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GOAL SETTING AND CHURCH MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess the Goal setting Theory and its application in the Church management. Goal setting helps to increase the individual as well as organizational performance. Goals helps us what needs to be done and how much hard work will need to be expanded. Goal setting theory is culture bound and is well adapted all over the world. This paper is an attempt to apply the Goal setting theory to Church and focused how church can use the Goal setting theory in church management.

KEYWORDS: goal setting, specific goals, church, commitment, performance, evaluation, allocation of responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

"Goal setting is a powerful process. It's based on the same principles of focus that allows us to concentrate rays of diffused sunlight into a force powerful enough to start a fire. It's the practicality of translating vision into achievable, actionable doing. It's a common denominator of successful individuals and organizations." Stephen Covey, First Things First

In 1960's, Edwin Locke put forward the Goal-setting theory of motivation. This theory states that goal setting is essentially linked to task performance. It states that specific and challenging goals along with appropriate feedback contribute to higher and better task performance. In simple words, goals indicate and give direction about what needs to be done and how much efforts are required to be put in. (Juneja n.d.) Setting life goals is the fundamental key to success. Goals let us create our future in advance of it actually happening. Setting goals helps us grow and expand, pushing ourselves to transform in ways that, just maybe, we never imagined. (Robbins n.d.)

Locke (1978) believes that goal-directedness is one of the major attributes of all living things; however, not all goal-directed actions are purposeful. (E.A.Locke 1978). Having goals is the one essential for all organizations. Goals give a sense of direction and purpose, promote enthusiasm, facilitate effective operation, reduce needless conflict, and give a clear understanding of what is expected. Indeed, in an organization there are few things more powerful than the idea of a goal. (Ministry International Journal for Pastors 1994)

In A Theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi reaffirmed the value of challenging activity to people in all aspects of their lives, including work. He demonstrated that people are happiest when they are in a "flow state," and that happens when they are so absorbed in an activity that nothing else seems to matter—strong support for specific, challenging goals. (Csikszentmihalyi 1990).

The setting of goals has been emphasized to be one of the most important tasks (Tett, et al. 2000) any individuals or organization. All human beings in the world require aims, direction, goals, a sense of

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purpose, in every area of life. Without these factors human being will become frustrated. But it surprising how much of the churches work an activity are carried out without clear goals. a goal's importance increases one's determination in pursuing the goals.

Reasons for setting goals is important as well as biblical is stated below.

Indication of Faith: Some people criticize goal setting in the church, they think that setting goals indicates lack of faith, because it limits God to what we expect rather than what he could do. But by setting goals that are clearly beyond our nominal expectation, and beyond our present resources or ability we are indicating faith. We can also indicate that this goal is our minimum, and not maximum expectation. And certainly, our goals should only be stated after prayer and seeking God's will. According to Hebrew 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. This state our expectation and desire that God will accomplish certain things in the Church is a sign of Faith hence I would say that setting goal is an indication of Faith.

Indication of Commitment: Setting goals indicate our commitment or willingness to want growth and work for it. This is perhaps another way of saying the same thing. All people want to grow and if there is not desire to achieve this objective it will not be achieved. Human being needs to grow include being willing to work for it and count the cost. And public commitment to such a task will certainly help to keep one to it that is one effect of setting goals and setting them clearly. It indicates our commitment to the plan or project where we are involved in.

Reflection of God's Character: The Bible portraits God as a God of order and design, who makes plans and purposes, both long and short term. This is true in the old testament where God's plan for the nations is to be fulfilled through his people i.e. Genesis 12:1-3 where God explain His plan to Abraham. In the new testament too, Paul speaks of God's plan and design. In Ephesians 1:5, 9-11; 3:9-11

Goals are expression of Faith: They are entirely subject to God's will and God's overruling. I am not saying that God must perform certain actions in specified times, but that, under God, we pledge to work and pray for certain objectives. And in doing so, we believe that we are in line with God's own character and purpose.

Unity of Church: If church does not have any goals, individual organization and individual Christians in the church will have their own thoughts often unstated goals. The choir pursues its goals, the youth group work toward its goal, the woman seeks its goal and the church is pulled in many different directions because this force is pulling in different ways, the total church does not move forward. But when there is unity of goals all of the various individual and groups participate and all the parts of the church lead in the same direction and it moves forward.

Setting goals helps a church and gives it a clear sense of purpose hence it is important. Following illustration shows the life of individual or organization is shaped.

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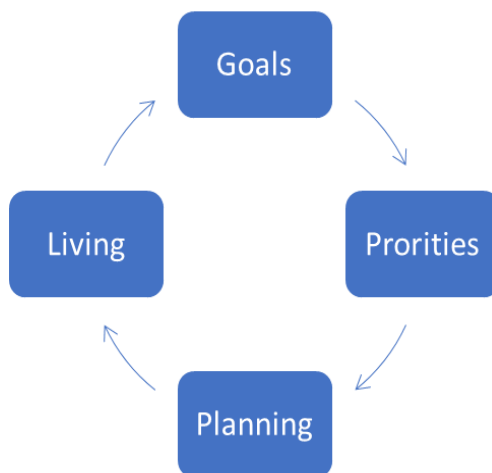
One may not fill that he wants his life to be planned. But in practice all of us live our lives according to priorities we have set consciously or unconsciously. The person who spends all his time relaxing, or eating, or chatting with his friend is in fact indicating that this is his priority. If that is what person really wants to do with his life then it is alright that is his decision but most of us find that what we actually do and that we want to do or fill we ought to do, are not always the same. Thinking about our goals and priorities and making plans which fit in with them can help our lives to be more unified and integrated. The same applies to an organization, especially the church.

Criteria for evaluation of goals. Following are the seven criteria that can be used to evaluate goals set by individual or organization.

1. Goals must be based on prayer and study of God's world
2. Goal must be realistic
3. Goal must be for short term and long term
4. Goal must be specific and measurable
5. Goal must include provision for evaluation
6. Goal must include responsibility
7. Goals must be owned by all those involved

1) Goals must be based on prayer and the study of God's word: Prayer and Bible study is important to know God's will. We will not know whether our Goals and plans are just a 'good idea' or a 'bold experiment' or an imitation of somebody else' success. Or do they really reflect God's will for us and our church? Our plans must come from God and be in line with His revealed will. So prayerful study of His character and purposes. And prayerful application of these to our situation, are indispensable.

2) Goals must be realistic: There are some individual or organization who are idealistic and optimistic whereas some of them are pessimistic but goals should be realistic. To set a realistic following three features should be considered.

Goals should be adequate to needs
Goals should be appropriate to resources
Goals should be relevant to the situation.

3) Goals should be short term and long term: It is important to have short term as well as long term goals. Short term goals help to keep specific and break the task down in to manageable parts whereas long-term goals give a sense of perspective and direction.

4) Goals must be specific and measurable: Sometimes specific, difficult goals do not lead to better performance than simply urging people to do their best (Seijts and Latham 2001) Smither (1998) lists three criteria in order for goal setting to be successful: goals must be specific, have time limits, and be challenging, but attainable. (Smither 1998). Edwin Locke and Gary Latham cite Locke's research showing that specific and challenging goals led to better task performance than vague or easy goals. (Locke, Latham and Smith, et al. 1990) Specific and measurable goals have meaning but they are very difficult to assess. Because they are vague and one could not say whether they have been reached or not. Every effort should be made to set specific and measurable goals. Setting specific and moderately difficult goals results in increases of an individual's performance as such goals direct one's attention, induce greater effort, enhance one's persistence, and elicit the use of task-related knowledge and strategies. (Locke and Latham, Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation. A 35-year odyssey. 2002). Seijts et al. (2004) found that a specific high learning goal (state orientation) is effective in increasing a person's performance.

5) Provision for evaluation: Goals must include provision for evaluation and adjustment. Evaluation enable to learn lesson from the failure as well as success and helps to modify the goals according to situation.

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6) Allocation of responsibility: Goals must include clear allocation of responsibility for implementing them. Responsibility must be clearly agreed. Allocation of responsibility should be given to few faithful members when there are many gifted members are available to be used in the program or activities in the church.

7) Goals must be owned by all those involved: While setting goals of the church everybody should be involved to achieve the goals. This will help the congregation to fill that to achieve the goals is not responsibility of few people it is the responsibility of each and every person of the church. (UBS 1983) Latham and Steele (1983) pointed out that "participation in goal setting resulted in greater understanding of task requirements that which occurred when goals were assigned to subjects" (Latham and Steele 1983).

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