

PASTORPEDIA™

Cutting Edge Conversations for Pastors and Church Leaders

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School or Team Spirit in Small and Large Staffs

“Gimme a T . . . E . . . A . . . M!”

Even the Lone Ranger had Tonto, sometimes his cousin, Dan Reed, and of course his amazing horse and friend, Silver. We should not try this calling called pastoring alone.

Whether we're talking lead volunteers or paid full-time and part-time staff, one of the goals must be joyful teamwork. Unified collaboration. Fun together. Joy in ministry! And none of that is automatic.

So this month we talk about how a leadership team or ministry team stays together on purpose and with love. The work of ministry may be hard at times but the pulling together should be joyful and encouraging. The leader must not give up on seeing that joy and encouragement are pretty constant.

Often the answers can look good on paper but be harder to make a reality. Ask Moses, or any leader in the Bible. Ask any mother or father.

But it is worth it.

Right, Kemo Sabe?

Grateful for good teams and meaningful times together,

Knute, for Jeff and Jim

Define it, please.

Jeff Bogue

- I would define team spirit as enthusiasm, enjoyment, passion, and teamwork. All of these attributes exist in the group.
- Being with a group of people, enthusiastically pursuing a goal together and enjoying that pursuit with each other.
- "Working with our friends" on a goal or passionate pursuit creates great school or team spirit. It is more than just getting a job done and certainly more than something we're duty-bound to fulfill.
- It is a shared heart passion we're going at together as a team. We support each other, win with each other, celebrate each other, and work and dream together.

Jim Brown

- When a group of people unite, believe in, and support with enthusiasm the mission and purpose of their church. And they are proud to say they are on that team!

Knute Larson

- When all, or almost all, on staff (and main volunteers) embrace the same goals gladly and enjoy serving together.
- It is there when team meetings are fun, prayer times are not awkward, and tension is not constant. The members like to come to work, serve the church, and be together. People feel like they are on the same team and have the same goals.

What are some signs that it is healthy and what can we do to produce them?

Jeff Bogue

- A strong team chemistry.
- A shared vision, unity, and work ethic, where each of you is waking up in the morning with the same passion to go after difficult things.

- You don't produce that with "pep rally meetings." The best way to produce that type of spirit is by dreaming together. You dream, plan, design, and figure out together what you want to achieve as a team.
- A strong element of it is suffering together. Shared sacrifice is often underestimated, and when you're sacrificing together and paying the high cost of achieving a goal together, it bonds people because you have been in pain, given your best, and done that as a unit.
- Achieving together. When a goal is reached or a dream is realized, the response is, "Look what God allowed us to do. We were able to team up and achieve this together!"
- As the senior leader, it's very important you pass down all due credit, and all celebration, to your team! Don't hoard any of that for yourself but let them have the win.

Jim Brown

- When people begin to say "my church" instead of "your church."
- When social media posts include hash-tags and referrals to your church.
- When laughter is clearly evident.
- When you begin to do things together outside the walls of the church.
- When a joyful disposition permeates the office space.
- When a genuine love and care for each other surfaces.
- When you celebrate each other's strengths and team wins.
- Model love, forgiveness, and compassion towards each other.
- Share the vision of your church often and take time to connect events to the mission.
- Regularly encourage each other.
- Create apparel and clothing that has your church mission and name on it.
- Pray daily and work hard at unity.
- Plan together times that are fun.
- Celebrate birthdays and special days on the calendar of each teammate.
- Read and study a book together as a team.

Knute Larson

- People want to know what is expected of them, to report to someone who thinks of them, and have joy when they get home. This means we have good job descriptions, a good reporting system, and we pick people that have good marriages!
- If people are going to have the same goals, those goals must be defined. Sometimes churches just think Matthew 28:19-20 are the goals. But what are we doing in our community? What are some ways we are growing in ministry and even in attendance? We all need to know the direction we're heading.
- School spirit is healthy when people love each other. We certainly do not have to like everything about each other. What that means is we deal with any tensions that we know about, and help our staff or lead volunteers learn what love is — and live it. Things do not usually get better on their own.
- Sundays go well, and the staff and lead volunteers know what is expected of them. Services and ministries are not off the cuff!
- In any size church, retreats, socials, perks, fair pay, and benefits help with all of this. Especially in medium and large churches. Church boards and financial committees often are very good to the senior pastor but then not fair to newer or more junior members of the staff. It is the senior's responsibility to correct this.
- Even announcements and extras on Sunday are planned well. Churches with good school spirit do not allow boring!
- Staff meetings have both cheers and tears. People are comfortable together. Any size church should not allow just haphazard meetings or quick administrative times together. Team meetings are special. Most who study churches say that there should be two or three "huddles" of lead volunteers every year also, partly because of the need for school spirit.

How do you redeem negative spirits or a person who brings disunity?

Jeff Bogue

- Change team spirit by getting "wins." To start winning together, set small goals or do small projects together and slowly but surely build momentum.
- Teams that are winning ball games tend to get along. Teams that are losing tend to be divided and start blaming each other. Any way you can, get a "win"!

How do you redeem a negative teammate?

- Interact with them and find out why they're negative. Has trust been broken? Has something happened in the past you don't know about? Are there external forces pressing in on them you don't know about? Understand their hearts and minds a little bit.
- Make sure everybody is in the right seat on the bus. Are they doing a job they can succeed at, and are they working in their areas of strength whenever possible?
- Finally, you may have to remove a negative teammate. When we don't deal with the worst, we discourage the best.
 - If there is one person (and it's fascinating to me how significant or insignificant their role on the team may be) that everyone dreads working with, or that changes the dynamic of a meeting from optimistic to pessimistic, it must be dealt with. If you cannot figure out a solution, and they are unwilling to change, you may have to remove that person so healthy chemistry and a healthy environment return to the team.

Jim Brown

- You address it head-on and make it known that poisonous talk will not be tolerated.
- If the behavior continues you remove the teammate.
- Make it a priority to lead the way with a positive team spirit and attitude.
- Set fresh goals that are attainable and celebrate the wins publically.
- Hire the right people on your team!

Knute Larson

- Quickly. Every time I have waited too long I have been sorry. A leader deals with someone who is poisoning the well.
- With prayer and action. See the very clear guidelines for us in II Timothy 2:24-26.
- One on one. "Something is bothering you. Can we talk about it?" — We must get right to the issue. No surprises. No waiting until the upcoming review.
- Understand that God is good and the Holy Spirit is present but people do not change very quickly. Some people need to have an "exit opportunity" so that they can start over again.
- There always is the chance that someone is on the "wrong seat on the bus." Sometimes the person's assignment does not match his or her abilities and a shift might help. But we all have to do things we don't feel gifted for. Even "doing the work of an evangelist" is a challenge to anyone who is not naturally inclined to evangelism, like me. But we still do it!

- Nothing excuses a negative spirit, being mean in a staff meeting, or disrespecting another person or a leader. These cannot be tolerated. School spirit deteriorates when people on a small or large staff know their leader is not dealing with the poison that is there. Part of what we signed up for as leaders is confrontation.
- Postlude comment: good school spirit on a staff and in a church are wonderful, and worth the effort!

Pastorpedia is a resource provided to you by CE National, a church effectiveness ministry. Please contact us at cenational@cenational.org or 574.267.6622 if we may be of any help to you or your ministry!

Jeff Bogue, of [Grace Church](#), in several locations in the Bath-Norton-Medina areas of Ohio; Jim Brown, of [Grace Community Church](#) in Goshen, Indiana, a church known for its strong growth, family and men's ministries, and community response teams; and [Knute Larson](#), a coach of pastors, who previously led The Chapel in Akron for 26 years. Pastorpedia is brought to you by [CE National](#). Visit cenational.org/pastorpedia for more issues and to read the bios of our contributors.