

LM - Ever since I was in about 3rd year Uni I was keen to return to Adelaide Uni and be involved in campus ministry. In 2011 God answered a long prayed prayer request and I kicked off as part of the team on Campus after completing my studies at Moore College.

Geoff has been the Campus Director of AFES in Adelaide since 2004 and me joining the team presented a new role for me and a new kind of long term team member for Geoff. Aside from it being a new role, Geoff and I are quite different in a number of ways and were aware that it would take some effort and attention to work well together on a team, so the aim of this seminar is to share with you what we've learned along the way.

Firstly, we'll talk you through the useful conversations Geoff and I had and some of the wisdom we stole from others before I started on Campus in 2011.

Secondly, we'll take you through "What worked" in 2011- there are 4 key things that we think set up a scaffolding for working together that helped me settle into my role on campus, helped us to care for each other well and gave space to deal with issues as they've come up.

I'm conscious that the context we are thinking about is student ministry and that Geoff and I talked about my role long before I started. There will be lots that is applicable to any ministry and I hope the issues raised in our conversations will flag good topics to be raising in your early days on a team if you haven't had opportunity to raise them before you've started a new role. We'll have time for questions at the end also, so please feel free to clarify anything then.

2010 Conversations

LM - Initial discussions about role: gifts and skill set/capacities -> Opportunities.

As I mentioned earlier, it had been a long term goal of mine to join the campus ministry in Adelaide. I knew Geoff was the team leader of that ministry so as I got to my later years of college the conversation became more specific.

Geoff spoke about manifold opportunities on campus so was keen for me to come and work on the team. Once that was established, the next step was to think about what my role might look like.

GL - identify differences, don't assume you are the same or that differences are bad

LM - Geoff and Laura (Early 2010)

Given we were talking about a new role entirely which neither of us had seen before we needed a bit more information than a blank page to peek out a Job description.

- One of the most useful things I did early on was to ask Geoff some questions about Geoff's expectations of any new staff member, what his expectations would be of a senior woman on campus and what his thoughts were about what she would do.
- Given that Geoff is responsible for the ministry as a whole, this helped me understand his expectations of anyone on his team so I could check if I fit with that. Also he knew the ministry better than me (given I was still at college) so it was good to hear his ideas about where I could be involved.

As part of that discussion Geoff made the great suggestion that I chat with some Uni ministry Veterans about their roles and what they do.

LM - Laura chatted with Caz, Tara, Tracey (Geoff suggested):

I met up with three women, Caz Andrews who Geoff introduced me to, who works at Sydney Uni EU, Tara Stenhouse who worked at UNSW for a number of years and Tracey Gowing who I had come to know through my involvement in AFES over the years.

I had probably a good 90min chat with Caz and Tara, and have talked with Tracey at length the whole of my last year at college.

I gleaned so much wisdom from these chats about how to go about my first year in ministry and every year in ministry for that matter.

- My main aim talking with each of them was to get them to tell me what the shape of a week, a month and a year looked like for them in their context.
- I got them to talk about when they have a day off, when are they on campus, when are the busy

- times of the year, how do they manage their energy, how do they take holidays all sorts of things.
- What were the things that energised them? what was just hard slog?
- Talking with more than one person helped me see what was common and I assume core to a campus role and what was flexible and adapted for their personalities and gifts.
- I also got ideas I would have never thought of myself about shaping the role. Like Tracey having an day each week where you stay off campus and attend to admin and preparation for the week, before that I'd just assumed you'd be on campus each day. Caz suggestion you work out your limit on 1-1 meetings in a day and don't do more than that for everybody's sake!
- Tracey and I also talked quite a bit about how to work with and care for your brothers on your ministry team. Tracey modelled that too and from her example I could see how humility and a willingness to put others before yourself served her team and her ministry. I also saw it wasn't always easy so I got ready to put some effort into it!

Those thoughts are the tip of the iceberg of the things I got from those conversations so I highly recommend tracking down 2-3 women in ministry who you want to be in 10years pick their brains about how they do what they do. Don't forget to ask your team leader if they any suggestions of who you could talk to as well.

Geoff knew Tracey through AFES and in June 2010 organised for the three of us to meet to have Tracey Talk us through her wisdom on what we needed to be thinking about as we kicked off on team together. This was Geoff's meeting in a way, I was just there to listen and take note of the things we were to talk about

GL- Geoff, Laura and Tracey (June 2010):

Tracey's 6 things

- Theology of Gender in Ministry
- Femininity?
- "Trust" (How are you?)
- Secure to stay but free to leave
- How to keep Laura excited/energised/fresh?
- Who does Laura talk to/holiday with/debrief with? (Wendy?)

GL - Geoff and Laura (October-ish 2010)

Follow-up on Tracey's 6 Things, particularly Theology of Gender in Ministry

- same page, flagged to revisit in the future (Day Conference 2012)

GL - Geoff and Laura (October 2010) Supporters Events

GL: opportunity for public affirmation of Laura in role.

LM - Grief – 2011-2012 – big changes from College (Sydney) to Ministry (Adelaide)

This is a bit out of place when thinking about team ministry. But from a point of view of preparing for the transition from College to a new role. I though it was worth talking about grief.

I had a great time at college (it wasn't without its struggles) but by the time I got to my final year, I'd found a rhythm with the study and enjoyed my friendships deeply.

I think the whole first 12 months out has had some sort of grief hanging around in the background.

Your focus moves from being able to follow your nose, your interests and your questions at college to needing to think about the issue from the point of view of those you are ministering to. I confess its been painful to become less selfish in my thinking this year.

There's not time for essay level precision when you are asked questions, but it takes a while before you realise that you are not going to fail a conversation, because you haven't read 20 books about it!

I've also lost a lot of confidence in spoken communication because I just haven't had to work on it for 4 years. I'm just not as good at this Uni thing as I was at the college thing, and my relationships are new again and don't have the depth I enjoyed at college.

I had the added change of heading interstate. But talking with my peers who are still in Sydney, you are doing well if you see each other 6 times a year. That's a big change. Be ready to feel it.

I just flag this because its not an easy transition, it would be a good thing to communicate to your new team leader. "Just keep an eye out for me, I'm going to be missing college and my college friends a bit this year"

Also, you are not going to know your team and get along with them as well as your final year college buddies. Don't blame your team for that! It will take some time and energy to learn to love and serve each other.

2011 – What Worked

So having had all those conversations I kicked off with the campus team in 2011.

We're going to talk you through four things that Worked.

They are: Keep Expectations Low, Structure your Job for good team relationships, Work on Conflict, Get to know your Team and their Families.

LM - Keep Expectations Low. Keep expectations of yourself and your first year low 'get through the year and want to do another'

The first point is to keep expectations on yourself and your ministry low. Geoff's way of saying this was to 'get through the year and want to do another'. To do that is not as easy as it sounds.

The last 12 months found myself to be a complete novice, I was learning people and names and who was who, I was learning to work on a new team, I was being reminded of how Uni Students talked and related, every week presented something new, and the shape of the year was very different to college. You don't feel like you know what you are doing a whole lot of the time. This takes a lot of energy. So keep your expectations on yourself low!

I had to be very careful not to compare this experience to past ministry experiences where I was much more settled and confident, or to others in ministry who knew what they were doing.

By Geoff setting for me the goal of getting through the year wanting to do another gave me permission to be floundering around and for that to be ok.

Keeping expectations low meant that I didn't get to 6months in and get completely disillusioned because the whole of Adelaide wasn't converted. It helped keep my expectations about myself and my ministry realistic rather than idealistic.

LM – Convo 3rd term.

An example of how this worked was in term 3 I noticed how the rest of the team was under the pump but I wasn't. It made me ask Geoff if I should be doing something differently?

- Geoff reminded me that one of my goals for the year is that I'm to get through the year and be ready for another. (he's had to remind me a lot this year and everytime, I'm like oh yeah that's right!)
- Secondly, he reminded me that my role has been set up to be different to the others on the team and why he thought the role was important and why he was thankful that I was doing it.

I walked into that meeting thinking, I'm not doing this ministry thing right and walked out excited about the opportunities I have on campus and reaffirmed in my ability to take them up.

GL – Learning from own mistakes balance between guidance and molly coddling!

GL – Structure your role for good team relationships

- o 1 Hour a week: (What does it look like to have good communication and space to build trust, react to issues, raise insecurities clarify expectations, prepared for upcoming events. Book Holidays. Also flag issues for future discussion)

GL – Laura to set the agenda, Geoff reserves right to raise anything

- o Reviews: 6month (unofficial review with Tracey) and 12month review (Review the team, not just new team member)
- o Holidays! Book!

GL – thinking about how to enable LM in ministry not blocker or holding up ministry

Note the Resource: Manage your boss

LM – *Creates a clear space in the week when I can raise anything! I know I can call/talk with Geoff at any other time but knowing I have that hour helps me make good use of the hour.*
That hour a week from my point of view is the engine room for the health of both my ministry and for Geoff and I relating well.

LM - Work on Conflict

One of the things I've become aware of over the year is that I have a long way to go in learning how to deal with conflict.

We had it raised for our team to discuss when we went to our AFES Senior Staff Conference where we worked through the introductory Peacemaker course.

In a general sense I would just caution that you take care in conflict to be examining yourself and assuming the best of others. Especially Being careful not to let gender or personality become scapegoats for issues of sin and hard heartedness. Jesus gives us incredible gifts of repentance and forgiveness, be ready use them!

Also, this year I've been reflecting on humility, it came up in a few contexts and I can see how humility is a crucial building block for dealing with conflict well.

This year Geoff and I have encountered a few spots of conflict. Most have been addressed in the 1 hour meeting, sometimes I've needed to take some time and come back a week later to clarify the issue. Sometimes its just checking in with me about a funny reaction I had in another meeting or context, or clarifying something Geoff said.

One example was early in the year, Geoff asked me to give him sermon feedback over a few weeks, there was one sermon that Geoff accidentally stepped on a raw nerve of mine.

In the end it was not about what Geoff said but about my sensitivity to the issue.

My reaction showed itself by me being overtly grumpy in a staff meeting, which Geoff followed up with me immediately, to work out what was wrong. Which lead to us talking it through, that day and followed it up at a later time.

Afterwards, I reflected on my reaction being so big for something Geoff did unintentionally and I thought it would be good to talk Geoff through it and any other Raw nerves I had which might cause a similar reaction.

So I talked Geoff through them, they were things like: Singleness, Cancer in the Family, Divorce, Women in Ministry and I told the story about why those things were raw nerves for me. Often those issues are raised and its fine, but when these topics are on the table, I'm just a bit more emotionally volatile especially when they are not dealt with sensitively.

Flagging this I guess helps Geoff know what issues I need to be pastored in, and cared for in.

It would be worth having a think if you have any of those raw nerves lying around, worth identifying and communicating to your team, it will help people care for you and pastor you too.

GL – Get to know your team and their families.

- Be praying for your team and their families!
- **Husbands, Wives and Families:** Work out with your team what is best for supporting/getting to know each other and your families. (Important in every context, different in AFES to a church context!)
- *Friends and Family* – what do you need? (Be proactive and foster healthy family relationships and friendships. (Takes time!))

GL – importance of maintaining college/Sydney relationships for LM

2012- What next?

GL: What makes LM tick?

QUESTIONS