

Ministry Maintenance vs. Ministry Capacity

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One of the complaints we hear from pastors is that they don't have enough leaders in their churches to carry out the work that needs to be done. Pastors often have more vision for ministry than their churches seem to have capacity to carry out. Just maintaining the status quo stretches the leadership capacity of the church, never mind starting new ministries for additional growth.

The result is that pastors often feel overworked and sometimes guilty that important opportunities for ministry are slipping away. Let's take a look at two situations that may illuminate this challenge.



One doctor started a mission hospital in a poor area. He worked alone for years, caring for the sick that lived in the villages of the surrounding countryside.

A second doctor came to another poor area. She also began caring for the sick, but took on an apprentice to train in nursing skills. As the nurse began taking on additional duties and responsibility, the doctor found she had more time. Soon she began training health care workers who could go out and start new clinics in regions of the country that still had no medical care. As she trained each health care worker, she asked only that they pass on the skills they had learned to others.

Both doctors served faithfully under difficult conditions. But consider the long-term impact of their choices. When each doctor dies, what will he or she leave behind?

This story illustrates an important principle of leadership development. While doing ministry and training others to do ministry are both important activities, the first alone won't get you to your ultimate goal. Raising up new leaders initially takes time away from other ministry responsibilities, but overall ministry capacity is increased in the long run. By investing time and energy in training others, our lives and ministries can have a much greater long-term impact than we could possibly have had by working in isolation. And ultimately, that increase in ministry capacity is what will reach the harvest fields.

Take some time to evaluate where you are spending your time and energy with the **Ministry Maintenance vs. Capacity evaluation Tool** (next page). A ministry coach can help you clarify goals for developing leaders in your ministry in order to increase ministry capacity.

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1. What percentage of your time is spent on 'doing' ministry yourself?
2. What percentage of your time is spent with other leaders – working along side them, training them, coaching them?
3. How would you like those percentages to change in your ideal ministry situation?
4. Of the things that take up your time, what are the things that you, and only you, can do? What things would you delegate if you had the leaders to do them?
5. What are you already doing where you could include emerging leaders in a way that begins to empower them for leadership responsibilities?
6. What up-coming programs or ministry situations will give you an opportunity to see new leaders emerge? How could you facilitate this emergence?
7. What are the blockages (personal or in your ministry) that keep you from raising up more leaders?
8. What is one step you could take this week to empower an emerging leader in your ministry?