

Something to Talk About

A conversation guide for church leaders

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Never Leave Baby Unattended

Note: This is one of a series of articles intended to facilitate and guide church leaders' conversations about significant issues that often are not talked about among pastors, boards, and church leadership teams.

Prior articles can be found at www.efcawest.org. Click on the Church Leadership tab to get to the archive.

By virtue of an 18-month-old grandson, I have been re-introduced to the world of baby things. While many things have changed since my own entry into parenthood, I have noticed one thing that has transcended the generations. It is the tag attached to everything “baby” that strikes fear into a parent’s heart – “*Never Leave Baby Unattended.*”

The tag is intended to minimize liability on the part of clothing, toy, and furniture manufacturers (why else would that tag be attached to a crib?), but there is an element of truth to the warning. Really bad things can happen to our baby if we do not pay attention. And that got me to wondering: Are there some things in our churches that we leaders should never leave unattended? That’s something to talk about.

Things and organizations naturally tend to decay and drift. Intentional intervention is required to prevent decay and drift. Are there some metaphorical “babies” in our churches that we should never leave unattended? Let me provide some ideas to jump start your conversation.

- Does our collective leadership growth and development need fairly constant attention? Do we schedule it intentionally? Is it a part of our board meetings? Do we look back on the previous year to ensure that we actually spent time in personal and leadership development for both pastors and non-staff elders?
- Does the health of our leaders’ families need our ongoing attention? How would we know whether things are going well in our pastors’ and church leaders’ homes? How often do we check or talk about it?
- Have we left our doctrine or statement of faith unattended? Do we know what we together believe? When did we last study or talk about it?
- Are we attending to our church’s mission and vision and values? What are we doing to ensure that they do not decay or drift?
- How do we attend to the trends in our flock in areas such as attendance, generosity, spiritual growth and discipleship? Do we attend to such trends often enough to intervene and make corrections before things hit rock bottom?

- Has the appearance of our facilities been left unattended? When did we last take a really good look at what our facilities communicate to our community?

We leaders obviously cannot pay close attention to everything all the time. But there are some things that are so critical to our church's mission, vision, and values and to its Kingdom impact among the people in our communities that we should keep a close eye on them.

Sometimes we forget to pay attention to the truly important things because we become distracted by things that are urgent. What are some of the things about your church that should never be left unattended? That's something to talk about.

*Have I missed anything? Let us know how your conversation goes.
Contact Bob Osborne by e-mail at bob.osborne@efca.org.*