

Leading with Vitality Council Reflection: Aligning Motivations

How to use the Leading with Vitality Council Reflection: Share this document with the Council members prior to the Council meeting and add 15 minutes to the beginning of the agenda for shared reflection. Prior to the meeting, invite one member of the Council to lead the discussion. Here's a simple outline for how the shared reflection might go.

First, the reflection leader reads the scripture passage aloud. Second, the reflection leader highlights one idea from the reflection that the reflection leader found meaningful or challenging. Third, the reflection leader uses one or more of the reflection questions below to encourage discussion. When the discussion draws to a close, the reflection leader closes the time with the prayer using the prayer below or another prayer they create.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 4:18-22 (NRSV)

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Aligning Motivations

As the Finance Chair began to speak, he was sure that what he was about to say would inspire the members of the congregation to increase their giving.

"So far this year, our expenses are running 7.5% ahead of our income. If we continue at this pace, we'll finish the year with a significant deficit. If everyone here will step up and give another \$5 a week, we'll cover our budget. We all voted for this budget. I encourage you to step up to the challenge and meet our obligations."

Sadly following this speech, the only thing that increased significantly in the congregation was the sense of despair and failure. The Finance Chair was well intentioned. He believed every word that he said and nothing about his statement was factually incorrect, but his message failed to consider the motivations of his audience.

Dr. Kennon Callahan suggests that God gives all of us these six motivational resources:

Compassion – sharing, caring, giving, loving serving
Community – good fun, good times, belonging, family
Hope – confidence, assurance in the grace of God
Challenge – accomplishment, achievement, attainment
Reasonability – data, analysis, logic, it makes good sense
Commitment – duty, vow, obligation, loyalty

Each of these motivations is a gift. Each can be learned. Each can be extremely helpful.

The key is to understand your own motivations and the motivations of your audience. With that information, a leader can be intentional about sharing a ministry story or idea in a way that connects most fully with those involved in the ministry.

What the Finance Chair failed to realize is that *while he was motivated by commitment and reasonability*, he was speaking to *a group of people who were motivated by compassion and community*. Imagine how differently this message might have been received if it had been crafted around the motivations of compassion and community.

“Thank you for being a part of this congregation. Together we are doing some wonderful ministry in the community. It has been a tough year for everyone. We are working together to be good stewards of our financial gifts so we can make God’s love known in the world. I’m here today to let you know that so far this year our investments in ministry are higher than expected and our giving is slightly lower than expected. The Council, the Pastor, and I are excited about the ministry we have planned for the rest of the year. We have all decided to increase our giving so we can continue to be a powerful presence in our community in these difficult days. I hope you will join us and make an additional gift to support the ministry God is calling us to do.”

Understanding your motivations and crafting your message to speak to the motivations of your audience opens the door to more effective communication and higher engagement.

Reflection by Pastor John Wertz, Jr. Six Motivations from Dr. Kennon Callahan various books and lectures.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Which of the six motivations resonate most completely with you?
2. Which of the six motivations do you think resonate most completely with the majority of the congregation?
3. Imagine that the majority of your congregation is motivated by compassion and reasonability. How could you use that knowledge to help you craft a message to the congregation about an upcoming project or event?

Prayer:

Generous God. When we lack the words to share what we know of your goodness, compassion, and mercy, fill our hearts with your Spirit and our mouths with your words. Open doors to cooperation and compassion that together we may proclaim your story in a way that can be more easily heard and understood. Amen.