

Empowering Guidance Skills

The Holy Spirit expects the church to equip the saints to fulfill their duties so that the body of Christ can grow. But how can believers be equipped effectively? I believe that believers are spiritual children born of the Holy Spirit. With the Spirit of God, believers will definitely have the desire to grow and will definitely have the ability to grow and develop. If believers do not grow, it is definitely not because of a shortage of God's power, but because of insufficient pastoral ability of the pastors.

To equip a saint, we must bring out the best in him. To bring out the best in a person, we must first be able to deeply and quickly understand the best aspects of that person. This involves understanding personality traits and the person's development history, but more fundamentally, it involves learning effective guidance skills.

But what makes people effective is not skills but breadth of mind, because our preconceived notions about a person greatly affect our listening ability. The labels we put on a person can stifle that person's room for growth. Everyone has flaws, but if you focus on his flaws and magnify his shortcomings, you will refuse to believe that he has the possibility of development. Instead of judging a person negatively, we should look for God's work in him and the various gifts that the Holy Spirit has given him. Since this person is a child of God, we have no right not to appreciate and develop him. Developing one person may be risky, but this is the mission given to the church by the Holy Spirit – to "equip the saints for the work of ministry."

In order to empower others, in addition to having a broad mind, you also need to practice your guidance skills, which can be subdivided into three levels: questioning ability, guidance ability and response ability.

I. Questioning Ability

1. Purpose of questioning

Why use questions to help people grow? Because when someone asks us a question, we will think about the answer. This is a conditioned reflex of human beings. If you think about the answer, it will fit the context of the question. If someone asks, "Are the Loch Ness Monster and the Chinese Lake Monster real dinosaurs that still exist in the world?" Even if you don't

quite believe it, you will still think about it a little bit in this direction.

The ability to ask sharp questions is a quality that every helping leader needs to develop. Asking the right questions will achieve the desired purpose. Your ability to ask questions determines the results of your training. Asking questions at the right time can get you the answers you expect. More importantly, the questions you ask the other person can help him find answers during the thinking process and create a stronger impression of what he has learned.

Sometimes we don't know how to ask questions, and the other party is also troubled because they don't know how to answer. This is because we are not clear enough when asking questions. Using effective questioning patterns can make it easier for people to understand and answer, and the topic can be discussed in more depth and breadth.

Therefore, asking questions is not just for inquiring about things you don't understand. You can also achieve different results by asking questions, such as: discovering and solving problems, improving persuasiveness, guiding the other party's thoughts or reflection, urging the other party to make a decision, making communication smoother, and reversing the situation.

2. Basic 5W1H questioning method

Take developing a leader as an example

A. Who – things about people

"What kind of man is he?"

"What kind of members are in his group?"

B. Why – the reasons

"Why are you a team leader?"

"Why doesn't your group have an intern leader?"

C. When – related to time, time slot, period

"When is the latest time to submit the book report on "Bringing out the Best in People?"

"How long have your group members believed in the Lord?"

"How long have you been in the group?"

D. What – information related to person or things

"What are your ambitions and dreams?"

"What are the characteristics of your group?"

"What do you value when choosing an internship leader?"

- E. Where – location, occasion
 "Where do you usually have discipleship training?"
 "How do you usually interact with new friends in your group?"
- F. How – method, feeling, impression
 "How do you spend your devotion time?"
 "How do you teach your team members on spiritual warfare?"
 "How do you train an intern team leader?"

3. Questioning to develop thinking

- A. Probing for knowledge – data, information, common sense, general knowledge
 E.g. "How can a sour orange be turned into a sweet orange?"
 "How many people were over 60 in China in 2015?"
 "What are the four major functions of a cell church?"
 "What are the four dynamics of a cell group?"
- B. Questions to examine – to inspect and understand.
 E.g. "What is the quality of the "eight habits" in your group?"
- C. Comprehensive issues – wide-ranging and diffuse issues.
 E.g. "What hypotheses do you propose regarding this problem?"
 "Please suggest some possible reasons why this team member keeps making trouble?"
- D. Application questions – how to do it
 E.g. "After realizing that the "sharing time" in a worship service should motivate people with an atmosphere similar to that of the "vision sharing" in small groups, how would you readjust the way you express it when you lead in the "sharing time"?"
- E. Analytical questions – using logic to help infer, as well as looking for possibilities
 E.g. "What do these groups that have seen a healthy growth this year have in common?"
- F. Question of understanding – what do you understand?
 E.g. "Define discipleship."
- G. Question of commenting – discerning right and wrong
 E.g. "What do you think of this group?"
 "How do you choose a mentor between these two internship mentors?"
 "If you were to lead today's worship service again, what would you do to make it better? Why?"
- H. Question of measuring – measuring progress by comparing with history, grasping the degree of gain or loss, and determining of the priority of doing things.

E.g. "How is preaching in a cell church different from the way you preached before?"

"What would you do if this team leader expressed something inappropriate during this group meeting?"

4. Questioning to enhance efficiency

- A. Paraphrasing – especially used in the early stages of a relationship. Listen first and then ask questions. First fully listen to what the other person says and understand the situation before expressing your own views. This will make it easier for the other person to pay attention to your views as well. After organizing the other person's thoughts, repeat his or her opinions and then ask, "Is this what you mean?" The other person will feel that you understand him or her and respect his or her opinions. If there is something you don't understand clearly, you can ask, "Could you explain that aspect a little more?" He will then feel that you are listening carefully and respond to him, and he will naturally listen to what you say just as carefully.
- B. Level matching – Don't ask questions that are beyond his level of understanding. Don't make assumptions. First explore and assess his level before communicating and asking questions. How long has he been in the faith? Is this his first time as a group leader? What is the maturity of his faith? Don't make things difficult for him, avoid embarrassing others.
- C. Closed questioning - This type of question does not allow for expression, but is used to provoke, strengthen, push, express, and force the other party to actively participate and respond. The questions already carry your opinions, such as asking: "Do you agree?" "Do you think so?" "I think so, what about you?" "Our God is Jehovah Jireh, Amen?" "This brother is spiritually fickle, how could you get attached to him so quickly?" and so on.
- D. Increasing sensitivity – Careless questions will be vague and unclear and fail to elicit a response. Sharp questions will attract attention and make the other party pay attention and respond. Questions like "How is it?" are ambiguous. Good questions include, "What actions will you take to pastor members who often work overtime and cannot come to the group meeting?", "How will you apply what you learned in the training to leading the group?", "What did you learn?", "How do you apply it?" These types of questions can help the other party understand the purpose. But you have to ask in an organized way. As long as you organize your thoughts more often, you can ask sharp questions at any time.

- E. Mutual learning and growth – a leader's ideas are not necessarily perfect. Sometimes, he can discover new things from his disciples', and maybe his ideas are even better. Don't rule out this possibility. Leadership is about fulfilling God's mission and achieving human growth, not self-satisfaction.

II. Guidance Ability

1. Bring them before God – let them always think from God's perspective, infiltrate the truth and viewpoints, and often bring out the perspective of "What does God think?" Don't just respond, but also praise, for example, "You have a great servant mentality, God will be very pleased!", "You are willing to sacrifice your own interests, you are really a role model of Christ's life!", "God is greatly glorified by you!" Don't always respond to him from your standpoint, but more from God's.
2. Broaden his mind – lead him to see things from the most important perspective, and help him see what is the most important from the perspective of the kingdom of God. Don't fight over pride or get indignant about honor or disgrace. Look at the big picture, don't care about personal gains and losses, don't worry about personal success or failure, don't regret or get frustrated on things passed, don't mourn over past mistakes, just learn lessons from them, no failure is meaningless.
3. Have a macroscopic vision – cultivate his ambition, embrace the great commission, and always have a fiery ambition and lofty aspirations. Raise his realm with this major premise, and guide him to think accordingly, and he will have dreams or develop in this direction. Ignite his hope and motivate him to take action. For example, ask a group leader, "If you were the district pastor of this district, how would you like to develop it?" Ask a newly converted woman, "If your husband believed in the Lord, what would happen to your entire family?"
4. Stimulate potential – stir up ambition, encourage and cheer him up frequently, so that he will be faithful to the Lord, move forward courageously, and always have high morale. There are three types of provocation methods: direct provocation, implicit provocation, and guided provocation. People have a positive competitive spirit and are "unwilling to accept defeat". Thus people can be motivated to make progress and fully develop our inner potential. We Christians should believe that Christians have great potential because we are not just humans, we are "spiritual beings." The more one's will is given to God, the more potential for the Holy Spirit's indwelling can be unleashed.

- A. Direct provocation – to provoke the other party directly and make him jump up. For example, the head coach of the national table tennis team said to the athletes before the World Table Tennis Championships, "You can't play like this. You can't always rely on your teammates to score." We can say to an experienced group leader, "The new group leader is leading the group very well. Besides, you have led several groups and have rich experience. Your group can become healthier and healthier!"
 - B. Implicit provocation – using other people's achievements to motivate the listeners. Parents will say to their older son who is distracted, "Your younger brother has almost finished his bowl of rice!" A mentor can say to a youth group leader, "The women's group can thrive without any support."
 - C. Guided provocation – it is not negation, but "provoking with guidance", using clear and inductive language to guide and motivate people. For example, "With your experience, how come you can't train good intern group leaders?"
5. Change perspectives – understand people's thoughts, change their perspectives, and observe the situation comprehensively. For example: "How would this leader, or each of the key leaders, view this situation or this decision?" "If you were not the leader but a member, would you still hold your opinion?" "If you were the senior pastor, would you be able to accept this?"
 6. Positive guidance – lead him to think positively. For example: "Why don't you dare to be a mentor? Why do you think God chose you to be a team leader? Why did the district pastor ask you to be a mentor?" Then he will think about his good qualities. "Do you know what else God expects you to do?" Then he will think about how to develop himself. "How do you think you can respond to the church's expectations of you?" Then he will think about how to fully display his talents and develop himself.
 7. Follow-up on practices – For discipleship to be implemented, at least four generations have to be trained up. So following-up is very important. To successfully make Christian disciples, determination is only 5%, following-up is 95%, teaching is 5%, and obedience is 95%.
 8. Seize the opportunity to win – People will want to follow the position they have expressed. If there is a contradiction, they will resist. This is because God created man and endowed him with the same faithfulness and consistency as Him. This tendency is called the "consistency principle." The business world is very good at taking advantage of this. After you order food in a restaurant, the waiter will ask you what you want to drink, or will immediately make a sales pitch by offering certain drinks or desserts at a discounted price. Fast food restaurants will ask,

"Would you like an extra serving of fries? A larger Coke? Would you like to try that new pineapple pie? It's so fresh!" Note that they won't ask you to add anything before you order, but after you express your purchasing intention. This is to go with the flow and move forward. At this time, his state is positive and dynamic, so we should make good use of it. For example, "You will experience a lot when you go on a short-term mission trip." "Going on a short-term mission trip is not the same as leading a short-term mission team. You might as well lead a team." "You're willing to go anyway, so why not go to a place that's not so comfortable? The harder you work, the more you can experience and understand God's love."

III. Response Ability

Eleven categories of response:

1. Questioning – ask questions to enhance understanding, help the other person discover themselves more deeply, and gain new insights. The rhetorical questioning method helps him reflect more deeply.
2. Resonating – meet his emotional needs, express your understanding of him, and promote the relationship.
3. Affirming - affirming others to enhance their sense of self-efficacy. You can affirm people on their intention, character, effort, and ability, and the first three are more important. You can compare yourself with the other person to enhance his or her self-confidence. When you want him to go further, tell him about some of the affirmations he's received from people he cares about.
4. Comforting – soothing, comforting and providing nourishment.
5. Thanksgiving – emotional exchange, enhancing the other person's self-esteem and providing nourishment. For example: "Thank you for sharing your honesty. We feel trusted."
6. Teaching – guiding, inspiring, directing, and explaining.
7. Being humorous - Reduce embarrassment, strengthen relationships, and divert attention away from anxiety.
8. Encouraging
9. Summarizing – Using concise sentences to clearly restate what the other person said will

make the other person feel that you respect and pay attention to his expression.

10. Non-verbal – Words only account for 45% of expression, while non-verbal responses account for 55% of the message. (Body language accounts for 55% of expression! The second is tone of voice 38%, and content only 7%.)
11. Spiritual insights – Spiritual insight is more important! The response you receive after listening to God's voice.