

Theological Musings from Dave's Laptop

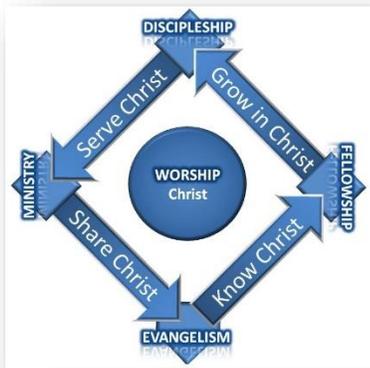
July 9, 2019 ¹

Many years ago in a galaxy not so far away, a youth ministry guru named Lyman Coleman put a “baseball diamond” graphic in his *Youth Ministry Encyclopedia* as a way of visualizing youth ministry. As far as I know, Lyman never did a lot with his diamond outside that book, but a young minister named Rick Warren developed Lyman’s idea and really “put it on the map.”



Rick first popularized his version of “the baseball diamond” in his best-selling book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, and this became the conceptual model around which he planted Saddleback Community Church in California, now one of the largest churches in the land.

For fairly obvious reasons, this approach to conceptualizing church life has become known as “the Saddleback Model,” and many congregations have found it very effective as a way to structure their common—and personal—lives.



I’m a fan of “the diamond,” and I’ve been using it in congregations I’ve served for a long time. I was pleased to discover when I arrived at CBF that our own Pastor Steve had a similar affinity for this model, and that our congregation was already structured in this way.

Those of you who are in worship at CBF regularly already know that I’m a visual learner with a whimsical sense of humor. It is in this sense that I offer this illustration of “the Baseball Diamond as a Hamburger Bun.” I very much doubt that you’ll ever see this anywhere else, and though whimsical, it does have a point.

You may remember ads some years ago whose punchline was “Where’s the Beef?” That’s the idea underlying this picture. As you can see from the diamond above, the main points of the diamond are WORSHIP, FELLOWSHIP, DISCIPLESHIP, MINISTRY, and MISSION (the diagram has “Evangelism” where we have “Mission”). That’s where “the beef” is.

WORSHIP is “the pitcher’s mound,” in this “baseball diamond,” because in baseball the balls are put



¹ I’ve shared the basic information in this *Laptop* with you before, but I find that it is helpful to review it from time to time 😊.

into play from that mound when the umpire throws the ball to the pitcher. In our spiritual lives, worship (private or corporate) is where God's Spirit "puts things into play" in our lives. Without that divine and continually enlivening input, our lives are "sound and fury signifying nothing."

"First Base" (FELLOWSHIP) has to do with interacting with other believers through small group connections of various sorts. "Second Base" (DISCIPLESHIP) has to do with the practice of daily disciplines that support spiritual growth. "Third Base" (MINISTRY) has to do with deploying our gifts and abilities to strengthen the Body of Christ, and "Home Plate" (MISSION) has to do with pursuing Great Commission Living as we go about our lives in the world. Our congregation has leadership teams in each of these areas, and these five teams and functions are the "meat" of our life together.

The "bottom bun" is our ADMIN Team, whose responsibilities support and undergird our congregational life, giving us a place to meet and a place "to stand," from which anchoring we gain the necessary purchase to carry out our primary ministries (the "meat"). The "top bun" is our DEACON Team, whose charge it is to oversee and to guard the spiritual health and strength of our common life as a "spiritual covering" over all we do. And when the leaders of those seven teams meet with our church officers and staff, that eighth group is our CHURCH COUNCIL.

This general model defines not only our common life, but is also an excellent model for guiding our own spiritual journeys. It is in this sense that you see this version of the baseball diamond on our worship PowerPoint from time to time:

The point here is that in order to grow spiritually, every one of us needs to do these five things each and every week. I very cleverly call these "The Five Things," and I suggest

to you that they are really not optional equipment for persons who intend to grow in Christlike graces. Whatever else God calls you to do, it will not be less than this:



1. **WORSHIP:** We participate in corporate worship somewhere at least once a week, every week of our lives, on vacation, work trips, or whatever.
2. **CONNECT:** We participate in a small face-to-face accountability, prayer, and study group each and every week. This can be a Sunday School class, but it can also be another small group at another time during the week.
3. **GROW:** We participate in the regular, daily practice of disciplines that support spiritual growth, notably prayer, Bible reading, and stewardship.
4. **SERVE:** We use our gifts and abilities to do something to build up the local Body of Christ in some way every week. This could be the same thing, such as singing in the choir or teaching Sunday School, but it could also be something different every week.
5. **GO:** We pay attention every day to possibilities for witness and encouragement that God brings our way, speaking humbly and gently in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Just as in the game of baseball, our “spiritual score” doesn’t “go up” until we complete the journey “around the bases” each week. But unlike baseball, each circuit of the bases isn’t accomplished on the same plane. Because The Five Things cause us to grow spiritually, our circuits around the bases are more like a heavenward spiral than anything else, and that’s really pretty awesome.



**But Wait,
THERE'S
MORE!**



Just in case you're the curious sort, here's a little more about what each of our leadership teams is responsible for. **You can help with any of these groups by letting the Team Leader know of your interest**

So What Does the WORSHIP Team Do?

WORSHIP Team (By-Law 3.5.1) **TEAM LEADER: Megan Larko**

"The WORSHIP Team's function is to plan, coordinate and evaluate the various worship gatherings of the congregation."

1. Works with pastoral staff in planning and evaluating all worship activities of the church;
2. Evaluates the need for changes in current worship services, including the need for new services;
3. Provides for services such as audio-visual support and decorations for special events;
4. Works with the DISCIPLESHIP Team to plan annual churchwide spiritual enrichment events;
5. Works with the pastoral staff and the MISSION Team to schedule missionary speakers.

So What Does the FELLOWSHIP Team Do?

FELLOWSHIP (CONNECTing) Team (By-Law 3.6.1)
TEAM LEADER: Felicia Amonoo-Coleman

*"The functions of the FELLOWSHIP Team are to facilitate the **identification** of persons who might benefit from association with our congregation, facilitate making **first contacts** with those persons, facilitate **welcoming** those persons when they visit, facilitate the **inclusion** of those persons in the relationship networks of the church, and encourage appropriate **commitments** as God leads."*

1. Plans and coordinates our efforts to publicize our ministries in the community, including website, brochures, postcards, flyers, etc.;
2. Plans and coordinates our efforts to discover unchurched persons such as new residents;
3. Plans and coordinates our outreach activities;
4. Works with the WORSHIP Team to coordinate our various welcoming efforts for guests;
5. Plans and coordinates follow-up with guests who visit us;
6. Plans and coordinates prospective member and new member classes, such as **CLASS 101**.

So What Does the DISCIPLESHIP Team Do?

DISCIPLESHIP (GROWing) Team (By-Law 3.7.1) TEAM LEADER: Fran Henderson

“The DISCIPLESHIP Team’s function is to organize, coordinate, staff, and evaluate the teaching ministries of the church.”

1. Plans and coordinates all small-group ministries, including, but not limited to, Sunday morning Bible study, Sunday evening, Wednesday evening, weekday, and home studies;
2. Develops and administers programs and classes to help seekers become mature & reproducing Disciples, including **CLASS 201**;
3. Develops and administers a discipleship curriculum with various levels of achievement that equips believers in all areas of Christian life;
4. Develops and administers effective and age-appropriate teaching strategies to accomplish these purposes across the life-cycle from birth to old age;
5. Recruits, trains, and supports leadership for small-group discipleship ministries;
6. Works with the WORSHIP Team to plan annual churchwide spiritual enrichment events.

So What Does the MINISTRY Team Do?

MINISTRY (SERVing) Team (By-Law 3.8.1) TEAM LEADER: Sam Odulana

“The primary function of the MINISTRY Team is to facilitate congregants’ discovery of their own spiritual gifts and abilities and then to assist them in finding ways to deploy those abilities in the life of the church. An expression of this is the development of the leadership slate.”

1. Develops and administers programs to help members discover their spiritual gifts;
2. Develops and administers programs to turn members into servant ministers by helping every member of the church find a meaningful place of service that best expresses her or his gifts and abilities, including **CLASS 301**;
3. Develops and administers programs to maintain current spiritual gift and interest information for all members;
4. Recruits, trains, and supports leadership for ongoing ministries;
5. Maintains and publishes information about current ministry needs and opportunities for short-term assignments;
6. Produces periodic church directories.

So What Does the MISSION Team Do?

MISSION (GOing) Team (By-Law 3.9.1) TEAM LEADER: Linda Baker

“The function of the MISSION Team is to organize, coordinate, and evaluate the mission education and missional activities of the church beyond our own congregation.”

1. Coordinates mission education for all age groups, including evangelism training, and including **CLASS 401**;
2. Promotes missional praying, giving, and going throughout the congregation;
3. Works with the pastor, other staff, and the WORSHIP Team to schedule missionary speakers throughout the year;
4. Coordinates all missional activity, whether local, stateside, or international.

So What Do the DEACONS Do?

DEACONS (By-Law 3.3.4) TEAM LEADER: Sandra Gray

*“In keeping with the New Testament description of the role for Deacons, the CBF Deacons are set apart to **minister to the spiritual and human needs** of the congregation. Such ministry may include such things as **visitation of the sick**, helping members at a time of **personal crisis**, and seeking congregational involvement to assist members in **times of emergency or hardship**.”*

*“The Deacons shall prepare the ingredients for and assist the Ministerial Staff in serving **Communion** to the congregation.”*

*“The Deacons will assist the Ministerial Staff and candidates for **baptism** as requested.”*

*“Should an occasion arise when the fellowship of the church is threatened, the Deacon Ministry shall work with the Ministerial Staff, the affected individuals, and other church organizations, as appropriate, to **assist in resolving the conflict**.”*



So What Does the ADMIN Team Do?

ADMIN Team (By-Law 4.1.1) **TEAM LEADER: Ray Sudduth**

“The ADMINISTRATION Team is responsible for most aspects of the financial and legal management of Columbia Baptist Fellowship.”

1. Develops procedures for the administration of church business, including preparation and maintenance of a Personnel Policy Handbook;
2. Ensures that CBF is in compliance with all current tax and legal requirements;
3. Ensures that the congregation has adequate policies of insurance;
4. Ensures that office equipment is up-to-date and functioning properly;
5. Provides oversight of the maintenance and operation of church vehicles;
6. Proposes an Annual Proposal for Ministry Support (budget);
7. Provides oversight of the handling of all church funds;
8. Ensures the conduct of an annual audit.

Would YOU like to HELP?

Let somebody know! ☺

