

Clarifying Values

Sequentially standing between beliefs (theology/doctrine) and mission (destination) values are like character, they are the organizational characteristics. Values are the qualities that define who we are as a church or ministry. They are deep within the individual and the organization and they define how mission and ministry are pursued. Values are the “white knuckle” issues, they are what motivate us, what drive us, that we hold to when all else is being stripped away and they are demonstrated in both attitude and actions.

For example:

- A church is involved in discipleship ministry because it values spiritual growth.
- A small group distributed food and clothing to those living in poverty because it values benevolence.
- A group of leaders look for ways of connecting more effectively with the community because they value relevance.
- A church connects with local agencies to work with existing efforts because it values partnership.

Admittedly there is a temptation to avoid values clarification believing that somehow individuals or churches are to hold onto all values or feeling that all values are equally important for all groups or situations. It may be easier to think of ‘Big Values’ and ‘Little Values’ or actual and aspirational values. Big values are those we hold most strongly to and little values are those that have less impact on life and ministry. For example, for some churches teamwork is a big value and virtually everything done in the ministry is engaged by a team or group working toward a common end. In other situations teamwork is a small value and while it is not denied or avoided there is also a strong sense that teams of one are often most effective.

Value of Values

Aubrey Malphurs suggests the following motivation behind identifying values.

1. Values clarify ministry distinctives.
2. Values help people determine if they would fit in the ministry.
3. Values communicate what is important.
4. Values help people understand and support change.
5. Values influence organizational behaviour.
6. Values inspire action.
7. Values enable leadership.
8. Values define organizational character.
9. Values engender deeper personal involvement.
10. Values give direction to Mission and Vision development
(Adapted from, Malphurs, Aubrey. *Values-Driven Leadership*. Baker: Grand Rapids, 2004).

The following examples demonstrate how different churches have constructed their Core Values in various ways.