

# DESTINY

M A G A Z I N E

**PULLING THE CHAIN  
OF LEADERSHIP**

**RECRUITING & DEVELOPING  
TEAM LEADERS**

**GOD OF THE GAP**

**2019 GATHERING PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS**

**UNLEASHING THE  
BOOK IN YOU**

**DESTINY CONNECT  
COMING TO A CITY NEAR YOU!**

# A WORD FROM PHIL & CATHY



Welcome to this edition of the Destiny Magazine 2019. Our Destiny engines are running as hot as the temperatures are outside! First, let me say that the Destiny Gathering was one for the record books. Several who attended have used the term historic and I think it's totally fitting! Hundreds of leaders (over 500 registered) came from all over the world and joined us for three days of wonderful! Our special thanks to Pastors Tom and Trina Lowe, and the entire Christ Church staff and serve team. You each gave your all with hearts of love and welcome! We are so grateful!

Then, we came right out of conference into our season of fasting, prayer and service as Destiny churches joined together in our Isaiah 58 Fast. This year we joined ARC churches for SERVE DAY 2019. Churches around the nation, even around the world, made a huge step forward for the Kingdom of God as we joined forces and served struggling people with the love of God. And great reports are coming in as a result. Thank you Jonathan and Stephanie Suber and Oasis Church for leading the charge!

Destiny Leadership Institute (DLI) is welcoming new students from new churches, and we are expecting record-breaking enrollment numbers this fall. Finally, our plans for a great fall season of Destiny Regional Connect Events have been finalized! Starting this September, nine regional opportunities to connect with Destiny friends, churches and leaders have been planned and a great experience has been prepared for each event that is certain to inspire, equip and connect you with amazing friends, tools and opportunities.

As you can see, there is so much going on, so much to plug into and so many ways to get involved. And that's our encouragement to you! Don't be a spectator. This is real and just the beginning. So get involved. Plan to attend a Connect Event and bring your team! Our slogan has been for many years, "Let's Do Something Great Together." If we will work together, we can create a future filled with God's purpose and potential!

## IN THIS EDITION

### **4 PULLING THE CHAIN OF LEADERSHIP**

*Dr. Phillip Brassfield*

### **7 ISAIAH 58 SERVE DAY RECAP**

### **8 UNLEASHING THE BOOK IN YOU**

*Suzanne Kuhn*

### **12 FINANCIAL ISSUES EXPLORED**

*Dee Sokolosky*

### **14 2019 GATHERING PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS**

### **16 ROADSIDE SWEET CORN: UNDERSTANDING THE HONOR SYSTEM**

*Pastor Paul Cook*

### **18 DLI STUDENT SPOTLIGHT**

*Rebekah Harrah*

### **19 TEAM SERMON BUILDING**

*Pastor Scott Jones & Pastor Landon Galloway*

### **20 GET CREATIVE!**

*Pastor Ryan Lowe*

### **22 RECRUITING & DEVELOPING LEADERS**

*Pastor Amos McFalls*

### **24 GOD OF THE GAP**

*Pastor Landon Galloway*

### **26 COMMUNICATION IS KEY**

*Stephanie Powers*



# DESTINYCONNECT

*EQUIP. INSPIRE. DEVELOP*

We all need relationships, training and encouragement. These events are designed to provide all of these in a fun and engaging environment. Come bring your team and invite your ministry friends!

## COMING TO A CITY NEAR YOU!

**SILOAM SPRINGS, AR**

SEPTEMBER 13-14

**ROUND ROCK, TX**

SEPTEMBER 23-24

**BRANSON, MO**

*(Destiny Global Retreat)*

OCTOBER 1-3

**AKRON, OH**

*(Golfing Event)*

OCTOBER 7-8

**COON RAPIDS, MN**

OCTOBER 11-12

**LANCASTER, PA**

OCTOBER 18-19

**OWENSBORO, KY**

OCTOBER 25-26

**SUGAR LAND, TX**

NOVEMBER 15-16

**PLANO, TX**

NOVEMBER 22-23

REGISTER FOR ANY OF THESE EVENTS AT [DESTINYLEADERS.COM/CONNECT](https://destinyleaders.com/connect)

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DR. PHILLIP BRASSFIELD

# **PULLING THE CHAIN** *of leadership*

Have you ever struggled as a leader with direction and consistency? Ever felt like you were disoriented and lacked focus - like your proverbial leadership wheels had come off and your forward movement had stalled? All of us who are charged with the responsibility to lead have felt that! It's a normal part of the leadership process. But there are some things you can do to get your focus back and regain your forward momentum.

Dwight D. Eisenhower served as the 34th President of the United States of America. Before he was President, he served as a Five Star General during World War II and as Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe. During his illustrious military career, one of his duties was to train generals. It is said that one of his first lessons involved an illustration that proved a powerful leadership point. He would bring a large steel chain into the room, set it on a sturdy table, and ask the generals what would happen if they tried to push the chain. He also suggested that they try to predict what direction the links would go when pushed. When they tried, the links would go in any and every direction. Then he asked them what would happen if they pulled the chain. When they did pull the chain, the links began to line up in order at their points of connection and move in an orderly fashion in the direction they were being pulled. As he trained generals who would command our troops into battle, he wanted them to experience the difference between a push and pull leadership style.

For all of us who serve others in leadership roles there is a lesson here. If you want to achieve organizational chaos, then try to push your team, push your agenda, push your plans toward your goals. Normally, chaos will result and your chain will go in unpredictable directions. Nothing orderly will be achieved and you will expend large amounts of energy to accomplish negligible results, except, of course, high levels of frustration. But if you learn General Eisenhower's lesson and pull instead of pushing the chain, the links of your team will line up and follow in the direction they are led.

Here are some pulling practices that are sure to get your team, vision, and goals moving again and heading in the right direction:

**#1. LEAD BY EXAMPLE.** The old "do as I say, not as I do" style of leadership is a pushing style for sure. It is heavy in command and control structures that almost always fail with people. Instead, get out in front of your team. Never ask them to do something you are not willing to do yourself. Let them see you practicing what you are preaching. Get to work early, be the first to start and the last to leave. Lead by example. People don't follow a vision; they follow a leader with one, a leader who is principled. Cast your vision as you move forward. Newton's first law of motion says that "a body in motion tends to stay in motion; a body at rest tends to stay at rest." Get out front and lead, and by doing so you will begin the pulling process. If you want forward movement, then move forward yourself and keep yourself in motion, moving toward your purpose. Inspire your team by what you do instead of what you say. Inspiration is a pulling action.

**#2. DEVELOP STRONG RELATIONSHIPS.** The second lesson we learn from the chain is that all the links need to be in relationship, they need to be connected. We have all heard the old cliché that "your chain is only as strong as its weakest link". This is another way to say that your team is only as strong as its weakest relationship. Relationships are the steel that holds the chain together. And a chain moves together because each link is connected to the link ahead and to the link behind. Division, dissension, backbiting and rumors are death to influential leadership pull. Spend time working on the relationships in your team if you want to achieve your strongest results. Place a high priority on unity, honesty and mutual concern for one another. Make sure people matter and that they know it. Time invested on the relationships in your team will pay off big in pulling power when it's time to move forward.

**#3. COMMUNICATE CLEARLY.** Communication is another way that links are connected. Willing and strong links can sometimes fail to move in the right direction at the right time if they fail to get the memo. Make sure your communications are clear, consistent and directional. It is better to over communicate than it is to under communicate. Don't assume your team knows what to do and when to do it. When all the links in a leadership chain know the plan, they can better cooperate



by playing their part. Communication can help you achieve full pulling power when the pressure is on.

**#4. SHARE THE WIN.** The neat thing about a chain metaphor is that every link plays its part in the pull. When forward movement is achieved, every link can have that sense of satisfaction that they did their job, held strong and diffused the pressure of the weight of the object being pulled throughout the links of the chain. Working as a chain is a great way to share the struggle, the pressure, and the glory of success. Literally, when the pull is successful, each link in the chain wins. Practice celebrating that reality with your team.

**#5. HAVE A PARTY.** Circulate a testimonial link that highlights the win and the results that were achieved for the Kingdom. Find creative ways to say, "Look what we did together!" This also strengthens each link and their connection to each other as well.

Push versus Pull styles of leadership have long been discussed in leadership circles, but not enough in the church. Sadly, because of the general lack of leadership training, too often leaders are left to their native instincts as their primary means of leadership techniques. When left to human nature, we almost always default to our own self-interests, and our lowest levels of leadership motivation. Therefore, personal issues like low self-esteem and the four fundamental fears that drive people in general (fears of being out of control, rejection, losing security, and criticism) can shade our leadership style to one that is more push than pull.

Developing a pull leadership style is not something you do accidentally; you must do it intentionally. You have to plan for it, strategize it and hold yourself accountable to it. And when you do, your team will flourish and your organization can reach its greatest potential.



## DESTINY GLOBAL RETREAT

OCTOBER 1-3, 2019

CHATEAU ON THE LAKE  
BRANSON, MISSOURI

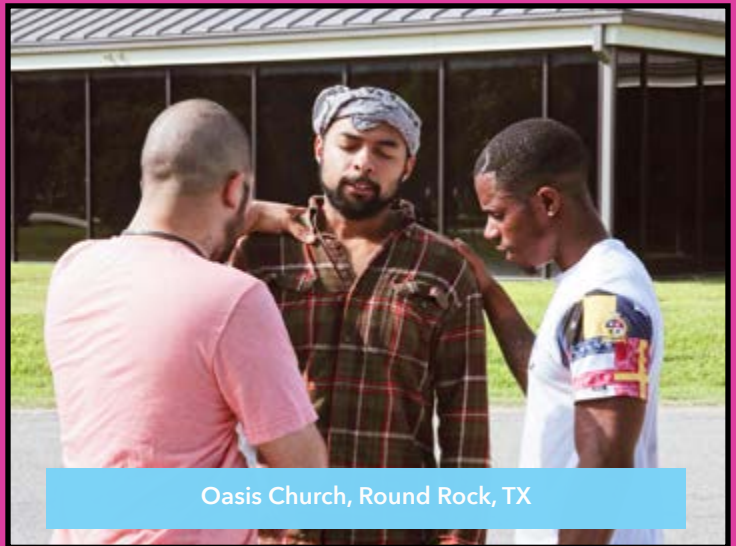


# ISAIAH 58

LET'S DO SOMETHING GREAT TOGETHER



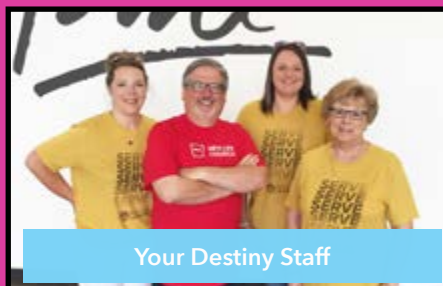
Destiny Center Church, Carterville, IL



Oasis Church, Round Rock, TX



The Sycamore, Tupelo, MS



Your Destiny Staff



Oasis Church, Round Rock, TX



Destiny Center Church, Carterville, IL

THANK YOU FOR SERVING WITH US ON SERVE DAY 2019! LIVES WERE CHANGED!

# Unleashing the Book in You

**SUZANNE KUHN** | *Brookstone Creative Group*

*Suzanne Kuhn is the founder and CEO of Brookstone Creative Group (formerly SuzyQ) and Brookstone Publishing Group. With more than thirty team members, she is changing how authors and speakers navigate the publishing and speaking world by honing stories, growing platforms, unleashing messages, and transforming lives.*



## Do You Have A Book in You?

One simple question rises above the others I've been asked after more than thirty years in the book industry. *"Do you think I might have a book in me?"* People also ask, "How do I know if I have anything worth saying? Would anyone actually read my book if I wrote it?"

I love these questions. To ask one of them, or a similar query, indicates the seed of a thought exists—with the potential to grow into something real.

Maybe you've had others say, "You really should write a book." If so, even if you feel completely unqualified, don't disregard the possibility too soon.

Bill Gates is credited with coining the phrase, "Content is king." Since you are reading this, you are likely either a pastor or in leadership, which tells me you definitely have content to share. Every sermon, message, workshop, or session you've presented contains viable content. If you're known as an expert in a specific area—you absolutely have content.

So, how do you determine your topic or even where to begin writing a book? If you haven't figured it out yet, I'm a questions girl.

- What are you passionate about?
- Do you tend to gravitate toward one particular topic?
- Though your themes vary greatly, is your overall message still focused in a specific area?





If you've been in leadership for years, you probably have an abundance of content, which means you likely have not one, but multiple books in you. To begin, start by building a strong foundation. Pray. Ask God for direction.

Next, explore and write down which topics get you the most fired up. Think about what inspires the most reaction from your audience. What burns in your heart to share?

### **Are You a Writer or Speaker?**

You are both. When it comes to writing, most people fall into one of two categories. You are either a writer who speaks or a speaker who writes. Whichever fits you best makes no difference, because your subject matter is the real key. Any spoken or written content can be turned into a book or a presentation—the message style is interchangeable.

### **If I Write My Best Book Now, Then What?**

Ask yourself, "If I can only write one book, what do I want my signature message or legacy work to be?" Then write it.

I heard a New York Times best-selling author tell a group of fans that her best book is the one she just wrote. At the time, this author had more than fifty published books to her credit. She made every new title her best.

If you pen a book, you should strive to be a good author who invests themselves in becoming a student of the process. Always write your best book now, otherwise you won't achieve the reach you want. If God has given you a message, that is the message you are to share—just make sure it's presented as professionally as it deserves. And don't give in to the temptation to hold it back for a better time.

### **Is Creating a Book a Team Sport?**

Yes. In ministry, strong leaders surround themselves with a team of experts. As the body of Christ, we all have our part to play. We have our unique gifts and God-given calls. When it comes to publishing a book, it's no different. You must surround yourself with a team of specialists who can help you create the best possible product and assist in getting your message out.

### **Who Should be on Your Team?**

With any writing and publishing team, you don't want vanilla ice cream only. Let's look at it more like Cold Stone Creamery would. Vanilla is our base, but with add-ins, each unique customer is served a special-made dish (or cone) of their choosing.

We all have our individual and corporate calls on our lives. We must approach publishing in the same way Cold Stone Creamery does. Though we add our unique flavoring, there are some basics—vanilla ice cream—we all need to include.

Every author, including New York Times best sellers, need editors. And a good editor will hurt your feelings. Anyone who comes to me with an "edited" book or manuscript is first asked the question, "Did your editor hurt your feelings or make you mad?"

Obviously, I'm not saying an editor deliberately provokes an author. But an editor's job is to make your book the best it can be. They will remove repeated content, ask for clarity, and move content around for easier reading.

There are times when a ghostwriter or book doctor (a specialist who does more than normal editing but not as much writing as a ghostwriter) is brought onto a project. But even then, any manuscript traditionally or independently published will go through an editing and proofreading process.

## Who Will Read My Book?

Because you are a pastor or in some other type of leadership, you have an existing platform. You have an audience already gathered to receive your content. This audience will read your book because you've already established yourself with them. They trust you and what you have to say. But with assistance, you can reach more.

Building and expanding a platform is like the difference between providing a message at the front of a room or delivering a message through a microphone and sound system, standing on a high-riser, in a stadium that seats thousands. You have your existing audience, but by utilizing tools like social media and methods that unravel influencing algorithms, your message can be globally discovered.

I married into the book biz as a young adult. I've filled every role from team member in a bookstore, to assistant buyer for a small chain of bookstores, to coaching and promoting authors through my original SuzyQ brand, to now owning and running Brookstone Creative Group with its publishing arm of Brookstone Publishing Group.

I consider it a great privilege to advance the kingdom of God through the power of spoken and written words. My team and I would be honored to help you as you pursue the call of God on your life and ministry. At Brookstone, our mission is simple. Hone your story. Grow your platform. Unleash your message. In that way, our clients increase their impact and fulfill purposes greater than themselves.

# Equipping Leaders

Discover why so many pastors, speakers, authors, musicians, and other creatives have turned to us to propel their dream forward.

[BrookstoneCreativeGroup.com](http://BrookstoneCreativeGroup.com)





# First.

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*The bank you can believe in.*

# BUILDING *the* KINGDOM

Our vision is to help build the Kingdom by providing financial services and expertise in a responsive and God honoring manner. Currently, we serve over 225 churches and ministries in 27 states. When you bank with us, you are helping build the Kingdom. *Give us a call or check us out online. We'd love to connect with you.*





# FINANCIAL ISSUES EXPLORED

**DOMINIC SOKOLOSKY**

**W**ith The Gathering now in our rearview mirror, our attention will soon turn to strategic planning and budgeting for 2020 and beyond. This article will address a few financial topics that our clients have asked us about recently.

## **1. WHAT ABOUT RAISES FOR STAFF?**

I should probably receive a near unanimous "Yes" to this question. The question is really how much is appropriate. Inflation has consistently been less than 2% for several years now. An annual raise of 2% would keep you just ahead of the cost of living in most

parts of the United States. (Having visited my friends Pastors John and Kristin Ragsdale in Nashville a few times, I can say that nothing I could possibly say regarding money or the cost of anything applies to Nashville. Nashville pastors - you are on your own!) Any raise above 2% would be to (1) bring the employee's salary more in line with the market if current salary is below market, (2) reward increased responsibilities or greater skills, or (3) be generous. From the employer's perspective, if you want to be generous or reward some significant achievement, a one-time bonus is probably the better course so you don't "inflate" salary for future years.



*Dominic Sokolosky is Chairman and CEO of First Bank of Owasso in Owasso, Oklahoma, a community bank whose vision statement is: To help build the Kingdom by providing financial services and expertise in a responsive and God honoring manner. The bank serves over 225 church and ministry clients in 27 states.*



## 2. HOW BEST TO ALLOCATE OUR RESOURCES?

There are several quality organizations that have charts and recommendations for budgeting.

We like to use the following breakdown as a starting point to discuss resource allocation:

### **40% - Personnel and Benefits**

#### **30% - Facilities**

*(debt service, insurance, utilities, repairs)*

#### **20% - Worship, Education, Youth and Other Programs**

#### **10%- Missions, Benevolence**

Obviously, every church is unique. We have one client that allocates 30% of its total budget for missions support. Others invest more heavily in youth and children's programs. A new church plant would likely need more resources allocated to advertising and outreach.

If a church has no loan payments or rent expense, then 5 - 10% for facilities is probably plenty. We like to see debt service or rent expense at no more than 25% of the budget. Once utilities, insurance and repairs are added, we are near the 30% allocation for facilities.

We hate to say that a church is "over-staffed." (Can we really have too many people spreading the good news?) We prefer the term "staffed for growth." However, we have found that churches with personnel expense in excess of 50% of the budget often encounter economic challenges at some point.

## 3. HOW ABOUT INVESTING OUR SURPLUS IN THE MARKET?

The U.S. stock market has grown rapidly over the past three years.

We have clients who say, "Hey, look how much money we would have in our building fund if we had invested in the market!" Avoid the temptation. Everyone wants to get in when anything is at its peak. Most economists feel the market is near the end of its bull run. If the U. S. economy does not falter during the six weeks between this article being written and published, we will have experienced the longest economic expansion in U. S. history (10 years). Nothing lasts forever.

Our economy faces some headwinds:

- Potential trade war with China, Mexico and fallout from Brexit.
- Weakening global economy.
- Significant underemployment in the U.S.
- Whatever President Trump said yesterday.

Our recommendation is to keep funds in a quality money market or savings account. Skeptics will probably say, *"Well, you work at a bank. Of course, you would say*

*that."* Our bank also has a significant wealth management practice with a Certified Financial Planner that manages \$100 million of our clients' money, and we offer those clients the same advice. If your time horizon for needing the funds is less than five years, stay out of the market. One of the last things you want to explain to your congregation is how much the building fund DECLINED over the past quarter. Retirement funds or building funds not likely to be needed in the next five years are a different story.

## 4. WHAT ARE INTEREST RATES GOING TO DO?

Through May 2019, the Federal Reserve Open Market Committee signaled one more quarter point rate increase in 2019 and possibly one more quarter point rate increase in 2020. The market didn't really believe the Fed. Now, as of this writing (July 1), the Fed seems to have shifted the conversation to the question of whether it will be lowering rates rather than raising them. The markets are projecting that interest rates will be flat to down over the next seven years.







# 2019 GATHERING HIGHLIGHTS











# Roadside Sweet Corn

## *Understanding the Honor System*

### **PASTOR PAUL COOK**

In my Midwest childhood summers, sweet corn was sold from unattended roadside stands. Hand-painted signs under big oaks directed us onto a farmer's crunchy gravel drive. The self-serve corn teamed in bushel baskets on a flatbed trailer. The kids piled out of the faded 60's station wagon to help select a dozen unshucked ears. A one-handed snatch popped open the used grocery store brown bag to hold our silky treasures. Cash payment was stuffed

in a rusty coffee can. The farmers offered the produce and trusted the unsupervised customers to pay. It was the honor system. As a kid, I mused over the unguarded dollars sprouting from a can with little regard for theft.

Honor systems depend on people doing the right thing without overt coercion. Healthy people trust those around them like the unattended roadside vendors trust their customers. They aren't demanding honor. They aren't policing people

who are less than honorable. They just provide a service and expect recipients to respond honorably.

There are many places you wouldn't want to do business on the honor system. You'd go broke. In the same way, leaders in churches that lack honor are operating in an emotional deficit. Discouraged, worn down, they no longer feel like producing. All of us are working on the honor system. All of us are providing some produce. All of us have a rusty can waiting for remuneration. Takers



abuse community blessing—they sneak off without making any appropriate contribution. The honorable pay.

Some of the recent Destiny Leadership Institute Webinars demonstrated how honor systems are big on the proper treatment of pastors and leaders. Here is a sampling of those points.

### **Be specific in your compliments.**

A general thank you is less impacting than a specific description. Call out positive habits, characteristics, and heart.

**Greetings.** Celebrate leaders when they walk in the room. Honor them with their title as Pastor—don't presume that first name only is appropriate for you. Smile. Welcome. Exits are just as important.

**Know what NOT to miss on the calendar.** Adjusting your schedule to prioritize around key events speaks volumes. Tell your leaders when you are on vacation or out of town or unavailable. Don't make people guess.

**Celebrate Special Days.** I'd question the fragile nature of a person's self-esteem if they have to schedule their own parties. However, if never celebrated, anyone would eventually feel as if they are invisible, unappreciated. Select some special days to make special people feel special.

**Responsiveness.** Turn around calls, texts, emails from leaders. Don't leave stuff hanging—it makes people worry and wonder and feel dishonored.

**Talk to, not about each other.** Talking about someone rarely solves a problem. Passive-aggressive people work the back channels when they are upset or don't understand. Courageous people go straight to the person or leader and address problems. If you can't do that, then be careful to be quiet.

**Stay in your lane.** You may have opinions about music or children's ministry or the building condition; however, if this is not your area, then you should keep it to yourself. The option you have is to get on the team that affects change in these areas. Offer your services. But offering your opinion on various aspects of the organization when you have no connection to the fixing of it or the oversight of it is not productive.

**Own the Fix.** Always casting all the load of organizational repair on others exhausts leaders. Don't be the person who is continually giving out a laundry list of things that need done. Share in the fix.

**Excuses aren't reasons—deliver.** Don't just offer an excuse and think that gets you off the hook—what it gets you is off the team. Deliver.

**Show up, on time.** This should be automatic, but for many it is not. Be early. If you are going to be late, communicate.

**Take Notes.** If you are in a meeting or an important conversation and you take notes on critical points or actions, it is a huge compliment.

**Respond to Sermons.** An audible amen, a head nod, a fist pump—be interactive and make the man want to preach!

**Take a photo.** During the sermon, if there is a point on the screen, take a photo. The very act says something to the speaker.

**Post a point on social media.** If something impacted you, remember it and post it on social

media. Be a fan of the message from your church (not just all the national celebrity speakers and churches). Sharing your church's social media links is a great show of support that lifts the load with a leader.

**Come to the Altar.** Sometimes people choose to stay in their seat to pray over the impact of a message; but when you are affected significantly, make a move toward the front to pray for awhile.

**Send a text.** Say more than "that was a great sermon." Tell why it impacted you—how it made you think differently or how it encouraged you.

**Money answers all things.** Money isn't the primary motivator, but sometimes a compliment coupled with a gift brings home the appreciation in a way that it is taken more seriously.

**I pray for you.** One of the most comforting things a leader can hear is that he and his family are being covered in prayer. Tell them once in awhile. Send a text, snail-mail card, email telling them you've got their back in prayer.

People in a true honor system have their cans overflowing with honorable transactions. No one has to push the honorable to make a contribution. No one has to chase them down to insure that they are doing the right thing. So, ask yourself, do you benefit from the services provided in the organization without ever making significant, appropriate contributions back to the leaders? The honor system is a payment system—the honorable always pay!



*Paul & Julie Cook are pastors serving for over 35 years. Paul is a Bible practitioner, teacher, leadership developer, mentor, organizational coach, entrepreneur, clinician, and artist serving Life Central Church in Plano, Texas since 2011. Paul also has a passion for the success of Destiny Leadership Institute.*

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## REBEKAH HARRAH



Hey y'all, I'm Rebekah Harrah. I've been married to my husband for 12 years, and we have three children ages 11, 9 and 6! We currently live in Spring, TX (near Houston) and attend Grace Church

- Tomball. I am the campus KidsMin director and love working with our ONETeam to make sure that our kids and families feel loved, valued and wanted by not only Christ but our church.

I joined DLI because for the past few years I had been wanting something that would help me grow more in my relationship with Christ as well as help me become a better leader. Late one night, I was looking at different colleges that might provide leadership courses as well as biblical classes. Every program I looked at was very KidMin specific. I just felt overwhelmed because none of it was exactly what I was looking for. Because I knew several people who had graduated from DLI, I decided to just glance at it. I watched a video on the website and knew that DLI was for me. That was the beginning of January last year and I joined that semester. I will graduate the summer of 2020. DLI has taught me so much

about biblical leadership and given me a more in depth understanding about the Bible. Learning to serve how Jesus served others and implementing that in all areas of my life has been such an eye opener. Serving like Christ and knowing how the church should look according to the Bible has helped me become a better leader not only in KidsMin but in all areas. My eyes have been opened to how to read the Bible with full understanding and how different translations have their place in biblical study.

I highly recommend DLI to anyone who wants to grow deeper spiritually and/or as a leader. Not only do you learn how to study the Word, about the geography of where the Word was written and how to become a better leader and person all around, you join with a group of people who are like-minded. It's a group of leaders who hold the same values as you and understand what the church is supposed to be like. They are people that you not only can do life with but can also do ministry with, even if it is at separate churches. We join together to change the world. If you are on the fence about joining DLI, jump off and dive into it!! You, your family and your church will be much better because of your decision.

### **CLASSES ARE ENROLLING NOW! SPEAK TO A REPRESENTATIVE TODAY!**

Study the Bible, theology, practical ministry, and leadership in a simple and interactive online environment. Serve in your local church while taking the online courses, so that you have a chance to gain practical experience to complement your ministry education.

**FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION AT [DESTINYLEADERS.COM/DLI](https://destinyleaders.com/dli) OR BY CALLING 501.887.9933**





# TEAM SERMON BUILDING

WITH PASTOR SCOTT JONES & PASTOR LANDON GALLOWAY



By nature, preaching seems to be a solitary endeavor. We tend to think of it as an individual preacher sitting behind a desk, with a bookshelf behind him laboring for hours, to build a sermon that is both biblically relevant and culturally accurate. Many pastors report spending at least 10-15 in hours per week in sermon preparation. While it is true that Scripture calls for pastors to dedicate significant time to preaching and praying, the reality is that the demand to preach fresh and relevant material every single week is often overwhelming. The many other responsibilities of a busy leader often choke out his study time and leaves him feeling unprepared for the weekend.

Therefore, it might be time to consider involving other people in the sermon preparation process. You can assemble a small team, inform them about the upcoming sermon series, and ask them to either come up with content ideas or to even build a sermon outline for you. Even if you don't have a large paid staff or team, you can pull astute lay leaders into the process. There are many gifted minds in your congregation that could greatly contribute to your Sunday sermon. In addition to saving time, here is a list of other benefits:

**DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES.** When other people are involved in the sermon process, they will naturally approach a text differently from you. Since your audience is made up of all kinds of different people, it is beneficial for someone who differs from you in age, gender, and ethnicity to contribute to your sermon. Even if you have been preaching for years, you might be surprised at what exists in a particular text that you had never noticed until you saw it with someone else's eyes.

**DIFFERENT PASSIONS.** As preachers, we all have particular ideas and emphases that get us excited. Some people love to preach about the grace of God, while others are overwhelmed by

His miracle-working power. Some people are passionate about emotive preaching that moves the congregation to an immediate decision. Others get fired up about practical preaching that moves the congregation to life-changing action. If you aren't careful, it's easy to preach the same pet topics and to elicit the same type of response week in and week out. When others get a chance to contribute, they bring in their passions which can make your Sundays more effective.

**PROVIDING A PLATFORM.** Since many churches only have one weekly service, preaching opportunities are in limited supply. Many of us grew up going to multiple service weekly. The Wednesday nights and Sunday nights often provided pulpit time to preachers other than the lead pastor. Since we don't have as much pulpit time to share, allowing other people to express their voices through sermon writing provides a much need opportunity for those who have a gift and passion to preach or teach.

**THEIR CONTENT, YOUR VOICE.** When you allow a team to help with your sermon planning, you get to incorporate their perspectives and passions in your own voice. You can use your own illustrations, re-write certain sections that don't resonate with you, and re-organize the material in a way that best meets the needs of your audience. By the time you have re-worked it, you aren't preaching someone else's sermon. You are preaching your own sermon that someone else helped you to develop. Other people help us develop sermons all the time. We consult commentaries, resource books, and listen to other preachers. If we depend on these voices, why would we object to relying on the voices of those on our teams?

*Scott Jones pastors Grace Church in Humble, Texas, a church with over 6,000 members in 4 campus locations. Landon Galloway is a part of the creative team at Grace and serves as campus pastor at Grace Church, Tomball.*



# GET CREATIVE

WITH PASTOR RYAN LOWE, CHRIST CHURCH, LA



Most of us know Las Vegas has some of the best signage you will ever see, and the city knows how to push its agenda. Ed Young, Jr. explains it like this, "Vegas has nothing to say but they know how to say it, yet the church has every thing to say but so often we don't know how to say it."

I love the church, not just our church, but every church that promotes a relationship with Christ. I believe wholeheartedly that we have the most important job on the planet - sharing the news of JESUS. At Christ Church, there was a place we arrived that totally changed our way of thinking about our weekend services. So, we landed on a couple things that we look at while getting ready for every service.

## PREPARE - "Stop Winging It"

We stopped winging it. Winging it is possibly one of the church's biggest downfalls, and far too many times we do just that. All the way from the person welcoming, to the offering guy, to the preacher, there's little to no fore thought into what is going to be said or done. We have become professionals at winging it.

So at Christ Church, we have made a huge effort in being prepared, not for our sake, but for the Gospel's sake and our guests' sake. I'm not going to try and convince you that there aren't things thrown together at the last minute, but being consistently unprepared screams volumes to your weekend attendees that you don't value their time or the Gospel. Benjamin Franklin said, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." The Church doesn't have the option to fail. So what we do, and it's the easiest thing we can do for our weekend service, is to TALK ABOUT IT. We talk through the Sunday schedule. When we started "talking about it", our presentation level grew dramatically.



## GET CREATIVE - "Not Just Weird"

Creative people have given creative people a bad name. Creativity is more than wearing funny hats, being tatted up, or having some crazy haircut. Being creative is a NORMAL way of life. It is simply our ability to make something new and the ability to perceive things in new ways.

The church should be on the forefront of creativity. The most creative venue out there should be the local church. Unfortunately, there are a few that somehow take the Bible, the most exciting book, and make it stale, almost lifeless. If your service is unattractive to people, don't blame God, because God is not boring.



One of the things that I tell my teams is that ruts are NO GOOD, whether it's a bad rut or a good rut. Ruts are predictable. The church should be consistently unpredictable because the higher the predictability, the lower the crowd participation and engagement. Most of us (the Church) are predictable. We all lean towards predictability but we have to be consistently inconsistent. Don't get me wrong, we should be consistent in our theology, consistent in rightly dividing the Word, but inconsistent in our approaches.

At Christ Church we have a creative meeting every Tuesday about future weekends, and talk about how we can make things a little different. Here are a few ways you can shake things up:

### 1. CHANGE YOUR WELCOMES.

We change our welcome almost weekly. It may be that a Pastor opens the service and starts service with a prayer, or it may be that video announcements welcome the crowd that day. We have found several layouts that we like, and essentially just rotate them around.

### 2. CHANGE YOUR WORSHIP FORMAT.

We have a format that we follow every Sunday, but our Pastor has given us the freedom to do what we like within those segments. Our format is worship, offering, and then preaching. But in each of the first two we are able to mix things up: utilize scripture readings, fellowship time, special musical components, and video elements; there are endless possibilities.

### 3. MAKE BEFORE AND AFTER CHURCH FUN.

On any given Sunday, guests and members might arrive to service and find a live band playing in the lobby, or fire pits ready for roasting marshmallows. We try to stick with a few major events throughout every year such as "Back to School", "Porch Party", Mother's Day, and Father's Day. Creating a great atmosphere before and after service will provide you with an opportunity to engage with people. It sounds like a lot of work, because it is. Creativity is like a muscle; working it only makes it stronger. To consistently be creative in our services, we make time to be creative. If you don't create on purpose, you will never create by accident. It's a practice - a habit that you have to develop.

I also believe having other people involved is a huge plus, even the people who you may not deem "creative". You never know what piece of the puzzle they may offer to allow your church to present the Gospel the best way it can. Christ Church may be in a different position where we have larger teams and a larger budget than some, but here's an eye opener, **LARGER DOESN'T ALWAYS EQUAL BETTER**. Size affords us some awesome opportunities but it also presents us with some disadvantages too. We can't be as relational or intimate in our creative approach as a smaller church can be. So recognize your strengths and play off those instead of dwelling on what you don't have, and you will go a lot further. Together, let's present the Gospel of Christ to our communities the best we can.



*Ryan has served on the pastoral staff of Christ Church for 14 years and is deeply passionate about the impact of the local church. In his current role as Executive Pastor, he oversees and protects the culture of Christ Church, gives oversight to various ministries and is part a part of the speaking them. Ryan has been married to Lindsey for 14 years and they have two children, Willa Rae (7) and Guy (6).*



# RECRUITING & DEVELOPING TEAM LEADERS

## PASTOR AMOS MCFALLS

At The Gathering this past summer, Dr. Mike Hayes spoke a sentence that has been turning over in my mind ever since I heard it. The context of his statement was in reference to his working with pastors. He said, *"There are those that have the calling of Apostles continuing to work in the calling of a Pastor."* He went on to explain that for various reasons these leaders hadn't raised up other leaders around them. The end results were leaders called to be Apostles working in the capacity of Pastors.

A quick Internet search on leadership will pull up multiple informative articles, podcasts, and books. These information sources are great, however most of these sources are directed to personal growth – how and what is needed to grow your own leadership. While growing ourselves is certainly admirable, personal growth is not necessarily indicative of growing others.

The truth is that whether we are Senior Pastors, second tier church leaders, or volunteer team leaders, we must be raising up the leaders around us. Peter Drucker said it this way, *"There is no success without a successor."* So the question that we are faced with is this: "How do we recruit and develop those around us?" More specifically, "How do we recruit and develop team leaders?"



Here are three things that I've found helpful when working with new leaders:

### 1. Recruit Character Over Talent.

A portion of Carey Nieuwhof's book *Didn't See it Coming* is devoted to the statement: "At the end of the day, your character is your lid." He makes the point that the most talented CEO can't be a CEO if he is embezzling money. He might be an incredibly capable person but no one would trust him to be their Chief Executive.

The temptation in recruiting leaders is to find someone who is the most talented, but if they can't carry the culture of the church - if they can't carry the culture of Jesus, then they have a low capacity for leadership. Recruitment for leadership begins with character over talent every time.

### 2. Invest Time Over Time.

True investment into others is never a singular event. If we want a leader to be properly developed, it takes an investment of hours over a period of time - time over time.

Investing in others is not easy. Investing in others is messy. An untrained person is not skillful and doesn't complete tasks with efficiency. It takes time to teach culture. It takes years to build trust. Investing in new leaders is risky and there is a possibility that it ends badly. However, when we take time over time to invest in new leaders, not only do we set them up to succeed, we set our team up for success.

Matt Smethurst once tweeted:

*I do. You watch. We talk.  
I do. You help. We talk.  
You do. I help. We talk.  
You do. I watch. We talk.  
You do. Another watches. Y'all talk.*

What a beautiful picture of the investment one must make when recruiting and developing leaders. The process begins with us and ends with the next leader training someone else. In other words, recruiting and developing leaders doesn't end with them performing tasks, but with their ability to recruit and develop others.

### 3. Resist the Urge to Recreate You.

Much of my frustration as a leader and team leader has been founded on the fact that those I trained didn't react the exact way I would have. Even after recruiting good character and investing time over time, they still handled the situation differently than I would. It's not that they handled it poorly, it was just different. As I watched this take place, I began to realize that the spirit in which they handled situations was the same, but the method was different. If I'm honest, I handle situations through the lens of my own life experience, and expecting them to peer through my lens was an impossible expectation. I could train them, resource them, and give them systems in which to work, but at the end of the day if it's truly their responsibility to make the call, then I have to trust them to do it. Often times, if the character is right - if the spirit is right - if I've invested correctly, I am pleasantly surprised by the results.

Our responsibility in raising up others is not to create mini-mes, but to call out the God given abilities and capacities in those we train.

Obviously, carelessly handing the reins to someone is not healthy for anyone, but recruiting character, investing time over time, and helping others reach their full potential as leaders is the goal. Incidentally, when we are recruiting and developing the leaders around us, we are maximizing our own leadership potential. John Maxwell says it this way, "Leaders become great not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower others."



Amos is the Director of Operations at Destiny Ministries. He serves as a Staff Pastor at Church of the Crossroads in Corinth MS where he works with serves teams and leadership development. Amos has been married to Lindsey for 11 years and they have two children Caroline (6) and Franklin (4). He is passionate about helping others find God's redemptive calling for their lives.



# GOD OF THE GAP

PASTOR LANDON GALLOWAY

One of the most difficult realities of following Jesus is that every promise comes with a process. These are times when God fills us in on His plan for our lives. He gives us a glimpse of the good things coming, things like increased influence, new ministry opportunities, and strategic relationships. This obviously excites and energizes us, as we anxiously exist in our “now” while we passionately look for our “next.” So, we wait. Then, we wait some more. Then, we are called out of the waiting room to.... another waiting room. So, we wait again.

Welcome to the gap, that uncomfortable place between God’s promises and their fulfillment. It’s that dreaded piece of real estate between where you were and where you will be. Most Biblical characters experienced the gap. David was anointed for the throne long before he ascended to the throne. Joseph had quite the journey from the polychromatic coat to the pit to Potiphar’s house to prison to Pharaoh’s palace. After Paul’s magnificent vision and commission on the Road to Damascus, he resigned to the Arabian desert for a few quiet years. But, perhaps the character who best represents the gap life is Abraham. He waited nearly three decades for his promised son to arrive.

Genesis 12 records God’s famous promise to Abraham with which we are all familiar. If Abraham agreed to leave the land of Ur and follow God to the wild unknown, God would bless Abraham with a great name, a promised land, and countless descendants. Notice that God told Abraham that He would make him a great nation, but not when. Here is the tension of the gap- Abraham knew God’s will but he didn’t know God’s when. It took great faith for him to leave the land of his fathers to follow the plan of a God that he had just met, yet that faith was not immediately rewarded.

If we fast forward to Genesis 15, we see Abraham’s frustration with the dilatory Deity is beginning to boil over. In the previous chapter, we read that Abraham delivered his nephew Lot from Sodom and defeated four kings. The king of Sodom wishes to give him the spoil

of wars, but Abraham refuses because he believes that God is the one who will bless him. He refuses a short-cut. But, then apparently he began to throw a pity party. “God I am trusting you. I didn’t take the riches. Why are you still not living up to your word?” This is what I often do after a great victory. Lord, look what I have done for you, the sacrifices I have made, and the things I have accomplished for the kingdom. Why am I still in the gap? Let’s pick the story up at the beginning of Genesis 15.

*Genesis 15:1-3 (NIV)- After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.”<sup>2</sup> But Abram said, “Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?”<sup>3</sup> And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”*

In Abraham’s culture, it was common for a heirless man to adopt his servant. In this case, the servant would receive the full inheritance of his master. Abraham is trying to help God out. “God, I like your promise. I understand what you are trying to do. However, it’s looking less and less likely. So, let’s try my plan instead.” I understand Abraham’s frustration. Who among us has not attempted to negotiate with God? But, the only thing worse than waiting for God’s timing is not waiting for God’s timing. The most miserable moments of my life have been when I was trying to help God out. It turns out that part of being God means that He is not reliant on human logic or wisdom. Surprising enough, He doesn’t really need my help. His ways are always higher, and His plans are always better.

God responds to Abraham’s frustrated request: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” Then taking him outside, He reiterated the promise: “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then He said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” In other words, “Abraham, don’t settle for Plan B because Plan A is still





on the way. Don't settle for Eliezer. Isaac is coming. Don't settle for the servant. Wait for the son." There are 8,000 stars visible in the Middle East. Astronomers have identified 30,000 stars in the universe, but estimate that there are over

100 billion. Abraham was still worried about securing one heir, while God had already secured countless heirs.

The reaffirmation of the promise served as a poignant reminder that Abraham's God is the God of the Gap. He isn't just God when promises are made and when promises are fulfilled; He is God even in the in-between space. This chapter teaches us how to respond when we find ourselves in the gap. There are three lessons that Abraham had to learn that are also instructive to us.

## 1. REALIZE THAT THE LORD IS YOUR REWARD.

Genesis 15:1- After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: *"Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."*

God was saying: "Abraham, you need to know that the child was never your reward. The land was never your reward. The wealth was never your reward. The honorable reputation was never your reward. I am and always have been your reward." If this doesn't blow us away then I'm not sure that we get the Gospel. **God—that's capital GOD—gives Himself to us a reward.** We get so caught up on the specifics of the promise that we miss the One who made the promise. Don't focus on the gifts at the expense of the Giver. During seasons of waiting, remind yourself that God is the goal. It was never about the ministry opportunity, the increased influence, or the financial breakthrough. We are privileged to just be in relationship with God and to have the opportunity to serve Him. Everything else is just icing on the cake.

## 2. SACRIFICE EVERYTHING FOR THE REWARD.

Gen. 15:9-10- So He said to him, *"Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."* 10 *Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two."*

After God reaffirmed the promise, he initiated a ceremony to celebrate the covenant between Abraham and Himself. The first part of the ceremony involved Abraham offering a sacrifice. In the gap, we can be tempted to remain passive, to quit striving, and to quit sacrificing. But, if we believe that He is the reward then we will sacrifice everything for Him. Jesus said in Matthew 13:44 that "the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field." When you find the reward, you go all-in for it.

## 3. PRESERVE THE SACRIFICE

Gen. 15:11- *Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.*

This seems like a pretty random passage... why would this be recorded? Because God wants us to know that we must protect the sacrifice. It's not a "one and done" decision. Jesus told us that we must daily take up our crosses, and Paul stated that he dies daily. In seasons of frustration, we are tempted to stop sacrificing and to stop serving. We adopt an attitude of "God, I have done my part. Now, it's your move."

So, when you are experiencing the gap, the piece of real estate between God's promises and your reality, you must realize that He is already your reward, go all-in, keep sacrificing, keep giving, keep believing, and keep striving.

The best part of this story is what happens after Abraham trusted God and made the sacrifice. When Abraham acknowledged that he could not bridge the gap, God bridged it for him. Let's take a look at what happens in Genesis 15:17. *"When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces."*

In the ancient world, when a covenant was made, two kings would come to make a covenant, they would cut the sacrifice in two, put the pieces on either side, and the two of them would walk in between as if to say, "If I don't hold my end of the covenant, let me be torn in two. In the Old Testament, God is often represented as fire. So the "firepot" and "blazing torch" are representatives of God. Notice this happened when Abraham was in a deep sleep. God takes upon himself the full responsibility for keeping the covenant. God is essentially saying: "Go ahead and take a nap, Abraham. This one is on me."

It's our job to wait, to see God as our reward, to sacrifice everything in following Him. It's God's job to make the miracle happen! If we will honor His process, God will His promise.



# COMMUNICATION IS KEY

## USING TECHNOLOGY TO EMPOWER YOUR TEAM

### STEPHANIE POWERS

Churches and ministries today thrive on effective communication. It is the line that connects thought to action. There are a lot of excellent resources about the best way to communicate to your church, and we should consistently research those ideas to make sure we are adequately representing our churches and events in our communities. However, there is one key step we can overlook. Before we can effectively communicate with our church and community, we must effectively communicate with our teams.

Tom Rainer reported on his podcast that in 2018, 56% of all church staff is considered part time. Essentially, this means that most likely during office hours, over half of your staff is not "in office." This can make it difficult to plan events, or even Sunday service! And, with more and more churches looking into a multi-site structure, it can be difficult to get everyone in the same city, much less the same room. So what do we do? How do we effectively communicate with our team when schedules and proximity can't lineup?

At the Destiny Office, some of our team members have other part-time or even full time jobs in ministries outside of the Destiny Office. Additionally, we have staff members that work remotely, and are spread across three different states. We have to overcome schedule conflicts as well as proximity obstacles. So how do we do it? How do we continue to be a fully operational staff while having different work schedules and locations? How do we have staff meetings, make plans for the Destiny Gathering Conference and other Destiny sponsored events? How does the DLI team work together on recruiting and enrolling?

We have found the answer to all those questions in some web-based internet platforms and phone apps. These have helped us tremendously to stay on top of projects and keep each other informed.

Here are three that we use frequently that could help you and your teams.



## GOOGLE APPS

Google Apps is a web-based collection of tools that assists in collaboration and efficacy. Think Microsoft Office, or iWorks suite, the difference being the actual applications are hosted on an online server (or like we say in the Destiny office, "in the cloud") instead of being downloaded to your computer.

The beauty of Google Apps is it's free, and all you need for an account is a Gmail powered email. One of the amazing perks about using Google Apps is many people can work on the same item, from different accounts, in real time. No more back and forth sharing, it automatically saves all your work. There are several different applications but the two we use most frequently (outside of using gmail as our email platform) are Google Docs (word processing platform) and Google Sheets (spreadsheet platform).

### HOW DESTINY USES GOOGLE APPS:

**Google Docs:** We use Google Docs primarily for editing copy for emails, websites and magazine articles. We also use it for creating project proposals, step-by-step instructions for various tasks, and creating working outlines.

**Google Sheets:** We use Google Sheets almost every day. A few ways we use it is to keep track of Conference Registration and to plan the services and breakout sessions. We use it to follow students through the DLI Application process, and to sort student enrollment.

### HOW YOU CAN USE GOOGLE APPS:

**Google Docs:** Create a manual for ministry specific teams, plan events, share sermon notes to your production team/administration so they can import media or create sermon guides for Sunday service. If you are multi-site, you can work on a sermon together without being in the same room. You can also create sign up sheets and info forms to print.

**Google Sheets:** Have a spreadsheet for weekly guest/connect cards. Import the data and assign contact to a team member. They can comment on their interaction. Use it to list registration for events, keep track of event fundraising, create inventory lists, and budgeting. The list goes on...

## ZOOM CONFERENCING

Zoom conferencing is a web based video conferencing tool. It can be accessed through a web browser or an app on your phone. Zoom has a free version of the platform, but if you need to use this frequently for more than 45 minutes at a time, you will need to look into a pro account. You can also record meetings so you can reference back to them at a later time. Zoom offers additional add-ons to the basic platform for your specific needs.

**HOW DESTINY USES ZOOM CONFERENCING:** We use zoom for our staff meetings. DLI uses the webinar tool (add-on feature) to host our monthly webinars. Dr. Brassfield and Cathy use Zoom to connect with pastors and leaders in different locations.

**HOW YOU CAN USE ZOOM CONFERENCING:** Host staff meetings, collaborate with other churches in various locations, or have someone speak to your team. Add-ons include streaming services to Facebook and YouTube.

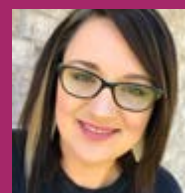
## GROUP ME

Group Me is a major step up from group texting, and the best part is it is completely free. This phone app allows you to create groups and communicate with them through the day or week. Group Me also lists participants names, but keeps their contact information confidential. You can customize the alerts to notify you without bombarding your text message inbox.

**HOW DESTINY HAS USED GROUP ME:** We have used Group Me for disaster relief team communication, DLI planning teams, and conference teams.

**HOW YOU CAN USE GROUP ME:** Have a Group Me for your lead team. You can communicate general info daily without having to call a meeting. Its great for having a continuous conversation about what is going on in everyone's life and ministry. Have your teams do the same for their groups, and even your small groups.

These are just some examples of how to use technology to communicate with your team. Each team has to find out what works for them. Try something new, and if it doesn't work, try something else and always be looking to refine your communication channels. We are currently exploring task-management platforms to take our communication to the next level. The bottom line is, we as leaders have to be committed to finding the most efficient way to communicate with our teams, so we can empower them to come alongside us. Working together, we can share the love of Christ in our communities, and reach people for the Kingdom. A break-down in communication can cause a break-down in ministry. A well informed staff can make all the difference.



*Stephanie has been involved in various forms of technology and communication in church leadership for over 15 years. For the last 6 years she has served as the Director of Communications for Destiny Ministries. Stephanie and her husband Roger of 18 years are both Destiny Ordained Ministers and DLI Graduates. They have three daughters Selah (13), Zoe (12), and Hallie (8). Their family currently resides in Beebe, Arkansas.*



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