



Mission Moments

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The Warmth and Glow of Campfires

By Rev. Eric Wenger



My family was hosting a party on a beautiful July evening. Before I knew it, there were very few people spending time inside. I got up to find out where everyone had gone, and immediately heard laughter in our front yard. As I walked down the sidewalk and around the corner, I saw the campfire that my wife had started in our portable fire pit.

I realized why almost everyone had left the air conditioning behind the instant that I saw the campfire. Of course, the s'mores had something to do with it. However, that was not the main reason. People were talking, sharing stories, enjoying one another's company, and having an all-around good time.

My interest in the dynamics was piqued enough that I later asked the people in my family what they like about campfires. Of course, the s'mores had something to do with it. Yet, that was not at the heart of their answers. Every one of them said it was fun to hang out with people. A couple of them said they learn things through the storytelling. They all like the warmth and glow of the fire.

I recall a campfire scene after Jesus rose from the dead. "When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread" (John 21:9, NIV). Ok, the verse says nothing about s'mores, but it does say that Jesus made fish and bread for breakfast. Friends gathered with the resurrected Jesus around the warmth and glow of the fire. It was there that Jesus reinstated Peter.

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus modeled the importance of spending time with His disciples in the rhythms of life. His campfire on the beach emphasized that point. My personal experience with campfires reminds me of the valuable relationship building that can take place around the campfire. It took reading "From Followers to Leaders" by Robert E. Logan and Tara Miller for me to connect campfires to the multiplication of servant leaders.

Logan and Miller call leadership network gatherings “campfires” in their book. Campfires are one stop on their leadership development path. They describe them this way, “What we’re aiming for in our network times is intentional conversation- the sharing of ideas, struggles, celebrations, and so on. Time for getting feedback and input from others who are engaged in similar ministries. Time for prayer and encouragement” (pg. 42).

Later in their book, Logan and Miller outline five things to consider when hosting a campfire. They include providing a forum for the team to gather regularly, praying together, encouraging team members to build relationships with one another, facilitating the exchange of stories and ideas, and helping them reaffirm the vision for what’s next (pg. 176).

I have learned that campfires are very effective. We organize them as part of our C4USM coach training. I start them regularly in my mission work.

How could you use a campfire effectively in your setting? Who do you need to invite? The Center for U.S. Missions provides coaching to help with your servant leadership development, your campfires, and your mission planting. Feel free to reach out to me at ewenger@livingraized.com to keep the conversation going.

God’s blessings as you enjoy the warmth and glow of some good campfires!



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Moment Extras

Questions for Discussion

Personal or Group Reflection

1. How do you envision starting or improving campfires in your servant leadership development?
2. How will you engage people in the Word and prayer when you meet for a campfire?
3. What strategies will you use to develop an ongoing culture of encouragement with your team and/or network?
4. Where does Christ-centered coaching fit into your plan?
5. How can you free people up for effective storytelling in your campfires and throughout your mission work?
6. What will it take to help sharpen the vision of every servant leader in your context?

Challenge: Read “From Followers to Leaders” and start at least one campfire.

Resources You Can Use

Related Books and Links

From Followers to Leaders by Robert Logan and Tara Miller provides an integrated path for developing leaders in our churches. This book provides a strategic, intentional pathway!

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