

Welcome to the One Life 5 minute Leadership Podcast.

Today we are going to be looking at the first of a four-part series on how to communicate vision to your church and to those you are leading.

Most pastors think that that this happens through church announcements. Church announcements can be effective, but they can also be the most tragic part of a church service. I remember going to a church in the Western Cape once, many years ago and I had to sit through 20 minutes of announcements! Every Tom, Dick and Harry came up there to make his announcement. They just went on and on, not thinking through most of what they were saying. There was even an announcement to say that there was going to be an elders meeting! I looked up and down the front row and thought *there are only three elders here and about 200 people are having to sit through this announcement*. What does that tell you about the elders? Either they never talk to one another or they want to boast that they are having these sorts of meetings. What an absolute waste of time!

If you're going to make church announcements a handy idea is to use media, because you can make the announcement in advance, check it and then cut out all the waffling to make sure it's effective. People listen to videos these days; it's the way we interact with the world. This particular vlog hasn't been made with a sound system or fancy video equipment - it's just my iPhone. You can do church announcements that way. If you don't have the skills for that, a live presentation of the announcements should be governed by these guidelines.

We never make an announcement to the whole church unless it affects at least 50% of the church. There are other ways to communicate to the grannies about their midweek meeting than making 90% of the church - who are not going to come - listen to the announcement. The same goes for youth meetings - the youth doesn't normally involve 50% of the church. However, men's meetings do, women's meetings do, church wide events involve more than 50% of the church, as do big church events and family announcements like the births and marriages of the people. These are things you want the whole church to know about. We have this general rule that if it's not going to affect 50% of the audience, then find another way to communicate it. In addition to that, we don't believe that there should be more than two or three, at most, announcements made. People won't remember six announcements. Take your three most important, whittle it down to your top two and then be very clear about what you're trying to achieve. Are you trying to create general awareness? Or do you want them to sign up and attend something? Make sure you end with what you're trying to achieve.

Making church announcements is only one way of getting people to share your vision. You can also drip feed it through your sermon. Sometimes a visionary announcement is so important that your whole sermon will centre around it. I spent five weeks, recently, trying to envision the church on the importance and the need to get involved in a Connect Group. That was worth five sermons! If it's not worth putting your whole sermon toward it, try drip feeding it by telling stories in your sermon. This gives it credibility, context and is an effective way to motivate people.

If you want to use your website then people have got to know that you have one. To really get people envisioned, the first thing one sees on the landing page ought to be the thing you're leading the church into, in that season. If it's high priority it shouldn't be more than two clicks away. Making things difficult to find on your website isn't going to encourage people to view it or be compelled to act on it.

If you're going to use social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc) use young people to help you run these accounts. They understand their way around social media. Use people who have got a large number of followers and interaction on their feeds. They will be able to give you a good feel for it and on how to use that mechanism of communication.

A general principle in inspiring a whole church is to find out who your opinion leaders are; who moves big groups of people and to speak to them. In some churches it's the matriarch mom and in some, it's just a loud, extravert sort of person. In other churches it's good strong leaders, like your connect group leaders. Get those guys on side, one on one, and get them to pass on the visionary message. That's a great way to get them to move people.

Make use of your connect groups by putting messages through your connect group leaders. Remember to give them tools and tell them what to say.

Using handouts when people arrive at the church is also an effective way to communicate, but can be an expensive way, and you have to show people how to use the handout. You're not giving an invite to your church people to attend something - you're giving them an invite so that they can invite their friends to come.

Employing broadcast messages, such as emails and whatsapps are effective, but you've got to avoid spamming people. Think through your messages very carefully. The more you make use of means like this, the more resistant people can become to it. You've got to look at what you're wanting to say, who you're wanting to move to action and then think through the medium that you're going to use to bring your vision across.