

10 Phrases Every Church Leader Should Use More Often

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Church leaders, regardless of church size, style, denomination or geographic region, all share one thing in common: the desire to love and lead people well.

As a pastor and speaker on Dave Ramsey's team, I've had the chance to speak to church leaders across the country. I've met some amazing leaders. Recently, I've been reflecting on what makes a pastor effective. A big part of it? Word choice. It's so simple! I love that.

So check this out: Here are 10 phrases that pastors should add to their vocabularies. **When church leaders make these words a regular part of their daily conversations, they can make an incredible difference in the lives of people in the pews.** I pray they encourage and challenge you.

1. "What do you think?"

Leaders often fail to listen, so make an effort to really listen to other points of view. When you sincerely ask people for their input, they feel valued and they're more likely to support your plan—even if it's not the one they would have chosen. And, hey, you might just realize their idea is actually better.

2. "No."

As a leader, you are a representative of your church's (and ultimately God's) values and reputation. So when you come across ideas or behaviors that violate (or appear to violate) those values, you shouldn't hesitate to give one, and only one, answer: "No, absolutely not."

3. "Tell me more."

Successful leaders are inquisitive. We love to hear good news, of course, but we should also make it a discipline to dig deeply into bad news and differing opinions. Be open to feedback. This will create a culture of healthy discussion and innovation.

4. "Here's why . . ."

Getting people to agree with a decision or request is less about the details and more about whether the plan holds real value. So explain yourself often. If the team completely gets the *why*, you can expect they'll be on board with the *what*. They'll believe in the reason behind it as much as you do.

5. **“Why?”**

Just like offering your own explanation for why your decisions are important, it's valuable to have your team give the *why* behind their own ideas. Why do they think it will work? Why do they think it won't work? Asking that question will give you tremendous insight into their heart and perspective, not to mention get more ideas flowing.

6. **“We're a team.”**

The best leaders are collaborators and team builders, not dictators. It takes a community of dedicated people to deliver consistent, winning results. Translation: We can't do it all ourselves, and we should communicate that regularly to our team—and the entire church. Use unifying and synergizing terms like “us” and “we,” not “you” and “me.”

7. **“This is our goal.”**

Your team helps drive your church forward, but if they don't know the intended destination, you'll all have a harder time getting there. So make your goals clear, specific and measurable. Most importantly, put them in writing and give them a deadline—then watch your team fly.

8. **“I'm sorry.”**

Confession is good for the soul. It's healthy in the church too. If you've made a mistake, say so. Your team and your church will respect you for it.

9. **“I don't know.”**

Everybody has strengths and weaknesses, including church leaders. Our teams know this. So when we pretend to know something we don't, the team can sense it. They'll lose trust in their leader, who'll look like he's struggling with confidence or just plain lying. Either option is no good.

10. **“Thank you.”**

People like their efforts to be appreciated, and saying “thanks” is one of the best and easiest ways to do that. Recognizing someone's contribution is critical. That's because we yearn for approval. Without affirmation, it's difficult to develop passionate, motivated team members.

You also can score some extra points for letting others hear your compliments, so applaud team members in front of their peers. It creates practically the same effect as bragging on them in front of their family. Just don't be shy about laying on the gratitude.