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TAP! TAP! TAP!

When the Spirit nudges your board, does
He hear a busy signal?

*If we are to engage in meaningful spiritual discernment with others,
and listen well for His will for our shared ministry life,
we first need to tend to the state of our own hearts.¹*

Stephen A. Macchia

Your board meetings probably always open and close with prayer. Some of your board members would certainly consider anything less to be sacrilege!

What about between the opening and closing bell at your board meetings? Does your board send up prayers at appropriate times? Is your board meeting ever interrupted by the spontaneous singing of the Doxology?

Now, the review of the minutes from the last board meeting may not require prayer. Neither am I suggesting that boards should routinely pray for most board agenda items. This could reduce prayer to a perfunctory level.

But investing time in prayer should not be limited to those challenging fork-in-the-road board decisions. Share prayers

of thanksgiving to celebrate God's hand in achieving a significant goal.

The arms of your CEO may be weary. Pray after your board hears the CEO's report or when you sense the load is heavy. Remember in Exodus 17:12 how Aaron and Hur held up Moses's hands, one on each side. "So his hands remained steady until sunset." A prayer of encouragement can have a similar effect for your CEO.

Based on my many years of board service, it is my observation that boards often miss prime opportunities to be empowered by our Heavenly Father. It's this simple: God's power is revealed in the boardroom when board members pray together.

God wants to release His power in your boardroom. This power may come in the form of:

- **Wisdom**—a plan of action that the board cannot determine on its own.
- **Courage**—more than the board could ever muster on its own.
- **Confidence**—uncommon belief that the board is on the right track.
- **A Miracle**—for example: when God moves a giver to fill a huge financial need.

Our colleague Stephen A. Macchia explains the nudge of the Holy Spirit as the "*Tap! Tap! Tap!*" of the Spirit on our hearts.²

How can your board avoid missing that nudge from the Holy Spirit? Let me share a few ways:

- **Realize we need God's help.** God's power comes when boards realize they cannot handle things on their own. Boards must enter the boardroom with a receptivity to hearing from the Holy Spirit. This attitude is the opposite of asserting that we have all the answers in and of ourselves. *Tap! Tap! Tap!*
- **Develop the discipline of stillness.** Too often, boards do not seize opportunities to be still. They do not become quiet and mindfully listen for His voice. Times of stillness and solitude were important to Jesus (Mark 1:35). The Apostle Peter went up on the roof to pray at lunchtime, and God talked to him there (Acts 10:9-20). Scripture is filled with people who took time to hear what God had to say to them. *Tap! Tap! Tap!*
It is possible to be aware of God's gentle promptings throughout the board meeting and still efficiently complete the agenda. Tap! Tap! Tap!
- **Commit to slow down—lower the RPMs.** If the board is typically running behind on its agenda and the pace of the meeting is moving too quickly, it may seem like taking time to pray for key decisions imposes on the meeting schedule. It is possible to be aware of God's gentle promptings throughout the board meeting and still efficiently complete the agenda. *Tap! Tap! Tap!*
- **Understand that any board member can feel the nudge of the Holy Spirit.** It may seem as if only the board chair

should call for prayer during the meeting. Not so—every board member has equal access to the Holy Spirit hotline. The board chair should make it clear that all members should feel free to “throw the flag” when they sense that it is time for prayer. *Tap! Tap! Tap!*

When a board prays regularly, sincerely, and specifically during board meetings, God will answer these prayers and He will be glorified.

To go deeper in this area, consider how St. Ignatius identified three distinct times when faced with making Spirit-filled choices:

1. **A revelatory time**—beyond a shadow of a doubt, the conviction is crystal clear (Saul fell to the ground, blinded by the light).
2. **A discerning time**—facing big decisions, interior movements of consolation or desolation pull you toward or push you away from a decision.³
3. **A waiting time**—like a sailboat without any wind, there is no strong consolation or desolation.

A revelatory time may not require prayer during a board meeting. But when a board is in a discerning or a waiting time, prayer is often just what a board needs.

BOARDROOM LESSON

When the Spirit nudges your board,
does He hear a busy signal?
All board members should be attentive
to the nudges of the Holy Spirit, throwing the prayer flag
when prompted on behalf of the entire board.

Board Action Steps:

- **1. Read:** Ask one or more board members to read (and report on) Ruth Haley Barton's book *Pursuing God's Will Together*.⁴
- **2. Review:** Reflect on your recent board meetings. Were there times when the board should have stopped to pray but did not?
- **3. Listen:** Be alert for those *Tap! Tap! Tap!* moments in board meetings. Then stop and pray.

Prayer: "Lord, nudge our board when you want us to stop—even in the middle of a board meeting—and ask for your guidance. Amen."