feel their gifts are currently being used to consider how they might help in filling the church’s ministry gaps.

#### **V. Evaluation and Closing (10 minutes)**

Provide paper and pencils and invite participants to spend a few minutes after the close of the session to write down their thoughts about the workshop. Encourage them to be honest and share positives as well as negatives. Identify a box or table for evaluations to be left anonymously.

Join in a circle and invite participants to complete the following statement: "I thank God for giving me the gift of . . . ." After each response, lead the group in the unison prayer, "Thank you God." Close with prayer, asking God to help each person use his or her gifts to enable others in ministry.

Give yourself time to reflect on your own experience of the workshop. What went well? What was challenging? In what ways did you use your gifts to enable others? You may want to spend some time "debriefing" with a trusted participant.

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*Christ chose some of us to be apostles, prophets, missionaries, pastors, and teachers, so that his people would learn to serve and his body would grow strong. This will continue until we are united by our faith and by our understanding of the Son of God. Then we will be mature, just as Christ is, and we will be completely like him. (Ephesians 4:11-13, CEV).*

From its beginning, the church has recognized the need for leadership. Leaders have been so much a part of the life of the church for so long that we rarely spend time thinking about the *concept* of leadership itself. All too often we think about the tasks of leaders without attempting to relate their roles to the purpose and nature of the church. This means that they become functionaries rather than ministers and institution maintainers rather than mission enablers.

This article explores leadership by unpacking the definition of leaders as *people who use their gifts to enable others in ministry*, and then making observations and suggesting implications for churches.

### **A leader is someone who uses her or his gifts . . .**

Ephesians tells us that God has gifted all people, “*Each one of us has received a special gift in proportion to what Christ has given.*” (4:7), leading some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (9:11). Today, this divine gifting leads people to serve on church boards, and as ushers, financial officers, church school teachers, youth leaders, directors of food pantries, and in a cornucopia of other roles. It all begins with gifts, though, which can be used in a variety of ways.

*Observation #1:* Gifts are given by God to everyone.

God doesn’t limit the gifts, so we shouldn’t limit leadership. The potential to lead by using our gifts to enable others in ministry isn’t restricted by intelligence, education, economic status, age, gender, or any other human distinction. Children and youth, as well as adults, are gifted. Women and men, boys and girls have all been given gifts that can be used in leadership in the church. That doesn’t mean, however, that everyone should be an officer of the church.

*Observation #2:* Gifts are many and varied.

As Paul writes to the church at Corinth, “*There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them.*” (1 Corinthians 12:4). The variety of gifts is much greater than the church traditionally realizes—well beyond gifts that are used in teaching, preaching and committee work. If we are to use all God-given gifts for leadership within the church, we must welcome the Spirit and discover that wide range of gifts. This is not always an easy task since gifts have an odd way of hiding themselves, especially from those who hold them. Gifts are so much a part of who we are that we tend not to think of them as gifts. The good organizer, for example, may assume that being well-organized is a commonplace. We often need one another to help us recognize our gifts.

*Observation 3:* Gifts are discovered through interaction with others.

Discovering gifts, however, isn’t enough. Many gifts can be used haphazardly, without attention to

their development. Effectiveness will be greatly enhanced through intentional development. For example, a person with natural musical ability can choose not to take lessons or practice and keep his or her ability as hobby and in so doing keep his or her gift from being fully utilized for service.

*Observation #4:* Gifts that have been discovered need to be developed.

These observations suggest several implications for the church:

- The church needs to expand its understanding in order to be inclusive and not overlook gifts.
- The church needs an atmosphere of acceptance that allows for experimentation and discovery.
- The church needs to encourage members to identify and affirm one another's gifts.
- The church needs to provide opportunities for training and development of gifts.
- The church needs to be intentional about using the gifts of children and youth in leadership.

**... to enable others ...**

Ephesians 4:12 tells us Christ gives gifts “*so that his people would learn to serve and his body would grow strong.*” Leaders use their gifts to *enable* others, so to understand how a leader functions, we need to embrace a process that helps others discover, develop, and use their gifts.

Enabling is *service*, for it is only in allowing others to become the persons God intended that a leader truly enables another. While it may be possible to manipulate or coerce others to act in certain ways, that is not true leadership. A leader must put aside his or her own ego needs and agenda and coach others in ways that help them blossom.

*Observation #1:* The key function of a leader is to serve in enabling others by helping them discover, develop, and effectively use their God-given gifts.

While few leaders will function in all categories, there are five essential components to enabling others. These are: encouraging personal growth; helping them gain knowledge; aiding in skill-development; assisting them in working with others; and providing appropriate settings.

- *Personal growth.* Persons grow as they develop self-knowledge, awareness of giftedness, and a sense of purpose, which is grounded in a relationship with Jesus Christ.
- *Knowledge.* Needed knowledge includes Christian traditions and the nature and mission of the church, quality Bible study, and specialized knowledge related to particular areas of service.
- *Skill-development.* Skills include effective communication, having healthy relationships, managing small group, and organization, all of which benefit wide range of ministries.
- *Working with others.* The ability to work well with others is essential to all forms of leadership.

One of the best ways for each of us to improve our work with others is to have a trusted friend see us at work and give us feedback.

- *Appropriate settings.* It is important to make sure that people use their gifts in contexts that enhance potential for success. Comfortable spaces, functioning tools (E.g. public address systems), accurate promotion, and clearly defined time-frames are essential to success.

*Observation 2:* The role of the leader is not always a direct or immediate. In a very real sense, for example, the person who provides nurture to young children or creates accurate promotional material for an event is providing early and behind-the-scenes enabling for the leadership of others.

These observations suggest several implications for the church:

- Every task of a leader needs to be seen in terms of how it enables others for ministry.
- Leadership as service may be a new concept for some, so the church needs to spend time in studies that explore up Jesus' own servant-leadership model
- The church must provide safe places and opportunities for members to develop and use their gifts.

**... in ministry.**

Discovering and developing gifts is not an end in itself. It is a means by which, as Ephesians 4:13 puts it, "*we are united by our faith and by our understanding of the Son of God.*"

*Observation #1:* The ministry for which we are gifted is a large one, taking place *within* the church and *outside* the church, extending throughout God's world.

Among church members, we have mutual ministries as a loving, accepting, supportive, available, and accountable community of faith. Outside the church, we respond to human need with a gospel of love and hope; uplifting the poor, empowering the powerless, confronting all that harms persons and creation, restoring creation, and reconciling persons to one another and to God.

Again, we can note several implications for churches:

- Because the development of effective leaders must be grounded in a church's vision of its ministry, a statement of that vision needs not only to be formulated, but also acted on.
- A list of the church's involvements "within" and "outside of," "the church can provide a map of leadership opportunities, providing a beginning point for selecting and developing leaders.

This information is drawn from "The Meaning of Leadership," by Jeffrey D. Jones from *Baptist Leader*, April 1981, (published by the American Baptist Board of Education and Publication).

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## Enabling Chart

HANDOUT B

*Instructions*

- Identify one or more past, present, or desired leadership responsibilities.
- Review the five components of enabling from Handout A.
- For each responsibility listed, use “box 1” to rate yourself on each enabling component.
- In “box 2,” write a descriptive phrase in support of your rating or identify steps to take to strengthen yourself in this area.

*Rating System*

A: always do this well

S: sometimes do this well

R: rarely do this well

Leadership Position		Growth	Knowledge	Skills	Others	Setting
	1					
	2					
	1					
	2					