

The Helpfulness of Grip-Birkman Blueprint in Member Care

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The Bible has much to say about how we relate to one another. In this current day, we often relate to one another in the context of team. In the context of global missions, facilitating more effective teamwork is a critical dynamic in enhancing Member Care. Can our ministry team operate under many of the same “one another” principles as the Body of Christ? I think so... and, in fact, Scripture instructs us to do so.

Implications and Applications of Grip-Birkman Blueprint for Member Care:

The Grip-Birkman Blueprint provides helpful images of what it looks like to be a biblical team. If a team is functioning biblically, it will naturally view itself as the first line of member care to one another. As such, members of biblical teams will practice what it means to live out the gospel in healthy ways. Therefore, they will influence others by the fragrant aroma that exudes from them.

Some Guiding Principles of Grip-Birkman Blueprint in Biblical Care:

First, the Gifts are God's and not ours. If that's true, then we are not seeking after gifts, or feel entitled to any gift. Instead, we are thankful for what He gives by His perfect design to accomplish His purposes in and through us. We know we have personality needs by His design, so when we also acknowledge our gift weaknesses are crafted by Him, we understand that we NEED one another. This perspective is lacking in teams with a spirit of competition (the unhealthy type) more than cohesion.

Second, as believers as well as team members, we know that Scripture teaches that we are ever being molded (conformed) into His likeness.

Third, His purposes become evident as we believe that who God brought is exactly who He designed to bring to our team. When we view our team as a group that God put together, then our perspective should be aimed at seeking HOW He will use us, not WHY He put this particular grouping together. This is very much a reality in the overseas setting.

But God has designed as part of our call that we are in PROCESS as believers. We are working out our salvation that is sealed in Him at the moment of conversion, yet our walk in Him is a process that will continue throughout our life as He transforms and conforms us more and more in His likeness, in His ways, for His glory. The process is also challenging and hard, for we must persevere with grace through many tests and trials along the path. But, we live in hope, and the process leads us to deep joy in Him, and to that living hope we uniquely share as believers in the risen Christ.

I see God using Grip-Birkman as an effective tool to mirror and reflect who we are in Him in ways other tools cannot or do not. Of course, Grip-Birkman Blueprint is a tool and not the point. The point is what I call **PRODUCTIVE COMMUNITY**. I believe God uses Grip-Birkman Blueprint to provide the canvas upon which individuals and teams paint a mural of Productive Community that they can identify with personally, relationally and functionally.

How? From a Scriptural Member Care perspective, it is helpful in **three important pieces of the process.**

1. Grip-Birkman brings clarity to our personal identity. Through the LifeStyle Grid, Organizational Focus, Intellectual Styles and the depth of the Components, we understand in a multi-dimensional way our natural and nurtured personality. In it, we see fingerprints of His presence, and we think through it from the context of a believer. That's so helpful for people who see themselves "in print" and "in color" for the first time.
2. Grip-Birkman identifies the gardens of fruitful joy in ministry. Because spiritual gifting is by the dynamic power of God, the body is built up, sustained, and matured through the understanding and faithful stewarding of their gifts. When individuals experience joy in their gifting, they understandably want to be in those "gardens" as much as possible, so team members help one another find their gardens, as their real fruitfulness and productivity happens there.
3. Grip-Birkman gives purpose to team vision. When team members understand who they are, how God has gifted them, where their effective gardens are, and lock on to the vision of the team, then role definition and progress measurement becomes interactive and meaningful. In effect, you have what corporate team authors call true ownership, or full buy-in – but *biblical* team is clearly and gloriously different.

Working through Grip-Birkman seminars with nearly 200 people representing many types of teams, I have seen growing ties to effective Member Care in teams in the seminar and in team-building. Because all are believers, the ties to Scriptural care are easy to connect.

There are biblical connecting points for teams to the LifeStyle Grid, through Interests, Usual Style, Need and Stress:

INTERESTS: Scripture instructs us to encourage one another. So team members can encourage and ask one another how they are investing in their interests. This leads to very natural opportunities to mix and match interests with other team members. Understanding each others interests also contributes to each person on the team "being known" and better appreciated and valued.

USUAL STYLE: Scripture exhorts us to affirm one another when you see them using their abilities and talents well. I call that operating in your Happy Place. Teams need to practice productive affirmation: speaking directly to the person, making eye contact, being specific with brief details, being genuine, and glorifying God for the way you see Him working through them.

NEEDS: Scripture guides us to connect with one another. People tend to move into stress when they aren't invited to share their burdens. Burdens don't have to be hard and difficult – most need the opportunity to talk through issues, circumstances and questions with someone who cares. It is not difficult to do. I call it "station identification," simply intentionally connecting with someone, asking caring questions, listening carefully to what they say, noting their expressions in words and body language. The nourishing effects of intentionality in caring is a necessary ingredient in forming and sustaining productive community.

STRESS: Scripture teaches us how to respond biblically to one another. Scripture is full of conflict and suffering, and doesn't walk away from it. Scripture deals with it. Transparency

is the key to dealing with conflict and difficulty. Most conflict and pain stems from a root of sin, and our heart is where that root grows and is nourished. When we practice confession with an honest heart, practice forgiving from a heart of restoration, practice speaking truth in love from a right spirit, practice affirming the goodness of God, and practice bearing up one another – when team members truly live out these principles – hurtful conflict has no nourishment and the team will experience fruitfulness and joy far beyond what they can think or ask.

There are also biblical connecting points to the building blocks of healthy teams. Healthy teams are undergirded by several foundation stones of Productive Community:

TRUST: Trust is a cornerstone, built and sustained on Scriptural principles. Serving one another (Gal 5:13-14), bearing one another's burdens (Gal 6:2), blessing one another through hospitality (1 Pet 4:9), being kind to one another (Eph 4:31-32), praying for one another (James 5:16). Without trust, any building is done on unstable ground. With trust, the building (the team and its purpose) is strong, joyful and fruitful.

FAMILY: A team that views itself as a family breeds character qualities that are pleasing to God, unifying to one another, and attractive to others watching them. This team is characterized by understanding they are His and not their own. They celebrate the gifting, personality and ability mix that God has brought to them... believing fully that God brought every person to that team by His plan and for His purposes. Their understanding of His purpose is unified and focused in very healthy ways.

FRUITFULNESS: Joy in ministry is evident – you could even say it glows – when the expression of team gifts is noticed, encouraged and affirmed... but often the very opposite when they are not. So a fruitful team practices blessing and encouraging one another in their gifting. This team is effective, focused, faithful, caring, and measured.

MEASURED? Yes, an effective team will consistently measure its progress. God had Adam and Eve in a perfect garden, but he expected them to work in it. As long as they were faithful, focused and measured, they were fruitful and joyful. It all changed when they stepped away from their focus.

The mural of true Productive Community is full of color, texture, and meaning. It also contains building blocks that give depth and purpose. The healthy team views the components of the mural and building from personal, relational and functional angles. God is using Grip-Birkman to provide the canvas of effective environment and landscape upon which the mural and building can form and grow into a beautiful work that glorifies Him and attracts others to Him.

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