Seven Keys To Longevity In Ministry

by Mark Cole

I recently celebrated 40 years since I started into full time ministry. There have been some incredible highs and a few lows along the way. But, I have always been amazed at the faithfulness of God. Here are a few things that I have learned about running the race.



1. Spend time with God daily
God is the source of all good things. So it certainly makes sense to spend time with God daily. One of the best habits that I have developed is opening my Bible early every morning and spending time getting to know God through His Word. It helps me keep my eyes on the Lord through the good time and bad times. God's word had taught me about wisdom, faith, love, relationships, integrity, forgiveness, leadership and a host of other invaluable life lessons. I could not have survived without it.

2. Family & Friends
The Lord has blessed me with great family and friends. I have great parents, grandparents and in-laws. And, I have a godly wife who has been an awesome support throughout our journey. When you have a peaceful, loving, healthy home, you have a great place to retreat to when the fireworks go off! Family is so important! Good friends are important! Invest in your wife, children, extended family and friends. It pays great dividends! You may change churches but you always keep the same family.

3. Work on improving daily
None of us starts with all the gifts and talents we need. Great mentors, education, seminars, books, positive feedback and daily discipline are all part of what it takes to stay on a journey of improvement. Never stop growing. If you don't keep growing, chances are, you won't last long. In the parable of the talents, the person who didn't double his talents got the boot!

4. Forgive
Hurts will come. Conflict will happen. It is inevitable. To survive the race, you need to learn to forgive quickly and often. Learn to deal with conflict the Jesus way! Learn to overcome your reticence to go to people directly. A lot of problems can be solved with one on one conversation. Even when you don't feel like it, forgive. God has forgiven you! It is the only healthy way to move forward! You will not survive in ministry if you don't forgive!

5. Humility
Keeping the right attitude in life is huge! You want to have the confidence that comes with walking with the Creator of the Universe. But, you need the humility that comes with knowing that any of us can fail! Put in the safeguards in your life that will help you to keep a proper perspective and attitude. Be humble. Be accountable.

6. Build great teams
If you are doing it right, the job is a way too big to do by yourself. One of my great joys in ministry has been to develop great teams of people to work with. Production teams, music teams, choirs, bands, Alpha teams, sound teams and on and on! Out of those teams will grow leaders. Leaders whom God will use and often send out. Jesus said, "Go into all the world". Our job is to train people to go!

7. Recharge
When God created the universe, He took a day off. If God needs a day off, so do you! I have always made a point of taking days off and also taking some great vacation time with the family. Life flies by. I love the memories that we have created in our vacation times together. Also, look after your health! I have learned the value of regular exercise and proper diet. Life is a marathon, not a sprint!

Question: What have been some of your keys to successful, long term ministry?



Mark Cole: Jesus follower, Husband, Father, Worship Leader, Writer, Pastor, Church Consultant, Founding Arranger for Praisecharts.com, squash & tennis player, blogger & outdoor enthusiast (biking, hiking, skiing).

The article above and many additional insights may be found on Mark's blog at http://markcole.ca/

Check out Mark's new book - "Leading Worship ~ Notes from a Grand Adventure" available in Kindle or Soft Cover Editions. This is a great gift for the musician or worshipper in your life.