PWOC LDP

Leadership Development Program

TOPIC: "STAKED"

The Bottom-Line Up Front: In Scripture, when we read "bear with each other," we tend to interpret it as "put up with each other." The meaning of the phrase is much more complex and intimate—it involves stepping in close and holding up our sisters in Christ, offering our strength until they can stand on their own.

1. **Bear with each other** (10+ minutes):
   - **Ephesians 4:2-3** *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient,* ***bearing with one another*** *in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*
   - **Colossians 3:14** ***Bear with each other*** *and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*
   - **Read the following paragraph about the Greek word for "bear with." Mark what stands out to you:**

     [Anechomai] means 'to sustain, bear or hold up against a thing,' much as a person would tie a stake to a tomato plant to sustain it from the weight it carries. The strength of the stake is transferred to the plant and thus 'bears it up.' When the Lord commands us to bear with one another in Colossians 3:13 and Ephesians 4:2, He isn't simply saying, 'Put up with one another.' Although He is telling us to do that, He is also saying, 'Stake yourselves to one another.' In other words, we're to come alongside a weak brother or sister who is 'weighted down' and say, 'You're not going to fall and be broken or destroyed because I'm staking myself to you. My strength is now yours. Go ahead, lean on me. As long as I can stand, you will.'

     —Dutch Sheets, *Intercessory Prayer*
   - **What could this look like on our Board if we chose to embrace the last few sentences?** *'You're not going to fall and be broken or destroyed because I'm staking myself to you. My strength is now yours. Go ahead, lean on me. As long as I can stand, you will.'*
     - Talk about it. Hold a 3-minute standing meeting with one or two other people.
     - Continue your discussion with the whole Board.

2. **Consider formalizing your commitment** (10+ minutes):
   - Holding a "staking ceremony" can be an incredibly powerful event that helps to solidify the Board's commitment to one another. This can take many shapes. Consider the examples below.
     - Board members stand in a circle. Whoever is leading this training should go first. She goes inside the circle, facing one person at a time, making good eye contact, perhaps placing a hand on her shoulder, and saying something like, "__*Name*__", I am staking myself to you. As long as I can stand, you will." Then the person she is speaking to responds with: "Thank you."
       - This is typically a very moving and memorable event; tears are common. Many leaders have never experienced a commitment like this from their peers. Sadly, many leaders have learned not to trust and to watch their backs. Your Board can be different.
       - Note that participation should be optional. Also note that more than one person can be inside the circle at the same time.
     - If the example above is too uncomfortable, consider standing in a circle with arms wrapped around each other's shoulders. The leader of the training would go first to say something like, "I am staking myself to each of you. As long as I stand, you will." As she says the words, she makes eye contact with each person in the circle. Opportunity is given for each Board member to make the same commitment.
       - This approach loses some of the individuality and impact of the one-on-one commitment but it still holds much value and may be a better fit for some Boards.
   - As the Board goes through the PWOC year, there will be many ups and downs—both collectively and individually. This ceremony becomes a reference point for Board members to remind their peers that they are not alone. When knees become weak and begin to buckle, sisters step in strong and *bear one another up,* doing whatever is needed to bring hope and restoration.