**Administrating Ministry**

**Part 1: Administrating Yourself**

You wont be able to administrate the vision unless you administrate yourself – you will always be on the back foot, disorganized and struggling to keep your head above water. Here are two key aspects to master if you are going to manage your time and your life:

**1. Live Your Mission**

Many years ago I was hugely impacted by exposure to the Stephen Covey approach to time management that involves starting with your life mission, then identifying your roles and goals and scheduling activities in your weekly planner. A weekly planner helps you to keep all these aspects in front of you. Here are the details that are displayed on my weekly planner:

\* My mission is to be a Christ-follower who equips family, friends and next generation leaders to be disciplemakers.

\* I live my mission through six roles: Disciple, Husband, Father, Youth Pastor, Mentor and Student.

\* I create two goals for each role each week.

\* I make sure an activity or two is scheduling in my diary for the week for each of my goals.

**2. Manage Your Actions**

The second part of my time management system comes from the David Allen approach called Getting Things Done (or GTD for short). GTD is a way to manage our commitments, to ensure we are productive, an action management system, a mental reminder system and a trusted system to track commitments.

Our biggest challenge is to manage all the commitments that we have and ensure that we exist in a state of productivity. David Allen suggests that the starting point is to capture all the things that need to get done into a logical and trusted system outside of your head and off your mind. This will ensure that you think about tasks and not of them. The brain is better at having thoughts than holding them.

To effectively manage commitments we must: (1) Capture all the things that need to get done into a logical and trusted system outside of your head and off your mind. This will ensure that you think about tasks and not of them. (2) Clarify what your commitment to each responsibility is and what you need to do to make progress towards fulfilling it. (3) Keep reminders of all the actions you need to take in a system that you review regularly.

Here is an activity to get you started: (1) Think of something that you need to do. (2) Describe in a single sentence the intended successful outcome for the problem or situation. (3) Write down the very next physical action required to move the situation forward.

THE GTD system uses Five Stages to Master Workflow: (1) Collect things that command our attention. (2) Process what they mean and what to do about them. (3) Organise the results. (4) Review everything on a weekly basis. (5) Do or actually get stuff done.

A. Collect

We must collect things that command our attention (anything personal or professional, big or little, that you think should be different than it currently is and that you have any level of internal commitment to changing).

(1) Get it all out of your head – nothing should be left in your mind.

(2) Minimize your collection buckets – these could be physical in-baskets; writing paper and pads; electronic note taking; auditory capture (answering machines, voicemail, dictating equipment); email and high-tech devices (like computers or PDA’s).

(3) Empty the buckets regularly – you must process the stuff that you have collected.

B. Process

This involves identifying what each item means and what you need to do about them. To get the collection bucket emptied you must process each item. You can ask the following questions:

(1) What is it? We must identify what each item is, where it comes from and what our responsibility is.

(2) Is it actionable? There are two possible answers to whether an item is actionable: YES or NO!

If the answer is No, you have three options: (a) Trash – throw it away! (b) Incubate – schedule it for future attention using a someday/maybe list. (c) File (reference should be information that can be easily referred to when needed) – this should be filed in an A-Z filing system.

If the answer is Yes, you must ask two follow up questions: (a) What project or outcome have you committed to? Any item that requires more than one step to accomplish the desired outcome is a project and must be tracked using a ‘Projects’ list and reviewed each week to check for follow up actions that must be completed. (b) What is the next action? The next action is the next physical, visible activity that needs to be engaged in, in order to move the current reality toward completion. Once you have determined the next action, you have three choices: (i) Do it – if the action will take less than two minutes it should be done right away. (ii) Delegate it – if it will take more than two minutes ask whether you are the right person to do it. (iii) Defer it – if it will take more than two minutes and you are the person who must act on it, you should defer it and act on it at a later stage.

C. Organize

The results of your collecting and processing must be organised. For non-actionable items the possible categories are trash, incubation tools and reference storage. For actionable items you will need a list of projects (these are things that require more than one action step), storage or files for project plans and materials, a calendar (time specific actions, day specific actions, day specific information), a list of reminders of next actions and a list of reminders of things you're waiting for (only review as often as they have to be in order to stop wondering about them).

D. Review

You must be able to review the whole picture of your life and work at appropriate intervals and appropriate levels. This involves being able to scan all the defined actions and options before you – to increase the effectiveness of the choices you make about what you are doing at any point in time. So what should you review and when? Firstly, your project list, your next action list, your calendar and waiting for list should be reviewed. Secondly, a weekly review must be done - this is where you gather and process all your stuff, review your system, update your lists, and get clean, clear, current and complete.

E. Do

The whole purpose of this workflow-management process is to help you make good choices about what you are doing at any point in time.

Finally, in order to administer your life you need to create an email system that will ensure that you are on top of all the demands that come your way through email. The goal is to get your inbox to Zero by process each email and assigning it to an action folder that you process and don’t forget about. My email system in Gmail uses the following folders to help me deal with emails and get them out of my inbox:

@Action – this is a folder for emails that I need to act on as soon as I get a chance.

@Downloads – this is a folder for emails that contain web links that I need to visit.

@Read – this is a folder for emails that contain information I need to read.

@Waiting For – this is a folder for emails that I cannot act on until I get a response.

Projects – this is a folder with sub-folders for each of the current projects I am tracking.

Reference – this is a folder with sub-folders for groups of emails that need to be archived.

**Part 2. Administrating Ministry**

There is a great story that Jesus told in Matthew 25:14-28: The Parable of the Bags of Gold.

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ “The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. “‘So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags.”

God has entrusted the vision (or ministry) we are a part of - or are leading - into our care! What are we going to do with it? Will we look after it in a way that pleases him?

Here are 10 keys that will help you administrate the vision that God has entrusted to you:

**1. Participate in Strategic Church Meetings**

Time spent in meetings that deal with any of the following aspects of ministry is time well invested: the vision of the wider church, the disciplemaking approach and any events or ministries that have a connection to youth ministry. This will ensure that the youth ministry remains vitally connected to the life of the church.

**2. Meet with Your Ministry Covering**

One of our key monthly meetings at HP Rosebank is a meeting with a pastoral couple, Simon and Lindi Lerefolo, who provide the covering for youth ministry from an elder level. My wife and I benefit hugely from this time of sharing of hearts and ministry strategies and any issues that they need to be informed about. We try and ensure that they are not surprised by anything that happens in the youth ministry and generally bounce ideas and plans off them before they are rolled out. They also happen to be responsible for doing our quarterly performance appraisals so they have unlimited access to our lives.

**3. Create Systems for Ministry Planning**

The need for advanced planning in youth ministry cannot be overstated! Here are some dimensions of our planning system:

A. Term Planning. We currently engage in detailed term-by-term planning (and last year we actually planned the whole year’s preaching schedule in advance). This ensures that we are not scrambling each week or month to figure out what we will preach or what events we will run and it allows us to come up with series that span a few months at a time.

B. Leadership Meetings. We meet once a month with our teen and adult leaders (on a Sunday after the second service over lunch) where we plan ahead – either for the upcoming term (this is done once a term) or for the upcoming month. These meetings are scheduled at the start of each term and almost never rescheduled or cancelled.

C. Prayer, Review and Preview. Our planning process consists of significant amount of time spent in prayer followed by a period of reviewing everything we have done in the last month or term and then time spent in previewing the upcoming term to discern where God is leading us. As youth pastors, my wife and I will spent a great amount of time behind the scenes working on where we sense God is leading us – and also consult with key teen and adult leaders – and then present our sense to the group of leaders at the meeting for shaping and fleshing out.

D. Term Preview Presentation. We make use of a PowerPoint presentation to promote the events in the term. It is structured around our disciplemaking process, namely Engage, Establish, Equip and Empower – and has a slide for each of the events or sermons that is then used in that respective session. The discipline of creating the slides for the whole term/series in advance is one that yields great benefits during the weeks of the term.

E. Term Planners. We create and print a full-colour planner for the term which is handed out to teens at the beginning of the term or when newcomers are welcomed at events. It includes the times of all our events, details of each event and contact numbers for the youth pastors. This planner is uploaded to the Facebook pages and shared on the WhatsApp groups we run.

**4. Stay in Contact With Your Leaders**

We have set up a number of different WhatsApp groups to facilitate interaction among the various levels of leadership. We currently have 3 groups: (1) Adult Leaders; (2) Teen and Adult Leaders and (3) Connect Group Leaders. We use our Facebook page to promote upcoming events and also to provide links to download sermon presentations, notes and podcasts. We also have a website that provides links to all our resources.

**5. Display Your Disciplemaking Strategy**

It is helpful to print and display the various aspects of your disciplemaking strategy – this could include your vision statement; the disciplemaking path, your values, etc. We also print a poster for each of our Engage (Friday night) and Establish (Sunday morning) series and display it in the youth group. We also print and display posters each Friday night at our Engage event – and these have even become collectors items for some of our teens.

**6. Schedule Weekly Announcements**

All our weekly events include a time of announcements to ensure that teens stay up to date with upcoming events – even though they get the term planner we still link back to the previous event and forward to the upcoming event each week. This is done on Friday nights and on Sunday mornings and we use teenagers to do the announcing rather than adults.

**7. Keep Track of Attendance**

Developing a system to track attendance is critical to measure growth in your ministry. Our church has a spreadsheet that is updated on a weekly basis and then shared periodically with all the ministry leaders. So on Sunday mornings we do a count of teens, visitors and adult leaders in each service and send the data through to be integrated into the church wide system.

**8. Advertise Your Ministry**

This is an area of our ministry that needs to be developed. We have made use of newsletters (specifically aimed at parents); promotional brochures and contributions to our church magazine but are not as consistent as we need to be. Finding someone who will run with this area is critical to ensure that it is done consistently.

**9. Keep a Teen Database**

We were using an online database with an SMS and email contact system however the church opted to transition to an app that has not yet taken off among teens. So we find ourselves in a situation where we are currently not contacting teens on a regular basis via SMS but relying on our weekly events to keep teens connected and informed – and of course, the Facebook page helps in this regard as do our various WhatsApp groups. A small youth group could make use of WhatsApp to do this until it gets too big and they make the transition to an online system.

**10. Create Booklets to Serve the Vision**

We have created youth version of all the major resources in the Every Nation movement including the One to One booklet (currently known as the Encounter Book which should probably change to the Engage Book) and the Purple Book (currently known as the Grow Book which should probably change to the Establish Book). This helps us to faithfully transfer the basic to our teens and not have to start from scratch each time we need to share one of the resources. We felt it necessary to create youth-relevant versions of all the material to ensure it is interaction and aimed at their level.

In summary, here are my 10 keys to administering ministry: (1) Participate in church meetings. (2) Meet with your covering. (3) Create planning systems. (4) Connect with leaders. (5) Display your strategy. (6) Do announcements. (7) Track attendance. (8) Advertise events. (9) Keep a database. (10) Create booklets. (11) Take offerings.