

Pastor, I Have an Idea

By Melanie Stone

Do you have an idea for starting a new ministry in your local church? If so, this article is meant to give you some thoughts on how to submit your idea to your pastor or church leadership team. Not every idea needs to have complete formation in the beginning; however, the more information you can provide to a pastor or church leader, the better your idea can be grasped. A good presentation will also show your leader your dedication to serve and your readiness to get started.

This article is written to those who prepared to be the leader of a new ministry. If you have an idea on your heart, but are not sensing the call to lead it, you can still make yourself available to your pastor or church leader and share ideas, but vision will need to come from the person who will bring leadership to it.

Consider Your Pastor's Point of View

When communicating a new ministry with your pastor, it is wise to first consider his or her perspective. When you ask a pastor or a church to give oversight to a new ministry, you are asking him or her to take on a new responsibility. As with any investment, a qualified leader will want to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, consider timing, and weigh the risks and determine if the cost of responsibility is worth the projected outcome. *Luke 14:28 "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it."*

Not only is a spiritual authority looking to God for His will for the church, but if he or she is also going to use natural and godly wisdom. Make yourself ready through prayer, but also prepare an excellent presentation. In order to prepare yourself, here is a list of things to consider including in your presentation.

- What purpose does this ministry have for our church or community?
- What is the plan for this purpose be accomplished?
- How does this ministry fit into our church vision?
- Is this ministry short-term or long-term?
- How will this ministry serve or benefit others?
- Who will this ministry reach?
- Will this ministry touch the church, unchurched, or both?
- Does this ministry have the potential to add people to our church?
- Does this ministry have the potential to add influence or resources to our church?
- Is this the right timing for this ministry?
- What are stages of development for this ministry?
- How will this ministry represent our church?
- How will this ministry affect current church ministries?
- How much oversight will this ministry require?
- Does this ministry have capable leadership?
- Does this ministry have interest from people in the church?

- How much communication will this ministry need?
- How much will this ministry cost the church in finances or resources?
- Will this ministry tap into our volunteer base?
- How will this ministry develop and grow?

Is This a Ministry of the Local Church?

Every Christian should have a local church home where they are spiritually fed and cared for. No person should be on their own without fellowship, credibility, and accountability. Every person should be submitted to a pastor, but not every ministry is a responsibility of a local church. One of the first determinations should be if the ownership of the ministry belongs to the local church or to an individual or group. For example, there are some who are called to operate prison ministries, safe houses, homeless shelters, and the like. Some of these ministries could be the responsibility of a local church, even though there are other churches or contributors involved. If they are, then a local church has authority to make decisions regarding the operation of the ministry. There are other instances where a ministry has their own established leadership and makes its own decisions. Determining authority will decide what approach to take with a pastor or church leader.

If it is your own ministry, where you have the final authority, then your approach will be different than it would be for a ministry under the authority of a pastor and local church. If you are not asking for the church to provide authority over this new ministry, then your request is to be sent out and/or supported in good standing with your home church. If you want to tap into a church's volunteer base or financial support, then that should be discussed with the pastor or church leader. In some cases, I would recommend putting an agreement into writing so that communication and commitments are clear between a church member and church leadership. If you are requesting to start a new ministry within the local church, then your request is for oversight, and possibly, resources and volunteers. This article is aimed to help communicate new ministries within a local church, but establishing authority should be the first consideration.

Prepare Yourself

To be well received, one must be well prepared. If you are not prepared to present a new ministry to a pastor, it will convey that you do not necessarily value the ministry to see it be effective. If you don't give care to it, then why should your pastor? It also sends the message that you are not adequate as a leader to initiate, recruit, develop, or efficiently operate a ministry.

Prepare your heart, not just your presentation. Above all else, you want your heart to come shining through. You can prepare a presentation and you can also prepare your heart. Spend time in prayer, and let God shape you into a vessel that will serve His purpose, share His love, and steward His kingdom. Genuine integrity isn't something you attempt to do; it is something you are. You won't have to try to be humble or convince a leader of your humility; you will simply be humble because that is who you are. Also, in prayer, ask God for the purpose. Ask God for the plan. Ask God for the anointing to pursue His purpose and His plan.

Be positive that the ministry will make a difference. Your passion needs to be communicated with hope for a change, not negative against a current situation.

Be flexible to adapt this ministry to fit the church vision and to function with church leadership. Allowing your ministry to be molded shows that you yourself are willing to be shaped and molded as a team player. Making changes doesn't mean that you or your ministry has been rejected. Remember to trust God to be the potter and allow yourself and your ministry to be the clay. God wants you to be of use to Him and your ministry to be a vessel to help others.

Be willing to wait. A pastor or a church leader will have the oversight to know when the best timing will be to launch a new ministry. Asking you to wait or to do more preparation is not saying "no," do don't become discouraged if development takes a little time.

Be submissive. If you honor God's authority, you will honor the spiritual authority in place in your local church. If the pastor cannot meet with you personally, be willing to meet with one of his or her delegated leaders.

Prepare a Presentation

To prepare a presentation, put it in writing. Habakkuk 2:2 says to "write the vision and make it plain on tablets that he may run who reads it." Your communication is definite when it is in writing, taking out any hesitancy from a lack of information. People don't always say everything they want to say in a verbal conversation. Also, the listener doesn't always walk away from a conversation remembering everything, so write it down as a tool for the listener to refer to later.

Structure your presentation with an introduction, your content, and a conclusion. Your introduction should state the purpose of your new ministry and how it will meet a need. Your conclusion should summarize your main points and reemphasize the results you hope to achieve. The main points should be clear and concise. You may feel like you have a lot to say, especially if you are passionate about something in your heart, but try to imagine the viewpoint of a leader. Focus on what they need to know rather than just on what you want to say. Also include any other resources, such as, a website or books you would like to work with.

Also, consider the visual aspect of your presentation. Your written vision for a new ministry may contain information, but the vision will typically be better received with some colorful visual images, charts, statistics, and photos. Your presentation may include a video clip, slide show, an art board, or other visual presentation. These are excellent tools, but always leave the leader with something in their hand. Be creative! If you are presenting a food ministry, bring in a meal. If you are presenting a drama ministry, prepare a short skit. If you do, make sure it is well executed. Also, ask beforehand how much time to have to make your presentation and make sure you stay within that time limit.

In addition to your presentation, you might want to supply additional resources to inform your pastor or leader such as books, research, article, and websites.

All your communication should answer the questions who, what, when, where, why, and how. The following provides information on the content to consider for your ministry request.

Communication Elements

1. Provide a mission statement. The mission statement should answer why you want to start this ministry. This is your purpose. Try to keep it simple, in one sentence, preferably.
2. Write out a vision statement. The vision statement answers how you plan to accomplish your mission.
3. Share how you believe the new ministry connects with the vision of the church. Also share how the ministry will add to the church's effectiveness. Will this ministry help bring more people into the church? Will it help the people within the church grow? Will this ministry promote greater influence for the church? Will it generate resources?
4. Describe the group of people you are aiming to minister to. Is it specific to people based on gender, an age group, experience, or a need? Will this ministry serve people within the church or outside of the church, or both? Provide some data if it helps to convey the people you hope to reach or the need you intend to help meet. Share your personal experience if this sort of ministry has ever applied to you.
5. Write out your strategy and goals. What results do you expect to accomplish with this ministry? How will you attain those goals?
6. Suggest a timeline for the execution of your strategy. For a new ministry, it is sometimes best to start with a start-and-stop project or dry run to see how the ministry is received and executed. Then, after the trial period, meet with the church leader for an evaluation.
7. Communicate the financial cost. Give a projection on what funding is needed. Include what resources and financial means you have. If you are asking the church to contribute, make sure you communicate the amount requested.
8. Communicate a strategy for volunteers. What type of volunteer base does your ministry require? How will you recruit them? Where will you recruit volunteers? Do you have anyone currently interested or involved in this ministry?
9. Express your expectations for leadership. What are you capable of providing as a leader? What are your qualifications as a leader? What type of involvement do you expect from church leadership? What do you need from the church? How often will you report to a church leader? Discuss the church policies for communication between church ministries and church leadership. Offer ideas on how you can stay connected with church leadership and inform the church of what is happening in the ministry.

10. Describe what you want from the church as far as promotion of the ministry inside or outside of the church.
11. Provide details on where you will meet. Will you need to use the church facilities? Will you meet in the community, a home, or another location?
12. Provide information on when you want to provide ministry. Is there a conflict on timing with another group? Also list the duration of the ministry. Is it a short-term project, like an event? Is it a long-term ministry that could develop and grow over months and years?
13. Always summarize your presentation and thank your leaders for consideration. If you have the opportunity, be ready to answer questions. Trust your leaders that they will do their part to serve you and the local church, and trust God. When an idea for ministry is from God, He will bring it to pass. God will give you favor, wisdom, provision, and blessing to do what He is calling you to do.

Remember these are just guidelines. You don't have to have all the answers up front; however, the better you plan the ministry and prepare a presentation, the better you can communicate your idea to your pastor or church leadership team. Above everything else, be transparent. Let your pastor or church leader see your heart for serving God and people.

Be careful not to become offended if the church does not implement the idea right away or if the pastor or leader wants to change a part of the plan. When you know you are called to a local church, it is your responsibility to be faithful and trust the leadership God has put over you. Your meekness is of great value.

Continue to trust the Lord with the plan and purpose He has for your life. When God calls you, He wants your surrender and your obedience. He will do the rest. Be blessed as you pursue to serve God and people.