

5 Little Known Things That Could Negatively Affect Your Ministry

by John Rinaldo

The little things make a big difference. When we don't do the little things in our ministry, then our ministry can be negatively affected. However, when we spend time paying attention to these 5 little known things, the positive impact in our ministry can be dramatic.

1. Not addressing conflict when it arises

Many ministers do this. It seems like we are hard-wired to not deal with conflict when it arises. We start to see conflict brewing, but we decide to ride it out in hope that it will solve itself. The problem is, it never solves itself. If it goes away, it just ends up festering inside without it being released. Eventually, this slowly inflating balloon will pop, with greater consequences than if we just dealt with it at the beginning.

2. Not responding to phone calls and emails within 24-48 hours

In today's world, it seems like it is easier than ever to be responsive to people when they call or email. With smart phones and mobile technology, my email and phone messages never leave me. Even with the changing times, I'm not entirely convinced that people expect a quick response. I think our culture expects a lack of response from any organization. This included banks, phone companies, and the church. In my experience, people are so impressed with a quick response that they don't know what to think or do. I email my bank and I don't expect good customer service. I email my pastor or Faith Formation Director, I expect a lack of response. When we respond quickly to those we minister to and with, it builds loyalty. They think to themselves, "Wow, they are really here to serve me and serve me well!" Although people may not expect a quick response from you, I am convinced that the benefits of responding within 24 hours, unless I'm on vacation or have a day off, is very powerful in ministry. When I am away for an extended period of time, a simple away message lets people know that you care about their email or call and plan to respond as soon as you get back.

3. Not meeting with your team (staff or volunteer) regularly

I have been on the receiving end of this in the past. When I don't meet with my team regularly, either staff or volunteers, I risk losing some influence and credibility with them. Touching base with your team regularly communicates a few things:

- That you care about them and the work they do.
- That you want to help them succeed in their ministry.
- That they can come to you anytime with any issues, concerns, or challenges.

4. Not being more directive with your team

I've learned this the hard way. I expect a lot from the people I minister with, both staff and volunteer. With that expectation comes the expectation that they know how to do the ministry well on day one. That is obviously not realistic. When I am not specific and directive with my team, especially when they are new, then I risk losing them as a volunteer or staff. I risk them not doing their job well because I haven't been specific enough with them. I have not given them enough direction to succeed. *Most ministers tend to be hands off leaders.* That can be good in certain situations. In some cases, it is not good at all. Be directive and specific when necessary.

5. Not affirming your team

We all need affirmation. We all need to know that what we do in ministry is making a difference. Yet sometimes, we as leaders forget to affirm our team. At some point, if we decide not to affirm people for the good work they are doing in our ministry, then they will lose energy for the ministry, they will not feel supportive, and they will eventually leave the ministry. Our team, both volunteers and staff, are the lifeblood of our ministry. We can't do it all on our own. Let's spend a little time letting our team know how important they are to the ministry we do.

Question: How can you combat against these 5 little known things?