

Jim's Tool Box

Coaching: A Ministry for You?

When most of us think about coaches, we think about a coach for an athletic team – football, baseball, basketball, or soccer among many others. But in this Tool Box article I want to focus on a ministry that is on the rise nationally (also internationally) and within the church – more specifically in the West Ohio Conference.

According to a FAQ on the West Ohio Conference website, a coach in the sense that I want to talk about it here is “... a professionally trained advocate/partner who can assist you in reaching your goals and dreams by providing an objective and focused strategic relationship.” In other words a coach can be a real gift to you in your ministry, your life, your career, your relationships.

Here are a few things that coaching is NOT:

- *A coach is not a consultant.* A consultant is hired to tell you or your organization what you need to know. A coach employs methods that help you discover ideas and move you into action.
- *A coach is not a therapist/counselor.* Coaching typically employs a one to one relationship (unless the coaching is being done with a group such as a church board). While counseling often attempts to resolve unresolved past issues, coaching “... only reaches into the past to explore recent behavior so that you may explore better future actions for better results.”
- *A coach is not a mentor.* A mentor relationship assumes that the mentor will share her/his successes and learnings with the person being mentored. Coaching assumes that you have within you the power, answers, and expertise that you need, and that given the tools and space to explore options and obstacles, you will adopt an action plan from within rather than one adopted from without.

Another common misconception is that coaching is for leaders who need help or assistance in some area. While coaching can be used in these settings, more often coaching is used by many effective leaders to give them an edge in their professional and personal lives. Coaching is about long-term fulfillment, goal attainment, and overall success.

I have already benefited from coaching in my own ministry. I know that coaching has helped me to focus my ministry work. My coaching experience has helped me make decisions about ministry issues (the coach didn't *tell me what to do*, but the coach *helped me to decide what I needed to do*).

I have chosen to take coaching training for two reasons:

1. I wanted see how coaching would fit in my personal “tool box” of ways that I can work with pastors and congregations to help them be the best leaders they can be and to deliver effective ministry in their communities.
2. I am exploring ways in which the CAS District could use the ministry of coaching in settings across the district if we were to train additional persons to serve as coaches to leaders and congregations across the district.

Over the next few months, I'll be trying out coaching as another way I can work with pastors and other leaders in congregations. My experience will help me explore ways that we can use coaching to strengthen the effectiveness of leaders in congregations across the district.

If you would like to know more about coaching, feel free to contact me (jwaugh@wocumc.org) or call me at the district office (614-222-0600). You can also click [HERE](#) to go to the coaching page on the West Ohio Conference website where you can read more about what it takes to become a coach or to find a coach for your ministry now.

While the coaching conversation is confidential in nature, I hope to report in the next few months what I have learned from coaching others and discuss ways that a coaching ministry could help us have more effective leaders in the CAS District.