

APEST



in Missional Communities

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Many across the church are engaging in local contexts using missional communities or mid-sized communities (missional vision focused on a network or neighborhood, social space size—15-30 adults—and with regular rhythms of devotion, fellowship and mission). A leader, or leaders, will uniquely lead their Missional Community (MC) depending on their base-gifting (see “base and phase” in the tools section earlier in this chapter) or the APEST make-up of the leadership team. A naturally apostolic leader, for example, will start, lead, sustain and multiply a missional community very differently to a teacher.

Growth and maturity in a MC will happen when leaders seek the symphony and synergy of all five functions. For example, a mature and effective apostolic leader is seeking to engage and release the other four. This process may involve recruiting other leaders with particular fivefold gifts or engaging other perspectives around the fivefold. So a healthy MC will have a leading beat or primary influence from the base calling and function of the leader but should have a team and a culture that reflects a healthy distribution and expression of each of the fivefold.

How Does Each APEST Base Tend to Lead Missional Communities?



Apostle-led Missional Community

These will usually be dynamic and engaging, orbiting around someone who overflows with charisma and possesses the ability to inspire and gather others. Frequently their groups will grow quickly, and multiplication is on the agenda from the start. This rapid growth and agenda of multiplication is because of the apostle’s focus on sentness but can produce pressure on the group due to the speed of growth. A mature apostle must have the skills to manage such a maneuver and the relational implications that it brings.



Prophet-led Missional Community

This community will tend to focus on the mission, but will not be as evangelistic. They are often highly visible, since they desire an incarnational approach to presenting the Gospel. Generally this means their groups are very radical, with the highest of demands placed upon members. If you have ever encountered a group whose talk—and subsequent action—focuses on reclaiming their city by their very presence and engagement with the people out on the streets, then it is probably a group with strong prophetic leadership. Such groups can grow by multiplying, but often they will keep the core team and allow a new work to bud off into a new context.



Evangelist-led Missional Community

The goal is to go straight after the People of Peace (Luke 10)in their chosen mission context. Evangelism is top of the agenda (unsurprisingly!) They will identify the gatekeepers in the community, engage intentionally and relationally and then stay with them. Often you see evangelists going out in pairs, finding a few People of Peace, building relationships. They desire to win an entire unreached neighborhood through these relationships. These MCs usually have a high number of non-Christians within the relational orbit.



Shepherd-led Missional Community

Shepherds long to bring community transformation by establishing and then building on long-term relationships. They value the integrity of becoming embedded in their context. This means while things are not as spectacular at first, they have a slower and long-lasting approach to mission. This model often works well in the suburbs. Relationships are at the heart of everything shepherds do, so it can be more difficult for them to multiply. They will generally tend to prioritize depth over breadth. They find it easier to grow as an offshoot—a small group of people who take what they are doing into a neighboring area.



Teacher-led Missional Community

Teachers will frequently give of themselves to model how to live the Christian life—whether in worship, community or mission. Mature teachers will do so humbly. It won't even feel like they are teaching much of the time but there will always be an instructing, training and coaching element to their leadership and community life. They will tend to commit for a long season, but many will eventually begin to seek a fresh context requiring their help and then release their group to a strong manager. They will send out new groups who will be characterized by having been thoroughly prepared with a clear model of how to do things.

Notes of Reflection:

Key areas for growth -

Next steps -