

Doing A Redo In Ministry

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Ever wished you could start all over again and re-do all the things you do, or have done, in your ministry?

Our friend Lori Biddle set out to do just that, and her thoughts and musings are very insightful. Perhaps these thoughts will assist you in steering a course in your own ministry.

DramaShare

Re Do- ing Your Ministry

Part 1 – Starting The “Re-Do”

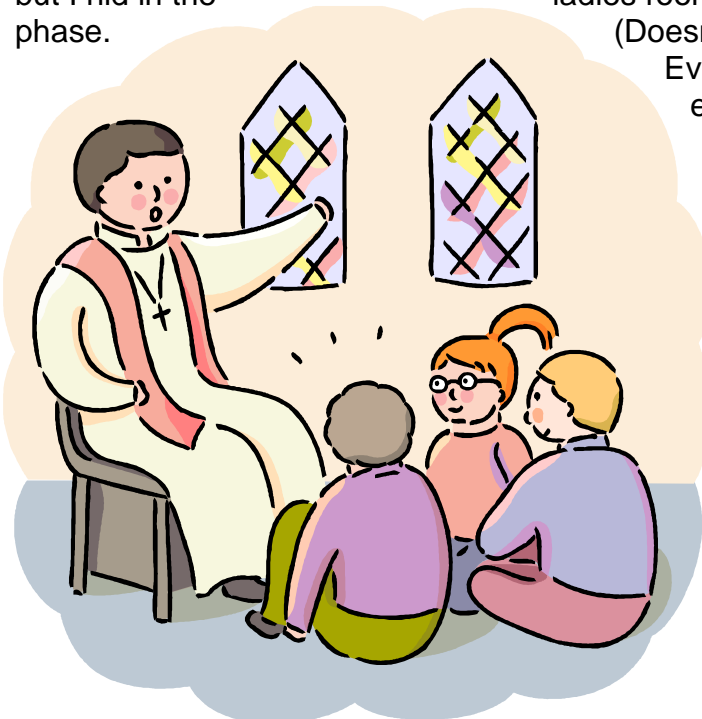
Have you ever asked God for a re-do? I find myself there often.

I have been in ministry in one way or another since I was born. At first sitting patiently in my baby seat as my parents cleaned the church, taught at the church, mowed at the church and lead at the church.

Next as a teen I hid at the church. I was still involved in ministry with my family, but I hid in the ladies room during our bad youth group phase.

ladies room during our bad youth group
(Doesn't every church have one?)

Eventually wondering out as that era drew to a close.



Finally as a young married couple my husband and I were foot loose and baby free for 10 years, so we vacationed constantly having a blast, not forsaking our relationship with the Lord, but, only involved when it was convenient to our schedule. That was until our pastor asked us to make a commitment to a new Young Married couples class, we did

and we've been doing ministry as a couple ever since.

Although we are no longer at the above mentioned church, we are currently on staff at Crossroads Community Church in Mansfield, Ohio www.crossroadswired.com and have been married over 30 years! God is so good!

So, as far as my marriage goes, no re-do's necessary!

I currently serve as the Director of Magnification, translation – Director of Programming. I am responsible for designing and executing everything within our services. This includes programming each service, overseeing the musical area, all the technical areas, creative arts teams, drama team as well as overseeing stage managers and leading two small groups. What a privilege, what a responsibility and what a platform for mistakes! My work is out there for the scrutiny of 2,500 people weekly! Scary!

I have always had a very difficult time believing that I know how to do things that would benefit others in ministry. But my life has taken a strange twist since our kids have gone off to college. Opportunities are beginning to arise that give me the chance to encourage others and share what I have learned from working fulltime in ministry for the past 13 years, and serving as a volunteer in about a million positions. I cannot deny that God is moving me out of my comfort zone. But, I have always been willing to follow after His leading before, so here it goes.



If I could begin again...

Part 2 - My First Big Re Do

If I could begin again I would spend more time defining 'our' ministries identity.

That is to say I would not have pushed to be something we were not.

Mega Church wannabe

That is what I tried to help make us, a mega church. Not just any mega church, I was sure we could be the next Willow Creek or Saddleback. We had it all...

- Amazingly talented senior pastor (not exaggerating you need to listen some time!)
- Fabulous worship leaders
- Creative technology guys
- Actors that were very experienced in local theatre

- Strong children's ministry leaders
- Staff with abundant local connections
- Over the top work ethic

And we grew. And I worked as hard as anyone in my field ever had. And we grew.

We became and still remain the largest church in *our* area. Not in someone else's area, in the area God gave us. And we grew to the size He had planned for us to be. And at 2,500 each weekend – we are ridiculously large for our area. Satisfied? Not me – still I charged ahead programming crazy, fun, creative services I was just sure would grow our audience still larger...



But, we stopped growing. We have now been at this level for several years and I have come to understand that I was being driven by selfish desires, not always by God's leading...

Re Do:

Know what God has called your ministry specifically to do.

- Who is your target audience?

We did try to identify our target audience. We created the church to fit the 'seeker sensitive' model. We continue to create our services in a way that is very thematic to each teaching, easy to understand to any visitor walking in, and full of creativity, but we do not sugar coat or water down the teaching of God's Word.

- What do you have to offer your community that all the other churches are not offering?

We were the first truly contemporary church in our whole area. People comment to this day that they immediately feel comfortable and welcomed when they come into the ministry. They express their appreciation about being able to dress casual with no pressure to try to impress anyone. We also do not pass offering plates but allow them to drop their offering in boxes as they leave. They also like the delivery of our pastor's teaching because although it is theologically strong, it is always easy to understand and is immediately applicable to their lives.

- Fit the type of community where your ministry is located.

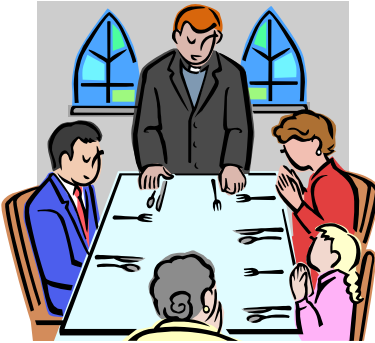
I tried in early years to create a 'big city' style ministry. That was silly. We are a blue collar, somewhat depressed small town. Looking back we were definitely called to start a church in this community, but, we were called to begin a large blue collar church, not a professional 'white collar – high income' ministry. We have always operated with a small staff and even smaller budget. This area is where we excel, low budget big creativity! It has become a very exciting challenge! And God shows up to provide over and over.

Mega church wannabe – forget it and be what God has called your church to be.

Part 3 - My Second Big Re Do

I would not create ministry teams; I would instead create small groups.

Small Group vs. Team



For a number of years I tried to corral the artists in our church, I am not referring to musicians but artists. No luck, an occasional art show hosted at our church, a kid's show, a staff art show (which was hilarious), but no ongoing commitment to the team. So, I let it die.

Just a month ago we launched the Crossroads Creative Arts Small Group. Not much advertising, just in the program and a description card added to our Small Group Hub. First meeting, twelve showed up. Second meeting, 15 showed up. Since then I have been contacted by 3 more interested in knowing when we meet next. On Palm Sunday we used artists during worship to the thunderous applause of our congregation. Artists want community, not tasks.

In two months time we have moved from meeting at our church to meeting at the local Art Center. Can you imagine the possibilities of reaching our community of non-churched artists?

I have had similar experiences trying to keep a Drama Team together. We waver from periods of continuous drama, to periods of very little drama. So trying to keep a working team together is impossible. On the other hand when I recently launched a Performing Arts Small Group, instantly we had 16 people sign up. I told them from the first meeting that we would sometimes be very busy and other times we would just do life together. They are excited and committed! Our Easter service will use a combination of artists painting as well as 7 actors involved in a couple performance pieces!

Now I have a second chance with our worship teams. With a recent exit and church plant by one of our former pastors (the plant was an independent plant in our town), we lost several band members. Out of difficult circumstances come God opportunities if we just watch for them! It's the perfect chance to change things up.

At the beginning of this school year we solicited information to identify college students in our congregation. (I was desperate to add younger musicians and vocalists to our teams). Previous to this we have not had a college age group, so this age group has always been sadly missing from our teams. So, I created a college small group. Two months later we shipped 55 care packages at Christmas and great things began to happen. When people feel connected and cared for, they want to be involved! Small group first, team second!

Suddenly extraordinary young musicians began to not only ask what they had to do to be added to the team, they asked for more. They asked for mentoring, devotional studies, they wanted Small Group – not just a ministry team! I just recruited a young married couple to lead a college small group this summer.

I now move forward fully committed to turning all our ministry teams into groups.

Re Do:

If I could begin again, everything I oversee would have its beginning as a small group. I wasted so many years trying to force people onto teams. People are busy; they do not need more 'jobs to do'. What they need is community and a safe place. They want a place to use their God given talents, talents that can be used to support and enhance the teaching of God's Word. All they need is a group. In the safe setting of a caring group, talents can be developed and trust can be built.

Forget teams, in many cases they simply do not work. Instead recruit and equip strong leaders who can lead small groups – this is the context in which you will discover lasting stability!

