

How do you train missional community leaders?

by: Hugh Halter

The first line of training is to actually model the behavior. So, within our church here and, what we help other churches do is to identify some existing leaders you have in your church that tend to be on the more incarnational end. They're probably really good with people outside the church; they have some gifting in hospitality; they have the ability to have a whole host of different types of people in their home; and they can model and integrate an environment. So that's where we start.

That's a dilemma because a lot of pastors have grown up in Bible school and seminary and have honestly admitted that they don't really know how to relate with people. If that's the case in an existing church, we ask the pastor to go on the mission with the people, not as a leader but just to say, "Hey, I'm going to try and learn this too." As long as that leader is in the process, and as long as they don't act like they're the experts, they can still influence their people.

The second thing we do is we get all of our leaders together, and we constantly talk about what it means to actually lead a missional community. So, just like you're training a small community to go overseas on mission, we actually take the same approach here locally, within our existing church.

We try to give our best training and time to our leaders. Sometimes we're teaching them pastoral gifting. Sometimes we're teaching them issues about how to engage culture. A lot of times we're processing through the formation of community. What's that look like? What's that feel like? I think the modeling and drawing people into the experience is always the best way of leadership as opposed to a cognitive training and then send them off, "God bless you," type of idea.