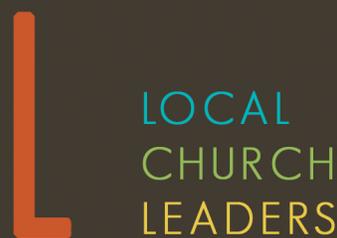


## THE BALANCE BETWEEN

Caleb DeHart



One of the things I struggle with the most in being a student pastor is balancing the time between events based on spiritual experiences and events based on building the relationships (fun events) that can lead to spiritual experiences. Just to clarify, I believe that everything you do in leading a Hyphen ministry should have the goal in mind of winning someone to God. If you go into that fun event with the intention of making guests feel welcome, it could have as much of an impact as a church service. I remember one time Mandy and I planned to have several Hyphen students over to our home just to hang out, and we posted the invitation on our local Hyphen Facebook page. A girl saw the ad and came to our house. To this day, she is still involved in the church. You do have to find a good balance between fun events and spiritual events.

My whole goal in being a student pastor is to reach students and see their lives changed. I told my pastor when I first moved to Connecticut that I was starting a church within Faith Tabernacle. I was joking with him, but I do see Elevate Student Ministry as the student church that I am responsible for pastoring and helping create an environment for God to give the increase and grow. But I occasionally find myself struggling to achieve a good balance between fun and spirituality.

Jesus did not spend all His time preaching. A couple times He preached and then everyone went out to eat and just had a good time. (Hint ... multiplying the loaves and fish.) He accepted Zacchaeus's dinner invitation at his house. He had a good time at a wedding feast with His mother and friends. He met the disciples returning from a fishing trip and cooked breakfast for them on the shore. Jesus knew that building relationships was just as important as preaching. He knew that these relationships would lead to spiritual encounters with Him.

Have fun with your students and build relationships with them. Host events and have your students bring their friends without the pressure new people sometimes feel in attending a church service. Use that as an opportunity to gain their trust. Once you have done that and they feel comfortable enough to keep coming back, then by the time they start coming to church you will have built a bond with your students (new and old) and given all kinds of room for God to move.

At times I have been guilty of doing too much fun and not enough church, but I also have been guilty of having too much church and not enough fun. God does want to move in our students' lives, so it is important that we achieve a balance. If we are having too much fun and never making room for someone to receive the Holy Ghost, then we are missing the point of the fun. The fun is supposed to pave the way for God to move on our students and effect real change in their lives.

This article isn't lengthy or profound, but I do feel it is making an important point. God wants to move in our students' lives, and we should help create an environment for Him to be able to do so. That is the importance of having both church and fun in your Hyphen ministry. You do not want your Hyphen students getting their fun somewhere else, but you always want to nurture an atmosphere where God can come in and change their lives. If we have balance, we can change our local world.