**7 Reasons Staff Teams Sometimes Fall Apart**

**By Chuck Lawless**

I’ve seen it in local churches, and I’ve seen it on the mission field. When I ask church leaders what they most struggle with, it’s not uncommon to hear that interpersonal relationship battles are the biggest problem. In fact, I know folks who walked away from their calling because the relational issues took too big a toll. Here are some reasons that teams so often fall apart:

Our selection processes don’t include enough time and interaction to know potential team members. I understand the logistical difficulties of finding that time, but enlistment that includes only a few meetings is surely insufficient. Long-term staff problems are often a front-door issue.

Potential leaders aren’t always who we thought they were when we hired them. Even when we’ve spent time with others (years, even . . .), we still don’t always know them. Some potential leaders show different colors once they’re officially on the team; the faithful, humble church member sometimes changes his tune when he becomes a leader with authority.

Many of us avoid honest conversations until the conflict is deep. Paul’s admonition to deal quickly with our anger (Eph. 4:26) is a wise one, but we too often preach it to others more than to ourselves. We shouldn’t be surprised by an explosion when we’ve chosen not to deal with the sparks.

Our training doesn’t always include conflict resolution. I’m a seminary professor, and I know we include that topic in our pastoral training curriculum – but I’m sure it’s still not enough. While churches and seminaries train future pastors to speak to culture, we also need to train them to speak to each other.

Some leaders have unhealthy homes that affect their work relationships, too. Particularly when marriages are rocky but pastors are unwilling to admit their struggles, their stress comes out in other areas. Somebody bears the brunt of the turmoil – and that “somebody” is often other staff members.

Even as believers and leaders, some of us still wrestle with jealousy. We don’t want to think that way—and we know it’s a wrong attitude—but our sinfulness rises to the surface when other staff members get more attention or credit than we do. Our subtle, verbal jabs at them are often a clue that we’re not dealing with the issue in a Christian way.

We don’t pray for each other until we learn of a problem. I’ve written much about this general problem in churches (see here and here), but it’s especially an issue among staffs. Leaders are by nature achievers, so we don’t think much about praying for each other unless we have to—and we miss an opportunity to build team unity on our knees.

What other reasons would you include?

The above article, “7 Reasons Staff Teams Sometimes Fall Apart” was written by Chuck Lawless.

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This article may not be written by an Apostolic author, but it contains many excellent principles and concepts that can be adapted to most churches. As the old saying goes, “Eat the meat. Throw away the bones.”