

A Healthy, Happy Church Staff in Only Two Steps!

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The title of this article is hokey—as if healthy, happy church staff members are made and shipped to you for seven installments of \$19.95. If *only* it was that easy! These steps are not the end-all, be-all but they are a start!

Step one: Have fun *together*. Ministry is hard work. It is good work, but it is hard work. Can I get an Amen? And sometimes in the midst of weddings and funerals and baptisms and picnics, we forget to let our proverbial hair down and have fun. More importantly, we forget to have fun as a church staff *together*.

Making this happen will require planning ahead. Everyone is busy. Toddlers in Northern Virginia are busy. Check their iPhones if you don't believe me. Everyone is busy, so plan ahead! Last summer our church staff tried to go to a Nationals game, but our schedules wouldn't allow it. Our solution? Go to the circus in May and the opera in August! The circus might not be your idea of a good time. The opera really might not be your idea of a good time, but our goal was accomplished: We had fun *together* both times. The point really isn't where or what. It's who—that our staff is *together*. We ate cotton candy and wore clown noses. When we couldn't see the English translation of the opera, we wondered aloud at its meaning! Both times we shared a meal. Both times we had fun *together*.

When you have fun *together*, you will almost immediately have a healthier, happier staff. Fun time spent *together* builds relationships, which make difficult moments much easier to navigate *together*.

Step two: Share your lives *with each other*. About a year ago, we began an intentional sharing time in our staff meeting. The words "sharing time" may bring juice boxes and kindergarten to mind or cause you to giggle, but whatever you decide to call it, here's what should happen: Carve out an intentional time to listen to one another and share what's happening in your lives. Invite staff members to share ups and downs and ins and the outs of their personal lives. Congratulate one another on the birth of a grandchild. Mourn together at the loss of a friend. Laugh. Make jokes (or at least attempt them). Rejoice and weep together. Spend time praying with and for one another.

Challenge yourself to be vulnerable and fully participate in sharing time...even when you don't feel like it. Let's be honest: Working in close proximity with one another will cause some annoyances. Frustration amongst work colleagues who care for one another is much easier to deal with than built up anger amongst people that merely work at the same place.

At first sharing time might seem a little forced, but slowly and surely your staff will come to anticipate this time of intentional listening to one another.

So, put on your dancing shoes. Break out the Capitals jerseys. Arm yourself with a paintbrush and attack some pottery together. Have fun with your church staff! And in the midst of it all, share yourself with those whom you labor alongside. Resolve to make 2010 a year that your staff is healthier and happier.