

Welcome to the five minute Leadership Podcast at One Life Church.

You've heard it said that leadership is about taking people where they wouldn't ordinarily go on their own. If they *were* going there anyway, it's little more than a walk in the woods, isn't it?

Here's the question we're looking at today: What does leadership look like as your church begins to grow? And what does it take to adjust your leadership style as your church grows?

Larry Osborne, a well known communicator in America says, "when you plant a church it's like you're a decathlete - you do everything! You do the high jump, the long jump, the triple jump and the long distance run."

It's the same when you plant. Your wife, maybe leads the worship, you do the preaching, the kids do the projection and the dog sits and listens. But then when you grow a little bit or have some people coming with you, you're no longer an athlete, it's now like you're playing golf. You each have your own ball and you're doing your thing together - that's what golfers do. There is no captain, you're each playing your own way but you're playing together. Many house churches are like that. They do quite well up to about 30 people; just muddling along and sharing life.

However, to get that community from 30 to multiple hundreds takes a massive adjustment. When you make that adjustment there is attrition; you lose people. They say, "we didn't sign up for that! We signed up for golf. Who died and made you the captain anyway?"

Because leadership is suddenly essential to take it from 30 to 150 Osborne says that "it looks more like a basketball game where there is a lot of energy, vision and focus." Basketball is distinct from golf as it has one ball, one field, one vision and one objective. You all have to work together to make that happen.

To get your church up to 150, you've got to be good at casting vision, creating a team and getting people to follow you. There is an energy that you've got to motivate. That's what it takes and what mostly underpins the very effective, fast-growing churches in the world today.

To move from 150 people to multiple hundreds and thousands there is one massive adjustment you've got to make. Osborn says, "it's like you put down the basketball and you begin playing gridiron." To us, non-Americans, we've got to get our heads around that and what it means.

Gridiron football is different to basketball in that there are 80 players on a team. In fact there are multiple teams. There are kicking teams, attacking teams, defending teams and they have multiple coaches, physios, and dieticians. The big dudes are fed lots of burgers, the little guys are given carrot and celery sticks. It's filled with specialists.

So what can we learn from that metaphor? To take your church beyond 150 one of the principle things you need to do is to move from community (five tightly-knit guys on a basketball court) to communities (small groups who mobilise little squadrons to go on

mission, to serve on a Sunday etc). You need multiple teams; teams within teams within teams are vital for the move from community to communities. If you can't get that right you're going to stay playing basketball.

In addition to that, you've got to celebrate specialist gifts. In basketball everybody touches that ball and everybody has an equal shot at throwing it into the hoop. In gridiron football, some guys will play the entire game but never see the ball because they are specialists at bashing things over or kicking things.

In a church context it looks like specialist administrators, specialist children's people, specialist musicians, specialist artists, specialist media people, specialist small group leaders, specialist counsellors. You've got to get to that stage.

In basketball there is one captain who calls the play. In gridiron there are multiple captains and levels of leadership. You've got to be able to celebrate multiple visionaries (different people coming with dreams and ideas). It's that collective pool, which gets you into the multiple hundreds and thousands.

Gridiron also mobilises a lot more people. You haven't just got a one-size-fits-all mindset, where a few individuals preach and everybody else sits and watches. In the gridiron game everybody is involved. Everybody is ready or warming up and has a part to play.

The secret of taking basketball to gridiron is being able to mobilise everybody with a unique role.

Some of you might say that you don't much like the idea of gridiron. That's fine - you should then play multiple games of basketball! - and as you get to the 150 mark, multiply that church out and plant another one.

There is biblical room for gridiron. In the early church thousands had been added to the church and masses of people were devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to prayer.

Whatever it is; whether it's playing golf, multiple rounds of golf or multiple rounds of basketball or whether you're going to go flatout for gridiron, enjoy the ride. We follow Jesus. We say "follow us as we follow Jesus", that's leadership in the kingdom - what a ride!