

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE #1

- 1. Facts of church/ministry - size, ethnicity, any pertinent info on breakdown of people, staffing, or other important facts of history that will help us grasp the context.**

We are in the Midwest with approximately 1000 people. – hard to know for sure currently – due to online, in person and COVID. Over 98% white – suburban – main campus with a small, urban campus. We have 20 staff – with 11 pastoral roles in that mix. Church born in 1959. Been fairly flat for about 5 years. Highly conservative culture – politically. 10 years ago, began focusing on being deployed into the community. Our shifts are on several levels right now – minister from abiding lifestyle – things we have said for years but are just discovering how far we are from this through more honest conversation, engagement, and accountability.

- 2. Describe one challenging problem/situation you are facing.**

We want to deploy people to be missional – but have also realized they feel ill equipped, and we have pulled back to build this first at the staff and board level. Our Board lacks the basics of discipleship and have fears of inadequacy in investing in others. I am also wondering “How do we make disciples that make disciples, in a way that is not a program but a reproducible pattern? I realize growing people more deeply through emotional health is deeply needed and takes time. How do we do this in a way that is not programmatic discipleship.

- 3. What attempts have you made - thus far - to address this?**

We do what most churches do – small groups, classes, mission trips, great weekend services, connect-grow-serve. Our staff and Board have read Emotionally Healthy Leader and Emotionally Healthy Discipleship. Love the ideas but are lost in how to begin implementing this kind of material.

- 4. From where you are now, what do you think might be next steps?**

I think introducing the EH Discipleship Course: Pt. 1 and 2 is important but I am not sure how or where to start? The Board, the Staff? The congregation? It feels a bit overwhelming right now.

- 5. What questions are you now holding?**

What is immaturity? How do we measure success in this complicated season, especially as it relates to discipleship. What first steps would you take if you were in my shoes? How do we build a model that is reproducible and normative? How do we help people grow without needing to have degrees in therapy? I am concerned we could professionalize discipleship from – you need a pastoral leader to you need a therapist or at least emotionally skilled leader to disciple. I would love to hear your thoughts on this tension-at least to me.

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE #2

- 1. Facts of church/ministry - size, ethnicity, any pertinent info on breakdown of people, staffing, or other important facts of history that will help us grasp the context.**

I am the Executive Pastor at a large African American congregation, a megachurch with over 100 staff. Our Church was planted in 1985 as the result of a church split. The Founding Pastor of our church was considered the "Acting Pastor" of an older prominent congregation for five years. During that time, the church was fraught with conflict between the Pastor and the Deacons. The conflict finally came to a head when the Pastor's health insurance was cancelled after his wife had a miscarriage. The day that the Pastor came to preach his last sermon and resign from the church, the Deacons (who were armed) attempted to lock him out. He was let in by an usher and announced to the church that he was leaving. Nearly 200 people followed him to another church where he would start our current church. Since that day, our church has grown numerically and in prominence and influence, reaching a membership of over 20,000 people at its missional peak. Our Pastor has also served as a political leader, and the congregation has been active in evangelism and outreach, leading major projects such as forcing the closure of liquor stores in our zip code, providing bibles to prisoners, providing tutoring to at-risk students to raise test scores, and leading tens of thousands of people to Christ in one year. Many churches and leaders have emerged from our church over the years.

- 2. Describe one challenging problem/situation you are facing.**

We are a megachurch in transition. About 15 years ago we built the largest worship center in the state. For about the past 7-8 years, the Sunday attendance and offering have sharply declined. During this time, we also experienced many transitions in staff leadership, and the death of founding members and key figures. The pandemic has further compounded the sense of loss and grief we have experienced over these past several years. The physical and spiritual toll of these changes have worn on Senior leadership.

- 3. What attempts have you made - thus far - to address this?**

I joined the staff in 2020, right before the pandemic, as part of a three-year strategic ministry plan aimed at preparing the church for the future by clarifying vision and mission, setting key objectives around debt management, church growth, discipleship and developing new leaders. As part of that strategic plan, we are now a team-led church as opposed to a single pastor led church (the Senior Pastor has been the primary decisionmaker and has had the final say in almost all decisions since the church started).

- 4. From where you are now, what do you think might be next steps?**

Next steps as we emerge from the pandemic might be to clarify the transitions we expect in the next 2-3 years and organizing details around those transitions to help people know how to respond. To do that, we will have to deal with the underbelly of transition, which might be much unresolved grief and loss in the church and in the leadership, and also naming and sitting with the anxieties that some may have about what "next" looks like.

- 5. What questions are you now holding?**

What does it look like for us to bounce *forward* from the pandemic and not back to old models we know?

What pain and loss will we have to embrace?

What painful emotions will we need to learn to allow to wash over us as a church family?

How might EH Discipleship be of help here?

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE #3

- 1. Facts of church/ministry- size, ethnicity, any pertinent info on breakdown of people, staffing, or other important facts of history that will help us grasp the context.**

This is an English-speaking congregation which includes expats in a large South American city. We have been here nearly 18 years in what has been a significant reclamation/renovation/renewal of the congregation. Today we continue to experience significant turnover among internationals but reach weekly work with 150 people. We are the only visible protestant church in the neighborhood and along the social-economic coastline of the city for 300-400,000 people. In any gathering of fifty people, all continents will be represented and all age groups. Our small team includes volunteers from three different generations and multiple cultures.

- 2. Describe one challenging problem/situation you are facing.**

My long experience in Latin America has opened doors for relationships with leaders locally and regionally. One close friend of many years, pastors a church he planted of several hundred in another city. He is unable to see the way to make significant changes in his routine or thinking about the church. He is afraid to lose people by changing the dynamic or expectation. Another long-term church planting colleague tells me he likes the EH Leader podcast, and read the book, but to implement it would be to change everything! So, he sets it aside. This is common among the Latino leaders I meet with...they often feel too much is at stake for them to make a major shift. They are too tired or too alone or too...??

- 3. What attempts have you made - thus far - to address this?**

I share my experience of personal and ministerial transformation. I invite to trainings. I invite them to "come and see". I share my story of Sabbath and Sabbatical. Moving from impossible for me /us, to being a new lifestyle connecting us to each other and to God.

- 4. From where you are now, what do you think might be next steps?**

I am taking this course to grow in my understanding of the backstory for the contemplative conversation (the biggest obstacle for Latin Leaders, I think). I am working to model it where we are and pray for ways to integrate it into my teaching and preaching.

- 5. What questions are you now holding?**

Leaders tend to think: "Easy for you to say." NO more kids at home or a small church, or I have too much.... One of my questions is how to encourage without imposing or enjoy a relationship knowing we are moving along the journey in such a different way. How do you work with younger pastors enamored with growth or with older pastors too tired to change?

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE #4

1. Facts of church/ministry - size, ethnicity, any pertinent info on the breakdown of people, staffing, or other important facts of history that will help us grasp the context.

Our church is 90 years old. My husband stepped into the lead pastoring role 8 years ago, following a very strong and iconic leader (not only at our church but the denomination). Over the past few years, we have transitioned to leading the staff and the church together.

After these past 3 years, our church is approximately 1/3 the size it was (now 500-600 adults on a weekend), and our staff is also about 1/3 of its former size. We also have responsibility over two other church campuses.

Both my husband and I read the EHS book approximately 8 years ago. The honest truth is we both thought it was great but didn't spend much time actually integrating any of it into our lives. Fast forward to 3 years ago when we (with our main leadership team) began really asking the question: Is the way we are discipling people producing the fruit we want it to? We knew how to get a lot of people in the doors, and we knew how to put on really great events. And there was fruit...it just wasn't consistent. We wanted to see more real life-transformation. When the pandemic hit, we found an answer to the question. Were we actually discipling people in an effective way?

Then this last Fall, my husband hit a major wall in every way (physically, emotionally, spiritually). He was still doing all the things he knew to do but was completely empty and running on fumes. This wall took us to 2 weeks with a counselor at a retreat (through our denomination) and again to EHD.

2. Describe one challenging problem/situation you are facing.

The last few years have brought several very significant changes in our staff. The staff we have now is very young (in age and in ministry experience). We can see the need to disciple this team in a more holistic way.

3. What attempts have you made thus far to address this?

First, we have been working on our own personal growth in all the above-mentioned areas. We have been incorporating principles and exercises from another ministry to cultivate health, gratitude, joy stories, vulnerability in our staff.

4. From where you are now, what do you think are your next steps?

We plan to create personal growth plans with each staff member. And we are looking to invest in our team in ways that will promote overall health (helping some of them participate in learning/growth cohorts and classes, making more space in our times together to practice "pausing to make space for Jesus to speak", helping them access other resources. Potentially a next step would be to take the team through one of the EH courses together.

5. What questions are you now holding?

Question: How can we foster an environment that is safe and gracious for all levels of maturity and skill, but not become passive or complacent in the work quality and effort we put toward what we do?

Question: Practically, what are other ways can we support and engage our leaders in their journey toward health and wholeness?

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE #5

1. **Facts of church/ministry - size, ethnicity, any pertinent info on the breakdown of people, staffing, or other important facts of history that will help us grasp the context.**

Our church is a 35 yr. church in Boulder, CO. Established in the 80's within the Vineyard movement, our congregation has a charismatic root system and passion to walk in the fullness of life in the Spirit. Currently, we are a non-denominational church. Our church has had several seasons of varied leadership models. Early on, there was strong, domineering leadership that left many hurt and broken. The reaction to this was a season of leadership model that was still "CEO led" but was also largely conflict avoidant. Issues with staff were rarely addressed directly in order to not hurt feelings. The pastor would "pray away" staff that he ultimately wanted to fire but wouldn't confront them directly. Following this season, there was an experiment with team leadership, but the lack of clarity caused much confusion over time. Within the last year, I became the Lead Pastor, but still operate with a pastoral team and eldership.

2. **Describe one challenging problem/situation you are facing.**

I have a senior staff member who struggles with time management. They are routinely 10 minutes late to every meeting. Even though I have directly confronted this issue, they problem remains. The issue is, this particular leader does great work in their ministry area. Highly prophetic and prayerful. They have good rhythms of Sabbath, prayer, and their life is generally un-rushed.

3. **What attempts have you made thus far to address this?**

I've confronted this individual before, and they've said that they know it's a problem and are trying to get better. But it doesn't change. While I've considered additional disciplinary action, I also know we likely will not fire this person for this reason. I know this is a performance issue, but I'm struggling with knowing how to confront this as a discipleship issue.

4. **From where you are now, what do you think are your next steps?**

At their next review, I might consider asking them "What is God wanting to show you about the way you relate to time?". Assign them the task of prayerfully journaling about what God might be saying to them to bring back to the team. Bring in a Board member?

5. **What questions are you now holding?**

How do you maintain a "family" relational culture, but also directly confront performance issues?

How do you apply the emotionally healthy skills taught in the EH Discipleship Course: Pt. 2 (EH Relationships), specifically "Stop Mind Reading and Clarify Expectations" in this kind of complex, nuanced situation?

Might this be a deeper genogram issue in their life? In mine? What else might going on?

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE #6

1. **Facts of church/ministry - size, ethnicity, any pertinent info on the breakdown of people, staffing, or other important facts of history that will help us grasp the context.**

My role as COO is with the denomination office of the International Network of 100+ churches of sizes ranging from 30-2500 + regular Sunday attendees. We are a Pentecostal movement started in the early 1980's. Predominantly Australian nationality in membership-unfortunately not heavily multi-cultural or indigenous representation. The Pentecostal movement started in 1974 that ran large revival meetings. First Australian group to go on TV with meeting etc. Pioneering movement. Many considered 'out there'. Now a lot more mainstream.

2. **Describe one challenging problem/situation you are facing.**

As Movement Leaders how do we monitor and measure churches' effective discipleship pursuits? In this new era, we want to measure healthy differently but from a distance, we feel restricted in many ways to cold hard data.

We have a tiered Ministry Leadership structure based on size demographic called Networks. The philosophy of that was that certain size churches tend to have the same size budget, staffing/volunteer numbers, and issues to deal with, the same type of building issues e.g. buying leasing, Sunday bump in, etc. This has been successful up until COVID as the Network Leaders can bring discussions, resources, and training relevant to their growth barriers and get quite involved with understanding their world. Approx. 1:12 ratio of leader to the Church pastor. The challenge is still, however, from a distance, how do we monitor discipleship without programming it to some degree?

3. **What attempts have you made thus far to address this?**

We collect national-level salvations, visitors, and financial monitoring. We have discussed adding in water baptism data but not sure from there. Just had a few discussions over the last 12 months but do not get a clear direction of which way to head.

4. **From where you are now, what do you think are your next steps?**

We are reaching out to others to see how they measure health and discipleship from a distance.

5. **What questions are you now holding?**

If you could design a monitoring system that a Board can review at meetings to have both lead and lag indicators for the health for the church and the level of discipleship pursuit/activity, what would you include in that system?

"How to create a healthy dashboard of "success" for yourself and your church by making Love the measure of Maturity, not Westernized Church metrics"

What is the role of the Board to measure an individual Church member's discipleship journey.

Why will it take 7-10 years to transform your church culture profoundly, and what is a pathway to do that?

How to ground our discipleship in biblical truths missing from traditional discipleship models like the gift of limits, embracing grief and loss, and breaking the past's power.

How to craft a rule of life for yourself, your family, your board, your staff/team and your congregation