

Building Trust on Ministry Teams

“Trust is the confidence among team members that their peers’ intentions are good and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group. In essence, teammates must get comfortable being vulnerable with one another.” (Five Dysfunctions of a Team, p. 195)

Members of teams with an absence of trust:

1. conceal their weaknesses and mistakes from one another
2. hesitate to ask for help or provide constructive feedback
3. hesitate to offer help outside their own areas of responsibility
4. jump to conclusions about the intentions and aptitudes of others without attempting to clarify them
5. fail to recognize and tap into one another’s skills and experiences
6. waste time and energy managing their behaviours for effect
7. hold grudges
8. dread meetings and find reasons to avoid spending time together

Members of trusting teams:

1. admit weaknesses and mistakes
2. ask for help
3. accept questions and input about their areas of responsibility
4. give one another the benefit of the doubt before arriving at a negative conclusion
5. take risks in offering feedback and assistance
6. appreciate and tap into one another’s skills and experiences
7. focus time and energy on important issues, not politics
8. offer and accept apologies without hesitation
9. look forward to meetings and other opportunities to work as a group

Questions for Discussion:

1. Would you agree with the statement that trust is slowly built but quickly broken?
2. What kind of a person is easy for you to trust?
3. What kind of things can we do that undermine the trust others have in us?
4. How is trust built in Russian culture?
 - a. How do people demonstrate that they trust one another?
 - b. How do Russians gauge whether we as missionaries are perceived to be trustworthy?
5. How is trust for one another connected to our trust for God?
6. How do we create a safe environment on our teams where team members can ask for help and admit their weaknesses and mistakes?
7. What hinders us in being vulnerable (honest, open and transparent) with one another?