



RELATIONAL INVESTMENT IN YOUR YOUTH PASTOR IS WORTH THE WORK.

One of the things we hear from youth pastors across the country is that they desire a closer relationship with their senior pastor. There is a gap between what many current relationships look like and what we believe both the youth pastor and senior pastor desire. We believe this gap is a contributing factor to job performance, stress, and ministry burnout.

Your youth pastor wants to be known and he or she wants to know that he or she is doing a good work for the church, the team, and for you.

LEADERSHIP DERIVED FROM AUTHORITY IS STRONG, BUT LEADERSHIP GROWN IN TRUST IS POWERFUL.

If there is not already a cadence of open communication between you and your youth pastor, you can blame us for any discomfort that comes from starting something new. We promise it will be worth it! Some of the most fruitful conversations happen when we make time for them. If you're an agenda-driven leader, it may be especially challenging for you to create space for natural conversation to take place inside these conversations, but it will help your youth pastor feel seen, heard, and valued.

Developing an expectation for and cadence of meeting, accountability, and trust allow for a deepened relationship that will encourage conversations of greater risk and greater success. The more often you meet, the more opportunities you will have to coach and care for your youth pastor. This benefits not only your relationship, but also the ministry you lead.

"When my senior pastor first wanted to meet, I was worried I was in trouble! What I realized after our third meeting was that he just wanted to support me and help me feel known. I learned that staff meetings were for work, and these personal meetings were for worth."

-Zac Workun

"9 months into a new hire, I was invited into Pastor Paul's office to be informed that he had seen my work, heard the reports, and he just wanted to say out loud that he trusted me. He didn't have to say it, but because he did, it enhanced my excitement to serve and furthered our relationship."

-Chad Higgins



GET STARTED

THERE ARE FOUR KEY CONVERSATIONS WITHIN THIS GUIDE:

- Caring for the Person: “How are you doing?”
- Caring About the Process: “How is it going?”
- Caring for the People: “How are the people you lead?”
- Prayer: “How is your soul?”

HOW DOES IT WORK?

For each of the four conversations, there is a bank of questions to ask your youth pastor. It goes without saying, but be sure your youth pastor has time to ask questions of you, gain clarity, and has a clear understanding of your expectations.

THIS CONVERSATIONAL RECIPROCITY WILL BENEFIT YOUR RELATIONSHIP IN THREE WAYS:

- It creates an opening to hear from one another.
- It makes space for openness and vulnerability.
- It builds trust and fellowship.

PRE-MEETING PRAYER

“Lord, open my ears to hear, my eyes to see, and my life’s experiences to share Your wisdom. Help me to see his or her potential and may my work here be to spur on the gospel through Godly encouragement and challenge. I ask that you make this relationship a valuable growth opportunity for each of us as together we seek to live out Your calling in our lives.”

CONVERSATION ONE: CARING FOR THE PERSON

“How are you doing?”

These questions are not going to be revolutionary, but they are a starting point. Chances are, you’ve asked these questions in passing before, but the point of this conversation is to slow down enough to listen to the answers and to reciprocate by sharing about your life, too. Conversation one is a low-stakes conversation that lays the foundation for higher-stakes conversations moving forward.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR YOUTH PASTOR:

- How are you?
- How is your family?
- What are you learning?
- How are you growing?

These questions about your youth pastor’s family are key to creating a pathway of compassionate care. For some of you, this is second nature; for others, we forget to ask our fellow ministry leaders how their kids are doing in school and what they are doing in their free time. You may uncover new information about family dynamics, and your youth pastor will have an opportunity to see you as fully human as you share about yours. Believe us, your youth pastor wants to know these things and they will indirectly help him or her grow in his or her leadership of others.

CONVERSATION TWO: CARING FOR THE PROCESS

“How is it going?”

The process by which we get our work done is the connective tissue between the person (your youth pastor) and the results. This process is rarely spoken of.

Guaranteed, a wall will come down if you share how you manage to get everything done—or the ways in which you struggle to get your own work done.

Your youth pastor is, in many ways, like you, and is craving a successful strategy for managing the work of relationships and leadership.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR YOUTH PASTOR:

- What are you working on right now?
- How is it going? How is it improving?
- What does your work look like for the next three months?
- What are some goals you’ve set for yourself?
- How can I help you be successful in achieving your goals?

Be sure that by the end of this meeting, you have thoughtfully and clearly communicated your expectations for your youth pastor and have also communicated the ways you plan to come alongside him or her in meeting those expectations. This clarity benefits your relationship, your youth ministry, and the families in your church.

CONVERSATION THREE: CARING FOR THEIR PEOPLE

“How are the people you lead?”

When you have a good understanding of your youth pastor’s insight into the people they lead, it can help you assess the quality of their leadership. You can help nurture their relational intelligence by helping them ask important questions of their leaders and by helping them celebrate stories of growth, compassion, and support.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR YOUTH PASTOR:

- Who do you lead that is growing?
- Who do you lead who is struggling; how can I help you give them more care?
- What ways can I help support your team more effectively?

Offer your own answers to these questions, too. This shows you are paying attention to their people and to their leadership. Paying attention to their leadership shows care because it gives you an opportunity to provide both constructive feedback and have their back.

CONVERSATION FOUR: CARING FOR THE YOUTH PASTOR'S SOUL

A Prayer Meeting

We learn a lot about a person from the way they pray. It's why Jesus' disciples asked the Rabbi to teach them in His way. You, too, have an opportunity to learn much about your youth pastor and impart wisdom by the manner in which you pray.

In a tender moment of prayer for your student ministry, hear the heart of the minister sitting across the table from you.

OBSERVATION THROUGH PRAYER:

- What are they seeking from the Lord?
- What are they asking of Him?
- Who are they interceding for with their requests?
- What praise or petition uncovers ways you can develop or encourage?

Personal meetings give tremendous worth. Active listening is perhaps the most luxurious gift you could give to your youth pastor. The work we do for the church is highly relational, and knowing that your leader invests relational energy in you is life-giving.

This is work worth doing.