

vineyard usa



Launching Leaders

HOW TO MULTIPLY LEADERS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

7 Practical Sessions From A Classic Vineyard Approach

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Develop leaders who change the world.

Since the beginning of the Vineyard Movement, we have been about the work of multiplying leaders and churches to serve God's kingdom purposes on the earth. For that reason, we've had to figure out a way to develop leaders who have a heart to serve, but who are also healthy from the inside out.

If we start with a healthy community, and then identify a leader growing in it, we have a way forward in seeing Jesus' mission accomplished in and through that person's life.

In this booklet, seasoned church planter Michael Gatlin shows you the "Vineyard way" that we have developed leaders in our local churches for years. This simple tool, if applied in your church, could revolutionize the way you do life and ministry with others.

Many leaders I know have road-tested these ideas, first taught by John Wimber, and found them to work very well in their communities. Good leaders are made, not born.

We can have natural abilities, but it takes the Spirit of God and healthy mentoring to develop leaders who change the world in Jesus' name.

I hope this book serves you, as you serve God's kingdom, in developing leaders.

Phil Strout
Vineyard USA National Director

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Written by Michael Gatlin, for Vineyard USA



An Introduction

It has been said that leadership is influence. Those who lead are influencing others toward or away from something. In the local church context our desire is to influence others toward *Christ*.

Leadership reproduction is one of the most important aspects of leading a healthy church community simply because, as the church grows, we need other leaders to come alongside us to help out. Over the years, we've seen that leadership reproduction and growth is a continuing key to experiencing healthy biblical community.

Over and over throughout the Scriptures we see the importance of this idea. Reproducing and empowering other leaders was central to the sage advice Moses got from his father-in-law (Exodus 18). As Jesus was discipling his followers, he specifically chose the twelve who would lead – and then focused on reproducing himself in them (Mark 3:14-15).

We see the Apostle Paul teaching the young leader Timothy to do the exact same thing: "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:1-2 NIV).

We must be intentional about this task. Leadership reproduction will not happen haphazardly. We must think, pray, and act resolutely.

If we want to lead healthy churches that will bring the kingdom of God to our local communities, we must learn how – and devote ourselves to the task of reproducing leaders.



a healthy biblical community

In Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul highlights that leadership is a gift God gives to the church. In verse 12, Paul says the reason God gives us leadership in the church is “...to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:12-13 NIV).

The gifts of leadership are given to the church so the church can grow and mature to look like Christ. The specific job of leadership is to equip and support others to do what God is calling them to do. Through this, the whole church will grow together to be more like Jesus. In verse 16, Paul continues, “From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (v. 16).

This is a great picture of healthy biblical community, where new people are constantly being invited into the community to experience the resurrected Christ, and to grow in their discipleship to Jesus. As this happens, the leadership capacity of the church must grow as well.

A church can only grow, both in numbers and in spiritual maturity, as the leadership capacity expands. If leadership does not grow along with the body, we are left with a tenuous structure (e.g., the *Leaning Tower of Pisa*).

leaders are a gift.



If leadership grows alongside the body, our structure is more secure, stable, and long-lasting (e.g., the *Great Pyramids*). Simply put, as our attendance grows, and as our influence in the local community grows – so must our leadership base.

Whenever a leader takes on this responsibility alone, the growth and health of a church gets severely bogged down. In the long run, the most effective way for us to meet the needs of the people we lead is to equip more and more leaders. Without active and intentional leadership development, we are faced with a non-growing and non-disciple-making church. Discipleship and leadership reproduction go hand-in-hand. Reproducing leaders needs to be one of our highest priorities.

What we need is a tried and true, effective method for reproducing leaders – one based on biblical methods of discipleship, and one that actively and conscientiously pairs with what God is doing. We have this method in the ministry of Jesus.

In our setting, we've created an acronym to help us remember the process: **IRTD MN**. We've even turned it into a verb, as in "Who are you IRTDMNing?" While that may seem a bit silly, it actually works at keeping the basic principles at the front of our minds. Remember, leadership reproduction will not accidentally happen – we must be intentional.

Identify: Look for those God is highlighting for specific leadership roles.

Recruit: Clearly call them into a process of discipleship that will prepare them for that leadership role, utilizing clearly articulated vision and expectations.

Train: Give them the necessary experiences and tools to be successful in their leadership role.

Deploy: Release them to lead their ministry and, most importantly, to disciple other leaders.

Monitor: Keep track of their effectiveness as a leader and continue to support their growth and learning.

Nurture: Continue to care for their hurts, needs, and desires while encouraging them to continue learning and growing.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1. Can you think of a situation where the leader felt responsible to meet everyone's needs themselves?*
 - 2. How did it affect the group?*
 - 3. How would you evaluate and prioritize your own intentional leadership development efforts?*
-

identify

The first thing we need to do is to continually invite everyone to serve in some area of ministry. Every single person in the community needs to have the opportunity to serve if they want to grow as a follower of Christ, and develop healthy life skills.

For me, it doesn't even matter whether or not they would self-identify as a Christ follower yet. There are many ways to serve in our community while investigating the claims of Christ (e.g., making coffee, cleaning, serving the poor, etc.)

Out of those who are actively serving, we begin to look for the leaders God has given to us. As mentioned before, I believe God gives leadership gifts to each local church community. Our job is to identify these potential leaders and begin the process of helping them become the leaders our Father is inviting them to become.

Identifying these potential leaders can be the most difficult part of the entire process. Most of us either set the bar way too low and see everyone as a leader, or way too high and even Christ no longer qualifies. But if we define leadership as influence, we are looking for people who have some ability and track record in influencing others toward a specific direction – and for those who naturally step into leadership roles.

identify.



Identifying a leader can be as simple as watching whose opinion is followed when a group tries to decide where to go for a meal, or more importantly, for life advice.

It is vitally important to realize we are not in this alone. God is already inviting really good leaders into what he is doing. Remember – we are just joining him in what he's doing (John 5:17-20). Our job is to identify and invite those whom God is already inviting to participate with him in our ministry areas. Remember, leadership is not about a particular set of gifts, a certain personality type, or a certain leadership style. Effective leaders vary widely in each of these areas. In a biblical community, leadership is about influencing others toward Christ.

As I go about normal life in our church community, I always have several leadership opportunities in mind. Each one of these requires different skills and abilities. It's like I'm carrying around several job descriptions in my back pocket. The next stage is to match the various opportunities with the gifts, abilities, and desires of potential leaders. I watch them in different situations and ask lots of questions, because I want to match who God has made them to be with the opportunities I have available.

As we evaluate their readiness for leadership, we begin by asking about how **F.A.S.T.** these potential leaders are.

Faithful. Do they follow through with their commitments? Is this someone you can count on? Is this person passionate about the same vision you care about?

Available. Time is a huge limiter to actually doing ministry. Do they have time to commit to leadership? There are many who have all the gifts, character, and calling to be leaders, but they don't have the time.

Servant. Are they leaders who serve? This is a high value for us, because even Jesus came to serve. Do they anticipate the needs of others? Do they meet those needs without letting obstacles or excuses get in the way?

Teachable. One of the most important qualities of a biblical leader is their ability to receive instruction, correction, and reproof. How do they receive constructive criticism? Do they welcome it or do they become defensive?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1. What are the names of three people in your community to whom others look for advice or input?*
- 2. Are you currently helping them develop their leadership gifts? Why or why not?*
- 3. Utilizing the above FAST acronym, how do these potential leaders measure up?*

recruit

Recruiting others to ministry and leadership is a very normal biblical activity. Throughout the scriptures we see God actively recruiting leaders (Noah, Abraham, Moses, Samuel and David, just to name a few), and it isn't just in the Old Testament. Jesus recruited the twelve disciples – he taught them to pray for, and recruit, more workers. Even after the resurrection, Jesus recruited Saul. Recruiting others to serve and lead is a very biblical activity.

First and foremost, your specific vision for ministry is your best recruiting tool. Think about this for a moment; you're not going to get a rush of volunteers if all you share is that you're overrun with toddlers. "Please come help us with all these poopy diapers!" Hardly anyone signs up to fill a need. But people continually sign up for a *compelling vision*.

Challenge yourself to write and rewrite your vision for any specific ministry area until it spills over with compelling and inviting vision for what you want to do – and hope will happen. But please do not write another corporate vision statement. I'm talking about a vision that flows from your heart – the thing that gets you out of bed each day, that you can't stop talking about to everyone you meet.

Consistently sharing a compelling vision is the tool that will connect you with the right leaders. It will draw them in naturally.

recruit.



We need to recruit these potential leaders with a heart-and-head approach – asking why they are being recruited and for what they are being recruited (passion and purpose). In other words, people need a clear vision and a clear job description of what is being asked of them.

If we recruit the head and not the heart, we won't get many people entering leadership because most people aren't looking for another job. And if we recruit the heart and not the head, we will breed frustration because our expectations are not clear and can't possibly be met.

We've already talked about our vision; let's now focus on the purpose and our expectations. A specific job description is a very important part of the recruitment process. Writing this out forces us to clearly think through what we are asking others to do. It serves as a great reminder to them of what they are agreeing to do. A job description will also become vital when we talk about monitoring their progress.

A simple job description should include: ministry area, ministry title, ministry summary, time commitment, length of service, responsible to, responsible for, helpful spiritual gifts, and other qualifications.

As we recruit others to lead alongside us, remember: we never want to use people just to fill slots on some ministry chart. Rather, we want to match their unique gifts, abilities, and desires, to specific ministry areas within our community.

Flexibility is an important part in the matching process as well, because there is hardly ever a perfect match. As a leader, I want to help others connect with opportunities to serve and lead in a way that allows them to express their God-given dreams. I want to accomplish specific ministry goals I believe God has given to me.

When we 1) recruit the people God is already inviting to participate in ministry leadership, 2) utilize both a clear, compelling vision alongside clear expectations, and 3) match the specific needs of our community with the gifts and abilities of our potential leaders – then we will begin to get the right leaders involved in a healthy leadership development process.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1. In the past, have I generally recruited with a "needs" or "vision" based approach?*
- 2. How clear and inviting is my vision for each specific area of ministry?*
- 3. Have I taken the time to write out clear job descriptions for ministry areas?*

train

New leaders must be given the different tools necessary to succeed in their ministry areas. Jesus provides a useful model for training leaders by inviting them to follow and observe him. Jesus invited them into relationship, demonstrated the ministry, modeled it in front of them, sent them out on short trips to do the ministry, and continued to nurture them (by the Holy Spirit) as they carried out the ministry.

In the Western world, we often confuse information with training. We think of training as a class. A class isn't training – it's informing. Training is when someone supervises and gives input to the work you are doing. The challenge is creating not just instructional opportunities but also participatory and experiential opportunities, both formal and informal. We need to create ways that people can apprentice and learn with hands-on experience.

This is just the sort of model Jesus provided.

Here are the steps in our **Basic Discipleship Loop** model.

Step One – You do the ministry. Before you can walk someone else through a ministry area, you have to become good at doing it yourself. They must see the behavior in you first before you will see it in them. This is the most basic key to recruiting and training.

train.



Step Two – You do the ministry while they watch. This is simple show and tell. Look for “teachable moments” – specific times to explain the what, why, and how of what you’re doing. Encourage questions, like “Why do you do that this way?” De-mystify what you’re doing. Without the proper explanation, they’ll fill in their own understanding of why we’re doing what we’re doing.

Take time to expose the theological framework out of which you’re working. Basically, ministry should be simple and reproducible.

Step Three – You do the ministry with them. Now you’re increasing the risk – “Why don’t you pray this time?” or “Why don’t you lead discussion next week?” Challenging them in this way will typically take some cheerleading. They may think they can’t handle it yet. This is the first place your trust and relationship will be tested, and you may need more of both before they are able to take risks.

It is like a bank account. Deposits are made through nurturing, and withdrawals are made in the form of risk. Be sure to pray with them for God to properly equip them for the task. It is important that they rely on God rather than on you. Afterward, discuss what happened and pray with them. Their faith will be stretched, and they will grow and mature even if they fail. Always be encouraging.

Step Four – They do the ministry solo, and you get together to discuss it. This step involves even more risk. There is no longer the safety net of having another leader present. Set them up for success by preparing them, equipping them, and praying for them. Think back to what you wished you would have known when you were in their position. You’ll also see an increase in evaluation, and confrontation.

Have them report back, discuss how things went, and pray for them. Likewise, teach them to self-evaluate – “What could have been better?” Evaluation is absolutely necessary in training and is a very good part of the process. Learn to develop little systems for measuring: Where are we? Where do we want to go? How are we going to get there? Are we making progress?

Step Five – You release them to train others. Yet again – more risk. They often don’t feel ready for this either. Did you feel ready for leadership? Coach them through this – help set it up by coaching them on who to train and how to reproduce what you did with them.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Each of us is stronger at some of these steps than others. Which of these steps is the easiest for you? The most difficult?

deploy

This is partially covered in the “discipleship loop” we just talked about. At some point you want to release new leaders to go and do the ministry themselves and begin to develop other leaders. As leaders, if we want to see new people being disciplined, counseled, taught, and connected to Christ, we must release the leaders we are training.

Over the years I’ve noticed two mistakes often made at this stage of leadership reproduction. Some of us wait way too long, while others of us deploy leaders way too early.

In both cases, the new leaders are often frustrated and their leadership experience is difficult. There is a bit of an art to deploying new leaders at just the right time. When we release too soon, our new leaders often feel unsupported and untrained like they are swimming in the deep end without a lifeguard. And when we wait too long, they often feel held back, or not believed in and trusted.

But when we get it just right, our new leaders will generally feel somewhat afraid or cautious of the risk, but not so overwhelmed that it causes undue stress. There’s a sweet spot when they don’t feel quite ready, but we’ve already watched them actually doing everything we’re asking them to do. There’s no specific timeline for this as it is different with each leader. Some require more time, training and relationship than others.

deploy.



As we deploy new leaders, once again Jesus is our model. As he sent out the disciples in Matthew 10, he gave them very clear and specific instructions about where to go, what to preach, what to do, how to travel, and what to expect from others along the way. In order for others to be successful in their ministry leadership, we, and they, need to be clear about roles and expectations.

We want to leave as little room as possible for hurt feelings, personal offense, and frustration. It is very helpful to delineate clear lines and rhythms of reporting, clear expectations of what is being reported, expectations of character and care, ongoing training and opportunities, and realistic expectations of the growth of the ministry area. We want and need to spell out as much as we can with them.

A helpful analogy for deploying leaders is the comparison of chess versus checkers. Many leaders approach recruiting and deploying like a game of checkers. In checkers, all the pieces move alike, and we can tend to want to treat every leader exactly the same. In reality, it is more helpful to think of working with leaders like the pieces in a game of chess.

In chess, each piece has its own strengths and limitations. Chess grandmaster, Bobby Fisher, once said: "Winning in this game is all a matter of understanding how to capitalize on the strengths of each piece and timing their moves just right." People are best empowered when deployment is done according to their strengths and where they are in the leadership development process. Great leadership is not about control – but about connection and release.

Most importantly, we must be committed to their success. This means we must be available to them: available to pray for them, encourage them, listen to them, provide counsel to them, and support them. We must also be diligent to maintain consistent contact with them.

Remember that we are not using these people to fill a need we have, as much as we are releasing them to be the leaders God has created them to be.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1. Have you experienced being deployed too early or not at all? What effect did that experience have on you?*
- 2. What are some things you wish you had known before being deployed in a ministry setting?*
- 3. Are there any leaders you have deployed that, after reading this, you want to reconnect with?*

monitor

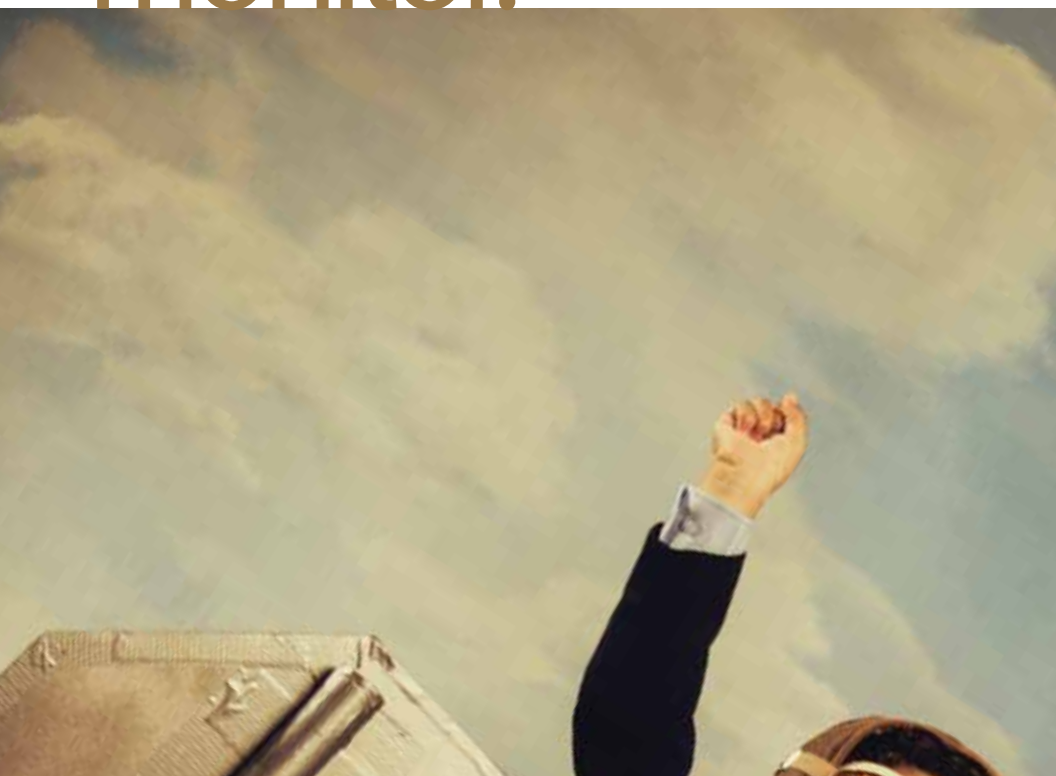
After we deploy leaders into various ministry opportunities, it is vital that we continue to follow-up with them. One of the greatest mistakes we can make, as many leaders do, is to think we are simply “giving ministry away.” I find this completely unhelpful language as it communicates that we are now finished with that ministry area or leader – we’ve given it away. Nothing could be further from reality if we want to lead healthy and growing churches. That is what these next two sections are all about.

In Mark 6:30, after one of the times Jesus deployed the disciples into a ministry opportunity, Mark records, “The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.” Jesus was following up with those he was sending out. Not surprisingly, once again, here is our model.

Because this kind of reporting has been done poorly, and without the benefit of a nurturing relationship, I’ve met many leaders over the years who shy away from any kind of effective monitoring. This is a huge mistake. Just as it’s a mistake to think we can effectively monitor through the filling out of some kind of monthly/quarterly/yearly report form.

Effective monitoring is an intentional way to strengthen the leadership relationship and increase ministry effectiveness.

monitor.



We want to set up regularly scheduled times when new leaders can report back to us everything they are facing in their ministry area and their lives: the joys and successes, the failures (we all have them), the frustrations, the problem people, as well as all the various parts of their family, work, and personal lives. During this time we want to ask the probing questions that leaders hardly ever get asked about the quality of their relationship with God, the health of their family relationships, and the effectiveness of their ministry areas.

When I am monitoring a leader, I also check in regularly with those they are leading – a sort of 360° review, if you will. At times, the leader might be too hard on themselves and I'll see this as I check in with others. At other times, they may be overly optimistic, or be unintentionally hurting others they are trying to lead.

I'm not trying to catch them making a mistake. Rather, I want to help them overcome any unforeseen obstacles and stay on track with their goals. I want to make sure they are doing okay in their own lives with Jesus and with others.

Through this personally-connected monitoring relationship, we will be able to assess any new areas of training they might need, as well as determine any areas of healing or growth that may have surfaced as a result of engaging in ministry. This is key because there are *always* areas of growth and healing that come to the surface as a result of engaging in ministry.

God has often used my engagement in ministry to reveal areas of my life, my attitudes, or outlook, that he wants to continue to heal. And it is often through personally engaging with my overseers that God has dialed into these areas to continue the healing process.

This kind of loving accountability will help to increase a new leader's effectiveness, resiliency and momentum. Weaknesses and problem areas cannot be corrected until they are seen. And as they hear what they are doing right, these new leaders will feel empowered to move ahead.

I encourage you to view monitoring as a key way to strengthen, encourage, support, and empower the leaders you lead.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1. Do you tend to shy away from this kind of monitoring relationship? Why or why not?*
- 2. As a leader of others, what parts of this kind of relationship will be the most difficult for you?*

nurture

To nurture is to feed and protect, to support and encourage, and to help provide an environment conducive to growth. If we want to see those we train go on to live fruitful lives in ministry leadership, then we must freely give ourselves to their nurturing.

Our example of nurture comes directly from God, who speaking through the prophet Isaiah says, "In that day – 'Sing about a fruitful vineyard: I, the Lord, watch over it; I water it continually. I guard it day and night so that no one may harm it'" (Isaiah 27:2-3). This the attitude and watchfulness we need to have with the leaders we deploy into ministry.

We see this, once again, in the example of Jesus. Luke records, in chapter 10, how Jesus spent time with the seventy-two disciples after they returned from their ministry trip. In this passage we see Jesus rejoicing with them, encouraging them, and even refocusing them on the most important parts of what they were doing.

Nurturing is all about taking the time to really understand where people are, what they are going through, what they are feeling, and what they really need. To accomplish this, we must focus on God's agenda for each of their lives. Nurturing happens as we get behind what God is saying to each person, encouraging them toward what he is doing rather than toward our private agenda.

nurture.



Think about it this way: we are not trying to satisfy the goals and ambitions of those we lead, but those of the God we all serve.

Nurturing has to do with developing genuine friendship, with giving value to a leader and meeting their personal needs through counsel and prayer. As a leader, ask God to help you see what they are experiencing under the surface.

Most importantly, nurture is about directing them toward God as their primary caregiver. Jesus did this with his disciples (John 14-16) just before his arrest, trial, and execution, as he pointed them toward the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Remind your leaders that God loves their ministry even more than they do, because all of it is his ministry!

When ministry leadership gets difficult, as it surely will, remember to remind your leaders that however difficult it may feel at the moment, learning to rely on God is a process we've all gone through.

Paul reminded the Corinthian church, "We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we have suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead" (2 Corinthians 1:8-9 NIV).

In order to provide a nurturing environment, take time to highlight the positive. Take time to give "feed-forward" rather than only "feed-back." Let your leaders know you believe in them and their ability to hear God. Be liberal with your praise and sincerely compliment them – even in public. Give credit where credit is due. If you steal their thunder, they will never forget it. Remember and remind them that the ministry is never more important than they are.

And lastly, don't forget that simply listening to them is one of the most loving things you can do. Practice asking great questions and then truly listening to their answers.

Ask great follow-up questions, and ask them what else they are thinking and feeling.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- 1. Which of these nurturing elements are most natural for you to provide to others? Which are the most difficult?*
- 2. What do you need to adjust in your listening and question-asking habits to more actively participate with what God is doing in another's life?*

“Develop leaders who
change the world.”





launching leaders

a reference guide

In Ephesians 4:12, Paul says that God gives leadership in the church “to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

The gifts of leadership are given to the church so the church can grow and mature to look like Christ. The specific job of leadership is to equip and support others to do what God is calling them to do. Through this, the whole church will grow together to be more like Jesus. *Are you IRTDMNing?*

identify

Invite everyone to serve as they follow Christ. Look for F.A.S.T. leaders – faithful, available, servant, teachable.

recruit

Share and clarify a compelling vision. Create a specific job description. Match their gifts to ministry areas.

train

Keep the loop: 1) you do it, 2) they watch, 3) you do it together, 4) they do it, 5) they train others. Give tools.

deploy

Release at the right time – not too early, not too late. Send them with instructions; capitalize on strengths.

monitor

Committed to their success, follow-up and set up a reporting pathway in your schedules. 360° reviews.

nurture

Feed, protect, support, encourage, provide an environment conducive to growth. Take time for friendship.



The Vineyard Movement, since birth, has valued seeing individual Christians experience God in their daily lives. Through spiritual practices such as worship, fellowship, mission, the reading and application of Scripture, soul care, family care, healing of the broken, cultural influence, the compassionate ministry of the Holy Spirit, and neighbor-love, the Vineyard community of churches seeks to be intentional about nurturing the lives of those who call us their family. To find out more about the Vineyard, visit www.vineyardusa.org.

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A COMMUNITY OF CHURCHES