



7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE COLLEGE MINISTERS

Arliss Dickerson

Leadership Development Consultant, Collegiate Ministry, Lifeway Christian Resources

Stephen Covey's book, "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" is an enduring classic. I have recently begun to wrestle with what are "EFFECTIVE" habits. In my current role, I supervise student assistant/interns. They care; they work hard. They give more time than we pay them for. This has helped me to again focus and think about what it is that is EFFECTIVE for those of us who are career College Ministers. Here is my first swing at it.

1. They realize and believe that God is up to way more than they realize and know about.

This is something to remember on those days when you feel a failure. Years later a student will say "you made the difference when"....or...."that retreat changed my life and walk with the Lord."....etc, etc.

2. They work at being "The Mayor of the Campus".

The mayor of a town or city is someone who is known by many and is always trying to know and relate to more people...especially anytime close to election time. The more a College Minister is known on campus the more effective their ministry will be. This is part of my "rule" that College Ministers should "Walk across the campus and through the Student Center every day!". The more administrators know a College Minister and realize what they are doing and how it benefits students, the more they will be cooperative. The more campus student leaders know a College Minister the more leader types that ministry attracts, etc.

3. They recognize and utilize the different seasons of college ministry.

This is being written in mid-April and we are full force into getting ready for Freshmen Orientations that begin next week. Enlistment time is a season. August/September is a season. Thanksgiving/Christmas is a season. There are different college ministry tasks to be done in those seasons. And, there are seasons for more renewal and family time.



4. They demonstrate what they expect.

If we want leaders to show up on time and do what they are supposed to do, we must show up on time and do what we say we will do. We get what we model! A ministry tends to attract or do best with students who appreciate what they see in the student and professional leadership.

5. They are willing to challenge students about mis-behavior.

The least pleasant part of college ministry is looking a student in the eye and telling them they cannot continue in a leadership role because of their behavior. Or, it may be saying there is a problem here that will destroy your life. Some say with volunteers you must take what you get. When we ignore mis-behavior (particularly moral) we not only do a disservice to the ministry....we do a huge disservice to the student.

6. A highly effective College Minister has friends their own age.

If you plan to stay in college ministry for the long term, you cannot continue to just be friends with college students. You need people who are going through the same part of life where you currently reside. Balance is huge in surviving for the long term (Luke 2:52). Many do not make it past the 3-5 year mark due to a lack of balance and having a life apart from students.

7. They are ALWAYS looking for, enlisting, training, and building up student leaders.

Student leaders multiply the ministry. Student leaders reach students the College Minister cannot reach. Trained and equipped student leaders benefit churches after they graduate from college. Student leaders multiply the time of the College Minister.