

Collaborative ministry involves a way of working with people which releases potential, builds confidence and encourages the taking of responsibility. We need to examine our churches and our styles of ministry to discover whether we are providing an environment which facilitates growth in these personal dimensions. This paper offers some tools of analysis for your church.

People and Task

Any organisation that knows what its purpose is has to bear two factors in mind when setting out to accomplish that purpose. Firstly, there is a *task*, or tasks, things to be done in order to move towards the goal. Secondly, there are *people*, working together to achieve the goal, but at the same time building relationships among themselves. In a church context these relationships are expected to display a particular character, of Christian love (agape) expressed in Christian fellowship (koinonia). Indeed, to express this is in itself one of the church's key tasks. For the church particularly, therefore, task and people cannot in principle be separated. However, the church is like any other organisation in that in practice, emphasis may be placed more on the one or the other within the 'organisational culture' (see figure opposite).

Some churches believe very strongly that attending to the people must take priority. The pastoral instinct is at work here and there is nothing wrong with that! People need to be cared for. Relationships need to be warm and supportive. Fellowship should be close and trustful. But a church that cultivates these things excessively can slide into decline. Keeping everything 'feeling good' can become the Big Rule. No-one must ever be upset; the worst disaster is for anyone to leave. No change can ever be made if there is someone who won't be happy with it. In

Being a Facilitator

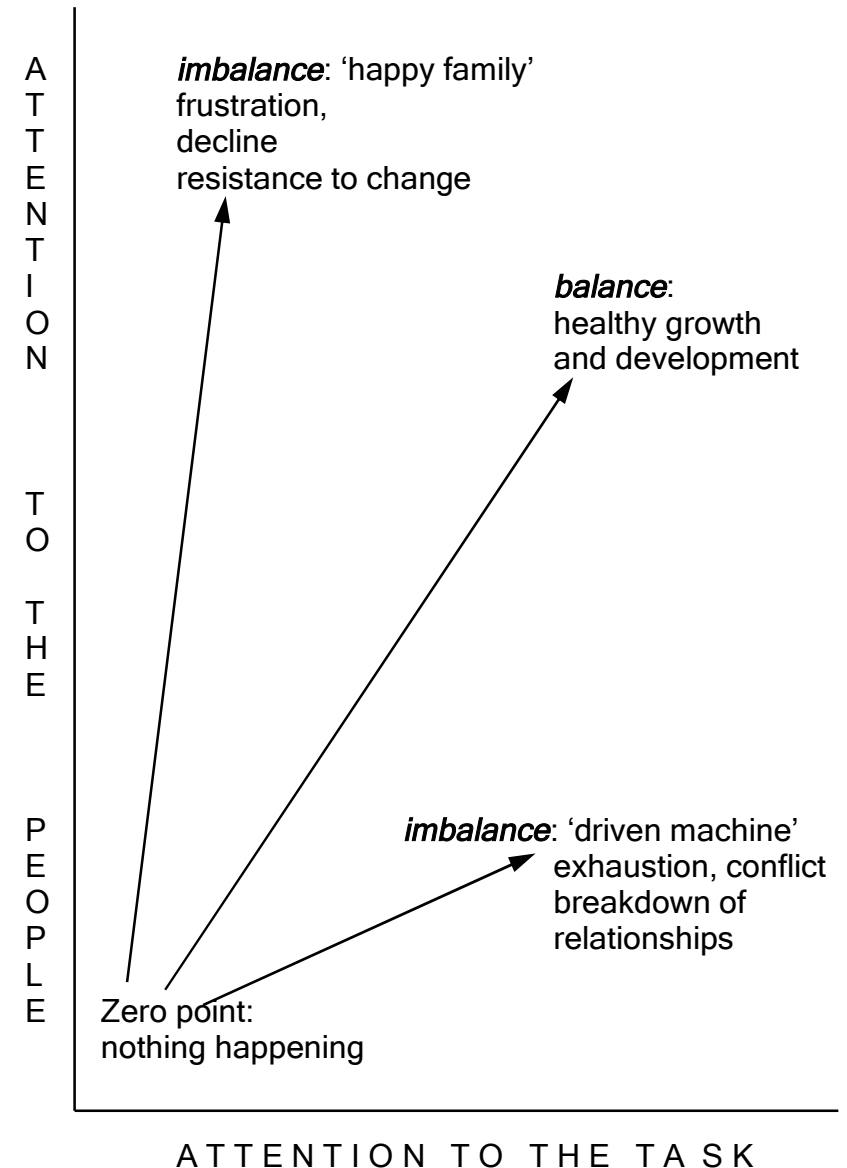
Bearing in mind all these factors which help to motivate people, how can you be more effective as a leader in cultivating the conditions for collaborative endeavour to flourish? Here is a summary checklist:

1. Learn to facilitate group discussion by using open-ended questions which release people to contribute. 'What does anyone think about this?' 'How do you see this proposal?' 'Has anyone any thoughts on this topic?' come before 'Here's what I think' or even 'This is what we're going to do. OK?'
2. Seek consensus. This does not necessarily mean a unanimous decision in every case. It does mean a decision everyone is prepared to work with, even those who may have doubts about it or (in a PCC for example) even voted against it. This means giving adequate time and space for everyone to contribute- not rushing or forcing things through- not avoiding conflict, but handling it productively.
3. Encourage group participation, especially in the early stages of a group's life. People need time and space to get to know and trust each other. The shy members have to begin to feel confident before they will speak.
4. Run effective meetings. Have a clear agenda with at least some timings. Make sure agreed action is recorded, with who will do it and by when; and always give sufficient time to important discussions.

Analytical. This motivation comes from people's need to feel safe and secure in the working environment. It is promoted by recognition of a person's knowledge and skills; provision of good resources, terms and conditions, job descriptions, clear procedures. You can enhance it by providing good training, keeping people informed, listening to and acting on their ideas. It is harmed by a sense of uncertainty, inadequate briefing and preparation for a task, poor environment or equipment. It is relatively low on both 'person' and 'task' but is the motivation which needs to be adequately addressed for the others to build on.

Driving. This comes from people's need to perform well at a particular task. It is promoted by the sense of making a significant contribution, achieving or surpassing a standard, and fulfilling personal aims. As leader you can enhance this by working with people to set measurable aims, making sure progress and achievement are reviewed, and focusing on people's personal development (beyond just 'giving them a job to do'). This motivation is harmed when there seems to be little substantial to aim for, too much unstructured discussion, infrequent review or feedback so that the task does not seem worthwhile. It is high on task-orientation but lower on 'people'.

Expressive. This motivation comes from people's need to have influence or feel they 'make a difference'. It is promoted by having the scope to exercise authority, taking on greater responsibility, and being known for having a particular skill or competence. You can enhance it by seeking ideas and suggestions from people which draw upon their experience and knowledge; giving credit, sharing your thinking, making sure someone's role is recognised by others. Harm is done by exclusion from decision-making, autocratic behaviour and withholding of authority. This motivation is high on both the 'task' and 'people' scales.



this way frustration can set in among those with a vision for the future, and resistance to change can actually be stiffened. The ‘happy family’ can turn into the ‘cosy clique’.

A commitment to collaborative ministry means that this scenario must be challenged, because collaborative ministry flows from the commitment to a shared vision and a common strategy for implementing it in which all are engaged.

Some churches, on the other hand, become very task-oriented. Activist clergy and leaders are particularly prone to this danger: there is always the next Big Thing to be getting on with. Mission, after all, won’t wait: there is a huge need for the Gospel out there! The missionary instinct at work here is also good in itself; but churches must beware of ‘initiative fatigue’. An endlessly busy task-centred church with little space for reflection, receiving, responding and just being can become an exhausting, draining place. People burn out or just quietly drift away because they’ve had enough. There is a drivenness about it which becomes impersonal.

A commitment to collaborative ministry means that people will be alert to this danger before it develops, because people can only work effectively together if they are at ease in their roles and responsibilities and enjoying ‘job satisfaction’ in what they do.

Another way of putting all this is to say: make sure that your leadership team is monitoring how effectively the *task needs*, *group needs* and *individual needs* of your active church members are being met.

Motivation

The graph on p3 indicates the two extremes which for different reasons mean that motivation will suffer. It is possible to analyse this further:

	TASK FOCUS LOW	TASK FOCUS HIGH
PEOPLE FOCUS HIGH	‘Amiable’: oriented to affiliation	‘Expressive’: oriented to influence
PEOPLE FOCUS LOW	‘Analysing’: oriented to security	‘Driving’: oriented to achievement

The four boxes represent four elements which are important, in varying degrees in different people, for producing motivation. Together they provide a more sophisticated tool for examining your church’s life and people and considering any ‘correctives’ that may be necessary to the current emphasis.

Amiable. This motivation comes from the need to establish and maintain warm personal working relationships. It is promoted by such things as being part of a team, being affirmed and accepted, and minimising conflict. As a leader you can enhance it by showing pastoral interest in people’s personal life (i.e. not just their ‘church’ role), building in social contact, sharing information and seeking opinion and expertise from people. It is harmed by undue abruptness of manner, a critical attitude, remoteness and lack of communication. It is high on ‘person’ but low on ‘task’.