

September 18, 2006

Dear GEBC Family,

A consistent refrain heard in the corporate world is that employees often claim management is close-lipped—unwilling to share even a few scant bits of information about the company and its plans. Employees say they want to know where leadership is heading. After all, workers will state, they do have a critical stake in the future of the corporation.

GEBC is not exactly corporate, but communication between church leadership and the church can sometimes be strained. Share too little and one might be accused of being secretive. Share too much information and one can watch eyes glaze over. (Ever sit through an all-day budget meeting?) I hate to disillusion anyone, but the current elder team has no secret formula for eliminating the tensions inherent in “corporate” communication. But we want to make a start. (And I “volunteered” to write a semi-regular note to the church highlighting the concerns and plans of the elders and staff. Volunteer is such an ambiguous - and ambitious - word, don’t you think?)

Let’s start out with what the elders do during a typical meeting. The first hour is spent on congregational care and praying. In a church our size, there are any number of people struggling with any number of problematic situations. If practical help is required, we discuss what that might be and try to implement it. If some form of pastoral/elder care is warranted, we attempt to provide that. We will facilitate meetings and counseling care; make home visits and offer to pray with them, etc. In some situations, all we can do is present our prayers to God. More than half that first hour is spent praying. Each elder, each request, and each petition is brought before God.

For some of us who want to “get things done,” prayer is a hard discipline. For some of us who are not as empathetic as we ought to be (I know who I am), prayer encourages the development of an empathetic heart.

At a recent elder meeting, the second hour . . . (and a few minutes more) . . . were spent discussing six-month staff objectives. Kelly presented a list of goals and objectives each staff member is working on. We also discussed the progress the elders are making with the objectives listed at our recent retreat.

Among those objectives were:

Create and implement an elder training program

Create and mobilize the *Leadership Advisory Team*

Increase the visibility of the Disciple Making Target

Identify a vision for reaching unchurched Glen and Ellyn

Identify the “what next” as a disciple making church (i.e. New campus? Plant a church? Build?)

Part of the tension of any communication is giving enough information without overloading readers with minutia. The other side of that concern is giving too little information as to cause confusion. (I may have accomplished both negative results with this letter.)

I hope this provides a clear recap of what happens at an elder meeting. And since I volunteered to produce this communication on a regular basis, I will amplify some of our discussion points in my next missive. (We’re talking about vision this week. Maybe I’ll take notes on that.)

For the elders,

Jim Kraus